

Exeter City Council Operation Manual and Policy for the use of

Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVC)

Body Worn Video Cameras (BWVC) are a portable tamper proof device that provides an audio and visual recording of activities undertaken by an Officer of the City Council.

The primary purpose of BWVC is to diffuse situations, prevent physical and verbal aggression against our Officers, and capture video and audio images that may be used by police and colleagues for the purposes of investigating and taking action against offenders.

This policy establishes a framework with respect to the planning, introduction and use of BWVC devices by Officers. Together with the BWVC Procedure & Guidance Manual, it provides guidance on the applicable legislation, management and retention of audio and visual data produced by BWVC's.

BWVC technology has a number of benefits and the aim is to achieve and promote improved communication between BWVC users and the public. In particular, it covers a number of specific objectives, namely:

- good quality evidence of conversations with the public, which will assure fairness, transparency and accountability supporting trust and confidence between BWVC users and the public;
- provision of reliable evidence of conflict or confrontation, contraventions;
- allowing for more detailed examination of the events leading up to and management of incidents;
- enhanced evidence capture;
- promoting positive behaviour and interaction between BWVC users and members of the public

The intended use of BWVC is to:

- Raise standards of service delivery
- Reduce incidents of conflict and the escalation of any such incident
- Reduce anti-social behaviour incidents
- Be used in the process of civil enforcement to help ensure transparency, accuracy and prosecution
- Use images for the safety of staff to the Employee Protection Register

This policy applies to all City Council staff who use BWVC.

The Operating Guide states when the use of BWVC should be applied, the list is not exhaustive, and each officer should use their own discretion when activating their BWVC.

Overview:

In the case of the Civil Enforcement Officer Response Team (Sierra) each officer will be assigned their own BWVC.

The Car Park team will be provided with BWVCs to be signed out as and when an officer needs to use them, for example when they go out and carry out enforcement duties.

It is the responsibility of all officers to make sure they have their assigned BWVC and make sure they have signed out and signed back in their BWVC at the start and end of every shift.

BWVC should only be stored in the docking station, not anywhere else.

Officers should only turn on their BWVC at the start of their shift. Once turned on, the BWVC is on a 30 second pre-record loop. Once the officer presses record, the BWVC camera will record footage from the previous 30 seconds onwards.

In case of a challenge in recording an encounter or a conversation with a member of the public, prompt cards on relevant legislation will be provided to all officers that use BWVC.

The BWVC records location, sound and pictures which will help the Officer gather unambiguous evidence and add an extra level of security. The system acts largely as a deterrent and should be clearly visible to be classed as overt surveillance.

At the end of each shift, footage from BWVC is downloaded to DEMS. These recordings will be stored for 30 days for any future evidence requests.

Tents and encampments:

- When approaching a tent, but before any engagement, both Officers in attendance should switch on their BWVC and should clearly state that the encounter/conversation is being recorded. The Officers should show the 24hr Notice to the BWVC and approach the tent clearly stating that it's the City Council and is anyone in the tent. If there is an individual present, then one of the Officers needs to tell the occupant that they are here to serve a 24hr Notice.
- If the tent isn't occupied, keep recording so evidence is gathered that the 24hr Notice has been served, for example the Officer placing the notice inside the tent.
- See current procedures for serving 24hr Notice on tents.

Enforcement Patrols within Car Parks:

- When carrying out enforcement duties in car parks (issuing PCN's) the Officer should leave the BWVC on but not recording. It is down to the Officer's discretion as to when he/she presses record on the BWVC, should an incident arise. If an incident arises to the extent the Officer feels they need to activate their BWVC, then the Officer will be required to tell whoever they are engaging with that the conversation is being recorded.

ASB Patrols within Car Parks:

- When carrying out ASB patrols within the City Council car parks, Officers should always switch on the BWVC prior to entering a car park. If the Officer is approaching

a stairwell, and prior to entering the stairwell, the BWVC should be set to record and the Officer clearly stating that any encounter and conversation is being recorded to inform anyone who maybe residing in the stairwell.

- When conducting ASB patrols in Cathedral and Quay Car Park or any other car park suffering from high levels of ASB, the Officer should press record on their BWVC on arrival. If they come across and approach any group or individual, they clearly state that they are being recorded and are required to leave.
 - Example: Officers have been called to the Staircase of Princesshay 2 car park. On approach to the stairwell, the Officer presses record on their BWVC and walks into the stairwell. If they encounter anyone, they politely say “good morning this conversation is being recorded. It’s time to vacate the car park as you are currently blocking the stairs and this is also a fire escape. Please can you leave and take all your belonging with you as anything left behind is likely to be disposed of.”

Significant incident and Community Safety patrols:

- Should any Officer be involved in a significant incident, at the first possible opportunity, the Officer needs to press record on their BWVC. At the earliest opportunity, the Officer must report the incident to a member of the Parking & Enforcement management team to record the incident on ASSESSNET and an incident form completed. The Officer will be debriefed and then make there way to St Stephens House where footage from the BWVC will be downloaded to Genetec so it can copied for evidential purposes.

Housing / Environmental Health / Planning visits:

- When carrying out duties within the Officer should leave the BWVC on but not recording. It is down to the Officer’s discretion as to when he/she presses record on the BWVC, should an incident a rise. If an incident arises to the extent the Officer feels they need to activate their BWVC, then the Officer will be required to tell whoever they are engaging with that the conversation is being recorded. The Officer should always record if they are visiting a building where they know it is occupied by someone on the Employment Protection Register.