

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Council Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice Annual Audit and Review

Date: 16 July 2026

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Wards Affected

All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

Update Members on work undertaken and planned, to ensure good governance and compliance with the law in respect of the Council's surveillance systems and to obtain approval to minor amendments to the Councils Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

THAT Cabinet:

- 1) Notes the work that has been undertaken and continues to be done to ensure lawful compliance, good governance and efficacy in the operation and use of the Council's surveillance systems.**
- 2) Approve the amendments to the Councils Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice at Appendix A**

1 Background

1.1 In March 2020, Cabinet approved the Council's Policy and Code of Practice for Surveillance Cameras. Under this policy the Senior Responsible Officer for Surveillance Cameras is required to report to Members on the auditing of CCTV systems and review of the policy

document on an annual basis. Members also agreed an approval system for the introduction of new CCTV cameras in the Borough to ensure good governance and solid justification for the introduction of new cameras. This is to ensure the Council's compliance with the Protections of Freedom Act 2012 (PoFA).

- 1.2 In July 2024 as part of the annual audit and review, Cabinet approved that the Deputy Chief Executive be designated as the Council's senior responsible officer (SRO) for Surveillance Systems and delegated authority to approve additional CCTV installations in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for Crime and Prevention including, where necessary, authority to submit an application for planning permission in respect of CCTV equipment. The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for CCTV, has continued to effectively operate the Council's CCTV systems and ensure compliance with the approval process for the introduction of new cameras.
- 1.3 Section 33 of the PoFA requires local authorities to pay due regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice ("the Code"), issued under sections 29-31 of the PoFA, where they operate surveillance cameras overtly in an open space. The Code was last updated in 2022, and the audit of 2023 saw our policy amended in line with these updates.
- 1.4 As part of the current review of the Council's Policy and Code of Practice, the Council have had regard to the amended Code of Practice and although there have been no amendments to the Code or significant changes to the national best practice guidance on video surveillance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office ("ICO") there has been a change in the amalgamation of roles that sees a new Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commission which requires an amendment to our policy and code and with ever expanding use of modern surveillance technologies we have taken the opportunity to make some minor amendments to the current policy to strengthen requirements around data protection, transparency, accountability, retention and access controls, ensuring the Council can demonstrate that its use of surveillance remains necessary, proportionate and properly governed.
- 1.5 The Council's Town Centre CCTV system is operated using Bosch Video Management System (BVMS) and still comprises of 88 cameras connected through a mixture of coax, network, wireless and fibre optic cabling across 14 sites. The Town Centre System remains fit for purpose. There have been no additions or removals.
- 1.6 The Council continues to undertake daily functionality checks of CCTV cameras at the start of each shift, including pan, tilt and zoom testing where applicable, to ensure cameras remain operational and fit for purpose.

Recent reviews of CCTV operations have reinforced the importance of these daily checks, particularly in ensuring camera functionality during critical incidents. Reflective learning from previous high-profile incidents has been incorporated into service procedures, strengthening operational resilience and quality assurance processes.

- 1.7 Since the 2025 audit by system owners the SPOC has assisted system owners in implementing changes recommended as a result of the audit including signage and working towards centralisation along with continuing to assist other system owners in complying with their duties under the Codes of Practice and the Councils Policy.
- 1.8 Since the last report to Cabinet, the annual audits have been completed on all of the Council's CCTV systems including the town centre system, leisure centre systems, civic centre system, vehicle mounted system and the system at the AMP. Data protection impact assessments are also being reviewed as part of the records of data processing activities implementation. The audits assist in ensuring that the systems in place remain fit for purpose and compliant with the legislation and Code of Practice. The quality of images and necessity of all cameras has been assessed. Any service area where body worn cameras are utilised must also ensure they are used in line with the Councils Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice. This includes the body worn cameras utilised by WISE officers, who undertake certain enforcement action on the Councils behalf.
- 1.9 The audits checked the operation of the cameras, and also looked at the processes for storing, handling and accessing data recorded from the cameras to our CCTV control room or other control locations. The Council work very closely with the Police and frequently get requests for access to CCTV footage by police officers as part of criminal investigations. The processes and powers to release this data to the police is managed well in the control room and the audit evidenced that this is similar across all of the Councils systems.
- 1.10 Through the annual audits and input from the SPOC, scrutiny of our surveillance systems continues to ensure sufficient justification for the volume of cameras, the necessity, proportionality and lawfulness. There is a performance management metric has also been added to the Council's Risk Management system to assist in highlighting the necessity for the relevant actions to be undertaken and ensure ongoing robust action regarding the use of the Council's CCTV systems and ensure compliance with the PoFA and other relevant legislation.

- 1.11 Any Council operation of surveillance systems must not be undertaken covertly unless this is in line with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the necessary authorisations under that legislation are obtained. Training in respect of RIPA powers is available on the Council's intranet for new starter and refresher purposes, and an updated online training is due to be delivered in 2026/27. The training includes a section on the Council's CCTV Policy and Code of Practice so is offered to those involved in the monitoring, control and managing of the Council's CCTV systems, as well as the Council's investigating officers.
- 1.12 Between July 2025 and May 2026, there were 517 incidents captured by the CCTV control room where CCTV was used to assist in the prevention and detection of crime, including assaults, anti-social behaviour, begging, theft, drug use and knife crime, and to support Nottinghamshire Police with arrests. The police reviewed 307 incidents, and 57 discs of evidence were provided. These performance figures should also be considered alongside the impact of significant major incidents during the reporting period. During the audit period, the CCTV service has supported a number of complex investigations, including a major incident involving one murder and four attempt murders in Arnold and a murder on Westdale Lane West in Mapperley, Nottingham, resulting in a substantial increase in CCTV evidence gathering and disclosure activity. This demonstrates the service's ability to respond effectively to exceptional demand whilst continuing to support day-to-day operational requirements.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the continued and ongoing work carried out in relation to the Council's surveillance camera systems and to approve the amendments to the Council's Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Members could determine not to receive annual updates in relation to the Council's Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice, however this would be contrary to the Council's policy position.
- 3.2 Members may recommend not to make the amendments to the policy and code of practice, however this would not see the updates needed to ensure the strengthening requirements around data protection, transparency, accountability, retention and access controls, ensuring the Council can demonstrate that its use of surveillance remains necessary, proportionate and properly governed.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The work to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation will be undertaken within existing resource. Surveillance cameras are already part of agreed budgets for relevant service areas.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Council is required to have due regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice issued under sections 29 to 31 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 when exercising relevant functions involving overt surveillance camera systems. The Council's own Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice should therefore remain aligned with the statutory Code and relevant national guidance, including guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 5.2 The operation of CCTV and other surveillance systems must also comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010. In practice this requires the Council to ensure that surveillance is lawful, necessary, proportionate and justified by a legitimate aim; that appropriate privacy information is provided; that Data Protection Impact Assessments are completed and reviewed where required; that images and recordings are retained only for as long as necessary; and that access, disclosure and sharing arrangements, including disclosures to the police, are properly controlled and recorded.
- 5.3 Any covert surveillance activity must only be undertaken where it is lawful to do so and where the necessary authorisations under RIPA have been obtained. The annual audit process, policy review and proposed amendments to the Council's Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice support compliance with these legal requirements and reduce the risk of unlawful surveillance, data protection breaches or interference with individuals' rights.
- 5.4 Subject to continued implementation of the governance arrangements described in this report, the legal risks associated with the recommendations are considered to be manageable.

6 Local Government Reorganisation Implications

- 6.1 Local Government Reorganisation may have implications for the future delivery, governance and commissioning of the Council's CCTV and wider surveillance functions. At this stage, the final structure, timing and operating model for any successor authority arrangements are not yet confirmed.

- 6.2 Potential implications may include the transfer or integration of CCTV assets, systems, contracts, policies, data protection responsibilities, staffing arrangements and operational control room functions.
- 6.3 It will therefore be important that CCTV and surveillance governance is considered as part of wider transition planning, particularly to ensure continuity of service, lawful processing of personal data, clear accountability for system ownership, and compliance with the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, UK data protection legislation, RIPA, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Council's approved Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice

7 Equality Implications

- 7.1 The Council must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when operating, reviewing or approving surveillance systems. This includes considering the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.2 The operation of CCTV and other surveillance systems has the potential to affect individuals and communities differently, including people with protected characteristics. Relevant considerations include whether cameras are necessary and proportionate, whether locations and fields of view are justified by evidence of need, whether signage and privacy information are clear and accessible, and whether monitoring, retention and disclosure arrangements are applied consistently and lawfully.
- 7.3 No adverse equality impacts have been identified as arising directly from the recommendations in this report, which relate to noting ongoing governance work and approving amendments to strengthen the Council's Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice. The strengthened policy requirements around necessity, proportionality, transparency, accountability, retention, access controls and review should assist in mitigating equality risks by ensuring that surveillance systems are operated for legitimate purposes and subject to appropriate oversight.
- 7.4 Equality considerations will continue to be addressed through the Council's approval process for any new surveillance systems, the annual audit process, the review of Data Protection Impact Assessments and, where appropriate, completion or review of Equality Impact Assessments. This will help ensure that any potential differential impacts are identified,

assessed and mitigated at the earliest opportunity and that the Council can demonstrate compliance with its equality duties.

8 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

8.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

9 Appendices

9.1 **Appendix A** - Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice 2026

10 Background Papers

10.1 None

11 Reasons for Recommendations

11.1 To update members in line with the Councils Surveillance Systems Policy and Code of Practice and to ensure the governance arrangements around surveillance cameras are lawful and to ensure transparency in the use of such cameras.