

PRESS RELEASE

30 July 2014



Commissioner says increasing use of new technology will make Bedfordshire Police more efficient

Bedfordshire Police's rapidly growing array of new technology to increase efficiency took a big step forward this week, thanks to additional funding which will boost the number of Body Worn Video cameras in use across the force.

Police and Crime Commissioner Olly Martins revealed today that a bid for body worn video (BWV) funding has been approved by the Home Office Police Innovation Fund.

Bedfordshire Police, which has been trialling the technology since June 2013, announced in May this year that it had completed the roll-out of 60 body worn video cameras for use by frontline police officers across the county. This latest funding injection will enable 1179 more units to be purchased for use in Bedfordshire and across the joint units organised with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, together with supporting infrastructure. The data captured will be fully networked but secure and auditable, accessed by authorised stakeholders alone in a way that negates the use of potentially uncontrolled media, such as DVDs or memory sticks.

The cameras offer numerous benefits, not least in helping to solve crime - in Bedfordshire earlier this month, a man who had given the police false details was identified from the video footage, enabling appropriate action to be taken. However, they also deter disruptive behaviour, provide confirmation of events and provide incontrovertible evidence.

A recent evaluation of the use of body worn video in Hampshire suggests it has not only cut crime but also reduced the number of complaints against officers, while in Wolverhampton reports show that in one month alone the number of complaints was cut by around 83%.

Welcoming the funding, Olly Martins said: "The cameras are proving popular with the public and police officers alike – the only people not too keen are the criminals being brought to justice due to the evidence provided. Local officers have told me that they are making a real difference in helping to secure prosecutions and defuse difficult situations.

"We have previously highlighted that in order to meet the Government's savings targets and enhance the service the public receive we need to invest in new technology and take advantage of the benefits it has to offer and these body worn videos actually represent just one strand of our plans.

"Over the coming months we will see several new or upgraded systems introduced which I believe will help to radically change the way local policing is delivered. These will enable officers and PCSOs to stay out of the station and on the street for much longer, doing their paperwork on the move from new mobile devices helped by improved connectivity for timely submissions."

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He continued: "Earlier this month, the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's Valuing the Police 4 Report acknowledged the significant progress being made by Bedfordshire Police but took the view that improvement was required. This wasn't news to Chief Constable Paul or myself and we are already well on the way to increasing the use of latest technology to do just that.

The successful bid for BWV was put forward jointly by Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire as part of the tri-force partnership programme. Other forces have also been successful in their bids for BWV and a collaborative approach to the purchase of the new equipment across these forces will ensure value for money and consistency.

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