

CCTV Half Yearly Report

1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023

Wantage and Abingdon

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 uses 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.

Due to staff changes and subsequent recruitment and vetting procedures, it is worth noting that for the majority of this period, the service was staffed by the equivalent of three full time equivalent (FTE) operators (rather than the normal four full time operators). Our high service standards were maintained but fewer operators meant that the control room could not be manned as often as normal and therefore fewer incidents were monitored/occurrences recorded. As an update, we have filled the remaining fourth operator post with the successful candidate currently going through the police vetting process.

DATA SUMMARY

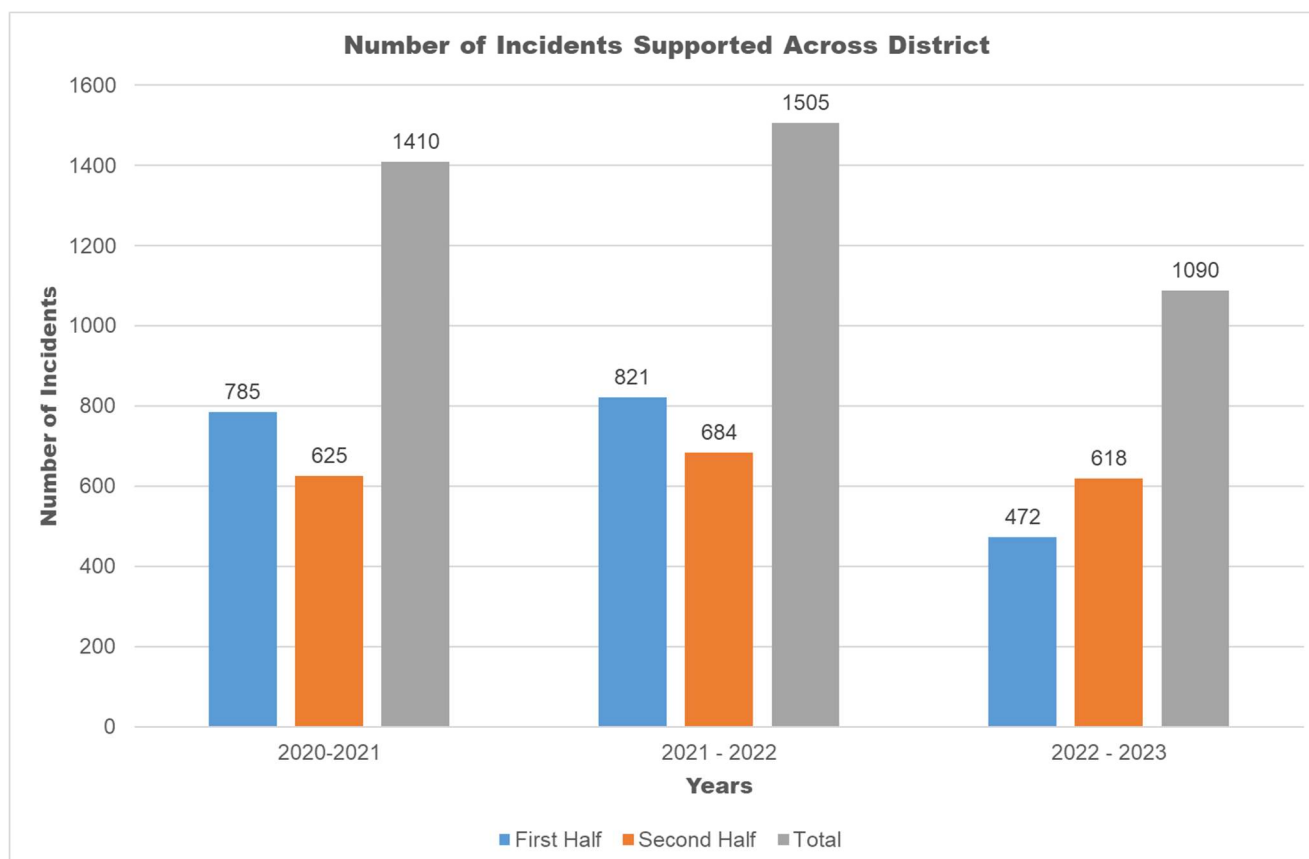
Across the Vale, CCTV operators supported 618 incidents during the second half of 2022-23.

The operators also produced 43 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 23 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 34 arrests.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the second half of 2022-23 where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Fear for welfare (46)	Suspicious behaviour (12)
Drunkenness (36)	Missing persons (11)
Anti-social behaviour (34)	Assault (8)

The chart below compares this half year's total with previous half years:



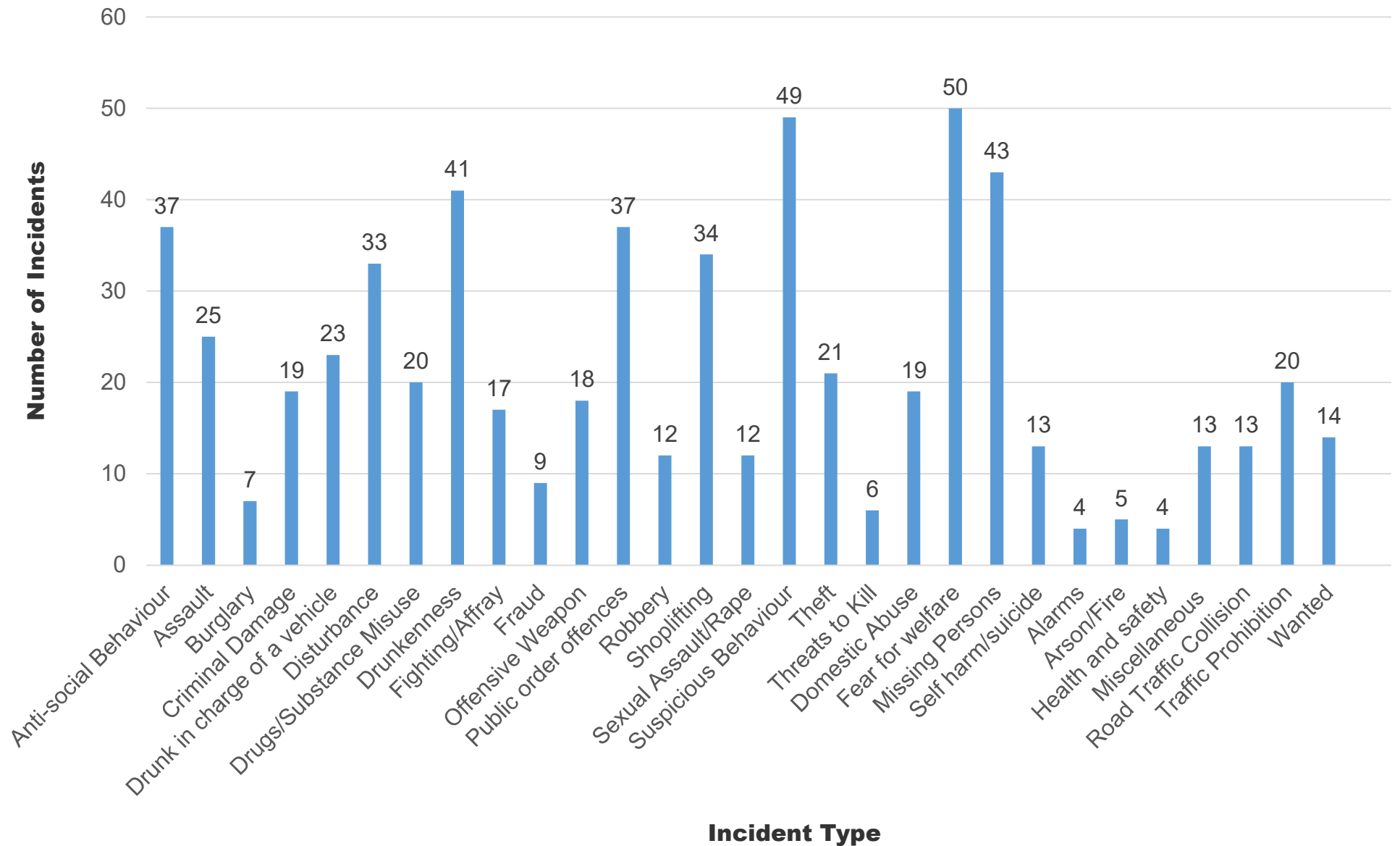
For further breakdown please see table below:

	2020-2021			2021 - 2022			2022-2023		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	662	542	1204	672	614	1286	374	521	895
Wantage	123	83	206	149	70	219	98	97	195
Total	785	625	1410	821	684	1505	472	618	1090

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incidents the CCTV Operators monitored from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 across both towns.

Incidents by Type - 1 October 2022 - 31 March 2023

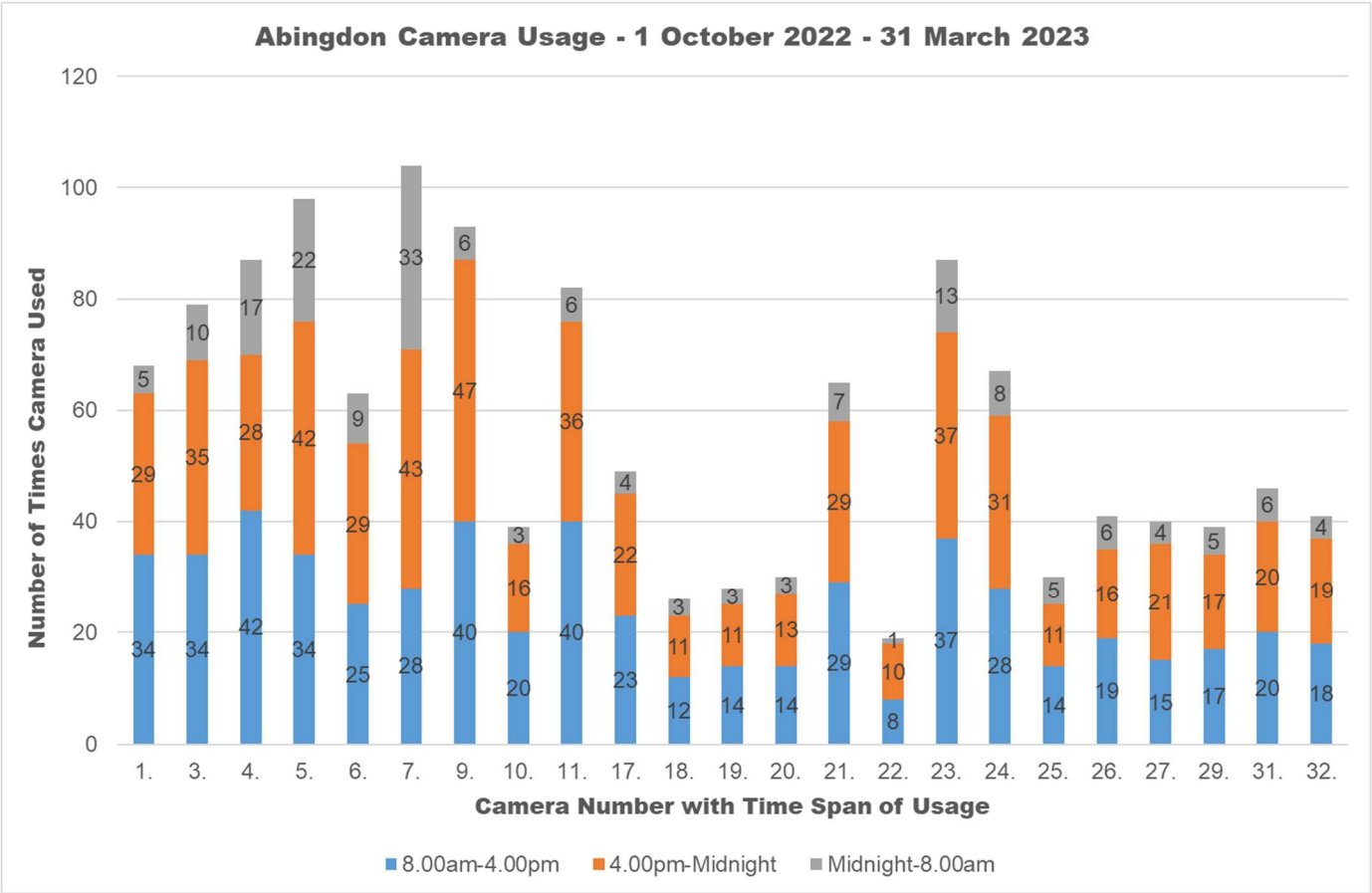


CAMERA USAGE

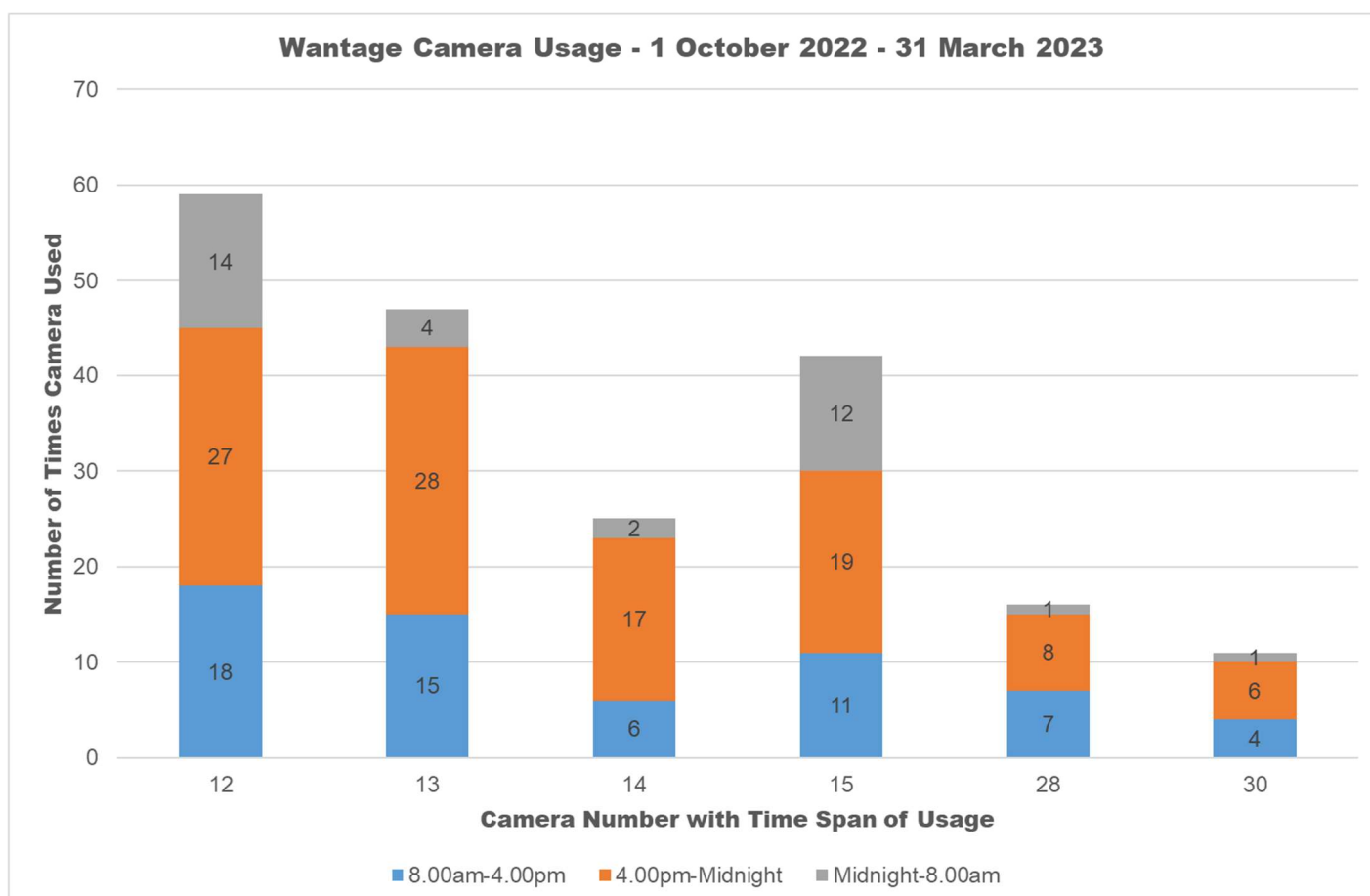
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras are deployed in recorded, monitored events.

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., most of the camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



Camera 7 is the primary camera for night-time economy and as a result, it saw the highest use across all cameras Camera 5 is also crucial in monitoring night-time economy and shows the second highest use. Camera 4 covers the High Street and saw the third highest use.



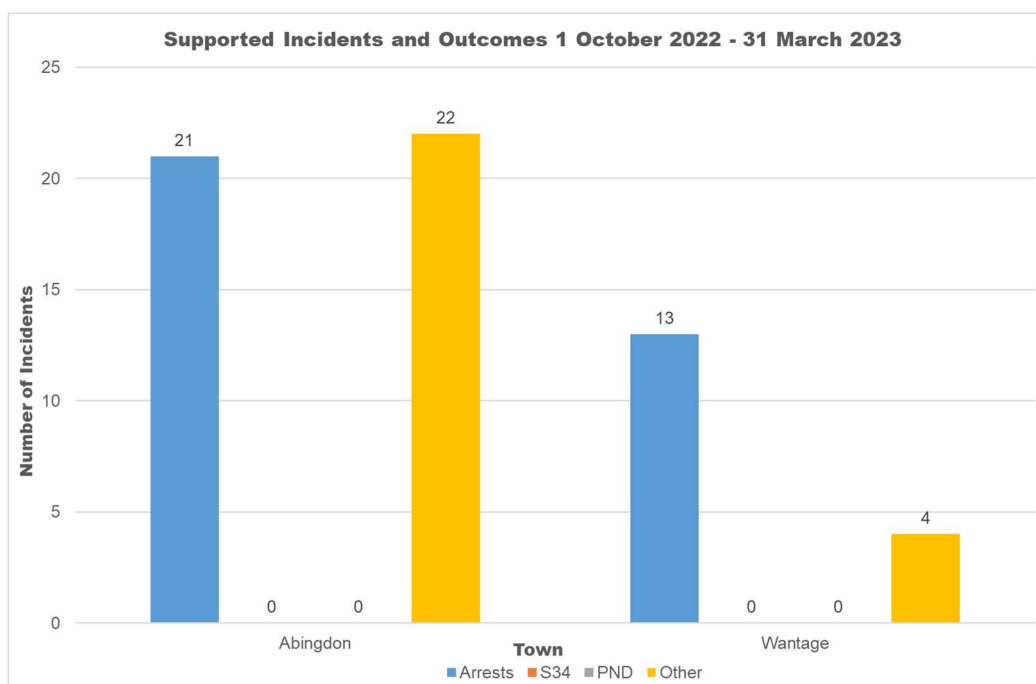
Camera 12 is used to cover the town centre and a major bus stop and saw the highest use. Camera 15 continues to see high usage monitoring the night-time economy.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart at the top of 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.

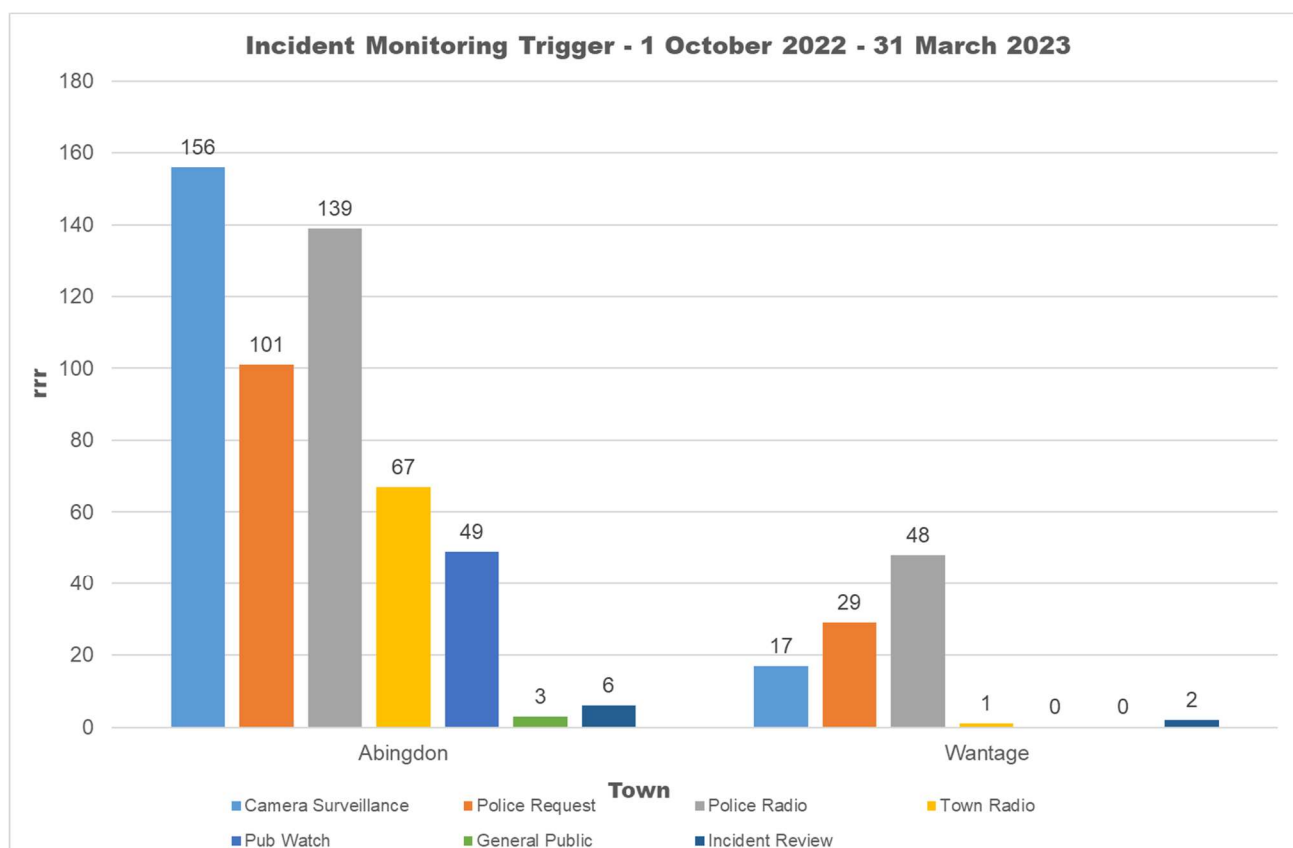
A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social behaviour disorder. A PND is an 'on the spot fine'.

Actions on the chart designated 'other' usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or admonition or a non-recordable sanction. Some of these included young people, responsible for anti-social behaviour, being made to tidy the area they were in before being returned to their parents and confiscating alcohol from underage drinkers.



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.

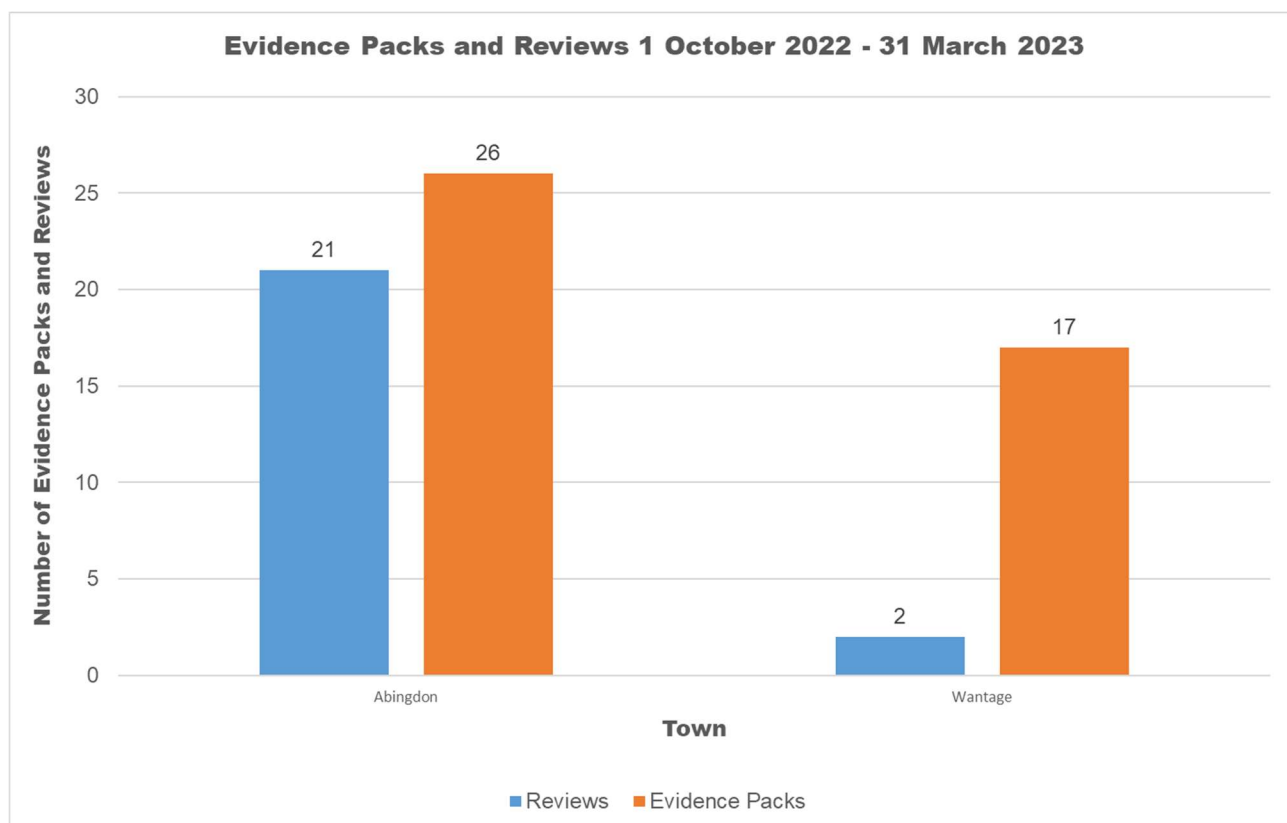
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which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

The chart below 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.

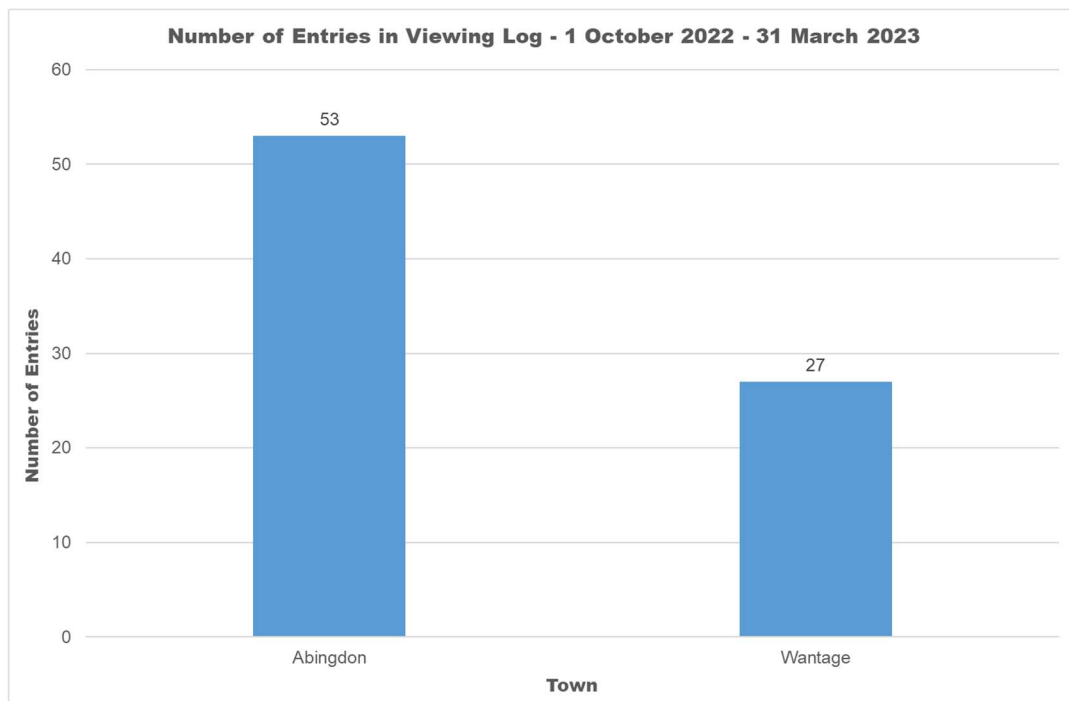
Activity that monitors past footage but does not result in an evidence pack being produced is termed 'a review'. This may be, for example, that the footage does not show an event clearly enough to warrant making a permanent copy for evidential use.

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

The following chart reflects the number of times that officers have attended the control room or made verbal requests to review footage between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023 across the two towns. This does not include formal requests received through email or the [Digital evidence management system](#).



CASE STUDIES

Abingdon

One afternoon, a report was made to police that a man had made threats to kill someone in the marketplace. Our operator recognised the description of the offender and was quickly able to locate them in the town. They communicated with police and tracked the man back to a property, where police then attended and made an arrest.

During routine monitoring, our operator noticed a vehicle parked suspiciously in town. They saw a man approach the vehicle and it appeared that some kind of drug dealing took place. The operator informed police and tracked the vehicle's movements, passing updates to officers. The vehicle was subsequently stopped, a quantity of drugs found, and one person was arrested.

Whilst monitoring the night-time economy, our operator noticed a man and woman arguing in the town centre. The man subsequently broke the window of a premises. Concerned for the welfare of the woman, the operator notified police and officers attended to take appropriate action and safeguard the individual.

Wantage

The police received a report that a man has been assaulted and a weapon has been used. Our operator was able to locate the aggrieved and then track back on the camera to establish when and where the assault occurred. They were able to locate an offender and ascertain clear images of the weapon used as well as a vehicle registration. This information was passed to police and an arrest was made.

Observations were put out over the police radio for a high-risk missing person in the Wantage area. Our operator conducted a review of the cameras in the town centre and ascertained their last known movements. Using this information, police were able to locate and safeguard the missing person.

While on shift, our operator heard a report on the police radio of a man, known to be involved in criminality, making off from officers. Using the description provided and the operator's knowledge of the town, they were able to locate the suspect and direct officers to him so further action could be taken.

Date of report: May 2023

Author: James Bell

Contact details: tel. 01865 309417, email james.bell@southandvale.gov.uk