

Enforcement Trial in Beddington Park Local Committee Update

Background

Beddington Park, has been extensively improved and upgraded to make it even more welcoming to visitors with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The main package of works from the £3.7m funding is now complete. The new playground is open, the lake and stock pond have been dredged and various landscaping works have been carried out including planting of herbaceous flower beds, in the Grange Garden and Churchyard Garden, and the new orchard in the Grange Garden. New volunteer rooms have been created, improvements have been made to infrastructure and new signage and interpretation panels have been installed around the park.

The 2018 visitor observation study conducted between May and July 2018 has identified that this has brought an increase in the annual person visits to Beddington Park of 9.8% since 2017, and 30.3% since 2015. This figure represents an increase of 61,982 annual visits since 2017.

In October 2017, the Beddington and Wallington Local Committee agreed a 6 month trial in response to an increase in antisocial behaviour in the park including the use of disposable and gas powered BBQs, a concentration of large groups using the park and BBQ area with sound systems and gazebos, and inappropriate and unmanaged car parking. The trial included;

- engaging with a third party and delegating powers for enforcement in Beddington Park
- the implementation of a permit/charging system for the static BBQs
- the introduction of a private parking enforcement solution for the roads within the park
- the enforcement of environmental crime experienced within Beddington Park including disposable littering, dog fouling, BBQs and noise

It was recommended that an update was presented to the Beddington and Wallington local committee in October 2018.

Service provided

District Enforcement Ltd have since been contracted at no cost to the authority with all revenues gained from the enforcement and BBQ permits used to offset the costs of the service.

District have provided 445 patrol hours in the park since the trial commenced on the 7 May 2018. A summary of the outcomes to date include;

Parking

- 814 Parking Charge Notices (PCNs) issued within the park (63% payment rate)
- 34 appeals to District Enforcement
- 47 tickets being pursued for debt recovery

BBQs

- 101 full day bookings
- 146 half day bookings
- 118 two hour bookings

Environmental Enforcement

- 131 unauthorised BBQ warnings issued
- 25 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for littering, fly tipping and dog fouling, 80 warnings issued (71% payment rate)

District Enforcement has generated revenues of £39,580 as of the 21 September 2018 since the introduction of the Enforcement Trial on 7 May 2018. What this has demonstrated to the Council is that the service modelled as it is can be run as cost-neutral.

Feedback

Over 70 responses have been received through the feedback form that was set up on the Council's website since the start of the trial.

Representations have also been made from a number of groups including District Enforcement themselves, the police, council officers as well as key stakeholders identified prior to the contract's commencement.

In summary;

- an improvement in access to the park through Church Road and a positive response from emergency vehicles
- a decline in vehicles parking in non-designated areas when officers are patrolling, however PCN numbers and feedback has suggested parking infringements in and around the access road from the cricket club to the Pavillion cafe
- an average of 50% of the parking spaces throughout the park recorded as still available during the trial
- appeals received by District, and enforcement activity does indicate a need to review further provision for parking and/or signage in the access road outside the cricket club and animal hospital
- an increase in the number of users in the park making use of the BBQs
- a decrease in the number of complaints regarding groups affecting other users in the park

- static BBQs are still being used outside of the booking times (10am to 5.30pm)
- a decrease in police attendance in the park for 'low level' anti-social behaviour reports

The Council has responded to a low number of complaints regarding the service since the trial commenced. These have included;

- the provision of parking bays in the access road to the Grange
- parking enforcement on the access road outside Beddington Park Cottages on Church Road and requests for dispensation for residents
- toilet provision in the park and that the BBQs have increased pressure on the current facilities
- duplicate BBQ bookings at the start of the trial
- inadequate signage for parking
- the approach to enforcement with gazebos and how proportionate the approach has been with unauthorised activities

Proposed approach

It is proposed that District continue to work within the park and that the trial is extended until April 2019 to ensure a balanced review is undertaken for the first 6 months and the impact of any changes are managed appropriately.

Options for the BBQs, parking management and environmental enforcement with proposals for the future of any scheme being presented back to the local committee on the 22 January 2019.

During this time the Council will engage and provide representations from key stakeholders. If you would like to be involved in this exercise, please provide your contact details and the nature of your interest.

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