



Policy Document

Thermal Imaging Camera Use Policy for Public Use

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no: F680

Review Date: 24.11.2027 – 2 years

1 Purpose

1.1 This policy sets out the conditions under which members of the public may access or use thermal imaging cameras provided by Witney Town Council, ensuring their use is safe, lawful, respectful of privacy, and compliant with UK legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and Human Rights Act 1998.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- Any member of the public, community group, business or organisation using thermal imaging equipment owned or operated by Witney Town Council.
- Any use of thermal imaging cameras on premises or land managed by Witney Town Council.

3 Definitions

3.1 Thermal Imaging Camera: A device that detects infrared radiation (heat) to create an image, often used for safety, wildlife observation, or inspection.

3.2 User: Any individual using the equipment under this policy.

4 Permitted Uses

4.1 Users may only use the thermal imaging camera for the following purposes:

- Thermal efficiency checks (e.g., heat loss in buildings) with property owner's permission.
- Wildlife observation (where permitted by landowner and with no disturbance to wildlife).
- Educational activities supervised or endorsed by the organisation.
- Personal interest or hobby use (non-commercial, non-invasive).

5 Prohibited Uses

5.1 Users must not use thermal imaging cameras for:

- Surveillance or monitoring of individuals without their knowledge or consent.
- Peering into private dwellings, vehicles, or private property.
- Commercial purposes (e.g., paid inspections) without prior written approval.
- Harassment, stalking, or intimidation.
- Law enforcement or investigative purposes (unless officially authorised).

6 Data Protection & Privacy

6.1 Thermal imaging can potentially capture identifying information or patterns of activity. Therefore:

- Users must not record or store images that could identify individuals without explicit consent.
- All use must comply with UK data protection principles.
- Users must delete any accidentally captured images that include people or private property.
- Any recordings intended for publication (e.g., social media or research) must be approved by Witney Town Council.

7 Eligibility

7.1 The thermal imaging camera is available for use by residents and businesses who fall within the geographical confines of Witney Town Parish Boundary. The Town boundary is defined by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Only residents and businesses who fall within the Town Boundary are eligible to take part in the scheme for free. If you are unsure if you meet this criterion, you can use the link below to see a map of the Town Parish Boundary: <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/electoral-wards/>

7.2 Proof of eligibility e.g. proof of residential or business address along with a form of ID e.g. driving licence or passport will be required at the time of collection of the thermal imaging camera.

8 Equipment Use & Responsibility

- Users must read the user guide before use.
- Users are responsible for the safe handling, return, and care of the equipment.
- Any damage, loss, or malfunction must be reported immediately to Witney Town Council.
- Equipment must be returned by the agreed time/date.

9 Loss or Damage – Recovery of Costs

- 9.1 Users will be held financially responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to the thermal imaging camera or its accessories while in their possession.
- 9.2 Witney Town Council reserves the right to recover the full replacement or repair cost from the user.
- 9.3 A deposit or security hold may be required prior to equipment loan.
- 9.4 Failure to pay for damages may result in further action, including legal recovery processes.

10 Health & Safety

- 10.1 Thermal cameras must not be used while driving or operating machinery.
- 10.2 Use of the thermal camera in potentially hazardous environments must be risk-assessed beforehand.
- 10.3 Users must not open or tamper with internal components of the thermal camera.

11 Legal Compliance

11.1 This policy supports compliance with:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (if applicable)

Misuse of the equipment may be reported to the Police or relevant authority.

12 Liability and Indemnity

- 12.1 By accepting the equipment, the user agrees to indemnify Witney Town Council against any legal claims, damages, or costs arising from unlawful or improper use.
- 12.2 Witney Town Council accepts no responsibility for the user's interpretation of thermal images or decisions made based on the thermal imaging cameras data.

13 Enforcement and Sanctions

13.1 Breach of this policy may result in:

- Immediate withdrawal of camera access.
- Banning the user, community group, business or organisation from future use.

- Possible legal action or referral to law enforcement.
- Recovery of costs for damage or loss.

14 Loan Period

14.3 The period of the Loan shall commence and cease on the dates specified in the User Agreement Form.

14.4 The user will be responsible for the equipment from the date of collection until it is returned to Witney Town Council, Town Hall, 51 Market Square, Witney, Oxon, OX28 6AG.

14.5 The collection and return of the camera will be during office hours.

15 Return of Equipment

15.3 The equipment shall be returned to Witney Town Council on the date specified in the User Agreement Form. The original equipment must be returned.

16 Failure to Return

16.1 If the user does not return the equipment to Witney Town Council within 24 hours of the specified date in the User Agreement Form, the USER AGREEMENT SHALL CONSTITUTE A BINDING ORDER TO HIRE THE EQUIPMENT AT THE STIPULATED COST OF £25 for each full day that the equipment is not returned. The user shall accept and pay any invoices issued by Witney Town Council reflecting such hire without the necessity of further documentation being exchanged between the parties.

17 Acknowledgement

17.1 All users must sign a User Agreement Form confirming:

- They understand and agree to follow this policy.
- They will use the equipment responsibly and lawfully.

18 Policy Review

18.1 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation.

19 Contact

19.1 For enquiries or reporting misuse, contact:

Witney Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Witney, Oxon, OX28 6AG

Phone: 01993 704379

Email: info@witney-tc.gov.uk