



**SURVEILLANCE CAMERA  
COMMISSIONER**

# **A National Surveillance Camera Strategy for England and Wales**

## **Executive Summary**

**March 2017**



1. The Government is fully supportive of the use of overt surveillance cameras in a public place whenever that use is: in pursuit of a legitimate aim; necessary to meet a pressing need; proportionate; effective, and compliant with any relevant legal obligations.
2. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner is appointed by the Home Secretary as set out in the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA). It is the Commissioner's role to ensure surveillance camera systems in public places keep people safe and protect and support them. The Commissioner's remit applies to England and Wales, as does the Government's Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (SC Code).
3. The surveillance camera sector includes CCTV, body worn video, automatic number plate recognition, vehicle borne cameras and unmanned aerial vehicles. Indicative estimates are available of the number of CCTV cameras yet these only cover part of surveillance camera coverage and capability.
4. Work on a strategy was agreed by the Commissioner's Advisory Council in January 2016. The Advisory Council agreed to support work to draw together a comprehensive national surveillance camera strategy that seeks to develop a holistic approach to raising standards and compliance with legal obligations in line with the 12 guiding principles of the SC Code. Partnership working is at the heart of the strategy.
5. A draft strategy document was published in October 2016 and was followed by an intensive 6 week period of consultation. Where appropriate the views received during the consultation period have been fed back into the strategy, accompanying delivery plans and to Government. A response to that consultation has been published alongside this revised strategy.
6. It is an ambitious strategy with long-term objectives which extend beyond 2020. Delivery plans have been developed for each objective for the first three-year period (2017 – 2020) and we will progress in the full knowledge that technological change is moving rapidly, so the world is changing around us. We want to develop a stronger evidence base before 2020 to inform further strategic planning to maintain momentum. The strategy is a 'living document' and as such will be kept under review and amended as legislation, technology and best and good practice change as well as when practical experience is gained as the strategy is implemented.
7. The Commissioner's strategic vision is:

*The public are assured that any use of surveillance camera systems in a public place helps to protect and keep them safe, whilst respecting the individual's right to privacy. That assurance is based upon deployment which is proportionate to a legitimate purpose, and transparency which demonstrates compliance with best and good practice and relevant legal obligations.*

8. The Commissioner will deliver this strategic vision by:

*Providing direction and leadership in the surveillance camera community. Enabling system operators to understand and use best and good practice, and then demonstrate to the public compliance with the principles of the SC Code and any associated guidance or legislation.*

9. Therefore, the strategy links in with relevant legislation such as the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, Data Protection Act 1998, Private Security Industry Act 2001, Human Rights Act 1998, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and other associated guidance. It will also encourage

the industries that supply and service surveillance camera systems to follow and demonstrate good and best practices.

10. The strategy will reach out to all system operators and those with responsibility for processing the personal data cameras capture with regard to their obligations as data controllers. This will include relevant authorities under a statutory duty to have regard to the SC Code, and those who are free to adopt the SC Code on a voluntary basis.
11. The strategy has been divided into the following work strands each led by sector expert who have developed plans for each strand to deliver the strategic vision:
  - Standards and Certification
  - Horizon Scanning
  - Civil Engagement
  - Police
  - Local Authorities
  - Voluntary Adopters
  - Critical National Infrastructure
  - Installers, Designers and Manufacturers
  - Training
  - Regulation
12. Objectives have been developed for each strand with a supporting delivery plan, setting out specific actions and outputs which contribute towards achieving the strategic mission. Delivery plans have been published alongside this strategy.
13. The Commissioner owns the strategy and is accountable to Parliament and the public through the submission of an Annual Report which is laid in both Houses.

