

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Wantage and Abingdon

1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

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.

Reports are provided on a half yearly basis to each town council and other stakeholders to share information and help publicise the positive outcomes of CCTV to residents and businesses. We have 23 cameras in Abingdon and six in Wantage.

DATA SUMMARY

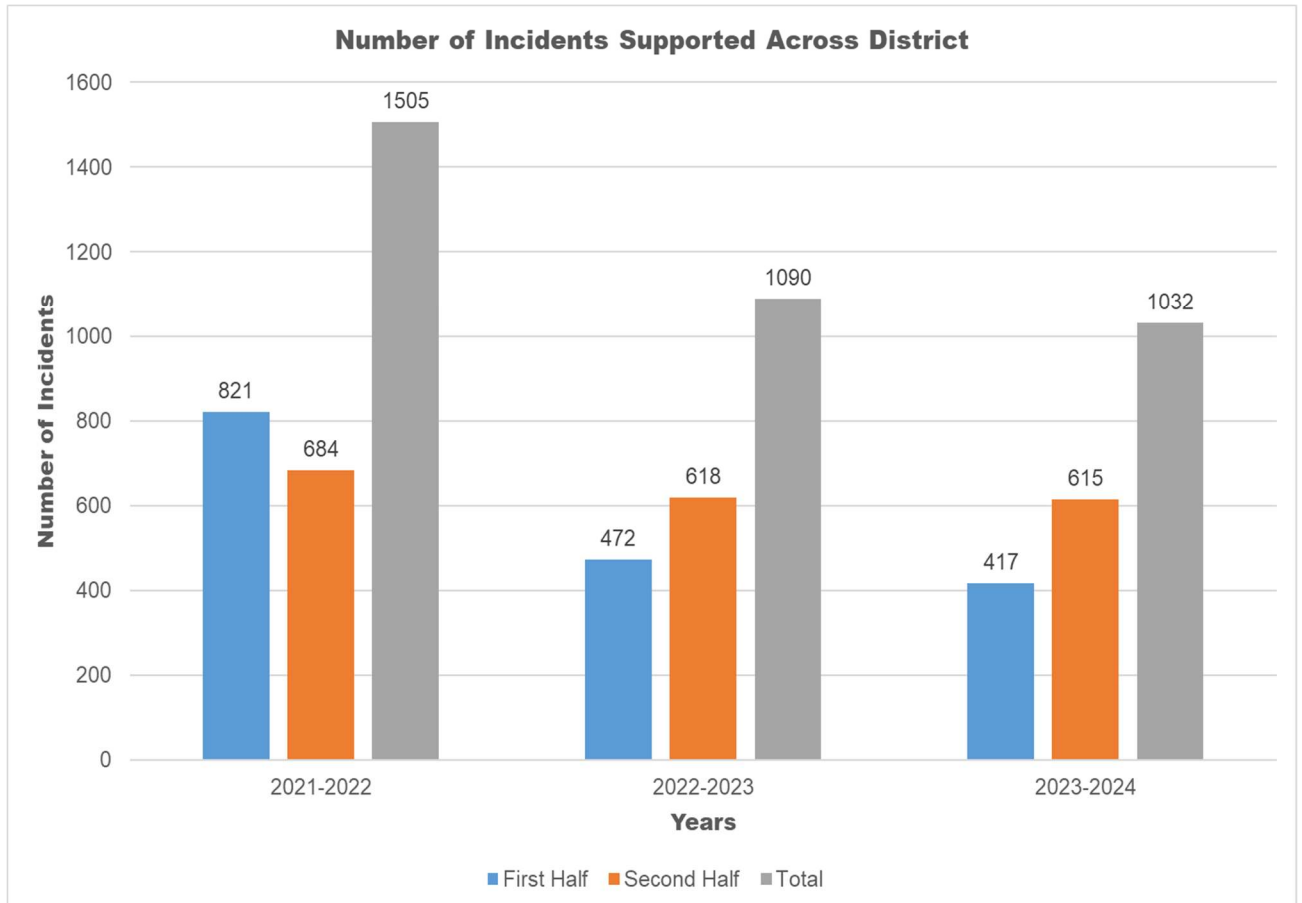
Across the Vale, CCTV operators **supported 615 incidents** during the second half of 2023-24, an **increase of 47%** when compared to the first half of 2023-24.

The operators also **produced 62 evidence packs** for court proceedings and **supported 50 arrests**.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the second half of 2023-24 where CCTV was involved at some stage:

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS	
Abingdon	Wantage
Fear for welfare (44)	Missing persons (29)
Antisocial behaviour (41)	Fear for welfare (17)
Vehicle related, including collisions (32)	Drunkenness (10)

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



As you can see from the graph, the number of monitored incidents is similar to the same period in the previous year. It is worth noting that the CCTV team has recently recruited a new team member, increasing operational capability. This is likely to result in an increase to the half yearly figures going forward, enabling our service to provide comprehensive support to the police and assist in protecting the wider public.

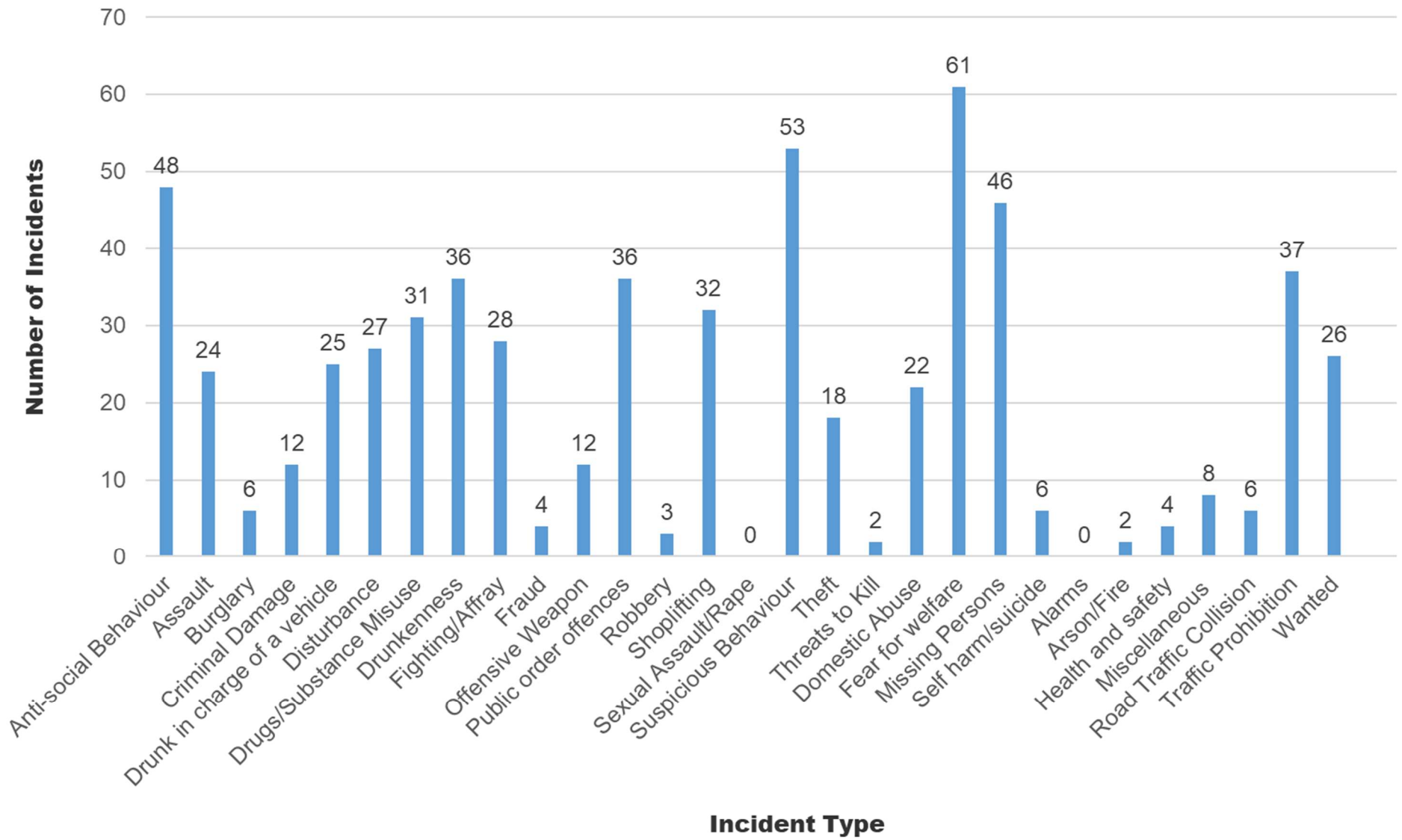
For a breakdown of monitored incidents by town please see the table below:

	2021-22			2022-23			2023-24		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Abingdon	672	614	1286	374	521	895	340	472	812
Wantage	149	70	219	98	97	195	77	143	220
Total	821	684	1505	472	618	1090	417	615	1032

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the numbers and types of incidents the CCTV Operators monitored from 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 across both towns.

Incidents by Type - 1 October 2023 - 31 March 2024

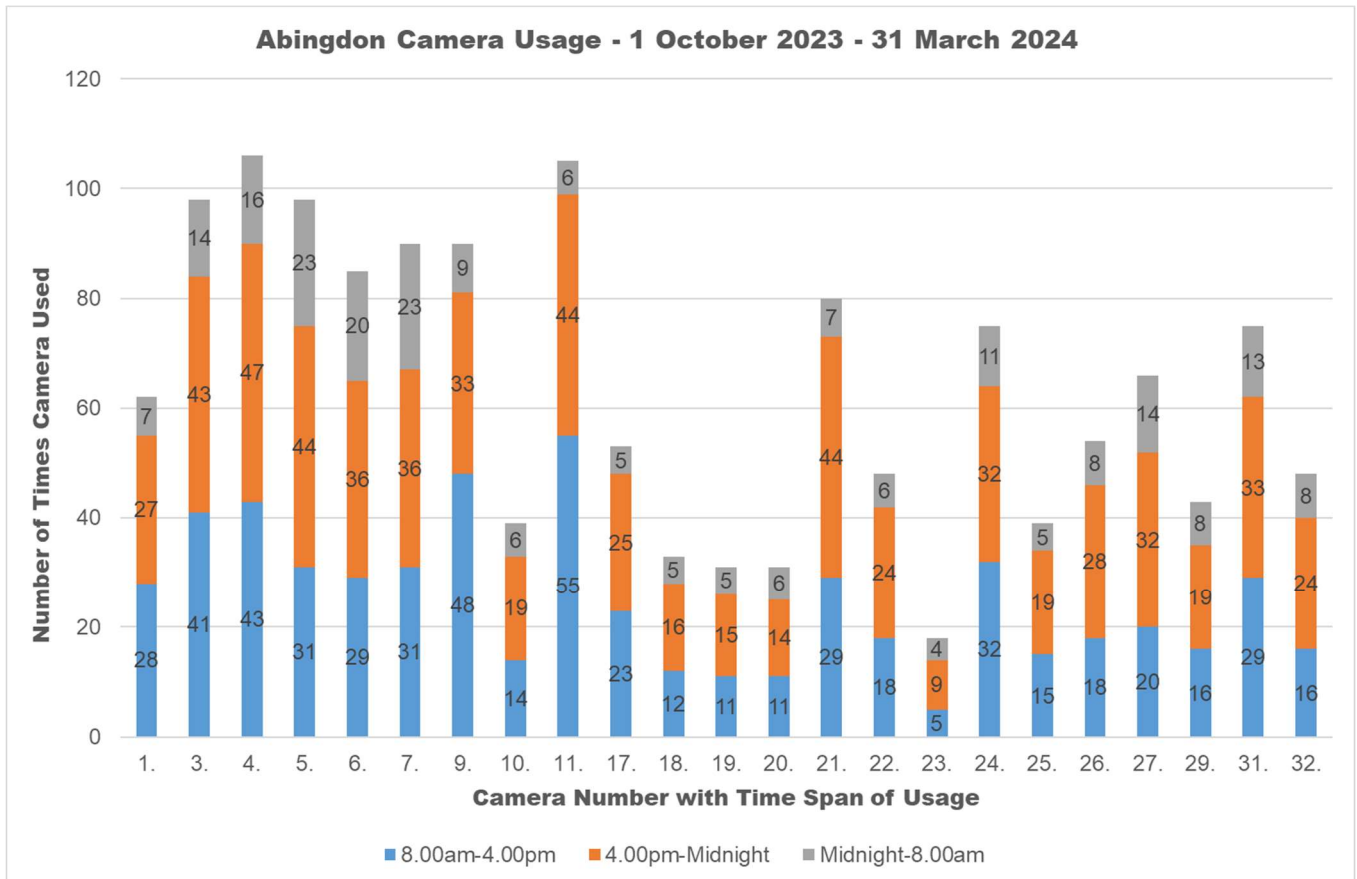


CAMERA USAGE

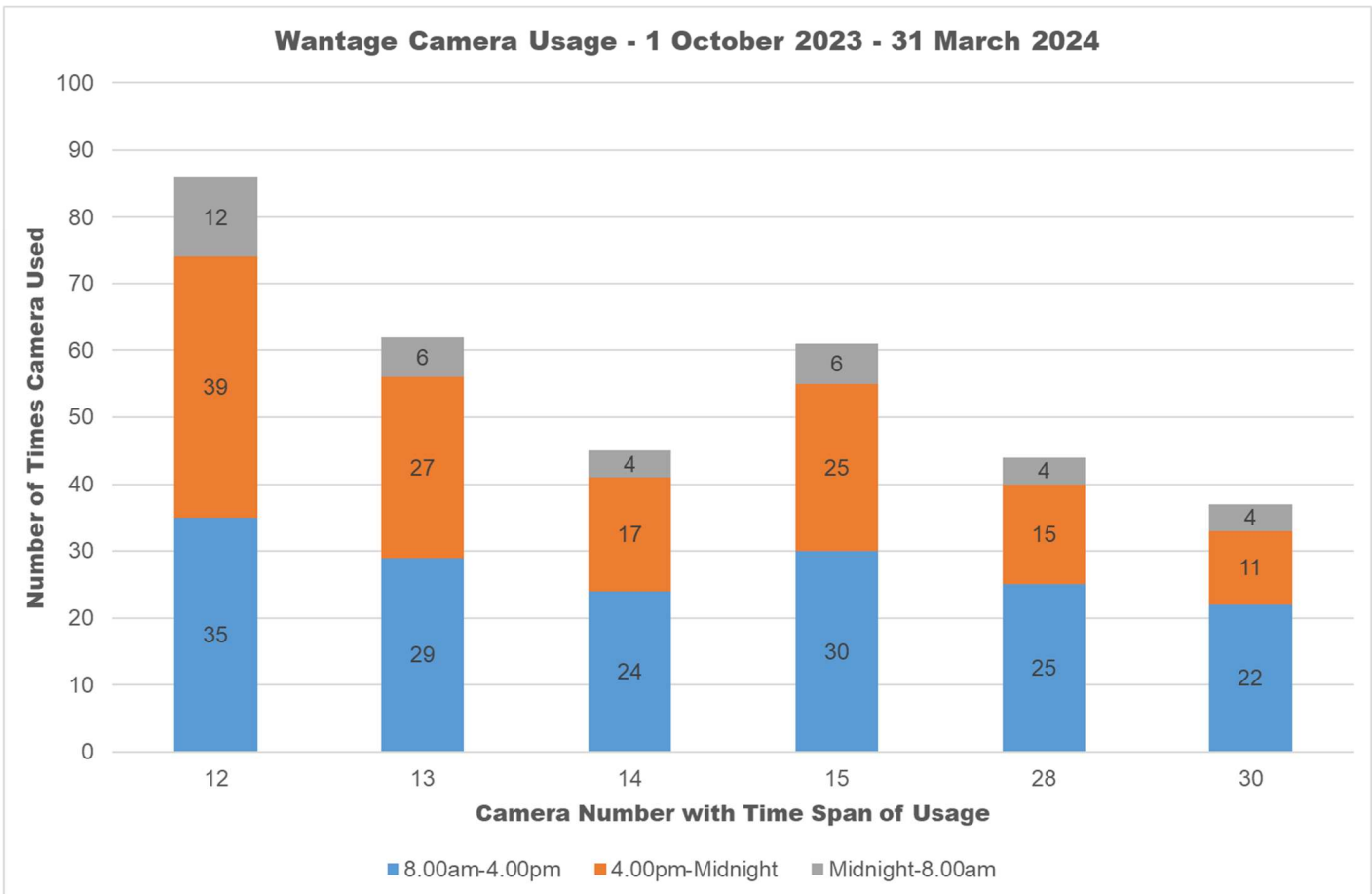
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras were deployed in recorded, monitored events.

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 4 (which covers the High Street), camera 11 and Camera 5 (covering the taxi rank and Square) saw the highest use; these were actively used 106, 105 and 98 times, respectively.



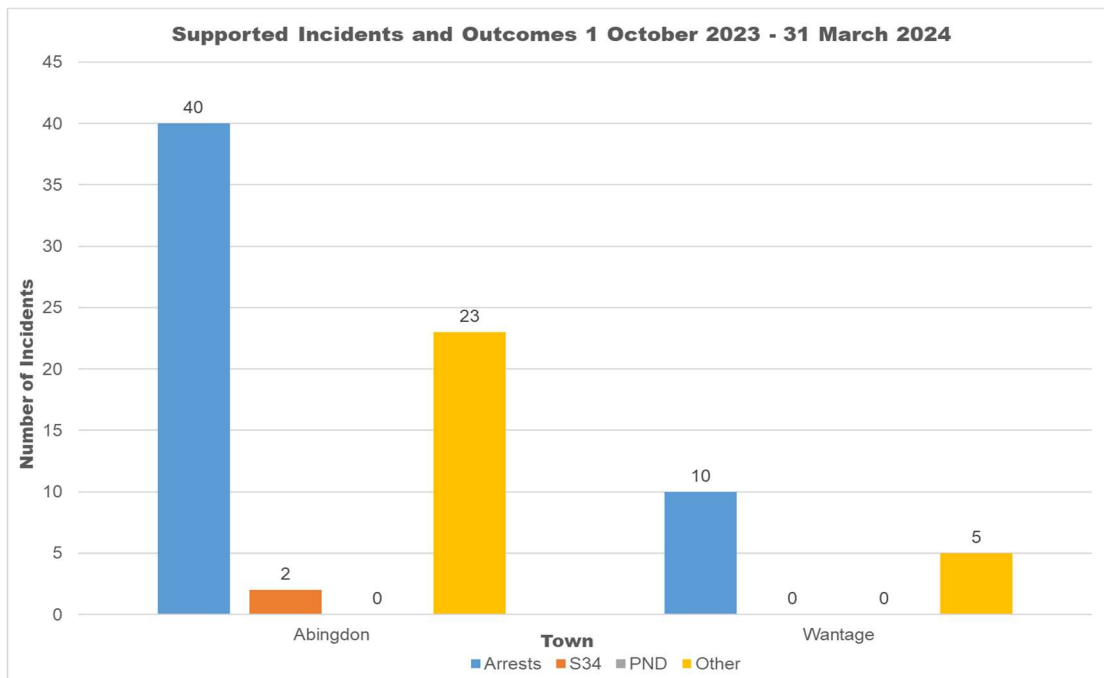
Cameras 12, 13 and 15 were the most used cameras in Wantage in the second half of the year – these cover the Market Place as well as several late-night venues.

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 prioritise 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.’

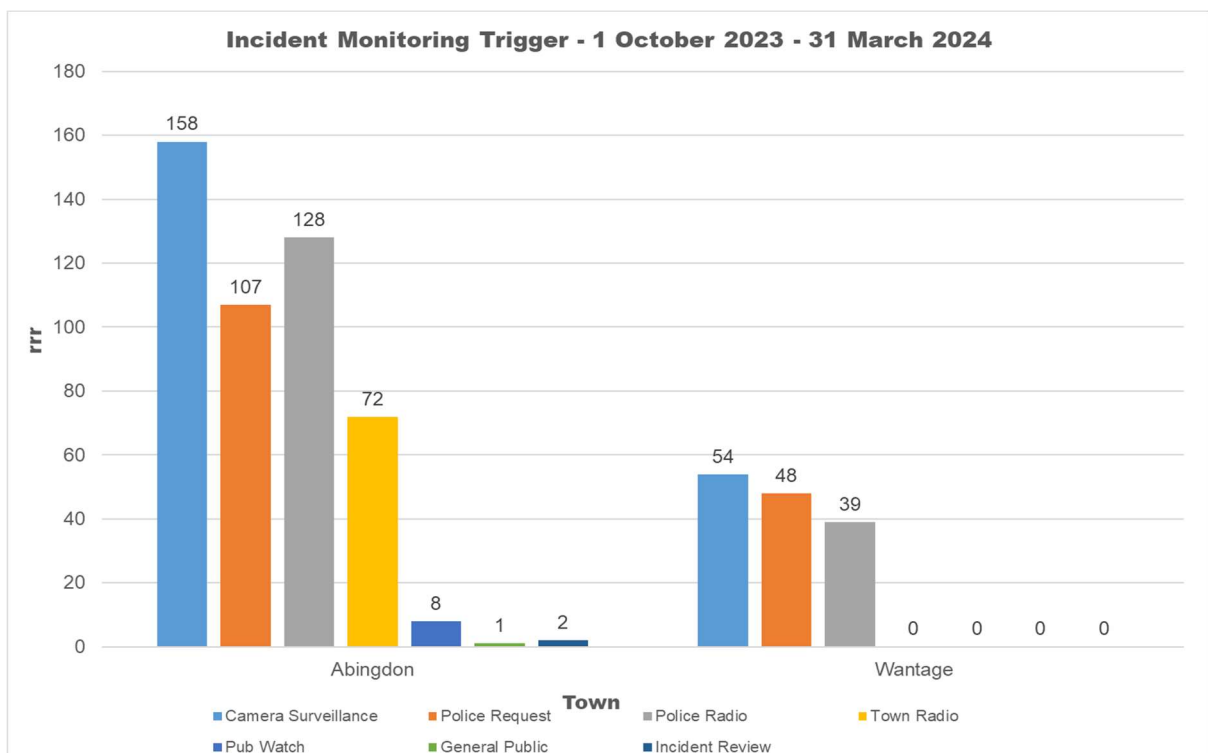
Actions on the chart designated ‘other’ usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or a warning or a non-recordable sanction, for example, returning and paying for low value items that had been stolen from a store.



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 town radio scheme.

During the second half of 2023-24, a new team member was recruited and trained and this is reflected in the number of 'operator led' incidents (incidents spotted by an operator): Abingdon saw an increase of 55 percent and Wantage 200 percent when compared to the first half of 2023-24. This demonstrates the effectiveness of CCTV being used proactively to prevent crime and protect communities.



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 where they remain whilst not being actively moved by an operator. These positions are agreed with the police as covering those areas that are most likely to experience community safety issues

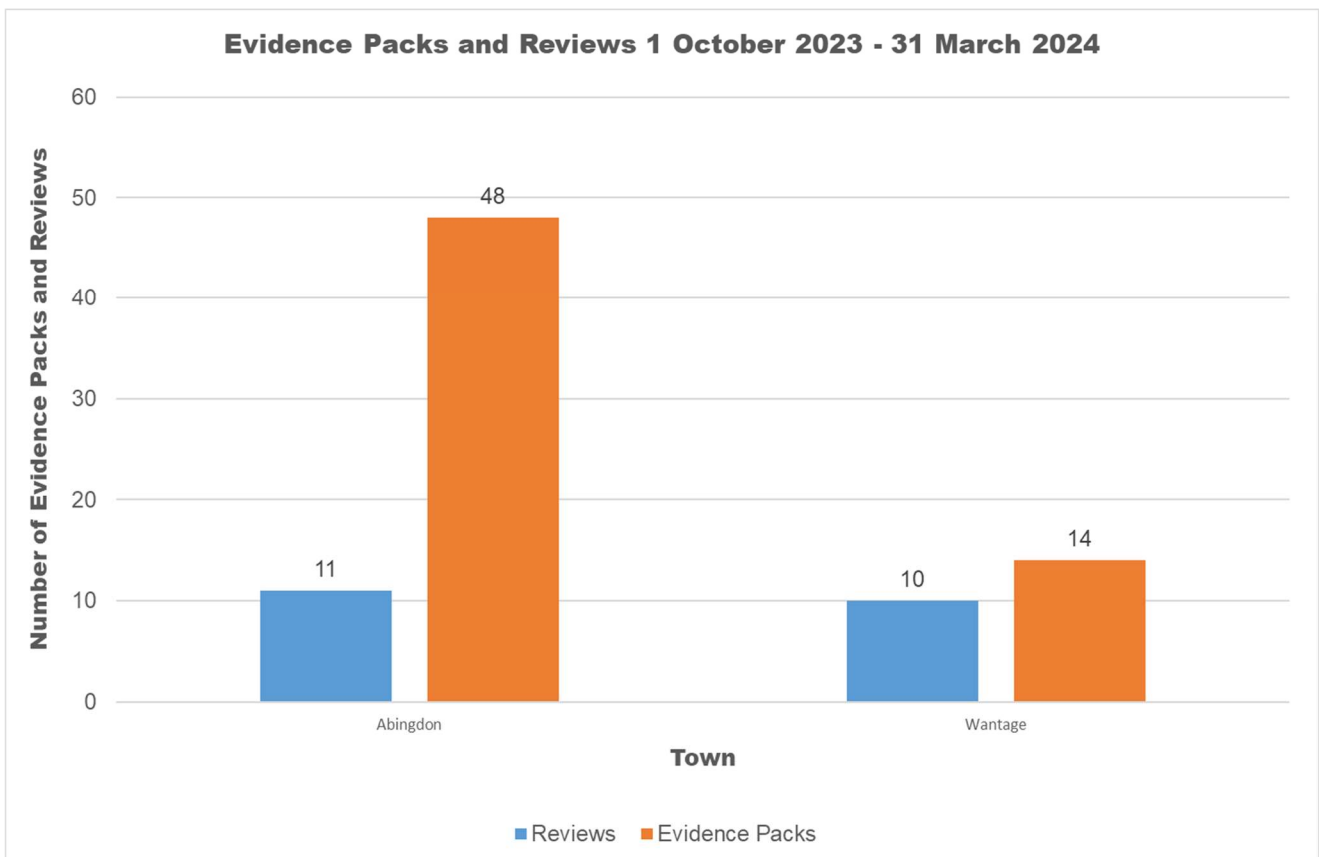
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which the complainant's car has been damaged. All such requests are actioned, and replies given. Altogether we received 15 such requests during this half of the year.

The chart below shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews undertaken following receipt of formal written requests.

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.

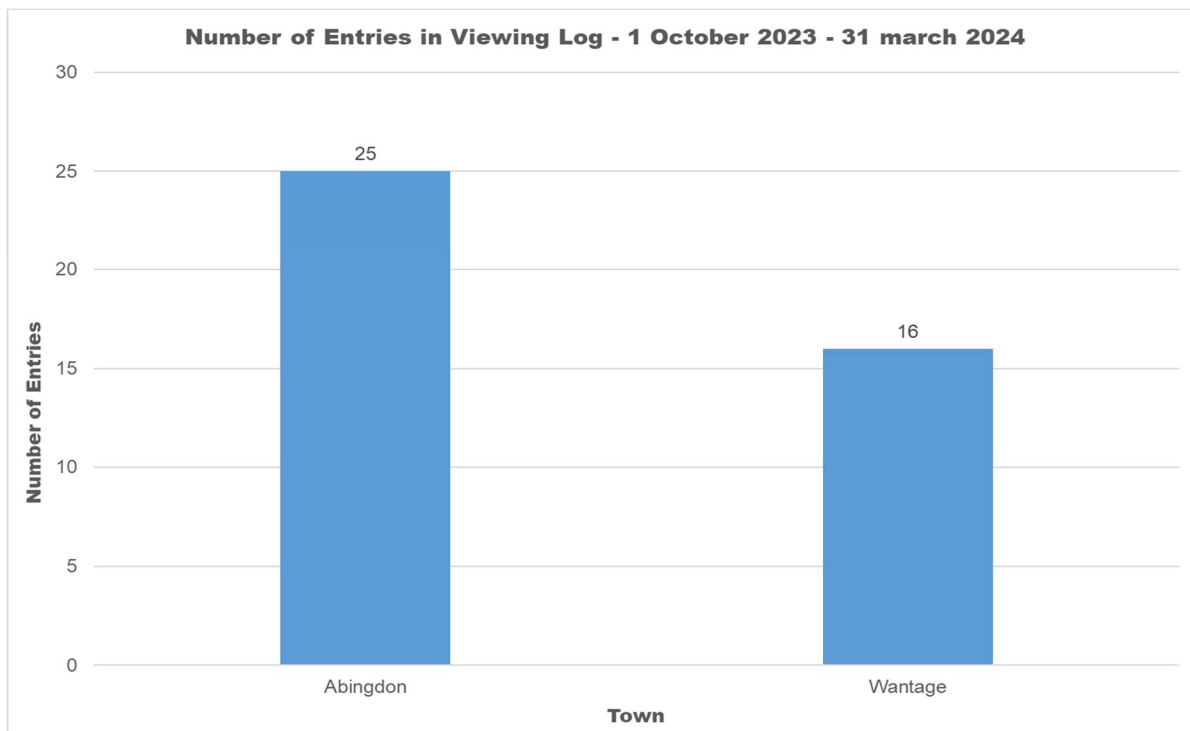
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences, this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

When authorised personnel (most often police officers) visit the CCTV control room to view footage, the details are entered into a viewing log. The chart below reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 October 2023 and 31 March 2024 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 second half of 2023–24. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Abingdon

During a routine camera patrol, an operator noticed a young child leaving their pushbike at the front of a store. A few moments later, a man approached the bike and rode off on it. Our operator recognised the offender and passed details to the police who attended the suspect's address and recovered several stolen items. The operator also kept track of the victim, who had begun to look for his bike and then went into a shop. Acting quickly, the operator phoned the store and spoke directly with the victim before police arrived and united him with his bike.

Late one evening, a member of the Abingdon Street Pastors contacted the CCTV team over the town radio to say that someone was sat on top of the multistorey car park. Operators quickly located the person who appeared to be very distressed and intoxicated. They immediately

contacted the police and kept them updated on the situation until officers arrived at the scene and were able to talk the person down.

Over the town radio, a local store contacted the CCTV team to pass on descriptions of two people who had just stolen items from the shop. The operator located the suspects leaving the store and tracked them through the town and saw them getting into a vehicle. Whilst the team continued to monitor the offenders, they passed all the information to the police control room, Officers were quickly able to stop and search the vehicle which resulted in the recovery of thousands of pounds worth of stock from various stores. Three people were arrested.

Wantage

Whilst monitoring the cameras in the centre of Wantage, the operator on shift observed what they believed to be a drug deal taking place. After obtaining details and images of the vehicle and people involved, they informed the police who attended and carried out a search. A quantity of drugs was found.

The team received a report of a man with a knife, possibly heading towards the town centre. Within five minutes, an operator located the suspect and informed the police control room of his whereabouts. They continued to monitor him and provide officers with live updates until they arrived on scene. One person was arrested as a result.

The police informed the CCTV team about a report they had received from a member of the public about a possible drink driver. An operator located the vehicle in question and informed police who stopped it and made an arrest.

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