

Broads Authority

29 November 2024

Agenda item number 14

Principle and Effectiveness of Body Worn Cameras

Report by Director of Operations

Purpose

This report reviews the outcomes from the body worn camera trial, conducted over the summer of 2024, and proposes that they should not be rolled out to front line staff carrying out byelaw enforcement.

Broads Plan context

C4 - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

Recommended decision

In the light of the findings from the consultation and the trial the Authority resolves not to roll out body worn cameras to front-line staff carrying out byelaw enforcement.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following advice from the Health and Safety Committee, who observed a rising trend in the reports of violence and aggression against Broads Authority staff, a trial of Body Worn Cameras (BWC) was held during July and August 2024.
- 1.2. The BWC trial was held during the busiest period on the Broads waterways and five cameras were provided, free of charge, along with access to camera software, to allow downloading and management of the captured data, supplied from Reveal Media Ltd.
- 1.3. The cameras were used by the Ranger Service (swapped between the teams) and by the Norwich Yacht Station Quay Ranger. The BWC's were clearly displayed for the duration of the staff working day.
- 1.4. The cameras tested were supplied by Reveal Media Ltd, the largest supplier of body worn devices who supply the Police Service, Armed Forces and other organisations like the Environment Agency and Parking Enforcement Companies. The D-Series camera has a 14-hour battery life, is rugged, with one-touch recording and a wide-angle camera capable of recording in low light and with audio.

2. Process

- 2.1. Prior to any recording devices being deployed, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was carried out as per guidance from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) by the Authority.
- 2.2. Processing of highly sensitive personal data is only lawful in two cases:
 1. There is consent by the data subject for law enforcement purposes and at the time the data processing carried out by the competent authority has an appropriate policy in place.
 2. The processing is strictly necessary for law enforcement purposes and meets at least one of the conditions in Schedule 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 2.3 The Broads Authority has a lawful basis concerning its law enforcement role in enforcing the byelaws, consistent with point 2 above, including meeting at least one criterion under schedule 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018, for the lawful processing of sensitive data, namely “1 (a) is necessary for the exercise of a function conferred on a person by an enactment or rule of law...”.
- 2.4 In addition to the DPIA, a Body Worn Camera Policy was developed, a FAQ and we undertook a public consultation¹ period, which ran from July to the end of September 2024, to comply with best practice.
- 2.5 We also developed an evaluation criteria format which captured responses to key questions:
 - Did the visibility of the BWC affect the situation?
 - Describe the reason for image capture?
 - Did the D3 BWC influence the person(s) behaviour?
 - Did the BWC give you added confidence to deal with the situation?
 - Having used a BWC would you want it to be a permanent piece of safety equipment?
 - Did wearing the BWC, when NOT recording generate comments from the public?

3. Feedback

- 3.1. The cameras were used across the northern and southern Ranger areas, and seventeen Rangers were able to wear the cameras whilst on duty. One camera was provided to Norwich Yacht Station Quay Ranger.

¹ The Public Consultation received five responses, all five were supportive of the Authority’s trial and no objections were received.

- **Did the visibility of the BWC affect the situation**

Only one response was received, explaining that the BWC did influence the situation. This was to inflame the tension of the situation and led to the person not wishing to speak to the Ranger. The other responses all stated that members of the public seemed to notice but were not concerned by the staff wearing a body worn camera.

- **Describe the reason for image capture**

BWC were activated on three occasions, to capture a speeding vessel, whilst interacting with habitual overstayers and to capture an obstruction to navigation. A BWC was also used to record an interview under caution.

During the trial period none of the cameras were deployed with Rangers who encountered a violent or abusive situation.

- **Did the D3 BWC influence the person(s) behaviour**

Of the seventeen Rangers' returns, only one response stated that the BWC influenced the persons behaviour and their response to the camera was negative and it inflamed the situation. Sixteen responses stated that the BWC had no impact on their interactions.

- **Did the BWC give you added confidence to deal with the situation**

Three responses stated that having a BWC did give them added confidence, mainly that it would remove any disagreements in the interaction as the real event could be recorded, especially over who said what. But most responses said that the BWC did not affect how they felt whilst dealing with enforcement issues.

- **Having used a BWC would you want it to be a permanent piece of safety equipment**

Although the Senior Ranger Team could see the wider benefits of the BWC, especially when conducting interviews under caution, the overwhelming response from the Ranger service was that a BWC was not needed.

- **Did wearing the BWC, when NOT recording generate comments from the public**

Before the BWC trial was instigated the public perception and how Rangers wearing kit normally seen on Police Service personnel, was a concern. National Parks are not generally associated with overt surveillance equipment. But the response from Rangers was that the public, although curious were not worried or concerned by staff wearing cameras. A few commented upon the costs and where the money was coming from, a few comments were noted stating surprised at the need for BWC trial, but overall, the BWC went unnoticed and uncommented upon

4. Costs

- 4.1. The Cameras are costed in a similar way to mobile phone contracts, whereby you pay a regular fee, dependent on the camera specification and any extras (constant live recording, night vision, style and type of camera mounting etc). Also, economy of scales applies, whereby the more cameras you order, the more extras you specify, the better the price.
- 4.2. Basing our requirements on personally allocated cameras for all front-line enforcement staff (Rangers and Planning Enforcement, lawful under the Authority's purposes), on a basic D3 and the DEMS360 software to download, store, share and redact data, the BWC would be circa £575 each, (for 25 cameras = £14,475.00 per annum, after three years the cameras become the Authority, but contract and replacement fees would remain).

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Abusive and threatening behaviour against the Broads Authority Staff is not tolerated, but unfortunately this behaviour does occur especially when staff are performing an enforcement role.
- 5.2. Our current mitigations include specific training in dealing with violent and confrontational behaviours, staff can utilise a call back system managed by Broads Control, we maintain a log of sites where additional caution may be needed based on intelligence, we link in with BroadsBeat and attend regular meetings with partnering agencies to share information. Lastly, staff are fully supported if they need to 'walk away.'
- 5.3. The conclusion of the BWC Trial is that this technology would be a '*nice to have*', especially in relation to interviews under caution and when dealing with violent and abusive behaviours, but the Authority's enforcement staff are trained to use techniques that aim to resolve conflict in an amicable way, and the experience of the staff trialling the cameras did not feel the camera technology assisted this process.
- 5.4. The Navigation Committee, at its meeting on 7 November 2024, was consulted on the findings from the trial and supported the officer view that the Broads Authority should not roll out body worn cameras to all front-line staff carrying out byelaw enforcement.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C4.