

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford

1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides information on how the district council's CCTV cameras¹ 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 completed by the operator on duty each time a CCTV camera is used proactively to monitor a specific incident.

The report covers the four towns that have had CCTV installed: Didcot (nine cameras), Henley-on-Thames (20 cameras), Thame (15 cameras) and Wallingford (13 cameras). 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.

DATA SUMMARY

In South Oxfordshire, CCTV operators **supported 305 incidents** during the first half of 2023-2024.

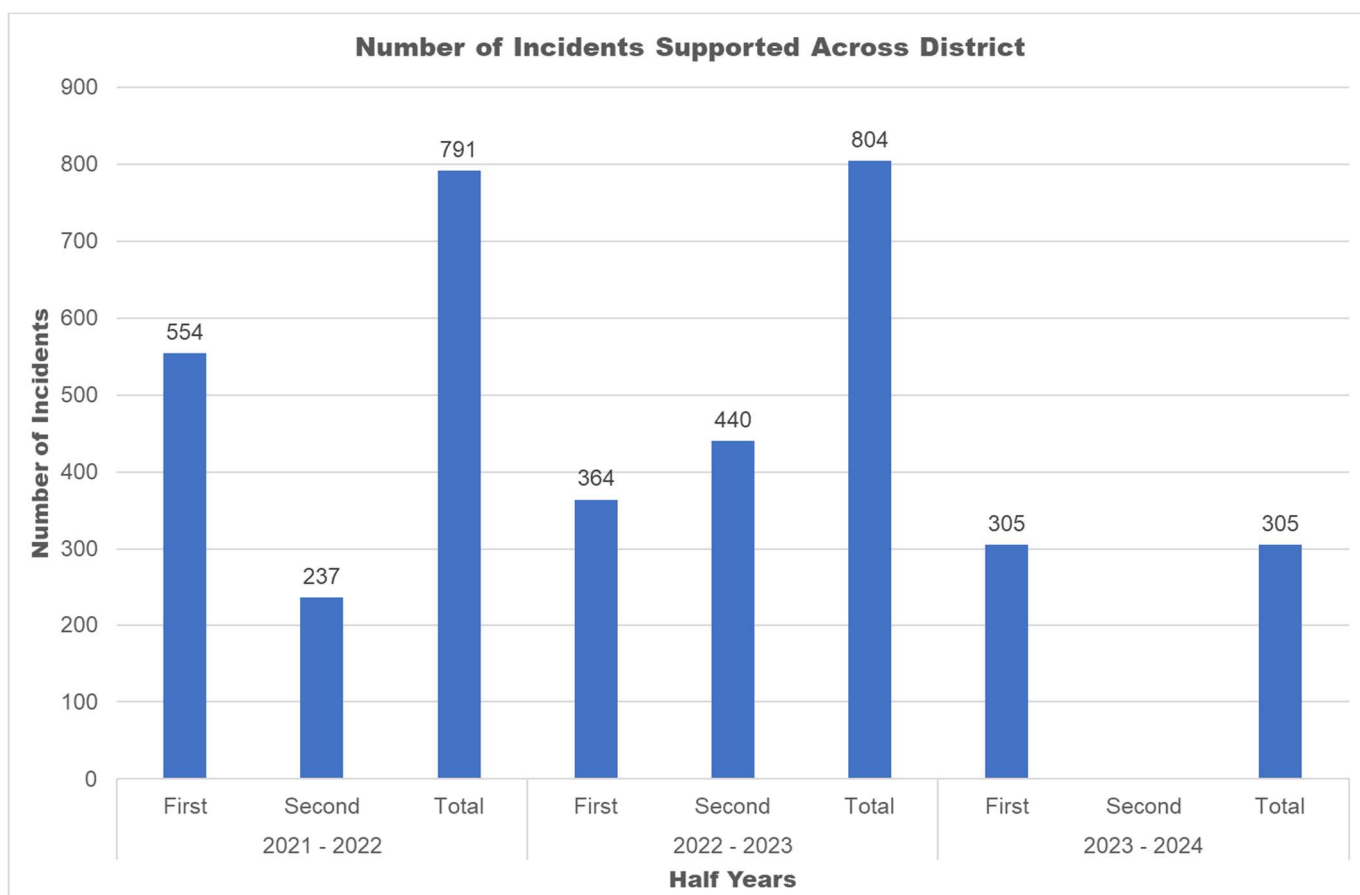
The operators **also produced 85 evidence packs** for court proceedings and **supported 35 arrests**.

The table below displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the first half of 2023-2024, where CCTV was involved at some stage:

| MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Didcot | Henley | Thame | Wallingford |
| Missing persons (20) | Fear for welfare (11) | Missing persons (24) | Missing person (10) |
| Assault (9) | Drunkenness (9) | Domestic abuse (4) | Fighting/affray (9) |
| Fear for welfare (6) | Missing persons (8) | Drunk-in-charge (4) | Fear for welfare (7) |

¹ The report covers the district council cameras plus three which Henley Town Council installed in Mill Meadows as these are managed under the same scheme.

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. However, it is important to note that during the first half of 2023-24, the CCTV service was carrying a full time CCTV operator vacancy which will have had some impact on the team’s availability to monitor the cameras. We have now appointed somebody to this vacancy and expect them to start shortly, once they have passed the police vetting process.

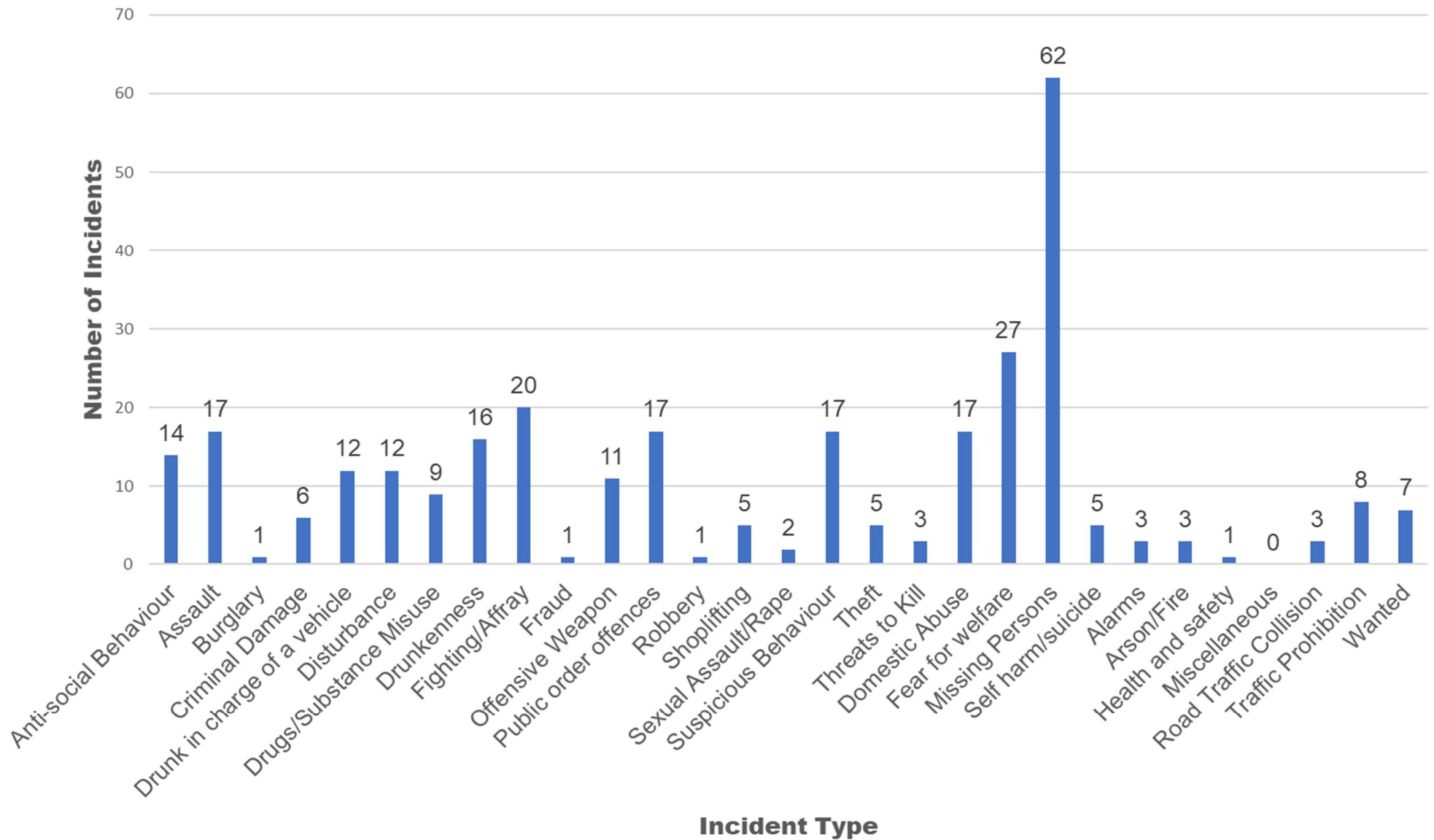
For a further breakdown of monitored incidents by town please see the table below:

| | 2021-22 | | | 2022-23 | | | 2023-24 | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------|------------|
| | First | Second | Total | First | Second | Total | First | Second | Total |
| Didcot | 156 | 148 | 304 | 126 | 146 | 272 | 87 | | 87 |
| Henley | 218 | 89 | 307 | 69 | 113 | 182 | 82 | | 82 |
| Thame | 87 | 58 | 145 | 76 | 87 | 163 | 63 | | 63 |
| Wallingford | 93 | 49 | 142 | 93 | 94 | 187 | 73 | | 73 |
| Total | 554 | 344 | 898 | 364 | 440 | 804 | 305 | | 305 |

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on page three shows the amount and type of incidents the CCTV operators monitored and supported across all four towns from 1 April to 30 September 2023.

Incidents by Type - 1 April 2023 - 30 September 2023

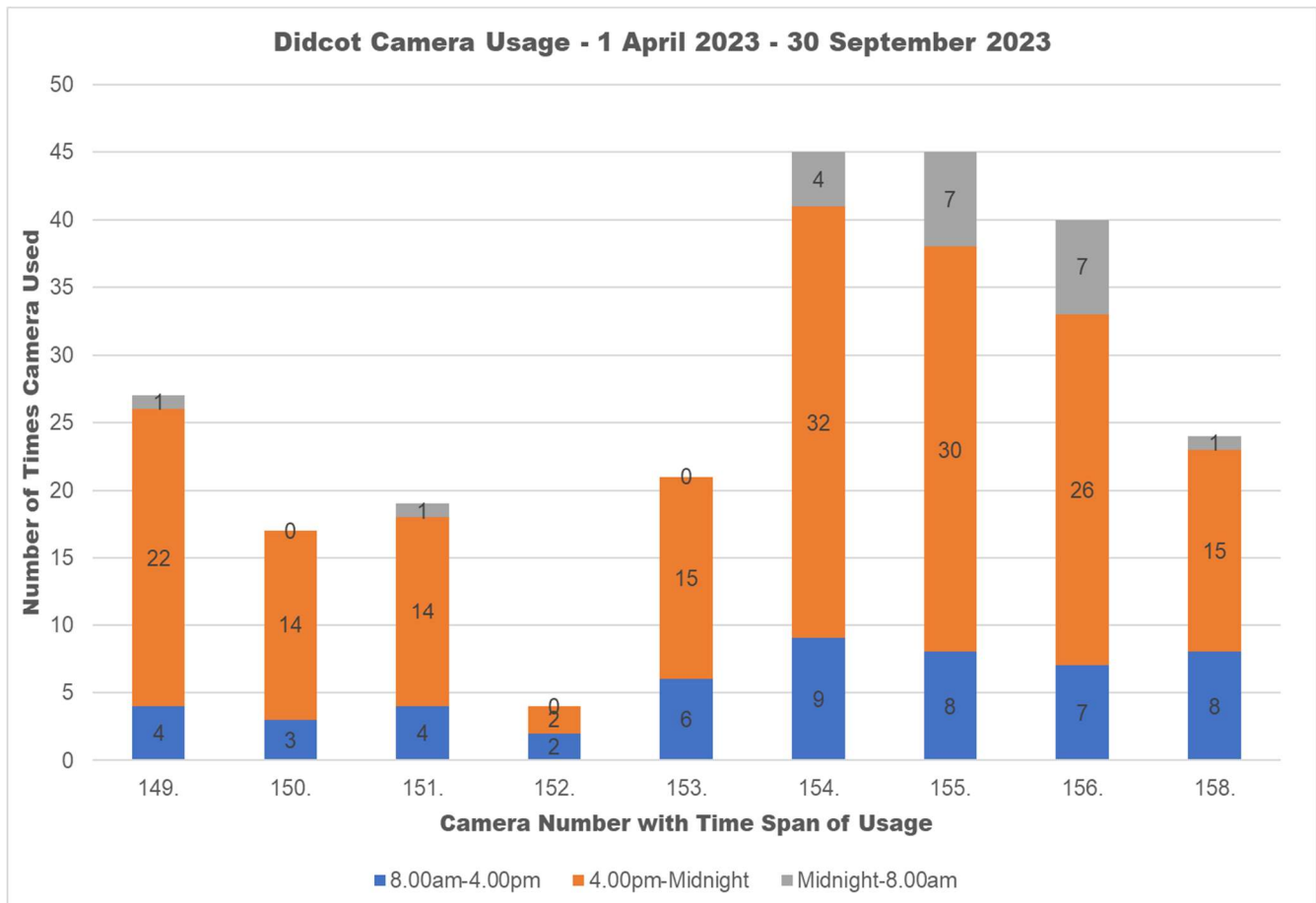


CAMERA USAGE

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

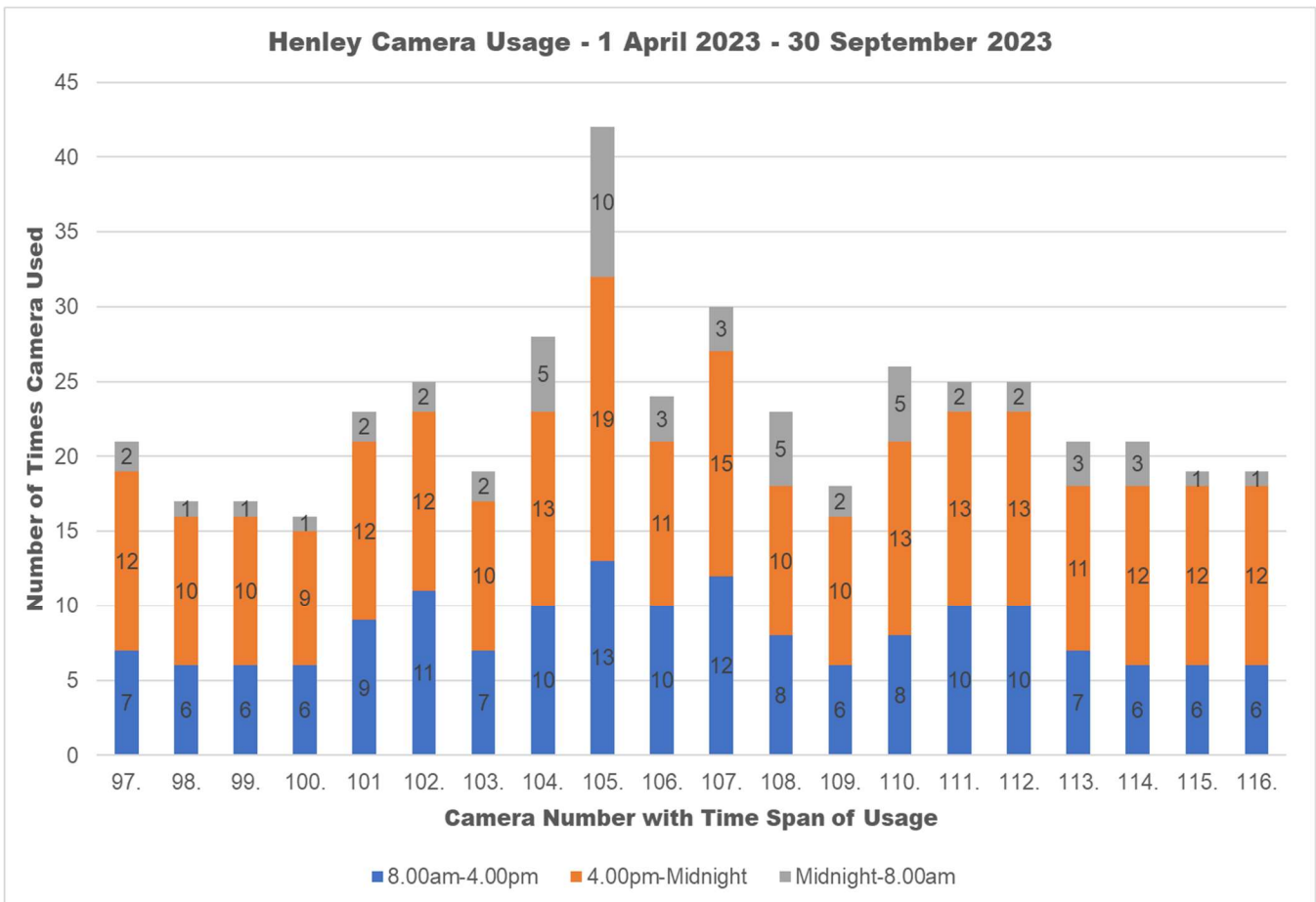
The number of times that each camera was used has been divided into three sections, covering a 24-hour period.

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

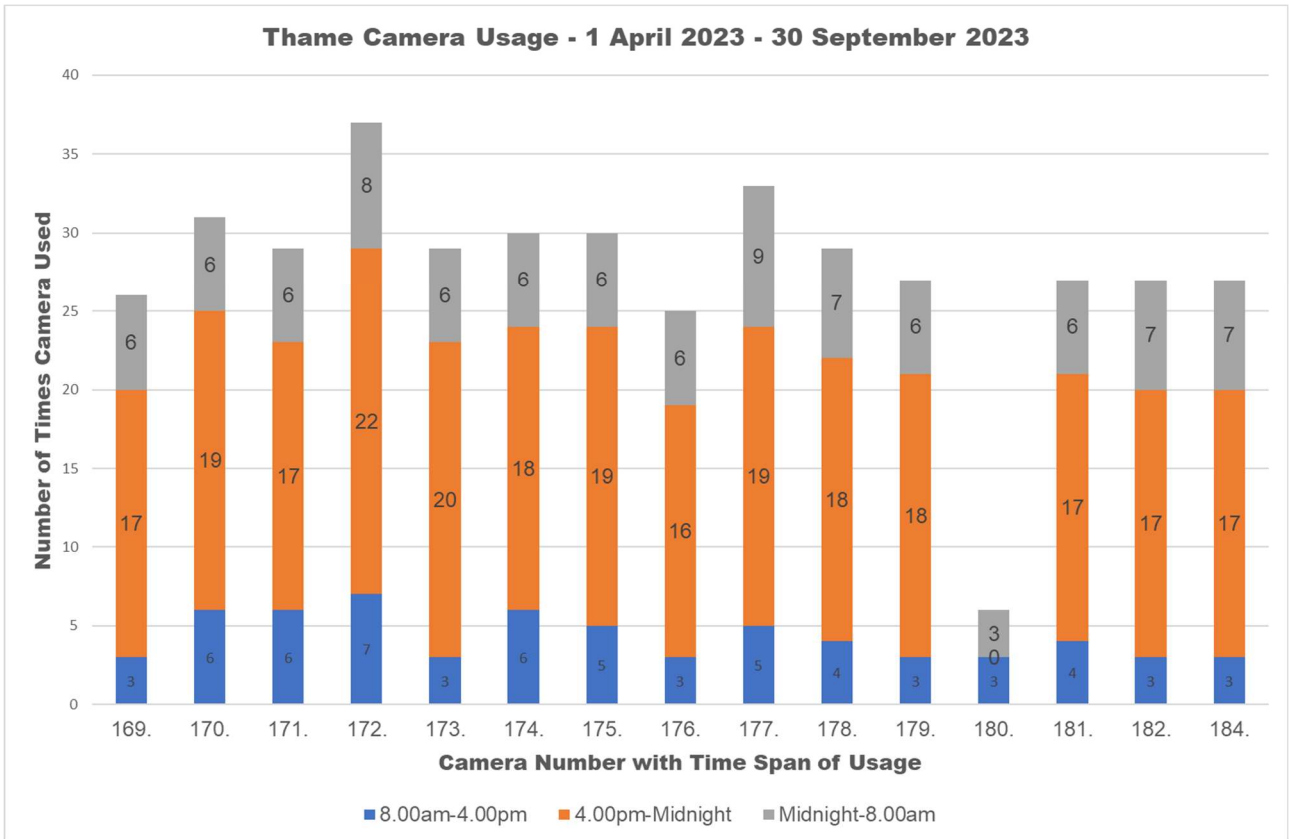


Camera 154 (which monitors the junction of Station Road and the Orchard centre) and camera 155 (often used to monitor night-time economy) recorded the highest usage.

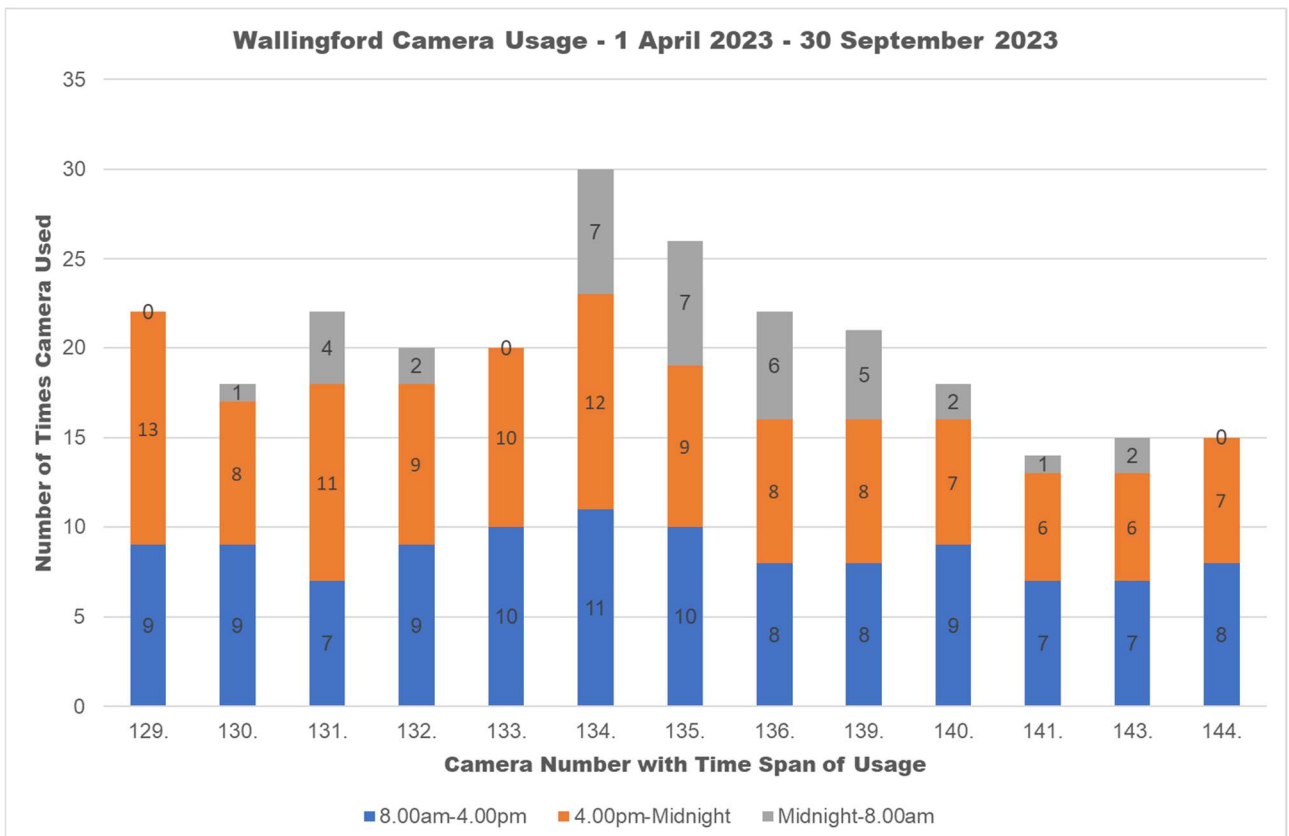
Some of the cameras were out of use for a period over the summer as they were damaged beyond repair following a severe storm and needed replacing (this has since been completed).



Camera 105 is situated in the town centre at the traffic lights serving the Duke St. – Hart St. – Bell St. junction and had the greatest number of occurrences attached to it; it is used for monitoring both daytime activity and the night-time economy.



In Thame, camera 172 on the High Street was used for the most occurrences; it covers the Town Hall, several bus stops as well as the lower part of the High Street. Camera 177, which is used to monitor the weekly market and the night-time economy, saw the second highest use.

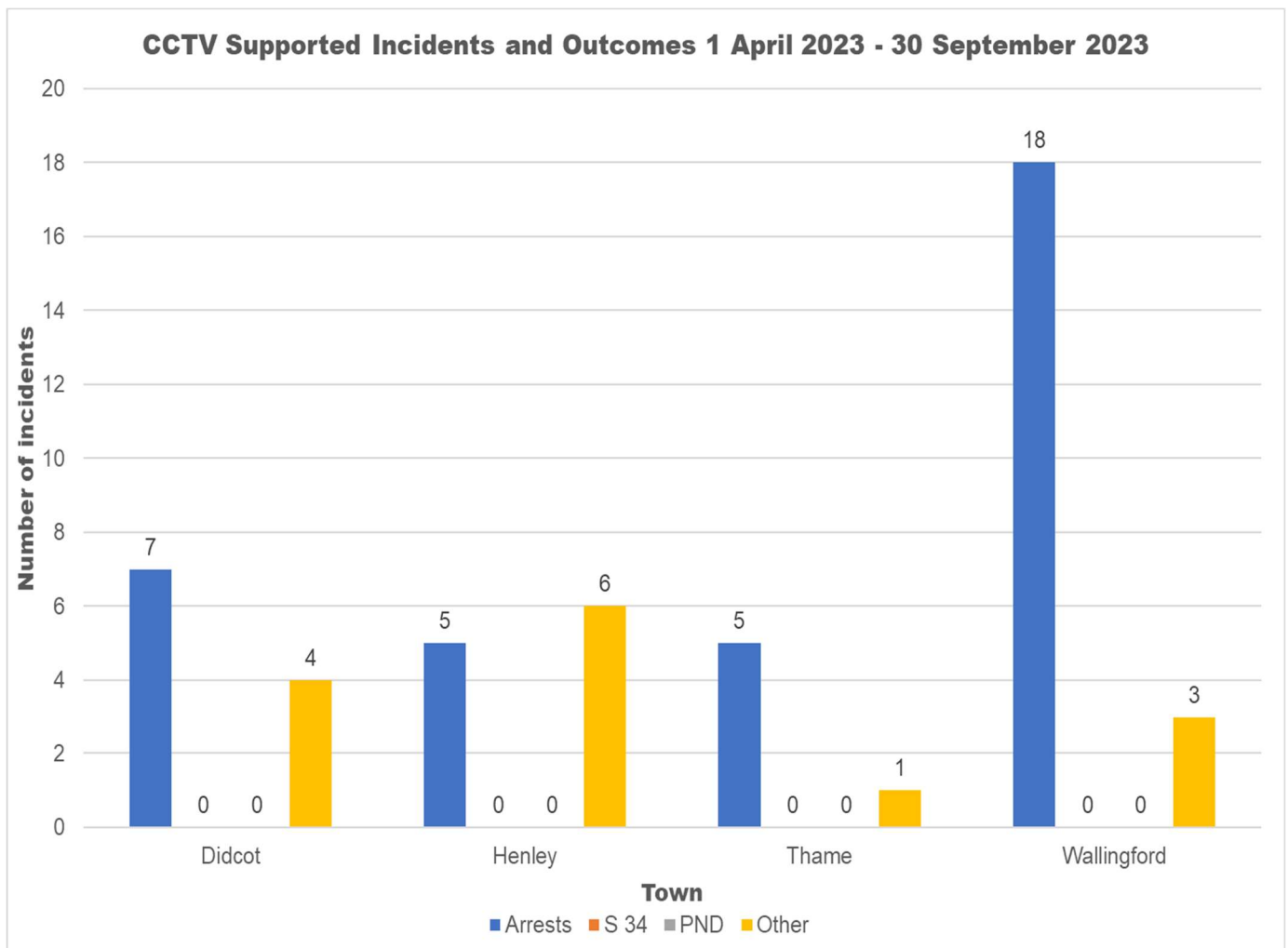


Camera 134, which supports both night-time and daytime monitoring in Wallingford, was used most often.

ARRESTS, SECTION 34S, AND OTHER OUTCOMES

The chart below 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. While we cannot always be certain whether CCTV was solely instrumental in an arrest or the serving of a Section 34² or a Penalty Notice for Disorder³ (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.

Actions on the chart designated 'other' usually mean that the police either gave verbal advice or a warning or a non-recordable sanction (e.g. returning and paying for low value items that had been stolen from a store).

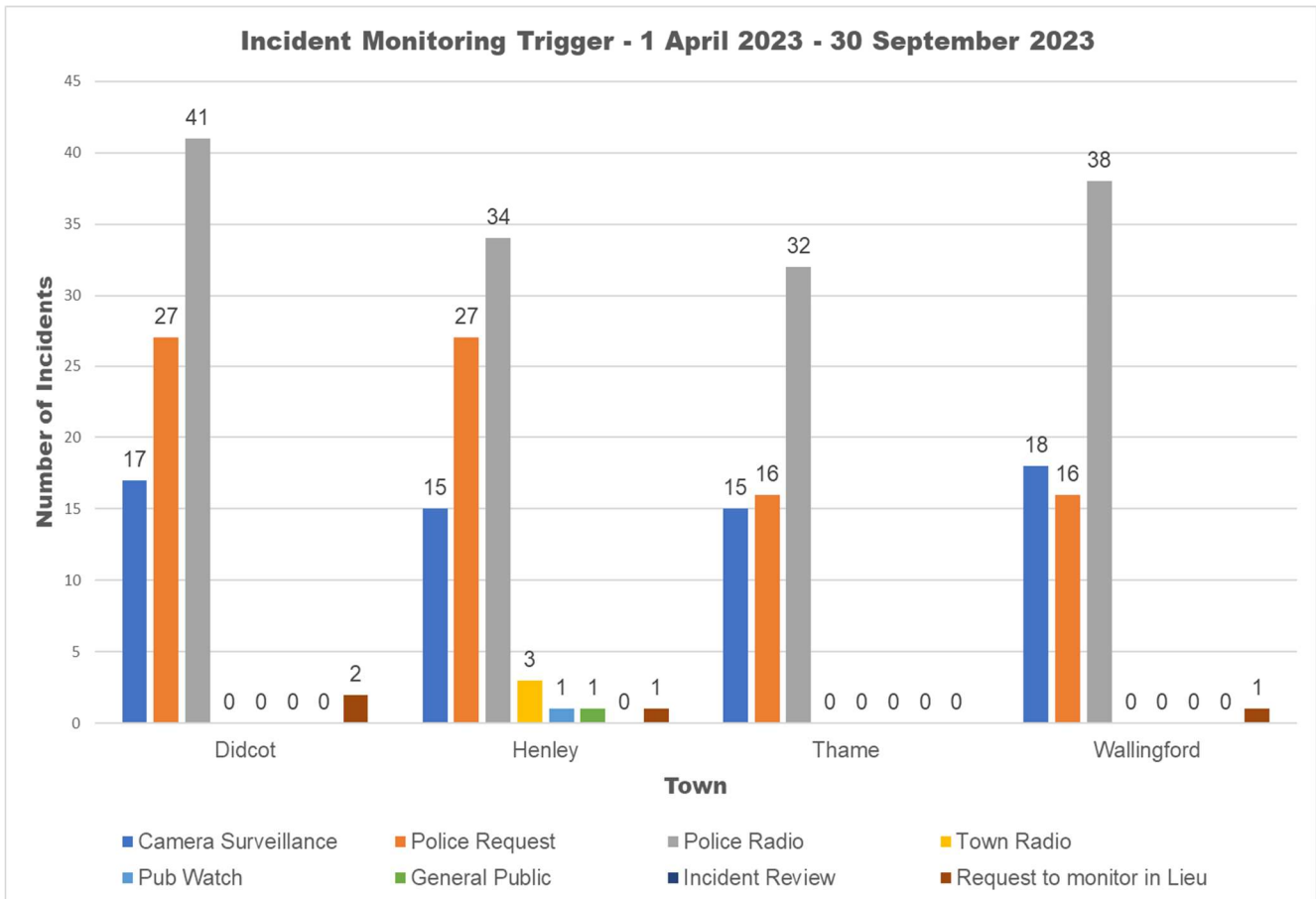


² A Section 34 allows the police to move someone from a specified area for a period of up to 48 hours if they believe the person poses a risk of anti-social related disorder.

³ A PND is an 'on the spot' fine.

HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart below shows how many of the incidents monitored 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); the operator proactively patrolling the cameras (camera surveillance); request from officers to review footage at the time of an incident e.g. to clarify details of a reported incident while they are on scene (incident review). Only Henley has a town 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 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.

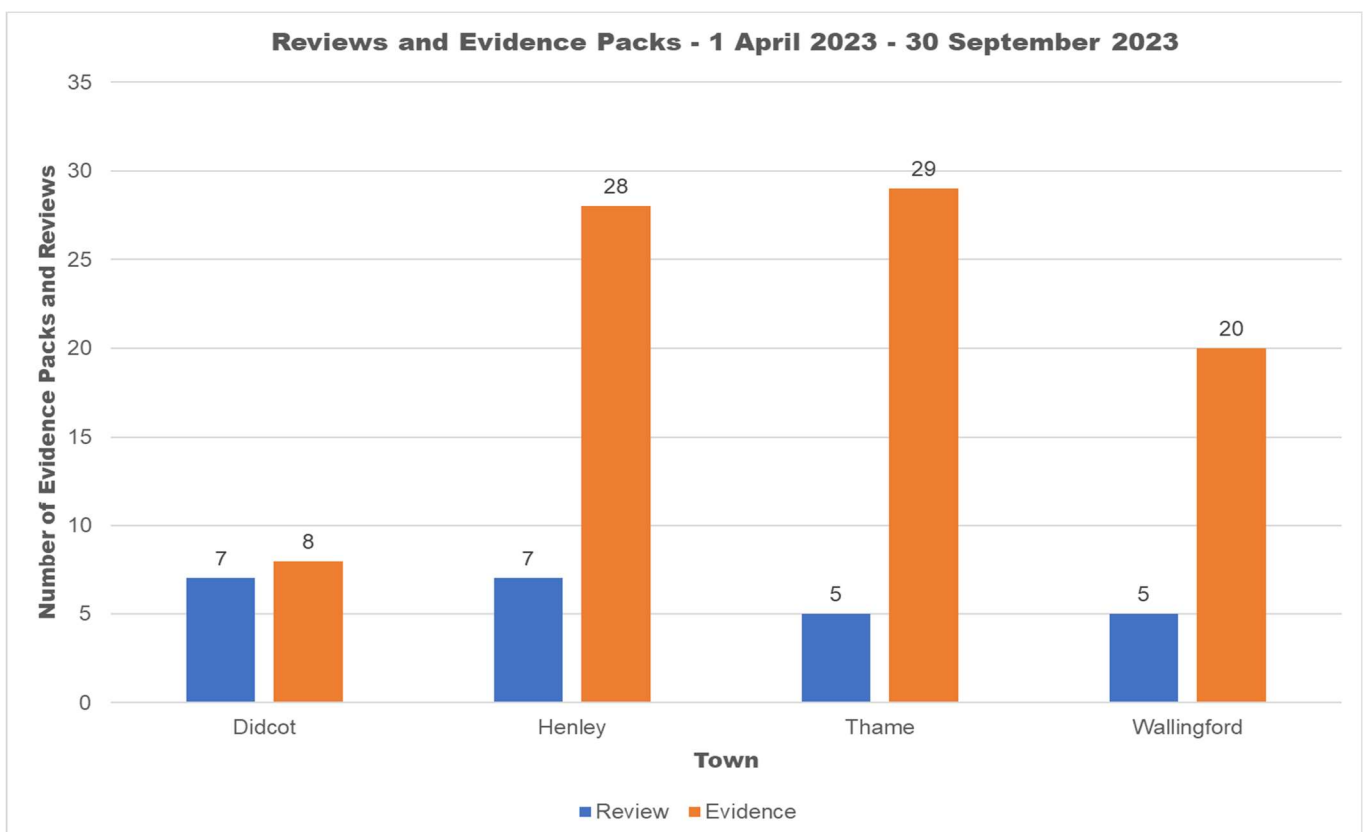
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of ‘non-stop road traffic collisions’ in which the complainant’s car has been damaged. Altogether we received 31 such requests during this half of the year. In eight of these cases, we were able to supply footage of specific incidents, caught on camera. Several others were passed to the police and footage provided as evidence. We also received six requests from town and district council departments regarding incidents.

The chart below shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews they undertook following receipt of a formal written request.

Evidence reviews are checks through recorded 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.

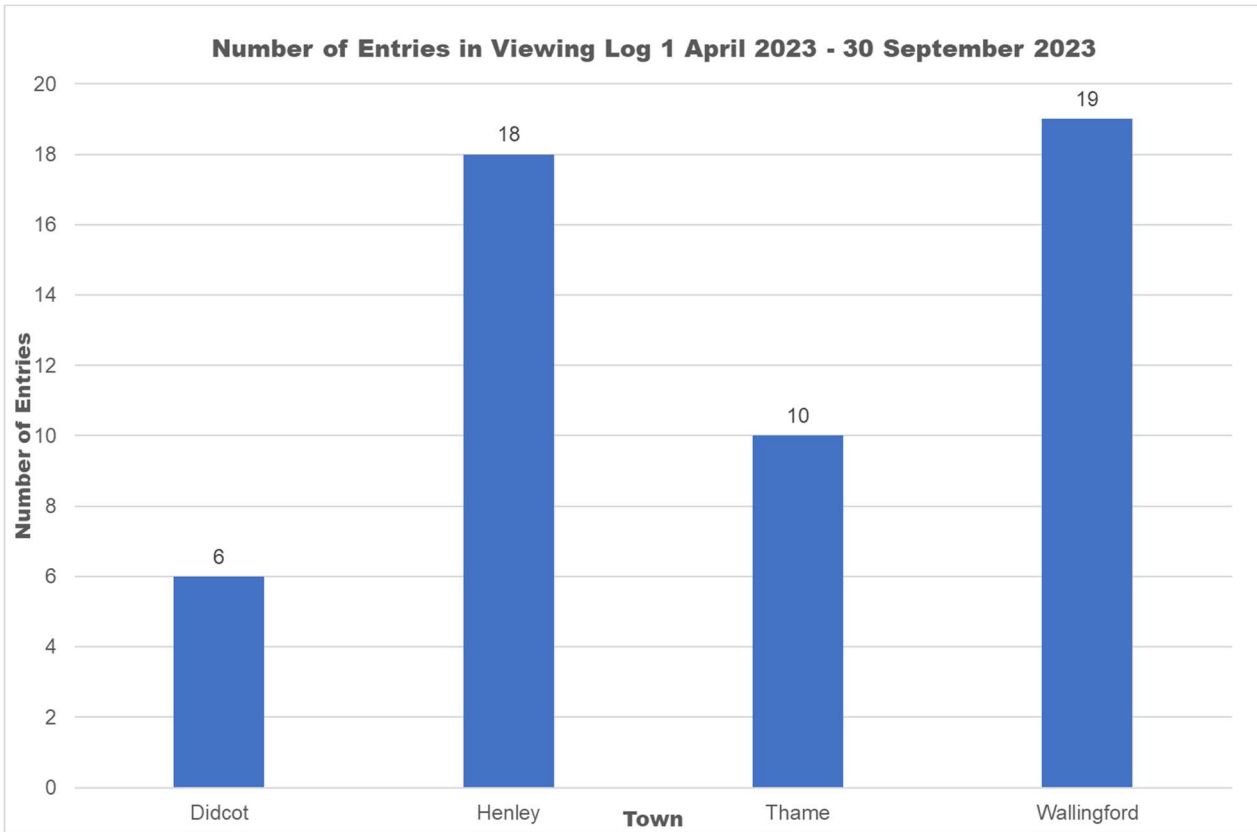
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences, this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

We also allow police to attend the control room to review footage with an operator. The chart at the top of page 10 reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023 across the four 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 2023–24. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Didcot

Whilst on shift, our operator monitored what they believed to be a drug deal between two individuals. They quickly passed the information to the police and continued to monitor the situation, directing officers to the scene where they made an arrest.

The police had informed the CCTV control room about a missing person in the Didcot area. Using the description, they were given, our operator on duty conducted a search of the town. A short while later they found the person on the Broadway and updated the police. Officers were dispatched and the missing person was safeguarded.

The CCTV team had observed a group of people causing damage to street furniture and plants in the town centre. They obtained quality footage of the damage and the offenders, whilst also reviewing previous camera footage to check for other offences. This information was relayed to police officers who attended and dealt with those involved accordingly.

Henley

Our CCTV operator heard a report of a vehicle failing to stop for police officers in Wallingford. Using their knowledge of the local area, our operator was able to locate the vehicle in Henley.

The car was seen being driven the wrong way down several streets and mounting the pavement. Our operator passed this information to the police who stopped the car just outside Henley; the driver was arrested for drink and drug offences.

Whilst carrying out monitoring, our operator became concerned for the welfare of a woman in the town. They passed their concerns to the police, but the individuals involved had since left in a vehicle. The operator captured images of the car's registration and officers were subsequently able to contact those involved to ensure the woman's safety.

A report came in of a man acting erratically in the town centre. Our operator conducted a search based on the location where he was last seen. They managed to locate him on the river-facing side of Henley Bridge and in some distress. Having reported this to the police, officers quickly arrived on scene and were able to bring him to a place of safety.

Thame

Our operator observed two young people setting items on fire and putting them into a bin. They also recognised their descriptions as two current missing people. The operator passed the information to police, who attended and safeguarded the children. The area was also checked to ensure there was no fire risk.

During an afternoon shift, a report of a suspicious person was passed to our control room by the police. Hearing the circumstances and the partial description, our operator conducted an area search and located a prolific pickpocket thief. They informed the police and observed this person approaching numerous people before leaving in a taxi. The man was later arrested and charged with multiple offences.

Wallingford

Whilst on duty one night, our operator observed a large disorder break out in the town. They monitored the fighting whilst relaying descriptions of the main offenders to the police and continued to track the offenders as police arrived on scene. Four arrests were made.

An operator on shift observed an individual acting suspiciously and approaching vulnerable people, purporting to be from a charity. The operator was concerned as this is a technique known to be used by individuals to defraud primarily older people. They made the police control aware, and officers were dispatched. Upon hearing the sirens, the individual ran off and left the area. A search was completed, and intelligence was submitted.

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