

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 5th October, 2017.

Present: Cllr David Wilburn (Chairman), Cllr Paul Rowling (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Officers: Reuben Kench (Culture, Events & Leisure), Marc Stephenson (Care for your Area), Sara Fortune (Development Operations Manager), Melanie Ryder (Development & Neighbourhood Services), Louise Crisp (Development Outreach Co-ordinator), Judy Trainer, Annette Sotheby (DCE)

Also in attendance: Cllr M Cherrett – Preston Parish Council

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Allan Mitchell, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Julia Whitehill

CAD 21/17 Evacuation plan

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

CAD 22/17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CAD 23/17 Scrutiny Review of Security at Preston Park

Evidence was presented to members, the key points as follows:-

CARE FOR YOUR AREA

Street Cleansing

- A team of three dedicated staff look after the park with overtime shifts during higher footfall periods such as summer holidays and events. Two FTEs worked from 7am – 8pm (including weekends), one FTE worked the additional hours on evenings during summer months and weekends. The park was well kept and tidy.
- These staff were a constant presence in the park, engaging with the public and they tended to be the first to witness anti-social behaviour or discover damage.
- Staff duties included keeping the park clean, for example litter picking (including dog fouling), first aid, public information etc. In the busier summer periods this was challenging with current resources.

Enforcement

- Although there had been a decrease in incidents of anti-social behaviour, over the past year, there were still ongoing problems such as damage to street furniture and fences and damage to the toilets. Although there had been less incidents of graffiti in the skate park areas, this was also still an issue.
- The toilets had been closed earlier to try to alleviate problems.

However, following requests from park users for the toilets to remain open until 9pm, an increase in damage had been experienced, and objects had been used to deliberately flood the toilets.

- Recent figures showed a substantial reduction of incidents during the period April to August 2017 compared to 2016, although it was recognised that the number of incidents in 2016 had been much higher than usual.
- It was recognised that the park and museum contained a number of valuable assets and this made it especially important to increase security measures.
- Surveillance measures put in place have had a sustained impact, with more structured enforcement mechanisms and CCTV – three cameras, monitored the park 365 days a year.
- Members requested a breakdown of offences relating to incidents pre 2016 to establish trends.
- A map showing the location of cameras was shown, although some areas were not covered. For example, no cameras were sited at the waterside. A fourth camera near the birdcage (to monitor the back of the museum) had been considered, although funding was not available at the time.

Members enquired if the cameras provided clear photographic evidence which could be used in prosecutions. It was confirmed that the cameras were good quality with pan, tilt and zoom and excellent night vision. Footage had been used to show parents evidence of their children involved in anti-social behaviour and could be used for prosecutions.

Members asked about the cost of cameras and how they were funded. The cost of each installed camera was £1600 plus £1000 per column. Average camera lifespan was between 5 – 8 years.

- Reuben Kench advised that there were 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.
- Signage around CCTV areas was currently under review to raise public awareness of cameras and hopefully further reduce the number of incidents.
- The skateboarding area of the park was very popular, attracting a mix of groups and ages. Anti-social behaviour in this area was not only committed by young people but adults also. Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults was a concern as some children were dropped off and unsupervised for long periods.
- Adolescents (16 plus) and young adults tended to be committing the offences.
- There was inappropriate use of cars, particularly at night and mostly involving adults.

- Car Parking and traffic control was also an ongoing problem including the problem of containing cars in the car parks. Due to the numerous points of access to the park it was difficult to clear the site at closing time with current resources. Reuben added that there had been an increasing need to bring in staff to help with marshalling.

- No regulation orders were in place for car parking although some existing controls were in place. Lack of power had not proven to be a problem as enforcement officers had the power to seize vehicles. A lot of enforcement and education had taken place over the last year and there had been some improvement. The introduction of CCTV might also have contributed.

- With regard to parking issues in nearby estates when events were taking place, more powers might be needed such as Clearway Orders.

- Members asked for clarification around the park lock up procedure. It was noted that security surveillance was an important part of the security checks. The café, toilet, skate park and overflow parking checks were carried out, then the main gate secured, followed by Preston Lane to secure the back car park. Two residents on site had keys for the park gates to enable access and egress and there were no issues with this.

Members expressed concern that it was not difficult to gain access to the park at night, and discussion took place around possible improvement measures including:

- Fitting barriers
- Clearer signage around opening/closing times, particularly when clocks changed and warnings that vehicles may be locked in
- Reducing number of access/egress points
- Controlling access to safeguard public areas

- The riverside was recognised as a vulnerability. However, it was important that any solution would need to provide access for emergency services.

- Unauthorised access points caused further damage to fences etc.

- Members asked if substance abuse was a problem in the park. It was noted that there was evidence of recreational drug use (not dealing) and alcohol consumption in the skate park area.

- Parking was currently a self-managed system, except for events when a security organisation was brought in.

- Members discussed whether a parking fee should be charged to generate income for improvements. Although it was recognised that administration costs would need to be factored in, the revenue to reinvest in the park could be significant. It was common to pay for parking in other parks and Members asked for details of charges at other parks and what the possible income could be based on visitor numbers at Preston Park.

Youth Direction

- The service included a prevention team managing the caseloads of 8 -17 year olds, a youth support team and youth patrols diverting young people into positive provision
- In August 2016, concerns about anti-social behaviour and safeguarding issues had been brought to the attention of a JAG meeting. Concerns included:
 - o ASB
 - o Issues around use of the skate park
 - o Jumping in the river and dangerous use
 - o Older males and females in cars
 - o Safeguarding concerns
 - o Recreational cannabis use
- In response to the concerns, non-threatening outreach patrols were deployed on Tuesdays between 6 and 8pm when there could be between 40 – 70 young people in the park. This was extended to Sunday evenings.
- There was a mix of young people and conflict was occurring between skateboarders and other young people in and around the skate park. Low level ASB included littering and bad language. Other concerns related to males and females in cars and young people smoking cannabis in the play park. Some young people were vulnerable, and referrals were made to the Switch (CSE) project through VEMT procedures.
- During the five month outreach period, staff made good relationships with the young people and links were established with All Saints Church Youth Club. 10 young people were supported to make changes through “lifeline” and other services.
- Young people took part in a workshop at half-term, working with Community Safety, the Fire Brigade and Police learning about consequences. Prisoners spoke to young people about how prison could affect lives.
- A restorative justice approach was adopted and one young person who had set fire to a bin paid for the damage and attended the workshop with parents.
- Street-based education was used to divert youngsters already known to police and enforcement for anti-social behaviour.
- Information was shared around vulnerable children and young people at risk.
- Funding was obtained from Tesco for 17 youngsters to play weekly football at Ingleby Barwick.
- It was recognised that sometimes young people did not want to engage in services or youth clubs. However, re-educating them that they were in a public park was still important.

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. Youth Direction still maintained a presence in the park with outreach patrols deployed between 6 – 8pm in the summer months and responding to any issues.

In order to improve security and safety, Youth Direction recommended 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 would be easier to monitor. Any measures which could be put in place to reduce the number of pedestrian access points would also help.

It was recognised that there was a reliance on the public to report anti-social behaviour, particularly in areas without cameras. More volunteers would be beneficial, with training for staff on how to approach youngsters who sometimes ask for help if unattended, and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Youth Direction advised that young people were aware of the CCTV cameras; considerate users welcomed it and the cameras were pointed out to young people involved with inappropriate use.

Catering

- The park had a tearoom in the museum and the main café near the skate park which had been broken into last year.
- Café staff were sometimes subjected to abuse, more from adults than young people. Café staff could contact surveillance for assistance and museum staff gave support where possible. The café also had a panic alarm. It was confirmed that there was never a lone worker in the café.
- There had been significant improvements since the CCTV cameras had been installed nearby.
- Customers often attempted to eat their own food in the café, particularly if it was raining. Although there were notices displayed, staff had suffered verbal abuse when challenging members of the public. It was suggested that an external sheltered eating area(s) might help.

Members expressed concern over the staff abuse and advised that the Audit Committee should be made aware of verbal assaults. It was noted that the Café Supervisor recorded incidents of this nature.

- Members discussed whether a CCTV camera could be installed within the café to deter behaviour of this type.

In addition, a number of complaints had been received from members of the public who had been ejected from the café for bad behaviour. If a camera was installed the recordings could be reviewed.

- The café opening hours were extended during the busier summer months when it was well attended, but staff had the flexibility to lock up earlier when it was quiet.
- The Supervisor felt that staff were supported with CCTV and by the

anti-social behaviour team.

CAD **Work Programme**
24/17

The next meeting to be held on 10th November and would continue to take evidence.

AGREED – that the work programme be noted.

CAD **Chair's Update**
25/17

The Chair had nothing further to report.