

CCTV Half Yearly Report

Didcot, Henley, Thame and Wallingford

1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022

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.

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 two 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 now have a third FTE operator in post with a fourth currently going through the police vetting process.

DATA SUMMARY

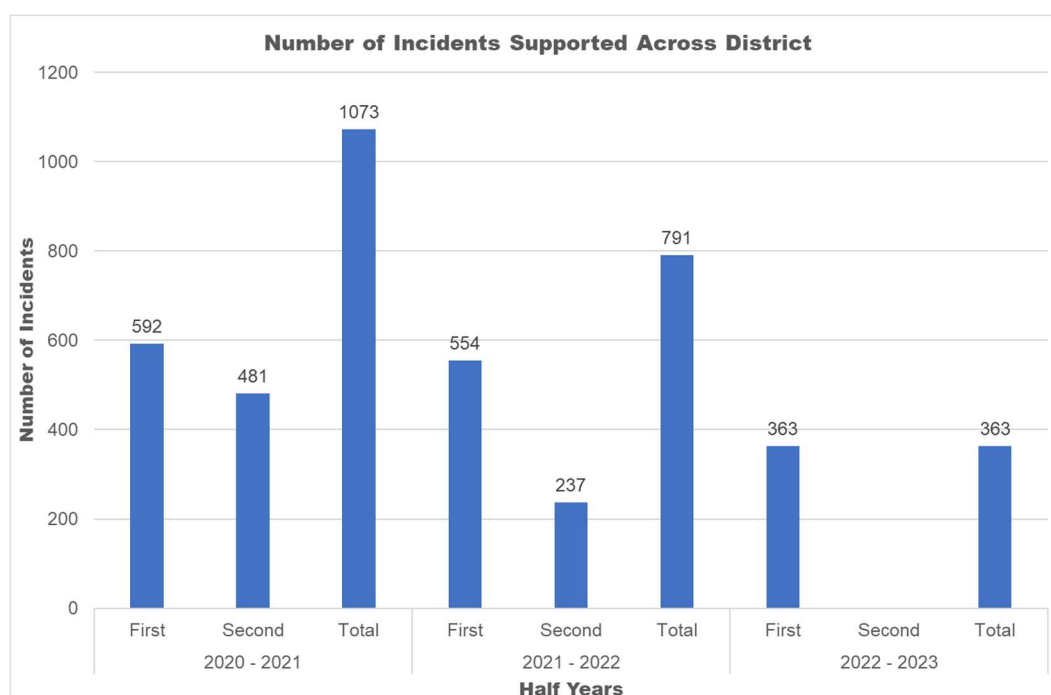
In South Oxfordshire, CCTV operators supported 363 incidents during the first half of 2022-2023. The operators also produced 47 evidence packs for possible court proceedings, carried out 29 reviews of CCTV footage (a review is undertaken as a result of a written request) and supported 42 arrests.

The following table displays the most common type of incident monitored for each town during the first half of 2022-2023, where CCTV was involved at some stage:

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.

MOST COMMONLY MONITORED INCIDENTS				
	Didcot	Henley	Thame	Wallingford
1	Missing persons (38)	Missing persons (9) Fear for welfare (9)	Missing persons (10)	Fear for Welfare (20)
2	Fear for Welfare (22)	Fighting/affray (6)	Fear for welfare (8)	Public order (8)
3	Anti-social behaviour (7) Domestic abuse (7)	Traffic prohibition (5)	Theft (6)	Drunkenness (7)

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



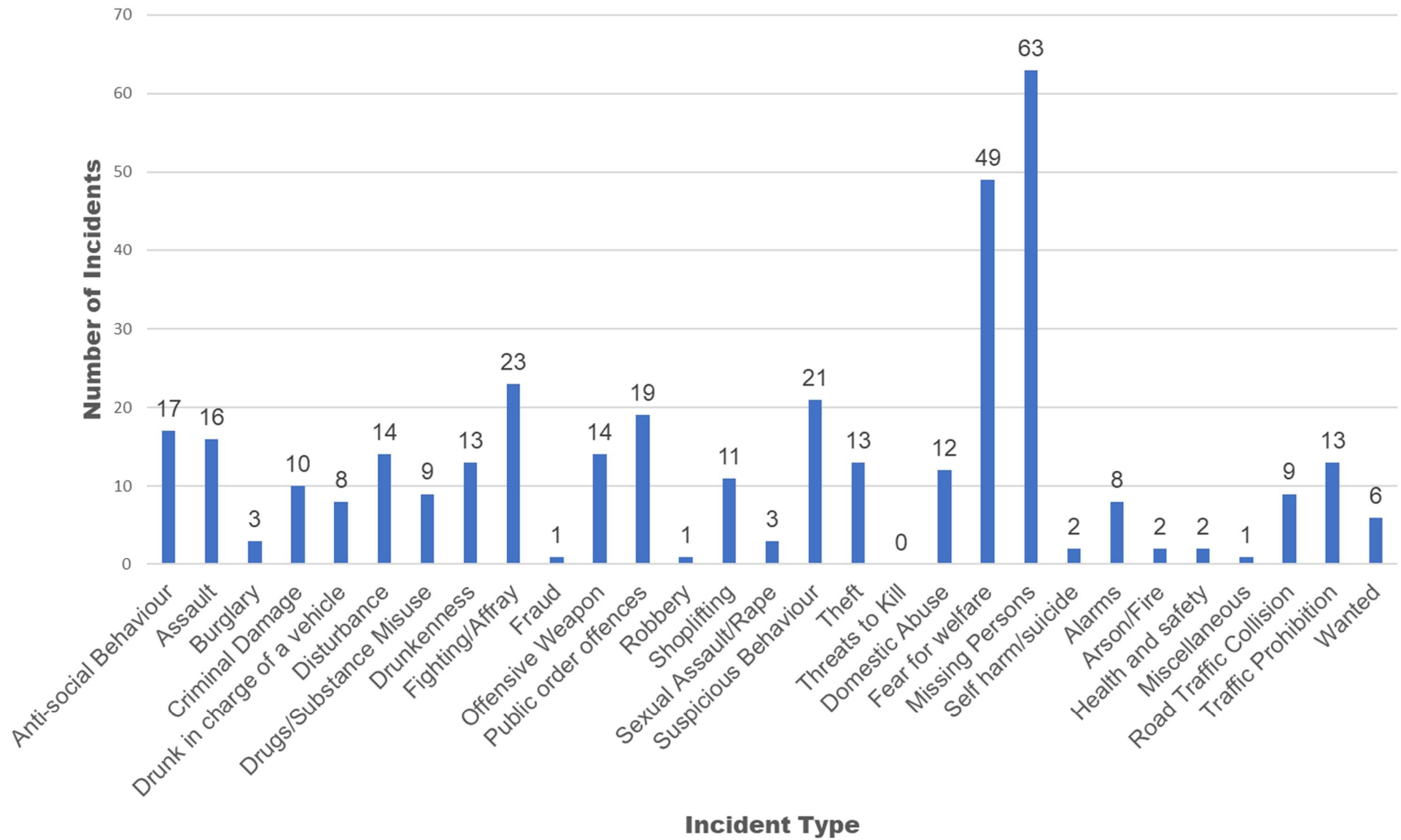
For further breakdown please see table below:

	2020 - 2021			2021 - 2022			2022 - 2023		
	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total	First	Second	Total
Didcot	198	157	355	156	148	304	126		
Henley	209	183	392	218	89	307	68		
Thame	97	78	195	87	58	145	76		
Wallingford	171	110	151	93	49	142	93		
Total	592	481	1073	554	344	898	363		

TYPE AND NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

The chart on the next page shows the amount and type of incidents the CCTV operators have monitored and supported across all four towns, between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022.

Incidents by Type - 1 April 2022 - 30 September 2022

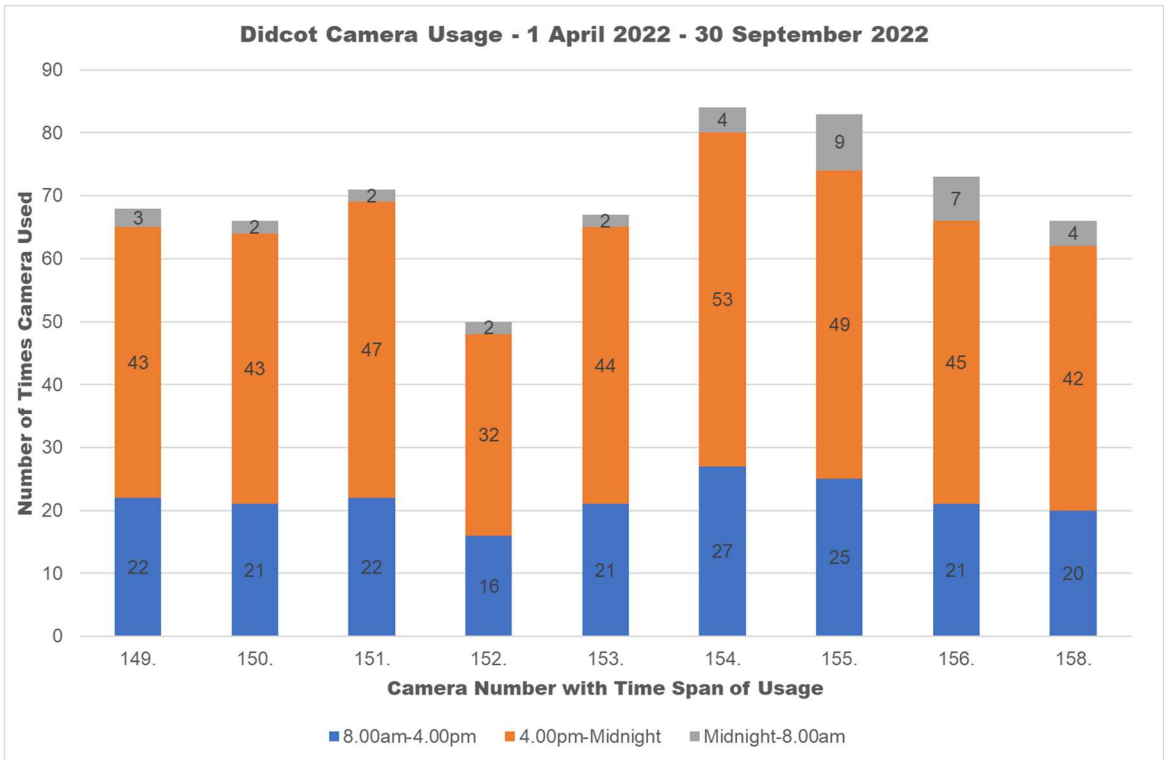


CAMERA USAGE

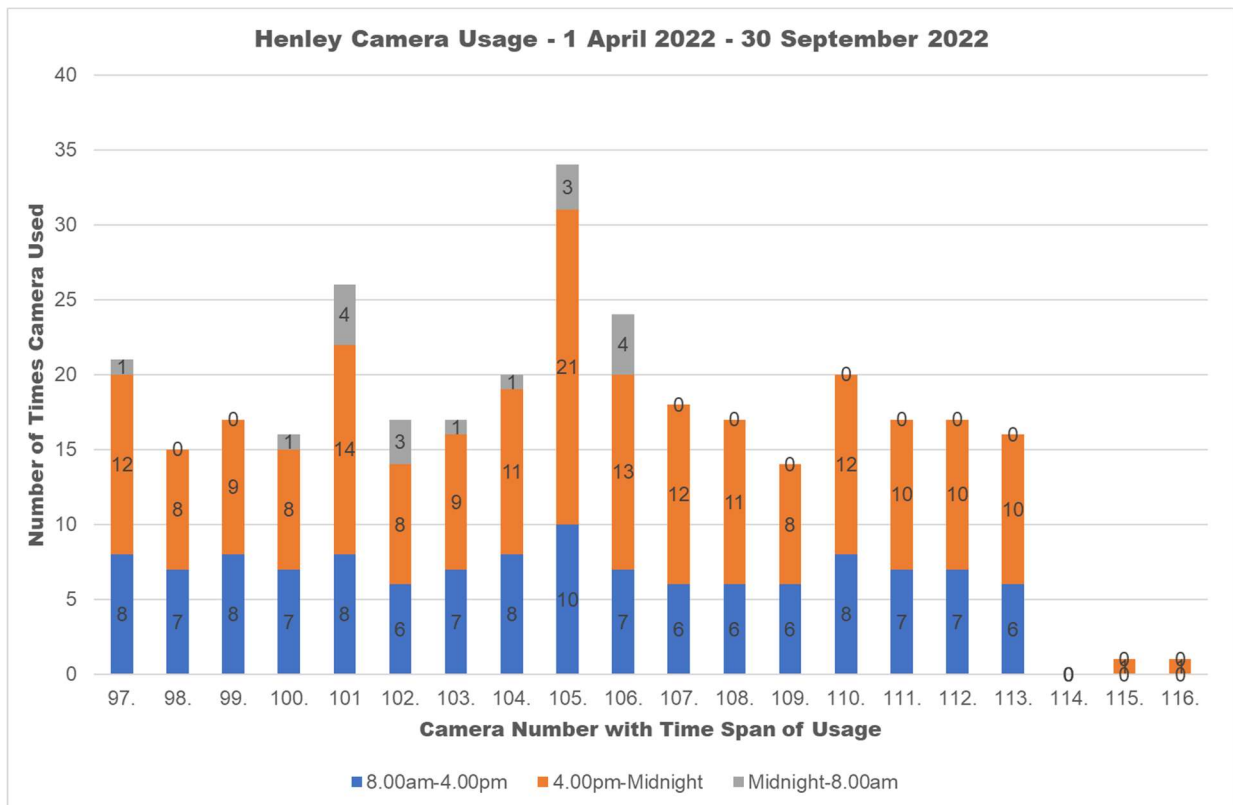
The following charts show camera usage for each town. These indicate the number of times that individual cameras were deployed in recorded, monitored events.

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

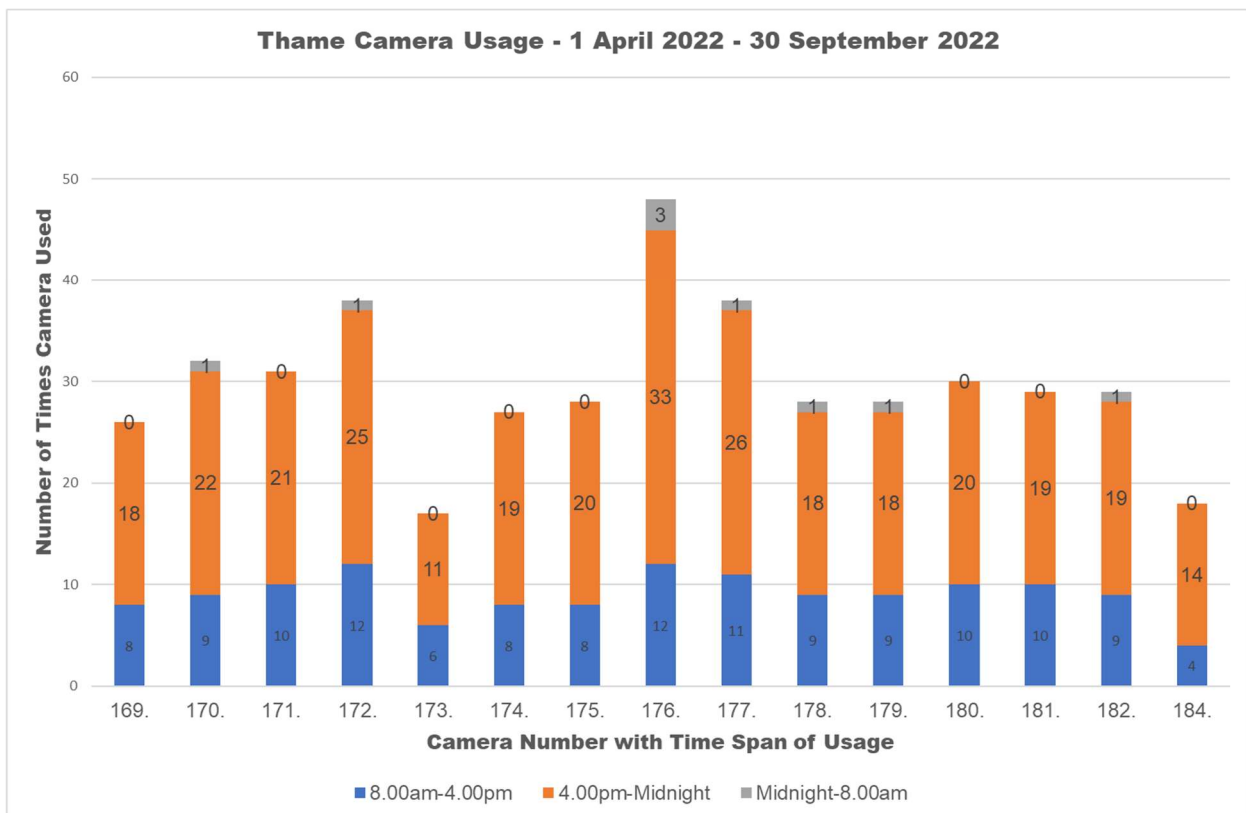
It is worth noting that for the period midnight to 8am, the vast majority of camera usage occurred between midnight and 4am.



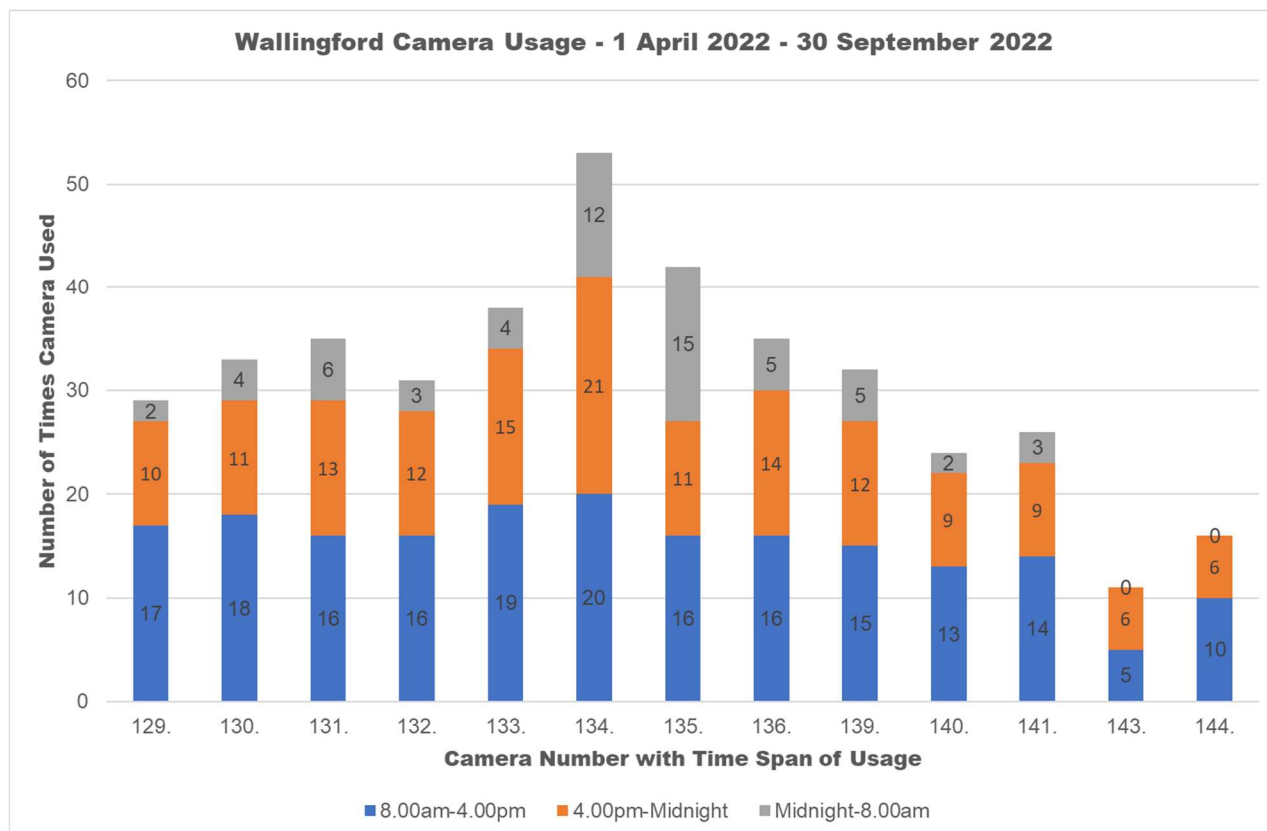
Cameras 154, which monitors the junction of Station Road, and the Orchard centre recorded the most usage. Camera 155 which is incremental in monitoring night-time economy had the second highest usage.



Camera 105 is situated in the town centre at the traffic lights serving the Duke Street - Hart Street – Bell Street junction and has the greatest number of occurrences attached to it; camera 101 which is on the junction of New Street and Bell Street, was the second highest.



Cameras 176 was used most often, as it supports the monitoring of night-time economy. Camera 172 on the High Street is instrumental in monitoring the town centre. Camera 177 also had high usage due to the night-time economy.

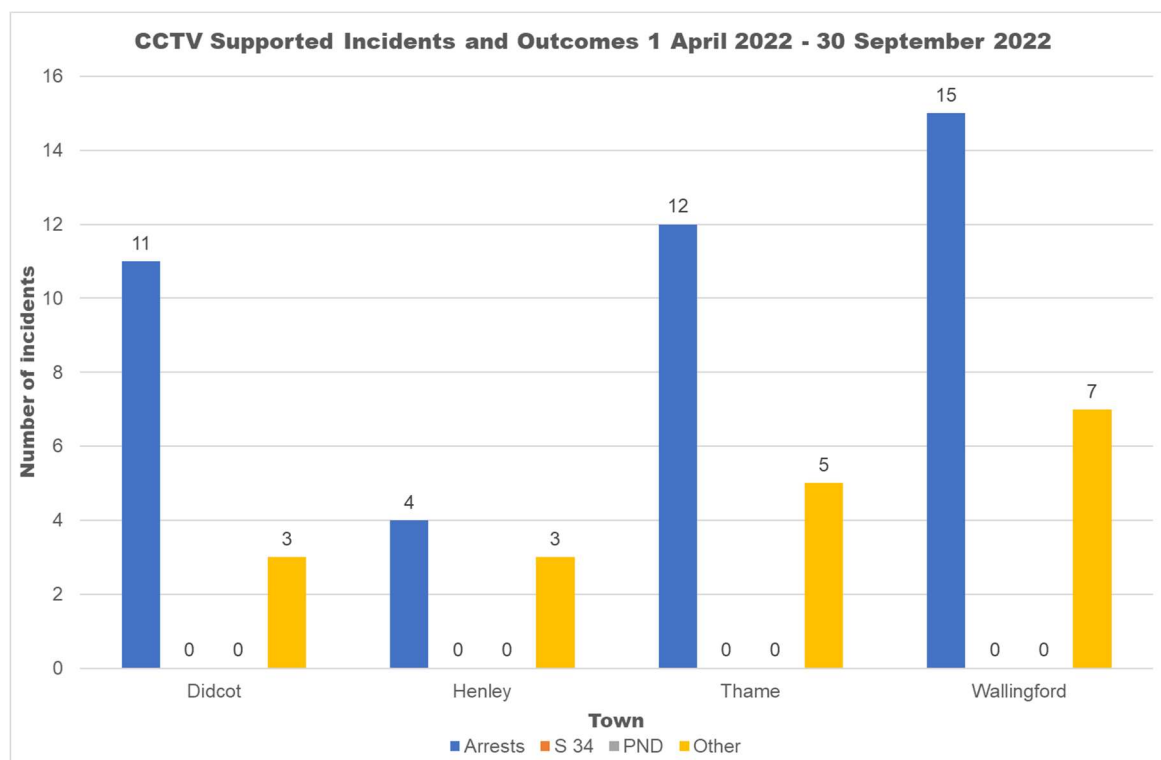


Cameras 134 and 135 are central to the town, which is reflected in the highest number of recorded uses. Cameras 143 and 144 (from June) are currently awaiting replacement as part of a forthcoming project to replace all the Wallingford town centre CCTV cameras.

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.

In the chart below, actions designated 'other' usually means that the police either gave verbal advice or a non-recordable sanction.

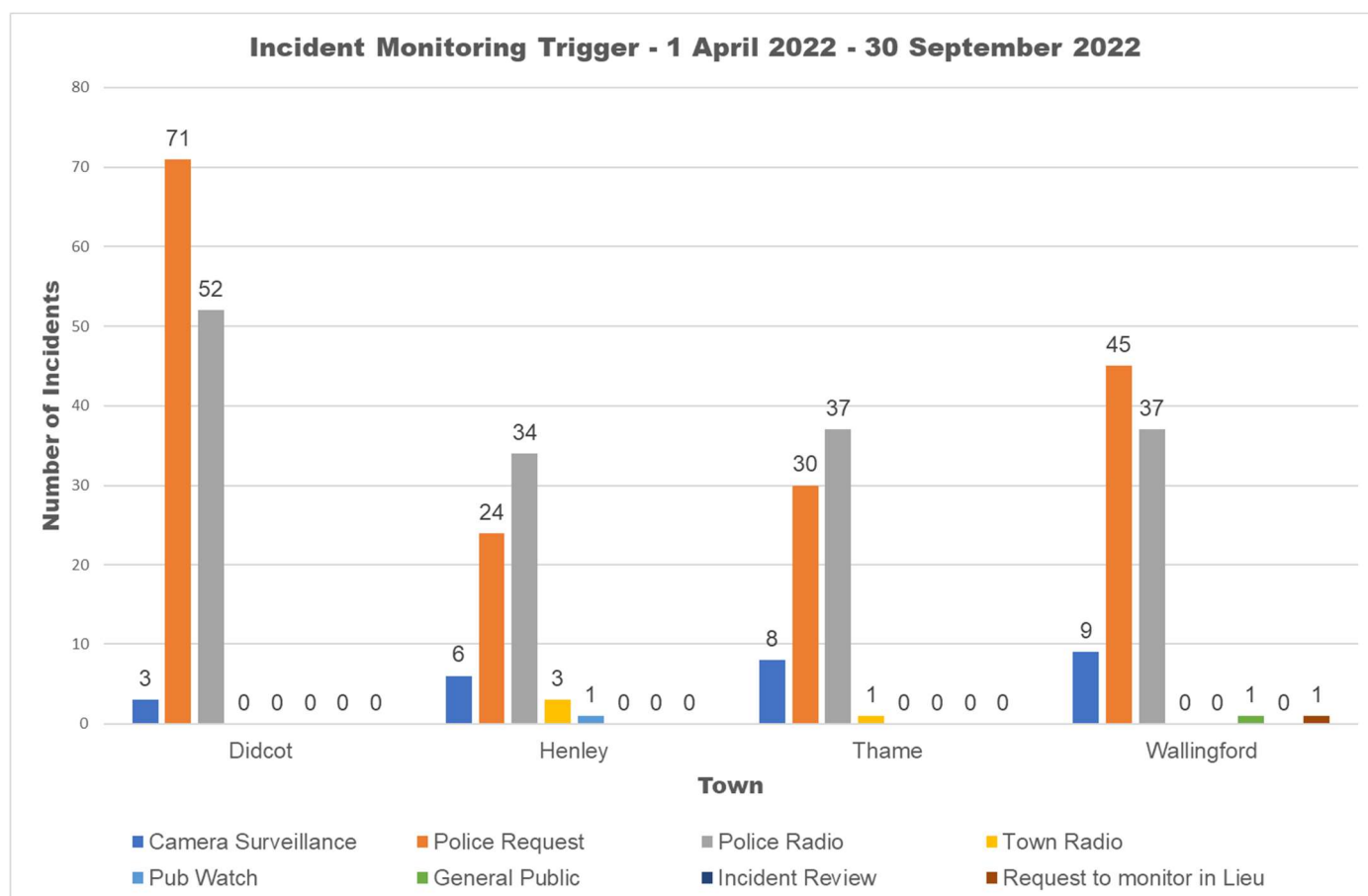


HOW CCTV MONITORING WAS INITIATED

The chart on page eight 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-on-Thames has a shop radio scheme.

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 the 'on the spot fine'



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 area most likely to experience problems.

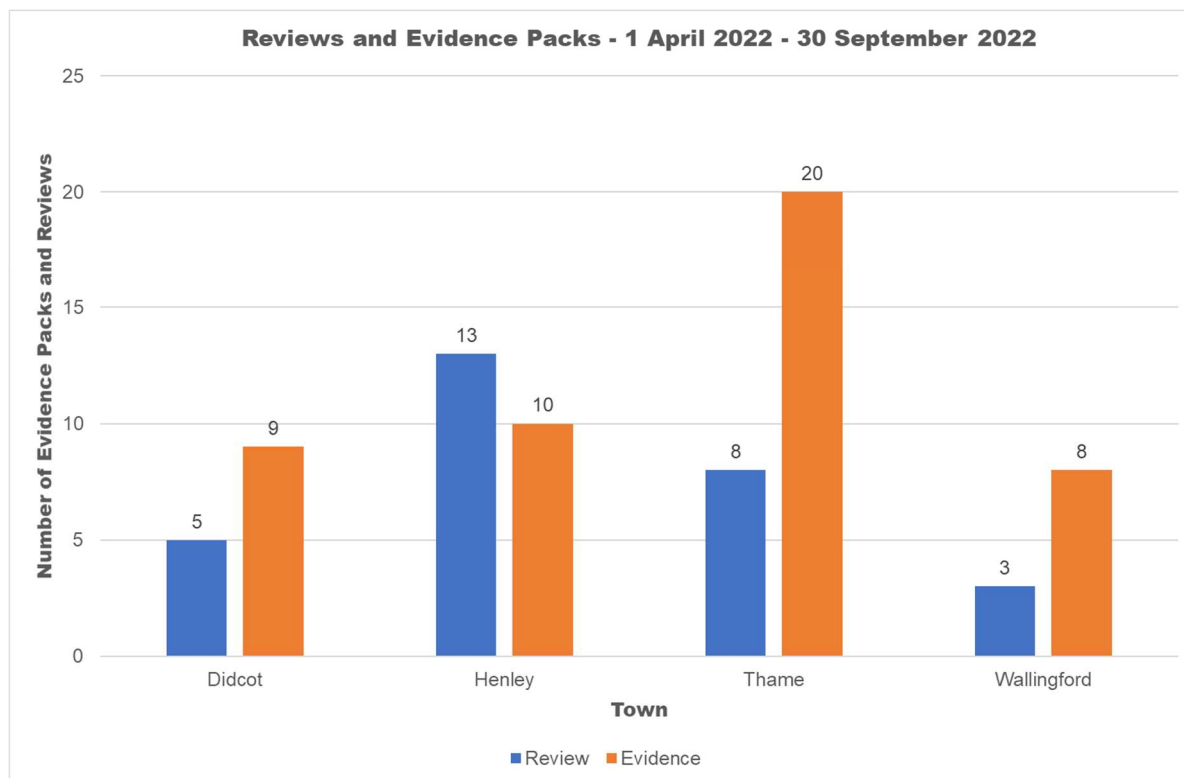
CCTV operators and the CCTV supervisor also respond to requests from members of the public and third parties under data protection legislation and subject access requests (SARs). The most common request is to examine car park or road cameras for evidence of 'non-stop road traffic collisions' in which the complainant's car has been damaged. Altogether we received ten such requests during this half of the year. In two of these cases, we were able to supply footage of specific incidents, caught on camera.

The chart at the top of page nine shows the number of evidence packs the CCTV operators put together and the number of evidence reviews they undertook, as a result of formal written requests.

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.

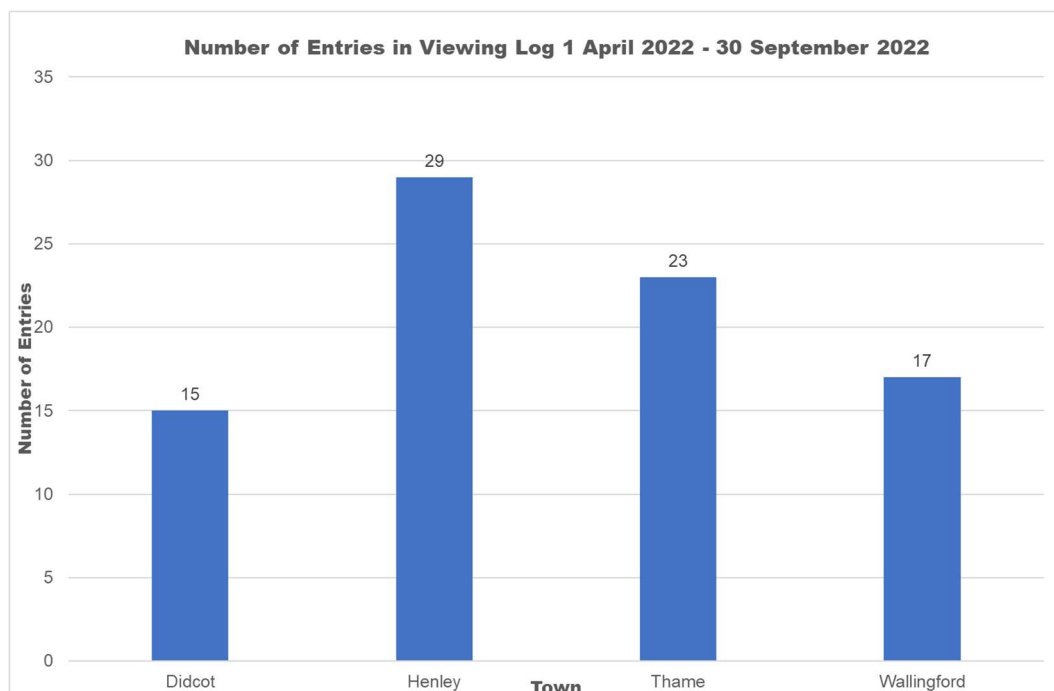
One of the greatest advantages of CCTV footage is in obtaining a guilty plea at the early interview stage. For many offences this early admission is due to the offence being captured clearly on camera and saves the expense of a full trial at either magistrates or crown court.



VIEWING LOG

When authorised personnel (mainly police officers) visit the CCTV control room to view footage, the details are entered into a viewing log. The following chart reflects the number of times this occurred between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022 across the four towns.

N.B. These visits 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 2022–23. They aim to demonstrate how our CCTV service helps to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe.

Didcot

Having monitored a group of young people causing damage to flower beds and other street furniture in the town centre, our operator informed the police and those involved were made to tidy up the mess they had made.

Over the police radio, our operator heard that the police were looking for a missing person. Having noted the description of the individual, they began an area search using the relevant CCTV cameras. When they spotted someone matching the description, our operator informed the police, officers attended and the missing person was taken home.

Henley-on-Thames

One day during the summer, our operator monitored a large group of young people consuming alcohol and jumping into the river. Due to a concern for their welfare, they contacted the police who subsequently attended, gave words of advice and ensured the safety of all those present.

Our operator was made aware that there was a man who had been threatening staff at the town's library. Noting the description of the man in question, the operator on shift used the cameras to locate him in the local area. They informed police and then directed the officers to his location, where an arrest was made.

Thame

Hearing a call out over the police radio about a fear for welfare of an elderly lady, our operator took note of their description and managed to locate them in the town centre. They directed police officers to her location so she could be safeguarded.

Having received a report about a man with a knife, our CCTV operator located him in the town and directed units to his location. Two further males became involved, assaulted an officer and ran off, taking the knife with them. Our operator tracked them, and they were then arrested. Upon review, our operator also located the discarded knife.

Wallingford

Whilst monitoring, our CCTV operator on shift saw that a large fight had broken out. They passed information to the police and helped coordinate a response. Despite a chaotic scene, they managed to give clear and concise updates, leading to multiple arrests and a section 34 dispersal order being issued.

Having heard details on the police radio about a possible drink driver, our operator located the vehicle in question in a local car park. They informed the police and continued to monitor the vehicle which was then stopped by officers as it was leaving the car park.

Date of report: October 2022

Author: James Bell (CCTV Supervisor)

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