
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

07 July 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor A S Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services

Ward(s) affected:

Wyken

Title:

Petition – Request for CCTV to be installed at Caludon Park

Is this a key decision?

No

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 1858 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council in July 2021. The petition is supported by Councillor F Abbott and requests that the Council install CCTV AT Caludon Park.

The petition reads:

“We the undersigned petition the Council to provide CCTV coverage for the park to stop our children being assaulted and so that people are no longer afraid to walk through”.

The petition goes on to provide the following justification:

“After several recent attacks the local community have finally had enough”.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to:

- Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.

- Note the number of reported issues of anti-social behaviour recorded at Caludon Park over the past 12 months.
- Note the cost of installing CCTV at Caludon Park is estimated at £15,692.19
- Note the park already has CCTV and the limited effectiveness it has in deterring crime and ASB.
- Endorse the actions being taken by the Parks Service Team and the Community Safety Team to reduce antisocial behaviour in Caludon Castle Park.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: A location map of Caludon Castle Park including the location of the existing CCTV camera.

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Caludon Castle Park is an area of green space within the portfolio of Streetscene and Greenspace. It is a popular and highly valued park which is well used by the local community. The Park is a designated Green Flag Park which is an internationally recognised standard of excellence. The Park is situated within the Wyken Ward and is 99,010 sqm in area.
- 1.2 Approximately 10 years ago, the Parks Service independently purchased two NOMAD camera systems including one for Caludon Castle Park.
- 1.3 These cameras were independent to those managed by ESU or West Midlands Police and were not part of the City Council's core CCTV network. The cameras record images for 72 hours before it is overwritten. Any data therefore has to be downloaded within 72 hours of the incident. This has to be done on site via a laptop with suitable wireless technology. It can then be transferred to a Flash drive memory stick.
- 1.4 If the Police require any recorded footage, they first have to apply to the City Council Information Governance team and provide a completed WA170 Digital Viewing Request form. The Parks Service are then notified and meet with a designated police officer in the park with the dedicated laptop to download the required footage. The footage is then saved to a memory stick which is kept by the police. This is a laborious operation and no longer compliant with legislation including BS 7958:2015, the Information Commissioner's CCTV Code of Practice (www.ico.gov.uk) or the Coventry Communications Centre CCTV Control Room Code of Practice for CCT.
- 1.5 There are over 200 green spaces administered by Coventry City Council. The Parks Service receive many requests for CCTV to be provided in our parks and green spaces. Such requests need to be balanced against various considerations.

a. Cost

The cost of installing a new fully compliant CCTV system in Caludon Castle Park has been estimated (November 2021) at £15,692.19. There would also be a cost for linking the system via a fibre-optic cable to the new offices the Community Safety team at Whitley Depot. Although costs for this are not confirmed, the cost for linking a similar system from Longford Park to Whitley Depot is estimated to be at least a further £40,000. This does not include the annual monitoring and maintenance costs for the new cameras.

The cost for supplying and monitoring the number of cameras required to monitor the entirety of a large park such as Caludon Castle Park is outside of the Parks Service budget.

b. Number and severity of reported incidents

Overall, the number of reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour in Caludon Castle Park is relatively low. Over the past 12 months the police have received only 24 calls and attended only 4 recorded incidents relating to the park.

c. Camera effectiveness

It is impractical to provide a consistent level of visual surveillance across a natural green space such as a park. The landscape of parks in Coventry typically includes such natural features as hedges, shrubs and trees etc as well as buildings, play equipment and other large features providing blind spots to cameras. The perpetrators of crime and ASB are aware of the limits of CCTV and will take measures to avoid being seen by the cameras. This can include identifying and using the 'blind' spots and also wearing clothing such as caps or hoods or Covid-facemasks to hide their faces. Furthermore, the most frequent time for ASB and crime is in low light conditions such as at night when even new 'starlight' cameras are least effective.

- 1.6 Crime and ASB do still occur in Caludon Castle Park, albeit infrequently and despite the presence of existing CCTV. Even where new CCTV camera systems are installed in other parks and similar areas of the city, crime still occurs. Even though there are relatively few incidents of recorded anti-social behaviour in Caludon Castle Park, we are very much aware of the impact any crime or anti-social behaviour may have on the victims and the local community, especially when violence is involved. We consequently take the matter extremely seriously. In an on-going effort to keep crime and ASB as low as possible in Caludon Castle Park and others across the city, we work closely with colleagues in the Community Safety and receive support from the neighbourhood policing team who provide regular patrols of Caludon Castle Park. In this instance however we do not believe new cameras would deter anti-social behaviour from occurring within this park and hence cannot justify the cost of providing them. Furthermore, the need to comply with the new legislation governing CCTV and the apparent lack of effectiveness of the current cameras means we must remove the existing cameras.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. The option of installing CCTV within the park has been rejected in consideration of the relatively low number of recorded incidents and its disproportionately high cost and limited effectiveness.
- 2.2. The option to do nothing has also been rejected. We will continue to work with the local police service and community safety team to maintain regular patrols of the park. We will work closely with local residents to encourage positive use of the park – including the creation of a new 'Friends of Caludon Castle' volunteers' group and to actively encourage visitors to the park to report any concerns or incidents. We will also review options for reducing the risk of crime/ ASB in the park and continue for other means to improve the safety of all visitors to the park.

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to:

- Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.
- Note the number of reported issues of anti-social behaviour recorded at Caludon Park over the past 12 months.
- Note the cost of installing CCTV at Caludon Park is estimated at £15,692.19
- Note the park already has CCTV and the limited effectiveness it has in deterring crime and ASB.

- Endorse the actions being taken by the Parks Service Team and the Community Safety Team to reduce antisocial behaviour in Caludon Castle Park

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. No consultation has taken place on this issue

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. To be agreed subject to approval of a recommendation within this report.

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance

- 5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The actions outlined in section 2.2 will be managed within existing resources.

- 5.2. Legal Implications

Assaults on individuals are crimes which are investigated by the police and prosecuted by the Criminal Prosecution Service and not the Council.

6. Other implications

- 6.1. **How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?**

Parks and green spaces are highly valued by the citizens of Coventry and contribute greatly to improving the quality of life to those that live and work in the city and help address health inequalities and provide valuable wildlife habitats

- 6.2. **How is risk being managed?**

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile.

- 6.3. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

Continued maintenance of the site will be delivered using existing resources.

- 6.4. **Equalities / EIA?**

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

- 6.5. **Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

No direct impact

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

There are no implications

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