

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Security at Preston Park



March 2018



Riverside Park – Chester le Street

Crime and Disorder Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
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Select Committee – Membership

Councillor David Wilburn (Chair)
Councillor Rowling (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Clark
Councillor Faulks
Councillor Richardson
Councillor Walmsley
Councillor Weston
Councillor Whitehill
Councillor Woodhouse

Acknowledgments

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Marc Stephenson, Operations Manager, Care for Your Area
Andrea Murphy, Preventions and Patrols Manager, Youth Direction
Louise Crisp, Youth Outreach Co-ordinator, Youth Direction
Melanie Ryder, Area Co-ordinator, Catering Service
Gareth Welsh, Butterfly World
Rachel Dodd, RiverShack
Dennis Kitson, Small Gauge Railway
Preston-on-Tees Parish Council
Local Residents

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Scope

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will also contribute to the following Council Plan 2017-2020 key objective:

Deliver sustainable events and attractions that contribute to the delivery of vibrant and economically successful town centres and economic prosperity

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Preston Park and Museum is a successful leisure and heritage attraction. Following investment in recent years the park and Museum have become increasingly popular.

The huge pressures of numbers of visitors to Preston Park and the Museum continue to challenge us with a growing need to manage the public's use of the space, to control car parking, to deal with competition for the use of spaces, and to address the upkeep of the attraction as thousands of people visit every day. Pressure on river access is also an issue.

The park has also suffered from incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour in recent months and these threaten the viability of the attraction and the satisfaction of visitors. Steps have already been taken to improve CCTV and other means of tackling antisocial behaviour in Preston Park.

There are numerous points of access to the park, both informal and formal, including rights of way and cycle paths. Clearing the 110 acre site at dusk and closing all points of access is not achievable with current resources.

Preston Hall Museum, situated in the park, is the primary means of delivering the Council's heritage work attracts c.150,000 visitors per annum.

The park itself is a popular leisure attraction, and is increasingly used for people to access the River Tees, with rowers, open water swimmers, paddle boarders, anglers, and powered craft all seeking to get onto (or into) the Tees from Preston Park. The park attracts an estimated 800,000 visits per year.

ASB within the park and the movement of people through adjoining residential streets to and from the park has an impact on the safety, or perception of safety of people and property in the surrounding area.

The safety of children and vulnerable adults using the park, including those taking part in ASB, is a concern for the general public and the Council.

The refresh of the Master Plan for the Park and Museum will be considered by Cabinet in October. The overall aim of the review is to identify the contributory factors of ASB and possible mitigating measures to address these.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

The Committee will explore the following issues:

- Night time activity
- Inappropriate use of cars
- Vandalism to buildings and threat to collection
- Threat to safety of staff and café staff
- Damage to toilets
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Swimming in river
- Dog control

in the context of:

- Car parking and traffic flow
- Access issues (inc. potential for secondary access, bridge across the river)
- Signage/ paths
- Under-used areas
- Café / Restaurant
- CCTV

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Cabinet, park users, park partners

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months.

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

Master Plan (Refresh to be presented to Cabinet September 2017)
Customer Feedback
Incidents of ASB

New information:

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

SBC Officers

Background and Context
Master Plan

Enforcement

ASB Incidents/ history
Causes of ASB

Youth Direction

Issues with Young People
Potential Solutions
Safeguarding

Museum Staff

Frontline feedback

Partners
(RiverShack, Butterfly World, Small
Gauge Railway)

Frontline feedback

Catering

Frontline Feedback

Parish Council

Issues from residents

Foreword

We are pleased to present the final report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee following its review of Security at Preston Park.

The Committee took evidence from a range of Council Services, the Parish Council and also the other organisations operating within the Park. Members also visited Preston Park on several occasions during the review and also visited other parks in the region to understand the effectiveness of solutions elsewhere.

The Committee acknowledge that the scale and nature of the site predisposes it to a number of specific vulnerabilities and believe that it is essential for further investment in security measures in order to make the park a safer environment for park users as well as preventing further damage.

The Committee were mindful that any improvements to security would need to be implemented in conjunction with development of the Master Plan for the site and could not therefore be prescriptive about specific improvements.

The Committee look forward to further reports as the proposals for the site are developed.



Councillor David Wilburn
Chair



Councillor Paul Rowling
Vice Chair

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review of Security at Preston Park.

1.2 The overall aim of the review was to identify the contributory factors of ASB within the park and possible mitigating measures to address this.

1.3 Aspirations for Preston Park Museum and Grounds sit within a master plan for the site. The aim of the master plan is to provide a coherent framework within which developments can take place over time, to ensure best use of resources and contribute to the achievement of overarching objectives. The plan contains medium and longer term aspirations rather than immediate operational matters. In October 2017, Cabinet considered a refresh of the master plan and noted that the approach to future developments within the park and any detailed work undertaken on proposals would be informed by the findings of this Select Committee review.

1.4 The Committee explored the following issues:

- Night time activity
- Inappropriate use of cars
- Vandalism to buildings and threat to collection
- Threat to safety of staff and café staff
- Damage to toilets
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Swimming in river
- Dog control

in the context of:

- Car parking and traffic flow
- Access issues (incl. potential for secondary access, bridge across the river)
- Signage/ paths
- Under-used areas
- Café / Restaurant
- CCTV

1.5 The Committee took evidence from

- Council Officers (Director of Culture, Events and Leisure, Museum Staff, Enforcement, Youth Direction, Café Staff)
- Park Partners (RiverShack, Butterfly World, Small Gauge Railway)
- Preston Parish Council

The Committee also carried out site visits to Riverside Park, Chester le Street and Hardwick Park, Sedgfield to understand the effectiveness of improvements at other parks.

2.0 Evidence

Background

2.1 Preston Park continues to attract more than 800,000 visitors annually. With the marked growth in numbers there has come the added pressure on resource, facilities and the current infrastructure. Areas that have received limited investment, such as the toilet block, café, signage

and pedestrian surfacing are now showing the strain. Despite some investment to improve capacity in the car parks, there is still a need to extend it further and improve access and egress.

2.2 The café is subject to similar pressures with huge visitor demand which cannot be served in the existing spaces, ultimately resulting in lost income opportunities and/or disgruntled visitors. The toilets are also now insufficient, unappealing, difficult to maintain and are subject to regular vandalism which worsens the situation. The independently run attractions within the park like Butterfly World contribute to the parking demand and pressure on infrastructure.

Preston Park Master Plan

2.3 The master plan outlines 28 areas for improvement, development or creation. These range from restoring boundary fencing, improving signage to investigating the feasibility of introducing new catering opportunities within PPMG.

2.4 The most important work in the medium term is likely to be the modification of the car parking and traffic flow systems and the improvement of the central café, toilets and pedestrian area. Shorter term work on pathways and signage are also a priority to encourage better use of the site and to ensure the safety of visitors. Overarching this entire plan is always the vision to establish PPMG as a major visitor destination under one brand, rather than the current disjointed feel the site has developed over time.

2.5 In October 2017 Cabinet agreed that detailed further work on possible traffic flow and car parking solutions and café and toilet improvements should be carried out as a matter of priority and noted that the approach to future developments within the park and any detailed work undertaken on proposals would be informed by the findings of this Select Committee review.

2.6 The Council has new staff and management arrangements in place, bringing the different Council teams within the attraction together under a new PPMG Development and Operations Manager. The new management team will be responsible for scoping and investigating the detail of any developments proposed within the plan, utilising their experience and knowledge of parks and heritage attractions.

Incidence of Reported ASB and Crime

2.7 SBC Enforcement have recorded 78 incidents over the past 2-year period (excluding entries which have been generated via Tasking/Patrols/Other).

2.8 Of these, the table below shows the variety of addresses that the incidents are linked to:

address	Total
Landing Stage At River Tees, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe	5
North Lodge, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RQ	1
Preston Hall Museum, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RH	9
Preston Hall, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RH	2
Preston Lane, Stockton-On-Tees, TS18 3RG	1
Preston Park Cafe, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	3
Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	49
Public Toilets, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	1
Rivershack, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	2
Skatepark, Preston Park, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, TS18 3RH	5
Grand Total	78

2.9 The following table shows the range of issues against the month they occurred:

catg	2016												2017										Grand Total
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct			
EN5 NOISE - Industrial/Commercial										1											1		
EP4 NOISE - Loud Speakers																1					1		
V01 Individual - ASB Issues									1	1	1	1				8	1	1	1	4	19		
V02 Groups - ASB Issues				1	4	2	5	2			1		6			3		1			25		
V03 Noise / Animal Issues	1						1								1	1					4		
V04 Alcohol/Tobacco Issues										1											1		
V05 Fire Issues					1					1											2		
V06 Littering / Rubbish / Graffiti										1			1			1	1				4		
V08 Vehicle Issues				2	1	2	1	1	1	3	1				1	1		1	1		16		
V09 Crime Issues		1								2	1		1								5		
Grand Total	1	1	1	2	6	4	7	3	5	8	3	1	7	1	2	14	2	4	2	4	78		

2.10 In addition to the SBC incidents, the police have received 57 complaints of anti-social behaviour, shown in the table below:

Count of Closure Code(Text)	Column Label																	Grand Total		
Row Labels	2016										2017									
	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov		
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - NUISANCE			2	4	4	3	7	7	2	5	2	2	3	3	4	1	2	1	1	53
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - PERSONAL	1						1				1	1								4
Grand Total	1	2	4	4	3	8	7	2	5	3	3	3	3	4	1	2	1	1	57	

2.11 Criminal activity at Preston Park during the past two year period, with 49 crimes recorded at Preston Park is shown in the table below against the Common Place Name:

Row Labels	Count of Common Name
PRESTON HALL MUSEUM	4
PRESTON MUSEUM SUB STATION	1
PRESTON PARK	40
PRESTON PARK CAFE	3
TEES CRUISING	1
Grand Total	49

2.12 Offences are shown on the table below, against the month they occurred:

Row Labels	2016										2017							Grand Total
	Jan	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Jan	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Nov		
01 - Violence Against The Person		2	2	3	3					1	2		2	1	1			17
02 - Sexual Offences					1		1									1		3
03 - Burglary			1					1		1								3
05 - Theft and Handling Stolen Goods		1		1	1			1				2	2			1		9
07 - Criminal Damage	2	3		1	1	1	2	1	1				1	1			1	15
09 - Other Offences					1	1												2
Grand Total	2	6	3	5	7	2	4	2	3	3	2	2	5	2	1	2	1	49

2.13 The breakdown of incidents over the past two year shows an improvement since the introduction of CCTV in March 2017. However, there are still ongoing issues; these issues were explored by the Committee and are set out in this report.

Costs of ASB

2.14 A breakdown of repairs and maintenance arising solely from incidents of ASB is not held. However, in respect of some recent incidents, the Committee was advised:

- Following incidents of wheel spinning and “doughnutting” on two separate occasions in the South Field Car Park, “make safe” repairs had cost in the region of £2,000 in labour and materials. An alternative to introducing measures to control car access would be to fully tarmac this car park, however, this solution would cost in the region of £20,000 - £30,000
- Recent repairs to toilets, including doors sinks and cisterns, had cost in the region of £2,000
- Since the jetty was installed at the riverside, repairs had amounted to £6,850 and there is currently further damage that needs repairing
- The cost for boarding up and replacing 14 windows in the Winter Garden following vandalism in October 2016 was £2,734. In the summer of the same year several windows were broken in the main hall which adversely impacted on a wedding booked at the Hall

Evidence from Council Services

Street Cleansing

2.15 A team of three dedicated staff look after the park with overtime shifts during higher footfall periods such as summer holidays and events. The staff are a regular presence in the park, engaging with the public and tend to be the first to witness ASB or discover damage.

SBC Enforcement

2.16 There are a number of ongoing problems at the park with adolescents (16 plus) and young adults tending to be committing the offences.

2.17 Car parking and traffic control are also ongoing problems and there is inappropriate use of cars, particularly at night. Parking is currently a self-managed system; all areas of the park can be accessed via car and this has led to various problems including damage to grass, ASB at the riverside and in car parks, problems with clearing the site at closing time and risks to pedestrians.

2.18 Local residents report problems with “boy racers” in the main car park when the main gates are open and this is a particular problem during the summer months.

2.19 No Regulation Orders are in place in respect of car parking although lack of power has not been a problem as enforcement officers have the power to seize vehicles.

2.20 Vandalism is an on-going problem, in particular damage to street furniture, fences and toilets and graffiti in the skate park area. Following requests from park users for the toilets to remain open until 9pm, an increase in damage had been experienced, and objects used to deliberately flood the toilets. Unauthorised access points cause further damage to fences etc.

2.21 The skateboarding area of the park is very popular, attracting a mix of groups and ages. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a concern as some children appear to be dropped off and unsupervised for long periods. There has been evidence of recreational drug use (not dealing) and alcohol consumption in the skate park area.

2.22 Recognising that the park and the museum contain a number of valuable assets, steps were taken to increase security measures. Three CCTV cameras were installed in March 2017

and these monitor the park 365 days a year. The cameras are good quality with pan, tilt and zoom and excellent night vision. Footage can be used for prosecutions. The costs of the cameras have reduced significantly in recent years and the current cost of each installed camera is £1,600 plus £1000 per column. The average camera lifespan is between 5 – 8 years.

2.23 The Committee noted that some areas of the park are not covered by the CCTV. For example, no cameras are sited at the riverside which is acknowledged to be a vulnerability. There had been plans to thin the woodland behind the museum and an aspiration to reconstruct the conservatory on the riverside; an additional camera could possibly be used for coverage in that area also.

2.24 Signage around CCTV areas was under review to raise public awareness of cameras and hopefully further reduce the number of incidents.

2.25 Recent figures showed a substantial reduction of incidents during the period April to August 2017 compared to 2016, although it is recognised that the number of incidents in 2016 had been much higher than usual.

2.26 Members discussed whether a parking fee could be charged to help to control car parking and generate income for improvements. Although it is recognised that administration costs would need to be factored in, the revenue to reinvest in the park could be significant and it is common practice to pay for parking in other parks.

Youth Direction

2.27 In August 2016, concerns about ASB and safeguarding issues had been brought to the attention of a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) meeting. Concerns included:

- ASB, littering
- Issues around use of the skate park
- Jumping in the river and swimming despite strong currents and submerged hazards
- Safeguarding concerns
- Recreational cannabis use

2.28 In response to the concerns, non-threatening outreach patrols had been deployed. There was a mix of young people and conflict was occurring between skateboarders and other young people in and around the skate park. Some young people were vulnerable and referrals were made to the Switch (CSE) project through VEMT procedures.

2.29 In order to improve security and safety, Youth Direction recommended to the Committee that the overflow car park should be closed at 5pm to deter inappropriate use and force activity into the main car park in full view of CCTV which is easier to monitor. They also recommended that any measures which could be put in place to reduce the number of pedestrian access points would be beneficial.

2.30 Youth Direction also highlighted that there is a reliance on the public to report anti-social behaviour, particularly in areas without CCTV cameras. It was suggested that more volunteers and training for staff on how to approach youngsters and report any safeguarding concerns would be useful.

2.31 Youth Direction advised that young people were aware of the CCTV cameras; considerate users welcomed them and the cameras were pointed out to young people involved in inappropriate activity.

2.32 Youth Direction advised that during the five month outreach period, staff made good relationships with the young people and a range of support and diversionary activities were put in place. In response to the interventions, there had been a significant improvement and the last time the issue was discussed by the JAG was in December 2016.

2.33 The Committee acknowledged that the initial scope had been set to focus on the impacts of ASB and the causes where this was as a result of the vulnerabilities of the attraction rather than explore underlying social factors and root causes. The Committee were satisfied that Youth Direction maintain a presence in the park with outreach patrols deployed in summer months and that the service responds to any issues that occur in the park and continue to target services to those with risk taking behaviours and other groups likely to be associated with ASB.

Catering

2.34 The park has a tearoom in the museum and the main café near the skate park which had been broken into during 2016. Café staff are sometimes subjected to abuse, more from adults than young people. Café staff could contact surveillance for assistance and museum staff give support where possible. The café also has a panic alarm. There is never a lone worker in the café.

2.35 Customers often attempt to eat their own food in the café, particularly when it is raining. Although there are notices displayed, staff have suffered verbal abuse when challenging members of the public. The Committee discussed whether an external sheltered eating area(s) might help and discussed whether an internal CCTV camera could also be installed within the café.

Evidence from Park Partners

Butterfly World

2.36 The manager of Butterfly World reported that there had been repeated incidents including break-ins and vandalism. During one break-in, there had been 15 – 20 youths in the park in the early hours of the morning and the break-in had resulted in a lot of damage to the plants due to the cold. At the suggestion of the police, eight CCTV cameras were installed externally up to the perimeter of Butterfly World. The cameras record date and time of incidents. However, on-going problems were experienced with youths shooting BB Guns at the cameras from outside of the range of the CCTV cameras.

Small Gauge Railway

2.37 There had been various incidents over the years including break-ins at the shed and rails being ripped up, vandalism of the toilets. More recently there had been the theft of three locomotives from a trailer and a fire in the workshop which had resulted in the loss of the workshop and machines, although it could not be established if this was deliberate or accidental damage. It was noted that there was no CCTV coverage in this area which is not overlooked from other areas of the park.

RiverShack

2.38 Rowing boats were stored at the river, on midstream buoys during Easter to October. RiverShack uses two of the three existing pontoons installed at Preston Park for each of the rowing boat and the passenger boat operations. RiverShack erects and dismantles all equipment each day, leaving no equipment at the riverside. This is due to a lack of storage, utilities or security, and also because any items left would be immediately stolen or vandalised.

Issues included:

- Vandalism to boats (even if midstream the river) from children to adults in early 20s. This also poses a health and safety risk
- Damage to equipment – only robust signage is used and this is removed out of season
- Damage to fencing which has necessitated repairs
- Drinking, intimidating and aggressive behaviour from men in early 20s – enforcement were called but it often took time for them to attend – a greater on site presence would help. Staff taking photos puts them at risk.
- Unauthorised use of BBQs
- Unauthorised cars accessing the river via the grass banks - a danger to children and adults
- Unsafe swimming

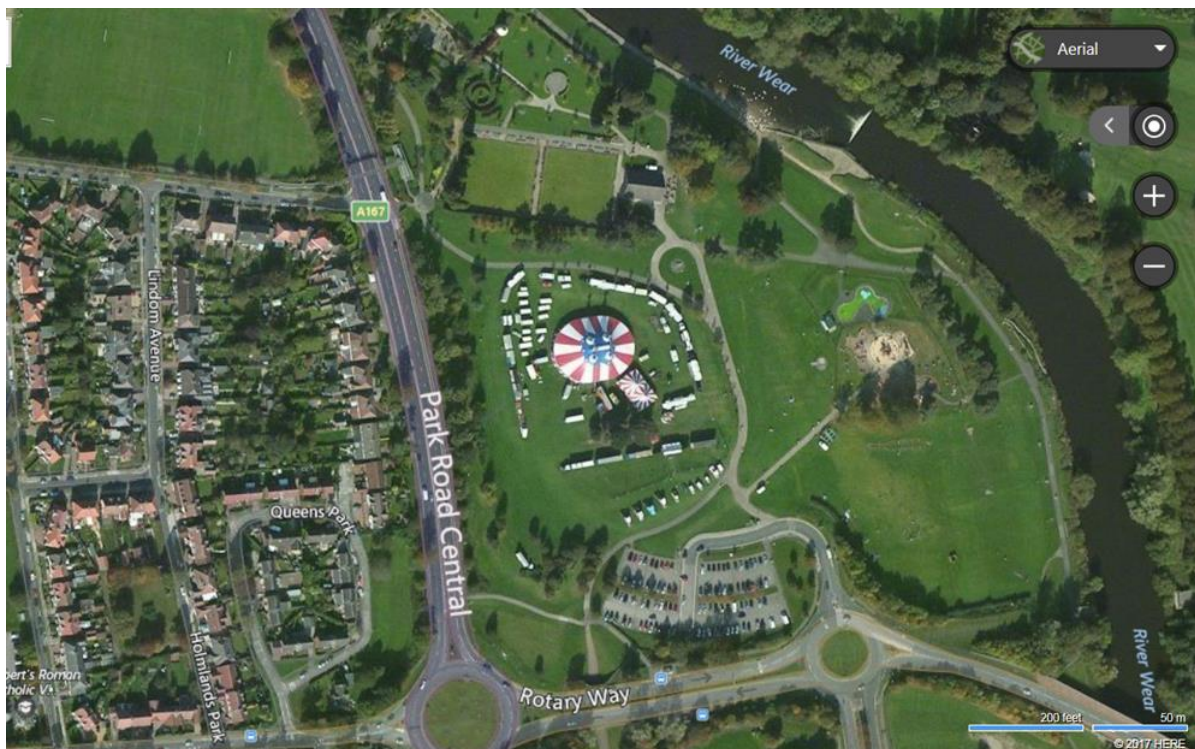
Improvements suggested by RiverShack included:

- More on site presence of wardens/ stretching of usage
- Provision of lighting on riverside pathways to increase safety and reduce ASB
- CCTV coverage at the riverside
- Improving access for those legitimately using the facilities (such as a designated access road for those bringing licensed boats and small craft)
- Robust building with utilities and storage facilities at the riverside (for boat equipment and shelter)
- Diversionary activities to mitigate ASB
- Safe swimming areas - particularly important, to help better educate young people.
- Reinstate the enforcement team on regular river patrols

2.39 Members acknowledged the need for closer working with park partners and the benefit of a greater presence in the more vulnerable areas of the park. The opportunity to review working hours for the two newly appointed park keepers in conjunction with gate closing times was also discussed.

Site Visits to Other Parks

Riverside Park, Chester le Street



2.40 Riverside Park is managed by the Leisure and Culture Directorate within Durham County Council. This site was chosen to visit as a comparable site to Preston Park due to its close proximity to houses, the river, various play areas and multiple access routes.

2.41 Currently the site has regular Care for Your Area operatives managing the cleansing and security of the site, with added support from their Sports Development and Countryside Team.

2.42 ASB does affect the site and this includes activities ranging from misuse of the river, drinking and drugs, littering, conflict in the play areas and general vandalism of the street furniture. To counteract this, Durham County Council have installed CCTV, increased staff presence and delivering community outreach projects to educate those groups likely to be involved. They have tried to reduce issues with vehicular access to the site with the introduction of locked boom gates, fencing and car parking charges and monitoring.

2.43 Car park charges at Riverside Park, Chester le Street are:

- 80 pence for up to one hour
- £1.20 for up to two hours
- £2.00 for up to four hours
- £3.10 for up to six hours
- £4.20 for over six hours

2.44 Dogs are allowed off their lead along the riverside walk areas, but they must be on a lead in the gardens. The Public Space Protection Order authorises officers to enforce against owners who do not have their dog on a lead in specified areas. A designated dog exercise area is available and dogs can be exercised off their leads in this area. Dogs, even on a lead, are not allowed in the children's fenced off play area.

2.45 Staffing Levels are:

2 FTE Cleaning Operatives (Winter)

4 FTE Cleaning Operatives (Summer)

Support from Sports Development for the Care and Management of the Splash Pad

Support from the Parks and Countryside Team for Biodiversity Work (i.e. woodland and wildlife Meadows), Education Sessions and volunteer work Parties

Café is not run by DCC but an independent trader

Friends Group established in 2014

Hardwick Park



2.46 Hardwick Park is a countryside site managed by the Leisure and Culture Directorate within Durham County Council. This site was chosen to visit as a good comparable site to Preston Park Museum & Grounds, sharing a similar audience demographic and numbers. Unlike Preston Park, the grounds at Hardwick Park have received significant external investment through the Parks for People HLF award back in 2009. This resulted in the site creating a visitor centre with toilets, learning room, offices and café. There was also investment in signage, car parking infrastructure and walkways.

2.47 Current staff levels within Hardwick are as follows:

1 Senior Ranger

2 Rangers

2 Attendants

2 Learning Staff

1 Visitor Experience Manager

1 Café Manager

Pool of casuals and volunteers to support

2.48 Improvements have been noted to ASB within this park since its restoration project. The reduction in ASB with vehicles has been significantly reduced due to the relocation of the car parks from the woodland to a more visible area, the introduction of street lighting, CCTV, Automatic Number Plate Recognition (APNR) camera, car parking charges and more structure opening and closing times of the park gates.

2.49 Staff presence on the site is also important. Within the car park area a new purpose built ranger compound was created. This has high fencing, CCTV and alarms and is an important space for securing high valued items. In the past the park did suffer from theft and damage to their plant, tools and equipment so this was deemed an important investment.

2.50 Despite much investment and changes to the infrastructure, occasions of ASB do still occur at Hardwick Park. There are occasional major incidents such as attempted break-ins to the café and car parking machines, combined with minor issues like littering, alcohol consumption, and dog fouling.

2.51 The park has a dog on lead policy. The Public Space Protection Order authorises officers to enforce against owners who do not have their dog on a lead. The dog exercise area allows dogs off their lead in a designated area. Dogs, even on a lead, are not allowed in the children's fenced off play area.

2.52 Hardwick Park is self-financing largely through the introduction of car parking charges. Cars can park all day for £3 and annual permits are available for those who visit daily such as dog walkers. When the charges were introduced, the park experienced a 10% drop in visitor numbers during the first year but this then reverted to previous visitor levels the following year and has continued to grow. Revenue from the parking charges was ring fenced for reinvestment in the park.

Preston on Tees Parish Council and Local Residents

2.53 Representatives from Preston on Tees Parish Council attended several meetings of the Select Committee and reinforced the feedback which had been received from Council Services and park partners. In particular, local residents from Clifton Gardens reported problems with "boy racers" in the main car park when the gates were open – a constant problem in the summer; quieter in the winter. A local Councillor reported that he was aware of similar problems being raised by local residents in respect of other car parks at the park.

2.54 Members noted that this supported the argument for restricting access and reviewing gate opening times.

3.0 Key Findings and Conclusion

A summary of the issues highlighted throughout this report and potential mitigating measures (including indicative costs) is included at Appendix 1.

Key Findings

The Issues:

- Preston Park is a successful leisure and heritage attraction and the volume of visitor numbers (c800,000 visitors pa) places pressure on managing the public's use of the space, controlling car parking and addressing upkeep

- The park has suffered from an increase in incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour in recent years
- Security issues threaten the success of the attraction and future investment; the cost of repairs and insurance is also rising and significant
- Park partners operating within the site (RiverShack, Butterfly World and Small Gauge Railway) also report on-going issues with ASB and crime
- The breakdown of incidents over the past two years shows an improvement since the introduction of three CCTV columns in 2017 but there are still on-going issues being experienced

Contributory factors of ASB:

- The 110 acre site has a number of authorised and unauthorised pedestrian access points which mean that there is always public access to the site
- The scale of the site makes it difficult to monitor and patrol
- Some areas of the park are not overlooked and lack of presence in these areas creates further vulnerabilities
- Car parking is not controlled and all areas of the park can be accessed via car. This leads to a various problems including damage to grass, ASB at the riverside and in car parks, problems with clearing the site at closing time and risks to pedestrians
- Lighting around the hall and park is poor in general
- The various attractions within the park operate different opening times resulting in a lack of presence at times and concern for staff safety
- Some key areas of vulnerability are not covered by CCTV surveillance

Visits to other parks:

- Riverside Park is a comparable site to Preston Park due to its close proximity to houses, the river, play areas and multiple access routes. ASB issues have been addressed through the introduction of boom gates, fencing, car parking charges and monitoring
- Hardwick Park has a similar audience demographic and numbers but unlike Preston Park secured significant external investment in 2009 resulting in a new visitor centre and investment in infrastructure. The reduction in ASB associated with vehicles was due to the relocation of the car parks from the woodland to a more visible area, the introduction of street lighting, CCTV, APNR, car parking charges and more structured opening and closing times. Staff presence including a secure, purpose built ranger compound also had a significant impact
- Hardwick Park is self-financing largely through the introduction of car parking charges. When the charges were introduced, the park experienced a 10% drop in visitor numbers during the first year but this then reverted to previous visitor levels the following year and has continued to grow. Revenue from the parking charges was ring fenced for reinvestment in the park.

Conclusion

The Select Committee concluded that whilst Preston Park is a successful and popular leisure and heritage attraction, the scale and nature of the site predisposes it to a number of specific vulnerabilities resulting in a range of security issues and ASB. The Committee believe that these problems can be alleviated through further investment in security measures and better management of access points and vehicle controls and greater staff presence. The Committee acknowledge that whilst the improvements may require some initial “invest to save” funding, there would be savings in ongoing repairs and maintenance which can be offset against these initial, up-front costs. Improvements to the security of the park will also make it a safer environment for park users as well as preventing further damage.

Recommendations

- (1) That the types and incidence of anti-social behaviour and key vulnerabilities within Preston Park be noted.
- (2) That the range of potential solutions to deter and reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour within Preston Park be noted.
- (3) That enhanced CCTV, vehicle controls, improved signage and lighting are acknowledged as the main means by which the key vulnerabilities within Preston Park can be addressed.
- (4) That the Select Committee report informs the development and implementation of the Masterplan for the Park.
- (5) That a business case is developed for implementing appropriate safety and security measures from the range of measures highlighted in the Select Committee report.
- (6) That the business case sets out the actual costs taking into account the likely savings in ongoing repairs and maintenance to enable Cabinet to make appropriate financial provision and/or consider the means by which income can be generated towards the costs of the improvements.

GLOSSARY

PPMG	Preston Park Museums and Grounds
CCTV	Close Circuit Television
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
SBC	Stockton Borough Council
JAG	Joint Advisory Group
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
VEMT	Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing, Trafficked
APNR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition

Scrutiny Review of Security at Preston Park – Issues and Potential Mitigating Measures

Vandalism Potential Mitigating Measures	CCTV	Signage	Perimeter Maintenance (to reduce unauthorised access points)/ fencing	Aligning Opening Times	Presence	Lighting
	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	£1600 per column	£250 - £350 per sign inc installation – approx. 10 = £2,500 - £3,500	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence	Possible within existing resources	Possible within existing resources	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence
<p>Vandalism <i>Issues:</i> Damage to street furniture and litter bins Damage to fencing Vandalism of toilets Broken windows in winter garden Break ins and vandalism of Butterfly World Small gauge railway – rails ripped up and break ins at the shed Vandalism of boats equipment at the riverside</p> <p><i>Key vulnerabilities:</i> Winter Garden Butterfly World Staff car park and small gauge railway River and riverside</p> <p><i>Potential Solutions:</i> Additional CCTV coverage of vulnerable areas CCTV surveillance inside the café Improved signage to raise awareness of CCTV Aligning opening times of all attractions within park to ensure more consistency and presence on site Review Park Rangers working hours in conjunction with gate closing times Improved lighting around the hall and key vulnerable areas</p>						

Night Time Activity	CCTV	Signage	Perimeter Maintenance (to reduce unauthorised access points)/ fencing	Parking Management/ Traffic Flow	Opening Times	ANPR	Presence	Lighting
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	As previous	Additional car parking signage £3500 - £4500	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence			£13000 - £15000 each including installation (worth being aware may have connection issues – fibre broadband may need considering at an extra cost		As previous

Night Time Activity

Issues:

Car issues – engine revving, loud music and wheel spinning etc. in the main car parks
 Alcohol abuse
 Recreational drug use
 Break ins at Hall, Butterfly World and Small Gauge Railway
 Clearing the site of cars at closing time

Key vulnerabilities:

Multiple access points
 Overflow car park/ isolation of vehicles
 Riverside, pontoon and structures – damage to equipment and risk of drowning
 Rear of museum
 Staff car park and small gauge railway site

Possible solutions:

Additional CCTV coverage of vulnerable areas
 Additional CCTV coverage at Preston Lane entrance to monitor access to staff car park and railway area
 Improvements to CCTV surveillance of Butterfly World
 Improved signage to highlight opening hours
 Introduce measures to manage, compartmentalise and control parking areas
 Automatic Number Plate Recognition to enable action to taken where necessary (i.e. track and trace car owners, deter inappropriate behaviour and can be used to pursue criminal action)
 Improved lighting around the hall and key vulnerable areas

Car Parking	CCTV	Signage	Parking Management/ Traffic Flow	Opening Times	ANPR
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	As previous	As previous	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence	As previous	As previous

Car Parking

Issues:

Unauthorised parking causing damage to grassed areas. This also puts the public at risk as vehicle movement is difficult to restrict
Difficulties in securing the site at closing time due to the presence of vehicles still in the park
Complaints from residents who can hear cars racing and playing loud music.
Attracting unwanted behaviour in cars on evenings.

Key vulnerabilities:

All cars parks
Cars parking on the grass near to the river
All areas can be accessed by car

Possible Solutions:

Better signage of parking / traffic routes
Introduce measures to manage, compartmentalise and control parking areas
Automatic Number Plate Recognition to enable action to taken where necessary (i.e. track and trace car owners, deter inappropriate behaviour and can be used to pursue criminal action)
Low level fencing around grassed areas to keep cars in a controlled, defined area and away from pedestrian areas
Improvements to all car parking surfacing to make it easy to maintain and reduce the temptation of drivers spinning their wheels - with our current looser surface and grassed overflow

River and Riverside	CCTV	Signage	Parking Management/ Traffic Flow	Presence	Lighting
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	As previous	£3500 - £4500	Additional gate and fencing to prevent vehicle access £4500 - £5000	As previous	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence

River and Riverside

Issues:

Vandalism of boats and damage to equipment and signage
 Damage to fencing which has necessitated repairs
 Drinking, intimidating and aggressive behaviour
 Unauthorised use of BBQs
 Unsafe swimming in river
 Damage to jetty

Key vulnerabilities:

Riverside and jetty area

Potential Solutions:

Additional CCTV coverage of vulnerable areas
 Aligning opening times of all attractions within park to ensure more consistency and presence on site
 Review Park Keepers working hours in conjunction with gate closing times
 Introduce measures to manage, compartmentalise and control parking areas
 Education and awareness of dangers of swimming in the river

Café	CCTV	Signage	Opening Times	Presence	Lighting
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	£1600 per camera	£350	As previous	As previous	As previous

Café

Issues:
 Abuse and aggressive behaviour from customers (mainly adults)
 Complaints from customers being asked not to eat their own food on the premises (usually in inclement weather) – this causing repeated conflict

Key vulnerabilities: Café

Potential Solutions:
 Aligning opening times of all attractions within park to ensure more consistency and presence on site
 Install internal CCTV camera
 Provide covered external eating area for visitors to eat their own food in inclement weather – Costs 10 – 15k approx

Small Gauge Railway (Sheds and Track)	CCTV	Signage	Perimeter Maintenance (to reduce unauthorised access points)/ fencing	Opening Times	Presence	Lighting
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	Camera at Preston Lane entrance £1600	£350	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence Additional £13,000 - £15,000 for security controlled gate option	As previous	As previous	As previous

Small Gauge Railway (Sheds and Track)

Issues:

Small gauge railway – rails ripped up and brake ins at the shed
Theft of locomotives
Fire at the workshop

Key vulnerabilities:

This area of the park is accessible and not covered by current CCTV, hidden, and there is lack of regular staff presence

Potential Solutions:

Additional CCTV coverage of vulnerable areas
Additional CCTV coverage at Preston Lane entrance to monitor access to staff car park and railway area
Improved signage to raise awareness of CCTV
Aligning opening times of all attractions within park to ensure more consistency and presence on site
Review Park Rangers working hours in conjunction with gate closing times
Improved lighting

Staff Safety	CCTV	Perimeter Maintenance (to reduce unauthorised access points)/ fencing	Opening Times	Presence	Lighting
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	As previous	As previous	As previous	As previous	As previous

Staff Safety

Issues:

Abuse from customers
 Drinking and intimidating behaviour

Key vulnerabilities:

Staff car park
 Café
 River and riverside

Potential Solutions:

Additional CCTV coverage of vulnerable areas
 Improved signage to raise awareness of CCTV
 Aligning opening times of all attractions within park to ensure more consistency and presence on site
 Review Park Rangers working hours in conjunction with gate closing times
 Improved lighting around hall and key vulnerable areas
 Investment in additional radios to improve communication and response times

Dog Control	CCTV	Signage	Perimeter Maintenance (to reduce unauthorised access points)/ fencing	Presence
Potential Mitigating Measures	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estimated Cost	As previous	£800 orientation board to show where dogs can and can't go off lead	financial pressure with no cost estimate available at presence	As previous

Dog Control

Issues:

Dogs going into areas they are not permitted (i.e. play areas, museum, café)

Aggressive dogs

Dog fouling issues

Conflicts between dog owners

Key vulnerabilities:

Play area

Around café and toilets

Potential Solutions:

Encourage adherence to existing policies and procedures

Dog exercise area to allow dogs to be exercised off lead in a more controlled area

Improved signage

Staff presence

Examples of measures used at other parks to improve security

Metal boom gates to enable effective closure of car park areas



Timber birds mouth fencing to prevent unwanted access to grassed and other areas by vehicles.



Double estate fence gate with pedestrian access to prevent unauthorised vehicular access



Solar panel columns to improve lighting

