Winchester City Council

FOI REF:	16554
RESPONSE SENT:	16/01/2026

Request

I am interested in the growing use of technology capable of detecting "sound events" which is being used, often in conjunction with CCTV systems, to monitor public areas.

This technology is designed to use audio inputs to detect sounds such as gun shots, human screams or shouts, speeding vehicles or anti-social behaviour to improve public safety.

Here are some examples of the type of technology I'm referring to:

https://soundeventdetector.eu/sound-event-detection-for-security/

https://north.tech/news/north-to-make-westminster-smarter-and-safer-through-1-2-million-contract-award/

I am trying to establish the extent to which this technology is currently being used in the UK by local authorities.

Specifically, I would like to ask:

:: Is your local authority using, or has it previously tested, sound detector technology as described above to monitor public areas for emergencies or anti-social behaviour?

:: If yes, please provide details of how many sound detectors or sound detector-equipped CCTV cameras you are operating and when they were installed.

To be clear, this request does not apply to CCTV or monitoring systems which can broadcast sound via a loudspeaker, for example to issue a public warning. It applies only to technology which monitors public spaces for audio or noise events.

Response

Winchester City Council does not use, and has not previously tested, sound detection or sound event monitoring technology to monitor public areas for emergencies or anti-social behaviour, as described in your request.

The Council does use specialist noise recording in a limited number of cases. However, this equipment is deployed solely for the purpose of investigating specific noise nuisance complaints at identified residential or commercial premises and is not used for general monitoring of public spaces. These devices are installed on a case-by-case basis in response to individual complaints and are not linked to CCTV systems or for the proactive detection of sound events in public areas.