

Report on	Railway Park Action Plan
Date of Meeting	Thursday 5 th November 2020
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks
Contact Officer	Nigel Hill

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update and seek approval from Members on planned actions associated to addressing issues in relation to anti-social behaviour in Railway Park, Dungannon.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Generally, community feedback on local parks and green spaces in Mid Ulster District Council emphasises the very positive benefits they and their families gain from their local green spaces – the way in which they help build a sense of community, the opportunities they provide for relaxation and escape, and the space they provide for exercise and recreation. However, they also tell us about how some parks have become neglected in their areas and how anti-social behaviour has become high on the list of things that they were worried about. People are concerned about the way that some parks seem to attract anti-social behaviour. They see that this in turn puts off other members of the community, like older people and mums with kids, creating areas that people are scared to visit. Evidence supports the public perception that poor maintenance of parks can attract anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Encouragingly, it also provides examples of places where a combination of good design, management and maintenance has transformed less attractive areas back into popular community spaces. Case studies also suggests that investing in creating good-quality parks and green spaces, which are well staffed and provide a range of attractive facilities for the local community, can be a far more effective use of resources than security interventions or blanket use of CCTV albeit balanced control measures and monitoring will always be part of an effective management model. We therefore acknowledge a broad-spectrum consensus that investing in park staff, in good design, and in the ongoing maintenance of spaces is vital if parks are to be the much-valued community assets that our communities have told us they want.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Dungannon's third largest park at just under twenty acres, Railway Park is a vital green space in the south-west of the town providing much needed recreational space and play along with access routes to shopping, community event space, services and transport links for school children and commuters. However, unfortunately Railway Park has, like some parks, a history associated to anti-

	<p>social behaviour. Regular incidents recorded refer to acts of significant vandalism and damage, disorderly behaviour associated to alcohol abuse and emergency responses to assault and organised fights. Local neighbourhood policing and PCSP recognise Railway Park as a 'hot spot' because of the number and nature of the incidents associated to the location.</p>
3.2	<p>Recently released statics from PSNI 12 months from 1st September 2019 to 31st August 2020 recorded 65,872 anti-social behaviour incidents in Northern Ireland, an increase of 9,776 (17.4%) on the previous 12 months. The trend generally followed the same direction as that seen in the previous twelve months, up to March 2020. The introduction of lockdown measures resulted in substantially higher levels of anti-social behaviour incidents, most notably in April and May 2020. When compared to the same months in 2019, figures for April to August 2020 were higher by 2,957, 3,272, 1,822, 1,412, and 1,378 respectively. This is reflected at a local level with Mid Ulster Policing District recording an increase of reported anti-social incidents of 19.4% over a 12 month period September 2019 to August 2020 in comparison to that of the previous year. These figures include 65 reports of ASB, 22 reports of criminal damage and 3 firework incidents in the Dungannon area.</p>
3.3	<p>Council Parks Service have recorded 12 reported incidents in Railway Park associated to anti-social activities and vandalism/damage over the period from 1st January 2019 to July 2020.</p>
3.4	<p>Mid Ulster District Council are progressing with significant redevelopment proposals for Railway Park in access of £1m on a twelve month works programme, scheduled for commencement in early 2021. The Council, at an early stage shared concept design proposals with the PSNI's Crime Prevention Design Service. This approach was to ensure that all feasible aspects of community safety were considered and where possible incorporated into hard and soft landscaping and infrastructure design features. (appendix)</p>
3.5	<p>Council took this approach as an initial and fundamental step of an action plan to combat the current held perceptions that Railway Park is not a safe environment. The creation of a safe environment not only relies on the physical aspects of design and creation of visitor friendly hard and soft landscapes, it invariably also relies on co-ordinated cross agency/organisational partnerships, sustainable management structures, continued investment, robust maintenance programmes and uncompromised community support to create the shared utopia that successful public parks possess. The formulation of a synchronized action plan to meet the challenges associated to Railway Park is a focus for the Council and in particular the Parks Service and should be for other partner organisations.</p>
3.6	<p>Works previously carried out between November 2018 and March 2019 in Railway Park to reduce anti-social behaviour included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree and foliage removal along three specific sections of the Park to remove tightly packed vegetation which encroached the main pathway to improve visitor visibility and safety. It also improved soiling and making good the respective areas of approximately 200 linear metres – approximate cost £17,345.

3.7

- Upgrade of 14 number pathway lights from 250 watt metal Halide to 11 watt LED fitting at a cost of £4,480. This measure enhanced lighting quality and supported safety improvements while also resulting in energy consumption improvement.

The benefits of the works targeted the following objectives:

- Improved Access and Movement - clear paths that provide for convenient movement without compromising security.
- Visibility - Walkways that are publicly accessible, overlooked and well lit.
- Activity - Safe walkways that generate increased users that the level of human activity is appropriate and creates a reduced risk of crime and sense of safety at all times.

RAILWAY PARK ACTION PLAN

Improvement Objective: Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and the perception that anti-social behaviour is a significant factor on public visits to Railway Park

Key Milestones:

1. A reduction in the actual number of anti-social behaviour incidents reported
2. A reduction in the actual number of recorded incidents of criminal damage
3. Increased number of community involvement projects, schemes and events in Railway Park

Actions	Service Responsible for Implementation	Time scale	Resource Implications	Outcome
Clearing of light restrictive vegetation and site lines - foliage removal and clearing of light restrictive vegetation/under growth and site lines along the 200m banked section. Some other minor tree/shrubbery works to improve light transfer and	Property Services / Grounds maintenance / Parks Service	1 mth	Estimated cost = £4,800 - not within current budget	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

	site lines at pedestrian access points and around the underpasses.					
	Lighting Enhancement - Installation of a new lighting under both underpasses, and a new light at the Ulsterbus access point which currently have no or very limited lighting.	Property Services	2mths	Estimated cost = £3,750 - not within current budget	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	
	Lighting columns - One option working with existing columns is to change the heads to double heads which are design to 'throw' the light further rather predominantly downwards. However a longer term solution is required to the overall lighting issue in the Park.	Property Services	2mths	Estimated cost = £5,775 - not within current budget. (Focusing on seven ASB hotspot locations indicated by the PSNI.)	Public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour	
	More co-ordinated approach to interventions identify list of interventions provided by all agencies / organisations	Parks Service / PCSP / PSNI	3mths	Within budget	Co-ordinated approach to tackling anti-social behaviour	
	Visible presence in Railway Park	Parks Service / Property Services /	1mth	Within budget	Increased public reassurance	

		Grounds maintenance / PSNI			Reduction in anti-social behaviour	
	Targeted response to hot spot areas Need for innovative approach to evidence gathering for prolific offenders	Parks Service / PCSP / PSNI	3mths	Within budget	Significant impact on recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour	

Actions	Service Responsible for Implementation	Timescale	Resource Implications	Outcome
Detached Youth Work Focussed youth work in identified areas of concern to work with young people and target groups	EA Youth Service/ PCSP / PSNI	4/6mths	Within Budget or additional funding for specific Activities and Resources £TBC	Young People engaged with the Youth Service. Reduced number of reports of ASB. Young People engaged in Diversionary and Alternative Activities

	Develop target group social media / awareness campaign	Parks Service / Marketing – Communications / Community Dev / PCSP	1/2mths	Within budget	Improved community engagement and public reassurance, reduction in fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
	Review staff resources / recruitment / role of Park staff/utilisation of temporary security. Consider staffing parks after dark in conjunction with neighbourhood policing initiatives	Parks Service / PCSP / PSNI	3/6mths	Additional budget would be needed – requirements to be further considered.	Reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents in parks after dark.
	Actions	Service Responsible for Implementation	Timescale	Resource Implications	Outcome
	Develop activities for young people / target groups within the park Consider joint use of community premises	Parks Service / EA Youth Service / PCSP	3/6mths	Within budget	Joined-up approach to the provision of community play and diversionary activities
	Enforcement e.g., Drinking dog fouling, rubbish	Environmental Health / Parks Service /PCSP / PSNI	1/3mths	Within budget	Reduction in reported incidents in parks associated to Drinking /dog foul / litter

	Railway Park Capital works Programme	Technical Services / Parks Service	12/18 mths	Within budget	Re development of Public Park
4.0	Other Considerations				
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications				
	Estimated cost for vegetation and lighting improvements is £14,325. This is not included within current revenue budgets. Where additional possible resources have been proposed, this will need further assessment by SMT, appropriate committee's and council as part of the rate setting process for approval before implementation.				
	Human: Where additional staffing structures or programmes are proposed, additional resources will require to be calculated and presented to SMT, appropriate committee's and council as part of the rate setting process for approval before implementation.				
	Risk Management: In line with Council policies and procedures				
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments				
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.				
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council policies and procedures.				
5.0	Recommendation(s)				
5.1	This report is for the purposes of seeking approval from members on the proposed actions associated to combating anti-social behaviour in Railway Park, Dungannon and the associated additional costs presented in the report.				
5.2	Members are asked to approve the allocation of additional financial resources estimated at £14,325.00 in addition to existing budgets to facilitate the identified short term action plan works.				
6.0	Documents Attached & References				
	N/A				