

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

12 October 2021

### Report of the Director of Central Service Director and Deputy Chief Executive

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Recommendation to Council

#### **1 REVIEW OF CCTV AT TONBRIDGE FARM SPORTS GROUND**

**This report asks Members to consider the petition set up by Mrs Marie Wheatley in relation to an incident involving her son at Tonbridge Farm Sports Ground and to consider whether improvements to the existing CCTV provision are required.**

#### **1.1 Petition**

1.1.1 On 13 September 2021 the Council received a petition from a local resident (attached as Annex 1). The full petition can be found at [Petition - CCTV down Longmead Park Tonbridge! - Change.org.](#)

1.1.2 The petition asks that the Council installs CCTV cameras at Longmead in Tonbridge in order to ensure the safety of children using the area of open space.

1.1.3 The petition contained 2953 signatories. Under the Council's adopted petition scheme (attached as Annex 1.1) petitions with more than 1,500 signatories will be debated at either full Council or Cabinet, depending on whether the matter relates to an Executive or Council responsibility. In the present case the appropriate forum for consideration of the petition is Cabinet.

1.1.4 This report sets out the details of the petition, and the relevant background information concerning the existing provision of CCTV in the area. Members are requested to consider whether any further action is required in response to the petition.

#### **1.2 Incident at Tonbridge Farm Sports Ground (also known as Longmead Park).**

1.2.1 The petition states that on Saturday 4 September, Marie Wheatley's son was attacked by another boy (we understand this boy was known to him) with a wrench at Tonbridge Farms Sports Ground. He was taken to hospital having suffered a badly bruised back. As a result of this assault, Mrs Wheatley started an online petition calling for better CCTV provision in this area. She is concerned about ongoing anti-social behaviour at the park, including intimidation and bullying by other youths.

### **1.3 Current CCTV provision**

- 1.3.1 At present there are three live monitored cameras in the vicinity of Tonbridge Farm Sports Ground (details in restricted **Annex 2**).
- 1.3.2 The quality of the images here is as good as the rest of the town centre CCTV. When the cameras are being controlled by the operator they can be moved and zoomed in to obtain evidential quality footage. When the cameras are resting, they are zoomed out to get a general overview of the large area covered.
- 1.3.3 On a typical day the CCTV control room could look at these cameras 4-5 times and if anything unusual or suspicious is seen, the operator will investigate further. This can vary if other works or investigations are required. If anything is active on the Police radios, the operator can go straight to the CCTV and investigate. Footage is automatically saved for 30 days and can be viewed by the police at the control room.
- 1.3.4 There are some concerns around foliage from some of the trees that may be obscuring some views of the park area (mainly the car park area). This will be investigated further to see whether any foliage (or trees) needs removing (although as we are coming into the winter months this may not be an issue).
- 1.3.5 In summary, the cameras that are in place currently do give adequate coverage of the park as a whole and the image quality of the cameras is good. The CCTV Control Room can live monitor the area and can respond quickly if any incidents occur. The Police can access the images if required.
- 1.3.6 Whilst it is always possible to increase provision of cameras, lighting etc, it is not considered necessary given the current range and provision of coverage. The increased monitoring is felt to be the most important change to be made.

### **1.4 Addressing anti-social behaviour concerns**

- 1.4.1 A number of low-level incidents of anti-social behaviour have been reported to the Police and Community Safety Unit at Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, although it is not believed that these are linked to the assault which took place. The area is not viewed as a hotspot area for anti-social behaviour or crime by the Police or Borough Council. However, it should also be noted that not all incidents may be reported and therefore these agencies may not have an accurate account of the issues in this location.
- 1.4.2 The Police are aware of the assault on Mrs Wheatley's son and have been keeping Mrs Wheatley informed of the ongoing investigation.
- 1.4.3 Police and partners are actively patrolling the area (including the Community Policing Team, the Police Youth Engagement Officer and KCC Community Wardens). Any individuals raised as being a concern will be referred to the appropriate agencies for further discussion/support.

1.4.4 The Community Safety Partnership had already commissioned the Ember CIC (Community Interest Company) and Kenward Trust to undertake some engagement work with young people in this area. The St Giles Trust (commissioned through the Police and Crime Commissioner) also undertake youth engagement work in this area. This work will continue in order to speak to the young people about any anti-social behaviour and to also provide them with diversionary activities.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

1.5.1 None arising from this report.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.6.1 There may be financial considerations if improvements/additions need to be made to the CCTV.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

1.7.1 Any risk assessments required will be carried out as appropriate.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.8.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.9 Policy Considerations**

1.9.1 Community Safety, Young People

## **1.10 Recommendations**

1.10.1 That the petition be accepted and noted

1.10.2 That the CCTV provision that is currently in place continues with increased monitoring by the CCTV Control Room. The Borough Council and Police to work together to address any incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to them.

Background papers:

Nil

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