

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Wantage and Abingdon

1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras in Wantage and Abingdon contribute towards deterring crime, reducing the fear of crime, increasing crime detection and protecting vulnerable people in the district.

The report is produced using information provided by the CCTV monitoring suite based in Abingdon. It is based on information drawn from the record of occurrences. A record of occurrence is reported each time a CCTV camera is used proactively to monitor a specific incident.

We aim to provide this report on a half yearly basis to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses. We have 23 cameras operational in Abingdon and six in Wantage.

DATA SUMMARY

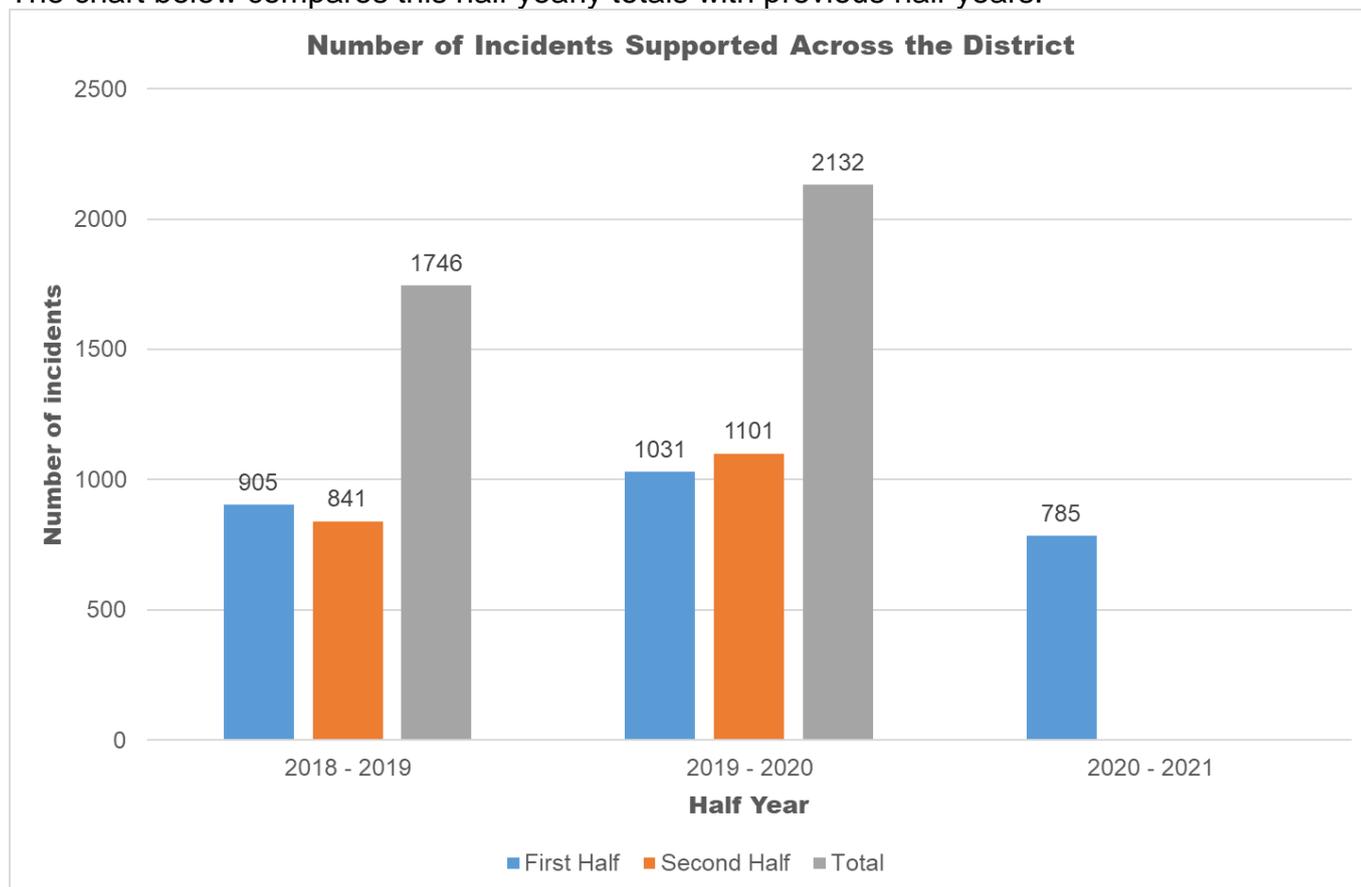
Across the Vale, CCTV operators supported 785 incidents during the first half of 2020-21.

The operators also produced 52 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 27 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 96 arrests.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the first half of 2020-21 where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Fear for Welfare (83)	Assault (25)
Missing Persons (59)	Fear for Welfare (24)
Shoplifting (56)	Fighting/Affray (20)

The chart below compares this half yearly totals with previous half years:



For further breakdown please see table below:

	2018 - 2019			2019 - 2020			2020-2021		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	741	735	1476	873	908	1781	662		
Wantage	164	106	270	158	193	351	123		
Total	905	841	1746	1031	1101	2132	785		

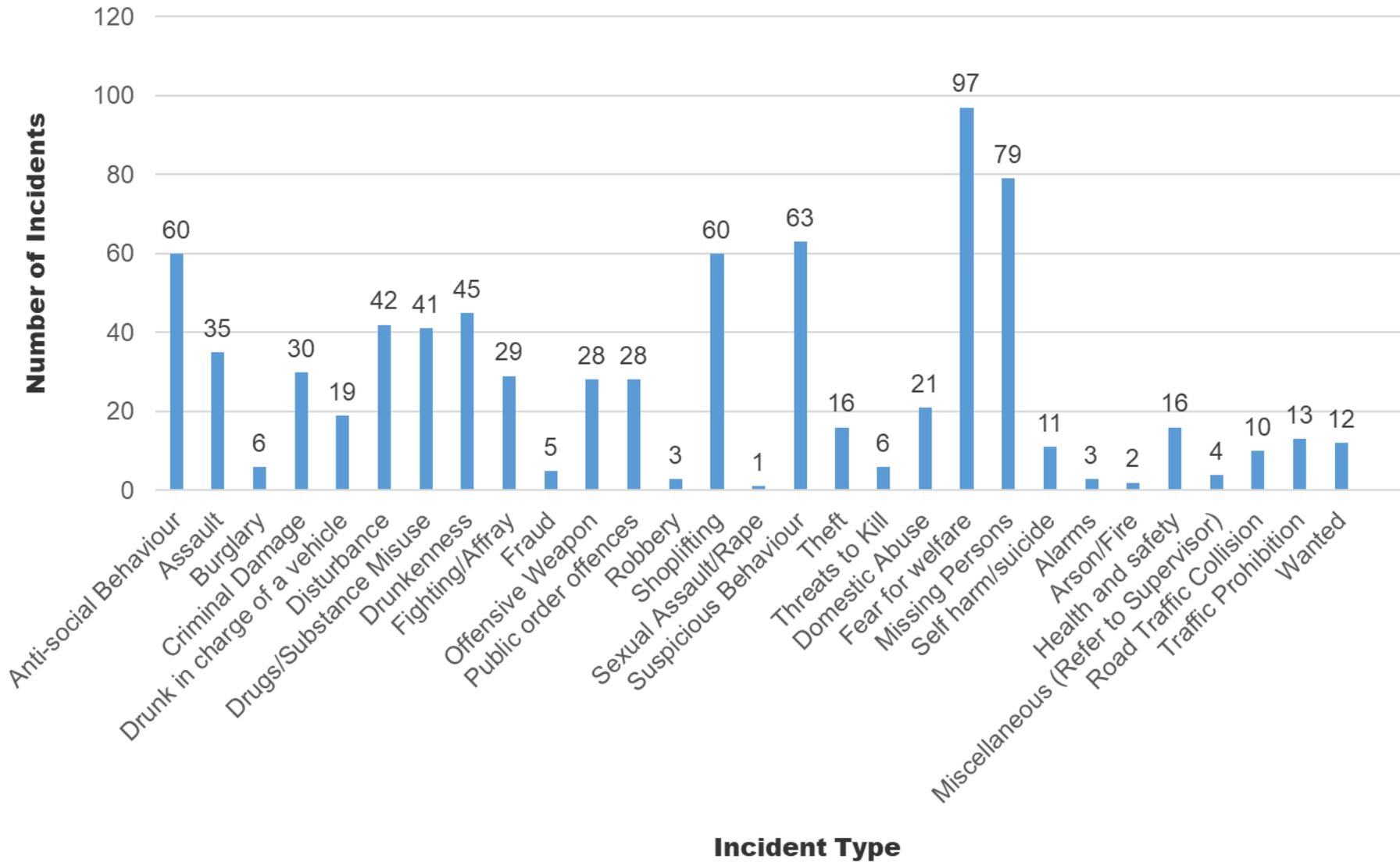
Demands on the CCTV service changed during the first half of 2020-21 as a result of the government restrictions introduced to help tackle Covid-19. The chart below compares the number of incidents monitored between April and June with the same period in 2019-2020. The figures in brackets compare the same totals for the month of April alone. During lock-down there was some variety in the type of incident monitored by our operators; the need to monitor incidents relating to shoplifting and the night-time economy reduced as many shops and bars were closed but 'Missing Persons' and 'Fear for Welfare' were prevalent.

	April to June 2020-21 (April)	April to June 2019-20 (April)
Abingdon	282 (71)	420 (129)
Wantage	71 (23)	63 (21)

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incident the CCTV Operators monitored from 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 across both towns.

Incidents by Type - 1 April 2020 - 30 September 2020

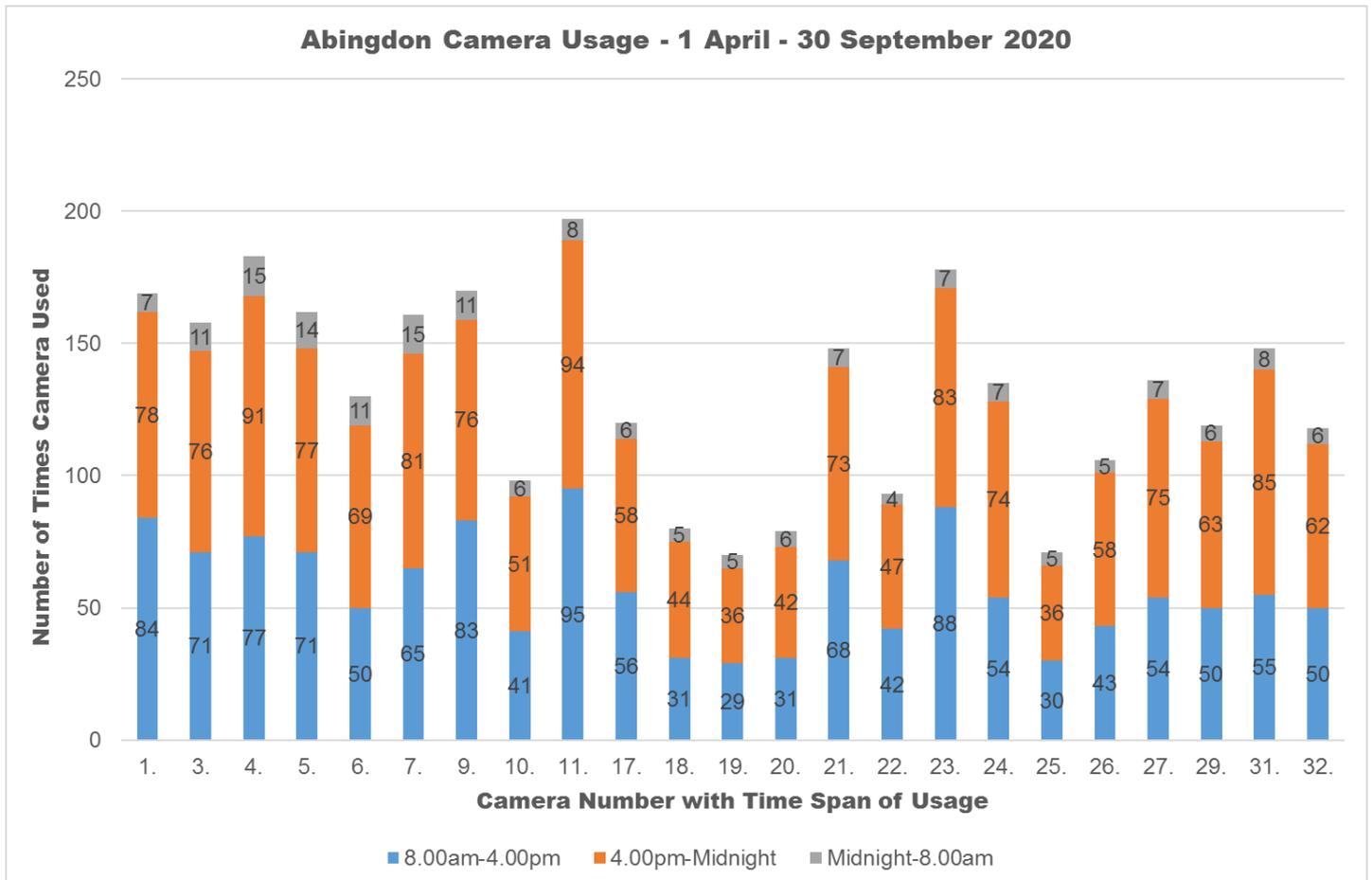


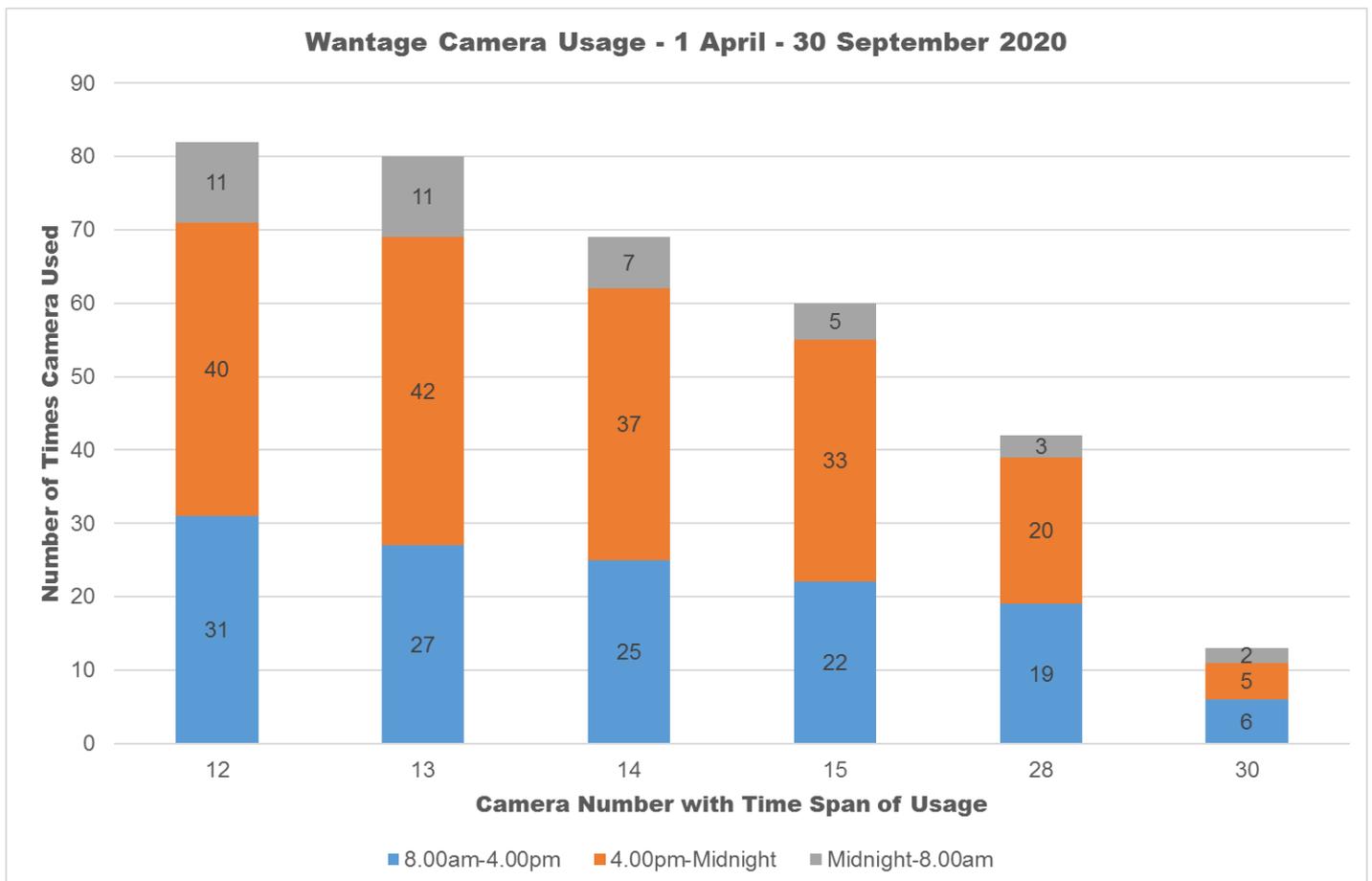
CAMERA USAGE

The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras are deployed in recorded, monitored events.

The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24 hour period.

It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am., the vast majority of camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.





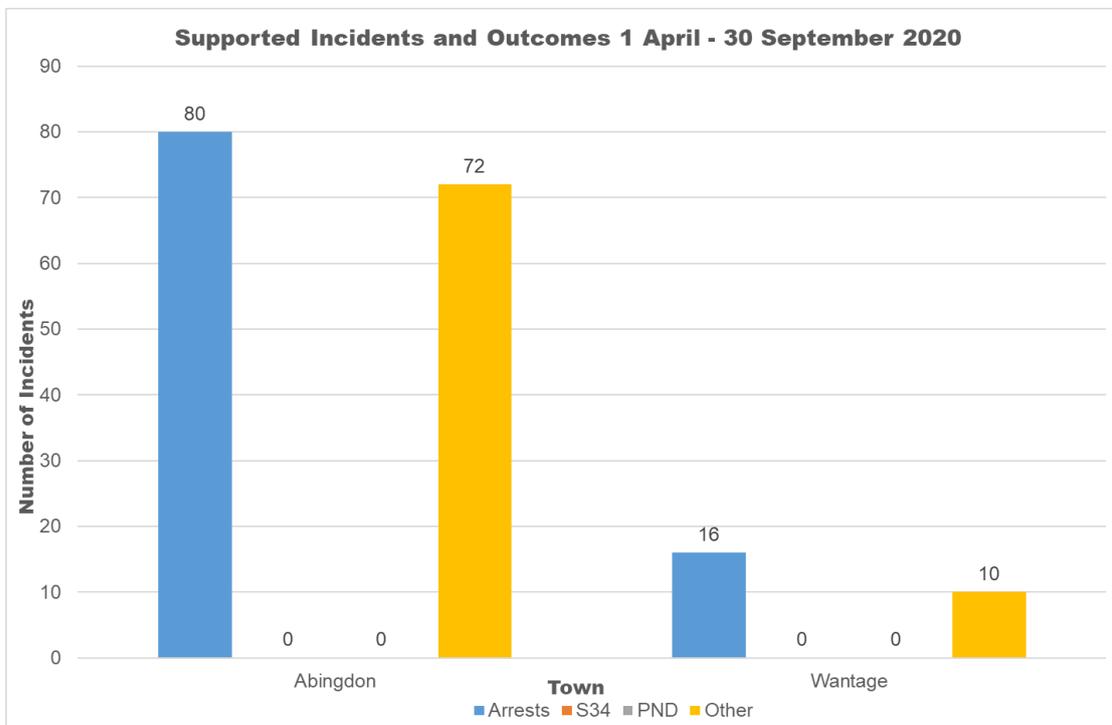
Cameras 12 and 13 are situated at either end of The Market Place and as such have an active role in monitoring activity during the day and the night-time economy.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart on page six shows the outcomes the CCTV operators supported while involved in monitoring an incident. The police use their discretion on how an incident is resolved based on experience, the gravity of the offence, the resources that are available to them at that time and so on. Whilst we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34 or a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND), we do know the cameras alert police to incidents they may not have known about. CCTV also gives the police the ability to assess and allocate resources and priorities in real time e.g. should the situation allow, leaving CCTV to monitor incidents or offenders while officers attend other incidents.

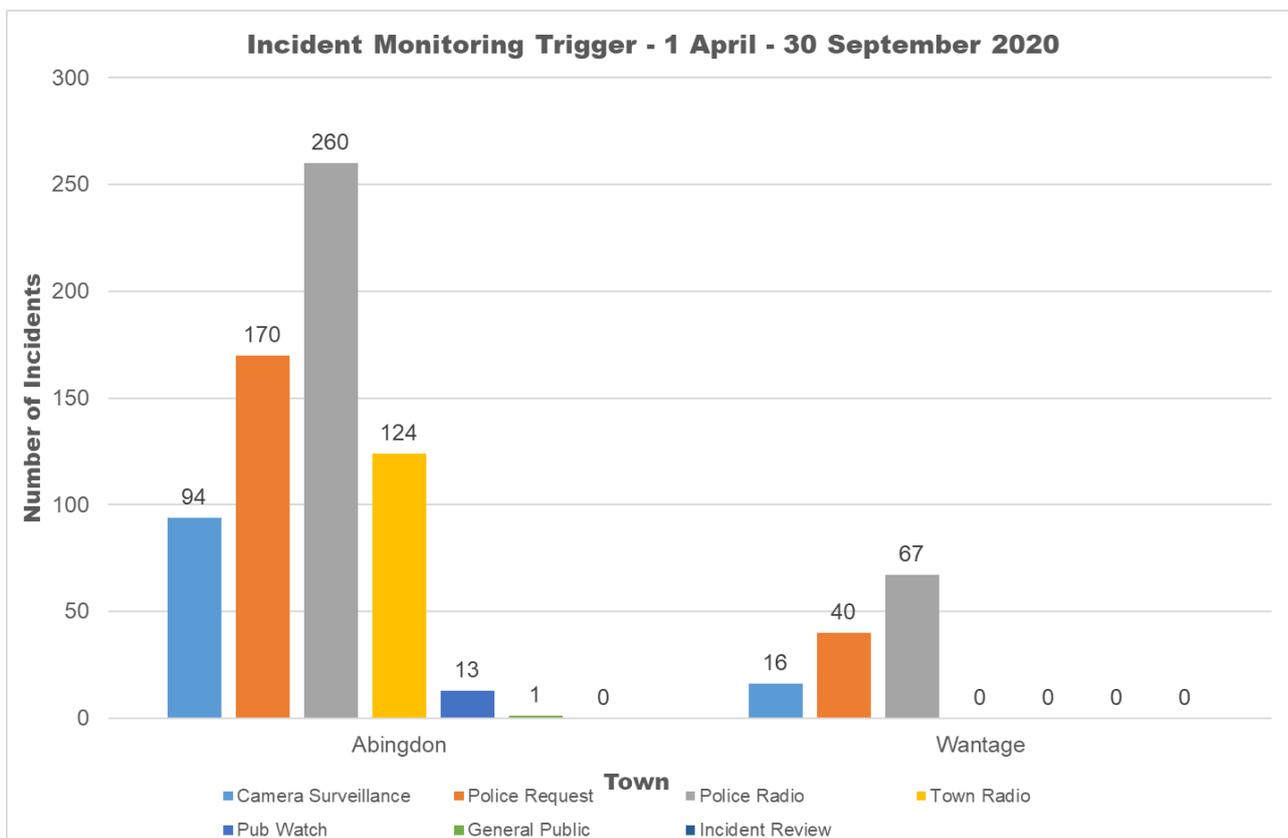
A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social behaviour disorder. A PND is an 'on the spot fine'.

Actions on the chart designated 'other' usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or admonition or a non-recordable sanction, for example; replace items in a bin that had been kicked over.



HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart below shows how many of the incidents monitored by CCTV were as a result of the following: a direct request from the police (police requests); the CCTV operator hearing about an incident on a police radio (police radio); request to review footage at the time of an incident (incident review); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance). Only Abingdon has a shop radio scheme.



REVIEWS AND EVIDENCE PACKS

When not tasked by police, the operators patrol all the cameras and focus on 'hotspot' areas. All cameras are recording 24 hours a day, seven days a week and are set in 'default' positions which are agreed with the police as the areas most likely to experience problems.

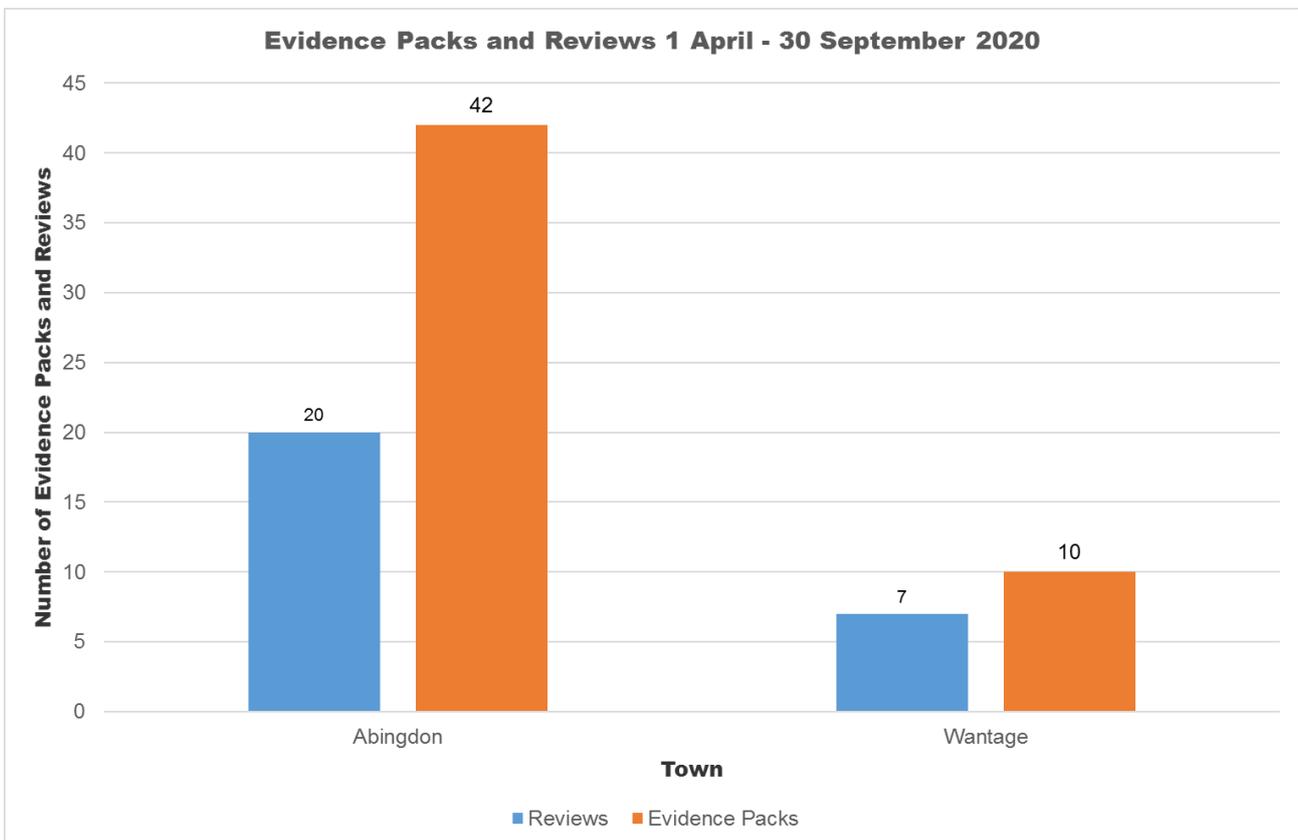
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which the complainant's car has been damaged. All such requests are actioned and replies given. Altogether we received seven such requests during this half of the year. We also received 12 requests from town and district council departments to review footage.

The chart on the next page shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews undertaken as a result of formal written requests.

Evidence reviews are checks through historical material. The evidence packs are the recordings and statements which the CCTV operators produce for police, solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced is termed 'a review'. This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent DVD copy for evidential use.

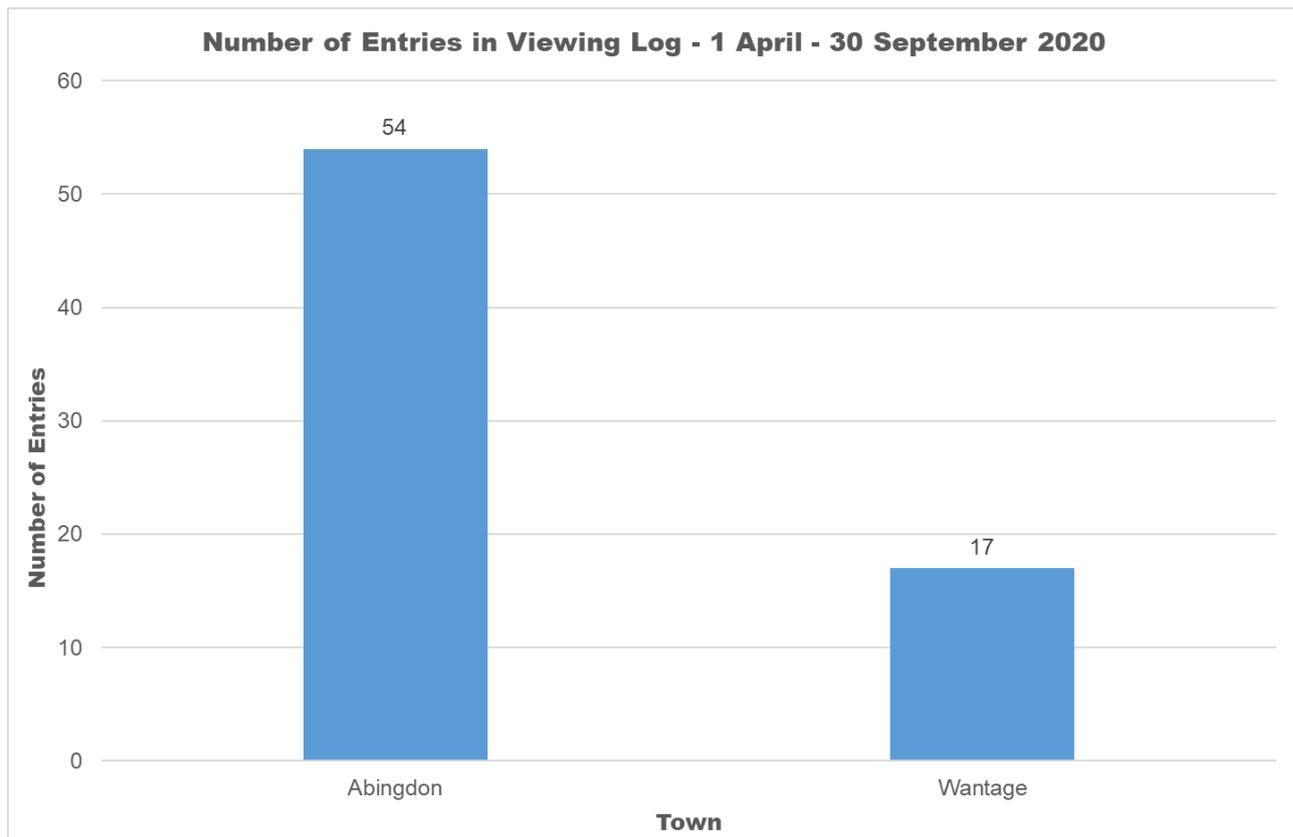
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

At present, we are unable to accommodate visitors in the control room due in the Covid-19 situation (with the exception of CCTV maintenance staff). Therefore, when police officers ask to view footage, these requests are carried out by our operators on their behalf. The following chart reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 April 2020 and 30 September 2020 across the two towns.

Please note that the viewing of footage may or may not be followed by a formal written request for footage.



CASE STUDIES

The following are examples of incidents dealt with by CCTV operators during the first half of 2020–21. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Abingdon

Across the police air waves, our operator heard of a man who had been seen to try and harm himself. From the location description given, our operator was able to locate the man walking alongside the river in a very agitated state. Guided by our operator, officers arrived at the location and attempted to talk to the man. Despite the man jumping into the river from a nearby boat, officers were able to retrieve him and he was treated by an ambulance crew before being taken to a place of safety.

A local supermarket contacted the control room via the shop-watch radio scheme. They had been alerted by one of their customers to a lady who was claiming to be a charity worker and was targeting elderly people for donations and their bank details. Having heard the radio transmission, the woman hurried away but was monitored by our operator as she appeared on a nearby camera. Our operator alerted a nearby Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who pursued the woman and stopped her. Our operator was also able to inform the PCSO that the woman had discarded a sheet of paper as she ran away. This was collected as evidence and the woman's details were taken and checked to assist the police with further inquiries.

The police control centre alerted our operator to a man who had been seen in the town centre; he was wanted for previous offences relating illegal drug usage and was alleged to be carrying a weapon. Although the details were sketchy, our operator was aware of the man from monitoring previous incidents and was able to locate him. Officers in the area were then guided by our operator's running commentary and the man was arrested.

Wantage

Our operator spotted a vehicle whose registration and description matched that of a vehicle wanted in connection with a previous offence and possibly containing a person listed as missing. The operator tracked the vehicle's movements and updated the police control centre. The car was stopped by police officers and the two occupants were subsequently arrested.

The police control centre relayed information to our CCTV control room about a robbery that had just taken place in the town centre; a man had threatened to assault somebody who was wheeling their bike along and then had stolen the bike. From the description given, our operator was able to review footage and locate the male. They updated police officers as they neared the location and the man was subsequently arrested.

A local pub had called the police to report an altercation involving three men who had been asked to leave and there was a concern for possible reprisals. The police control centre contacted our operator who was able to monitor the three men from the descriptions given. Once the men had left the town centre and moved out of camera view, the police control centre was informed.

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