

THE ASSEMBLY

2 NOVEMBER 2005

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Title: Petitions for better security and lighting on the footbridges between 1) Ripple Road and Sparsholt Road and 2) St Awdrys / Essex Road and Salisbury Road and 3) other footbridges in the Barking area. | For Information |
| <p>Summary:</p> <p>Two petitions have been received. One with 242 signatures (238 from different households) asking for better lighting for the footbridge linking Ripple Road and Sparsholt Road; and one with 367 signatures (325 from different households) raising concerns regarding assaults, muggings and the lack of safety and asking for CCTV and improved lighting on the footbridges linking St Awdrys, Essex Road and Salisbury Road.</p> <p>This report is submitted in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 15 of the Council's Constitution which requires petitions, which contain more than 50 signatories from separate households, to be reported to the Assembly, together with details of action taken or proposed.</p> <p>Wards Affected: Gascoigne and Eastbury</p> | |
| <p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>Network Rail is responsible for the maintenance and security of these footbridges.</p> <p>Legal:</p> <p>The council is unable to carry out work on the bridges without the consent of network Rail.</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p>These footbridges are vulnerable to crime especially robbery and assaults. Adding mirrors, better lighting and other security measures would be an effective deterrent against these crimes. The quality of life and fear of crime for the residents is directly affected by whether these measures are put into place.</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Diversity:</p> <p>The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a requirement on local authorities to make an assessment of the impact of new and revised policies in terms of race equality. Existing policies have already been subjected to impact assessments. This Authority has adopted an approach of extending the impact to cover gender, disability, sexuality, faith, age and community cohesion.</p> <p>As this report does not concern a new or revised policy there are no specific adverse impacts insofar as this report is concerned.</p> | |

Crime and Disorder:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals.

In relation to this report there is a direct link with crime and disorder. Local residents currently feel the bridges are too dangerous to use both by adults and children, therefore making parts of the Borough inaccessible. The security measures are required on the footbridge to prevent and deter crime and disorder and reduce the fear of crime for the residents. The footbridges are the property of Network Rail and the council has no jurisdiction on them without the permission of Network Rail.

Recommendations

The Assembly is asked to note that

1. The actions taken to date;
2. The Council will continue to put pressure on Network Rail to improve the security on the footbridges; and
3. The Council is seeking legal advice to establish what action the Council can take in respect of the footbridges.

Reason

To assist the Council in achieving its Community Priority of "Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer".

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Contact Officer: Teresa Munro | Title: Deputy Community Safety Manager | Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2861 Fax: 020 8227 5699 E-mail: teresa.munro@lbbd.gov.uk |
|---|---|---|

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 The council has received two petitions, both requiring enhanced security on two specific footbridges in the Barking area.

1.2 The first petition from residents states:

'Recent activity on and around the pedestrian footbridges at St Awdrys Road/Essex Road and Salisbury Avenue Barking has heightened the fears of local people regarding their personal safety when using the footbridges. As these footbridges provide the principle pedestrian access to the Town Centre, Barking station and several schools we, the undersigned, request that the council work with other responsible agencies to improve the security of and lighting on the bridges.'

- 1.3 The second petition from local residents states:
'Better street lighting on footbridge for Ripple Road and Sparsholt footbridge'.
- 1.4 The footbridges are the property of Network Rail.
- 1.5 In view of the issues raised a meeting was held on Thursday 14th April 2005 involving the lead petitioners, Police, Local Authority, British Transport Police, Transport for London and Network Rail.
- 1.6 Network Rail failed to attend the meeting or send any apologies.
- 1.7 The lead petitioners raised concerns on muggings, assaults, antisocial behaviour, and fear of crime, graffiti and cleanliness on and around the footbridges. Full discussion took place and the following action points were agreed:
- Street wardens to patrol the areas.
 - Police Community Support Officers to be tasked to the areas.
 - The street cleansing team will continue to clean the area including the bridges.
 - Contact to be made with Network Rail and a further meeting to be arranged.
 - British Transport Police to carry out a formal crime reduction survey for the areas.
- 1.8 Copies of the petitions were sent to Network Rail and continuous efforts were made to engage with them.
- 1.9 A further meeting was held on Wednesday 6 July 2005 involving the lead petitioners, Ward Councillors, Council Officers, Network Rail and Transport for London.
- 1.10 The agreed actions from that meeting were as follows:
- Network Rail's Route Crime Team to carry out site visits to the bridges and complete an assessment / gap analysis report of their findings.
 - The report to be forwarded to the Council and Transport for London who will then meet with Network Rail and formulate an action plan.
 - Network Rail's team of liaison officers to contact the council to arrange 'rail awareness' sessions in schools.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 No report has been received from Network Rail.
- 2.2 The Police 'Safer Neighbourhood' Team are patrolling in the areas of the footbridges and on going police operations are being conducted in the area.
- 2.3 Street Wardens are patrolling the areas and liaising with the petitioners.
- 2.4 Incident log sheets have been issued to the lead petitioners to monitor incidents.
- 2.5 The street cleansing team are cleaning the bridges.

- 2.6 British Transport Police have conducted a crime survey for the eastern end of the District line – this is not specific to the two footbridges cited in the petitions.
- 2.7 Network Rail has made contact once with the Council since the meeting held on 6 July via e-mail on 9 August 2005 and gave the following update:
- The lighting meets the required levels.
 - The type of caging used on the footbridges is a reflection of the level of trespass and vandalism incidents recorded by the police and is necessary to protect trains and workers.
 - Details of the contact for their 'External Liaison Officers' who will provide 'rail awareness' session in schools.
 - With regards to enhancing security on the footbridges by improving lighting or the installation of CCTV a jointly funded scheme may be possible, however, this would be dependant upon the cost of the scheme given Network Rail's need to prioritise on anti-trespass and vandalism resources.
 - Their 'Maintenance Delivery Unit Manager' will assess the security levels on the footbridges and they have proposed a meeting between the Council, London Underground Limited (LUL) and themselves to discuss the issue further.
- 2.8 No further contact has been received from Network Rail until 12 October. The following update was given:
- The type of caging used on the footbridges in question - particularly the density of the wire mesh - is a specific response to the level of trespass and vandalism incidents recorded and the need to protect trains and track workers alike. The lighting also meets the required level.
 - Network Rail is committed to enhancing security in and around station environs. The footbridges in question have not been flagged by British Transport Police as hotspots. Their maintenance teams therefore target resources at crime hotspots in an effort to enhance security.
 - Regarding Network Rail's suggestion to improve the security of the footbridges (e.g. lighting or the installation of CCTV) by a jointly funded scheme, following discussions with their maintenance team, such resources are being targeted in areas with higher levels of recorded crime at present.
 - Apologies were given for the delay in responding to recent e-mails, this was due to annual leave commitments and is not a reflection upon the seriousness Network Rail attaches to issues of safety and security.
- 2.9 The Council will continue to put pressure on Network Rail to improve the security on the footbridges.
- 2.10 Legal advice is being sought to establish what action the Council can take on the footbridges.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 Crime has been monitored within a 200 metre radius of the two footbridges for two timescales, year on year. The four and half months prior to the first meeting of 14 April 2005 and the four and a half months after that meeting. The table below shows the figures.

| St Awdry's Rd/Essex Road/Salisbury Avenue Footbridge | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|--|-----------|
| Recorded Crime/Disorder | From 1 st Dec 04 to 14 th Apr 05 | | From 15 th Apr 05 to 31 st Aug 05 | |
| | 03/04 | 04/05 | 2004 | 2005 |
| Violence Against the person | 5 | 5 | 5 | 12 |
| Sexual Crimes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Street crime | 7 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Antisocial Behaviour | 6 | 9 | 15 | 10 |
| Total | 18 | 19 | 21 | 29 |

| Sparsholt Road /Blake Avenue Footbridge | | | | |
|--|---|----------|--|-----------|
| Recorded Crime/Disorder | From 1 st Dec 04 to 14 th Apr 05 | | From 15 th Apr 05 to 31 st Aug 05 | |
| | 03/04 | 04/05 | 2004 | 2005 |
| Violence Against the person | 9 | 3 | 6 | 10 |
| Sexual Crimes | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Street crime | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Antisocial Behaviour | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 12 | 7 | 11 | 14 |

- 3.2 The figures show that crime and disorder, especially violent crime and street crime, are increasing in both areas.
- 3.3 Investigations have taken place regarding CCTV. A site visit by Council officers has identified that it would be impractical to site any cameras on the actual footbridges. If the cameras are located above the cages their view would be obscured by the density of the caging. If they are placed inside the caging they will be easily accessible and liable to be vandalised. However, there are poles to facilitate cameras on the footpaths either side of the footbridges. The council has identified two costs for the installation of CCTV using these poles in both areas. The quotes include a third footbridge which runs next to Essex Road / Salisbury Avenue.

The first quote is for installing mobile cameras which the council already possesses. These cameras are moved around the Borough as and when hot spot areas are identified. These would not be a permanent fixture. The installation cost to enable the mobile cameras use in these areas is £5,000.

The second quote is to install permanent cameras on each footpath either side of the footbridges at a cost of £55,000.

Currently no budget has been identified to facilitate either process.

4. Consultees

- 4.1 Graham Stark – Metropolitan Police
Stuart McVernon – Network Rail
Carl Horseman – Transport for London
Paul McQuillam – British Transport police
Teresa Parish – DRE
Alex Anderson – DRE Finance
Lee Russell – CS finance
Muhammad Saleem – CS legal
Naomi Goldberg – CS policy and performance
Colin Beever – DRE corporate estates
Jeff Elsom – DHH community Safety
Darren Henaghan – DHH Head of Service
David Woods – DHH Director

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

- Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 14 April 2005
- Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6 July 2005
- Petitions