

Overview and Scrutiny update – Community Safety Team

Street Lighting

Hampshire County Council have monitored county-wide crime trends since May 2018 as part of the preparation for part-night lighting. This data is however based on all crimes over a 24-hour period and isn't broken down and is county-wide as opposed to local.

The conclusions they have reached are that the introduction of part-night lighting has had no measurable impact on crime (positive or negative). There is a spike this June, but likely related to the gradual relaxation of lockdown and associated behaviors.

They have looked at county-wide burglary, robbery, vehicle and criminal damage crime types, with these generally seeing an overall reduction, which was an ongoing trend prior to part-night lighting being introduced.

Anecdotally at a local level there is concern from residents about crime related to the part-night lighting. No in-depth survey has been completed on this since the last Overview and Scrutiny meeting owing to Covid and resources available. Should members wish a survey to be carried out there may be merit in approaching County Council colleagues to assess whether a wider survey could be conducted by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with a campaign highlighting the benefits of the scheme and the reality around crime rates.

Antisocial Behaviour in Parks

Since the easing of lockdown, we have had significant complaints from the public around antisocial behavior in the parks across the Borough – ranging from late night noise, music, littering and vandalism.

As a first port of call we encourage residents to report to the 101 non-emergency number, due to the Council having no late night parks provision. Understanding resident concern around the time it can take to get through to 101, we have also been recommending the online reporting form available here - <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-b/report-antisocial-behaviour/>.

If individuals are identified by officers, we work in partnership to discourage this behaviour through the use of warning letters and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts as well as direct liaison with parents.

Our CCTV team have been monitoring cameras the parks where available (Queens Road Rec, King George V, Municipal Gardens, Aldershot Park, Manor Park) and report directly through to Police when a significant incident is in progress that requires a Police response. An additional camera is also being installed at Moor Road recreation ground in response to an increase in reporting and to protect a significant investment by the Council in new equipment.

Further, the Comms team have recently carried out a campaign on social media targeting young people around noise levels and littering in order to encourage respectful use of our green spaces. The reach of this is currently being assessed with a view to repeating in the future if deemed successful.

We are in regular liaison with the Parks Manager, Building Services and Contracts in order to quickly deal with issues when reported.

Street attached in Aldershot Town Centre

Again, since the easing of lockdown we have experienced a resurgence in street attached individuals in Aldershot Town Centre, with complaints centred on alcohol and substance misuse, and the subsequent associated behaviours this brings.

Due to resourcing and operational issues around Covid, it has taken some time to mobilise a response. However, moving into the next few months we will be working closely in partnership with the Police, other Council officers and third sector colleagues to offer a wide-ranging response centred around engagement and enforcement where appropriate. The Council will be utilising its powers around Community Protection Warnings and Notices in order to tackle the most disruptive individuals. Non-compliance with these notices can lead to police and court sanctions.

An additional Community Patrol Officer will be recruited in the coming months in order to focus on Aldershot Town Centre, engaging public and retailers, as well as gathering evidence to take further action where appropriate.

For information, the Public Space Protection Order in both Aldershot and Farnborough Town Centres has now expired. Upon review there was little evidence of formal use to justify its extension as is required by law. However, should it be deemed that a new order focused on specific behaviours in Aldershot Town Centre be required, complimentary to the ongoing regeneration work, evidence to take this forward can be assessed.

For now, the focus is on using Council powers to target individuals.

David Lipscombe, Community Safety Team Leader

August 2020