

Appendix 3

Sandford Park Crime Prevention Assessment from Gloucestershire Constabulary

Following receipt of the petition the Council's Green Space Team asked the Crime Prevention Design Advisor at Gloucestershire Constabulary to undertake a Crime Prevention Assessment of Sandford Park.

Assessment Prepared by the Crime Prevention Design Advisor:

The petition has focused researched initially conducted 20-30 years ago. The Painter and Farrington papers explore the levels of crime 12 months before the installation of new street lighting, and compares with the following 12 months.

Both studies concentrated on urban streets and focussed on the following crime types

- Burglary
- Vandalism/outside theft
- Vehicle crime
- Cycle theft
- Robbery/snatch theft
- Assault
- Threats/pestered

They identified that improving street lighting in these areas increases natural surveillance and discourages burglary and theft.

In September 2008 a systematic review of Street light was written by Welsh + Farrington, entitled 'Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime'. This research was used by the College of Policing in 2015 as part of their What Works toolkit.

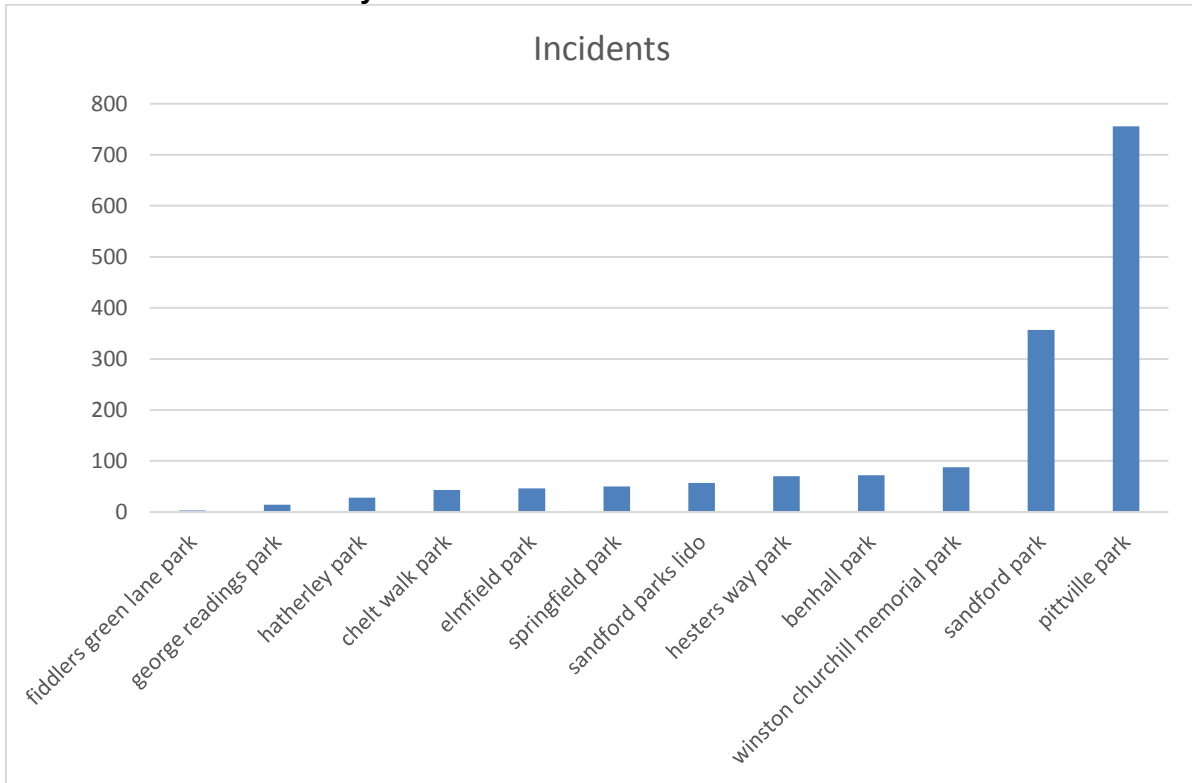
This systematic review of 13 previous studies for the United States of America and Great Britain. Their findings highlighted the reduction in burglary and theft, and a decrease in violent crimes within housing estates.

The petition explains extra lighting would save money in the long term, however this is based on the number of burglaries and thefts in residential areas. In the areas described in each research paper, the local authority had already approved the increase in light, so the cost was never a consideration.

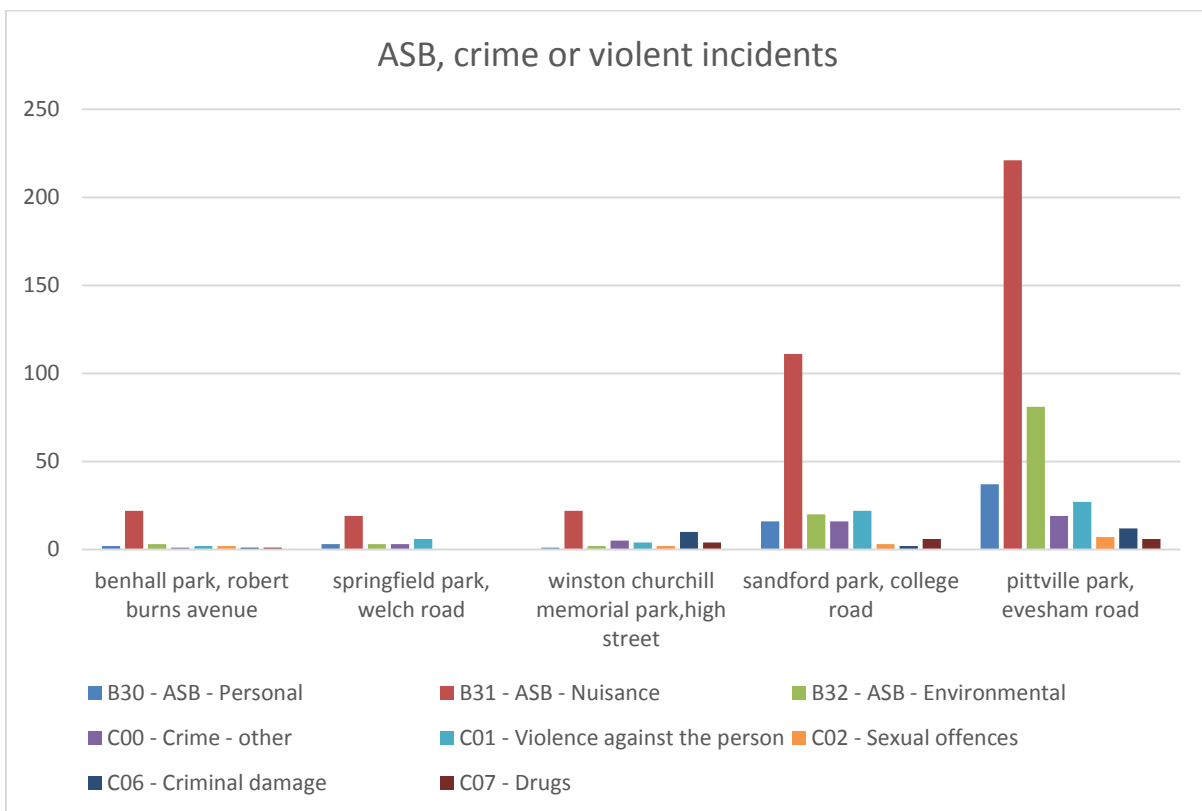
Financial values were then added and the potential savings calculated. Everyone would see the benefits of the lighting, but no one would actually see a financial gain.

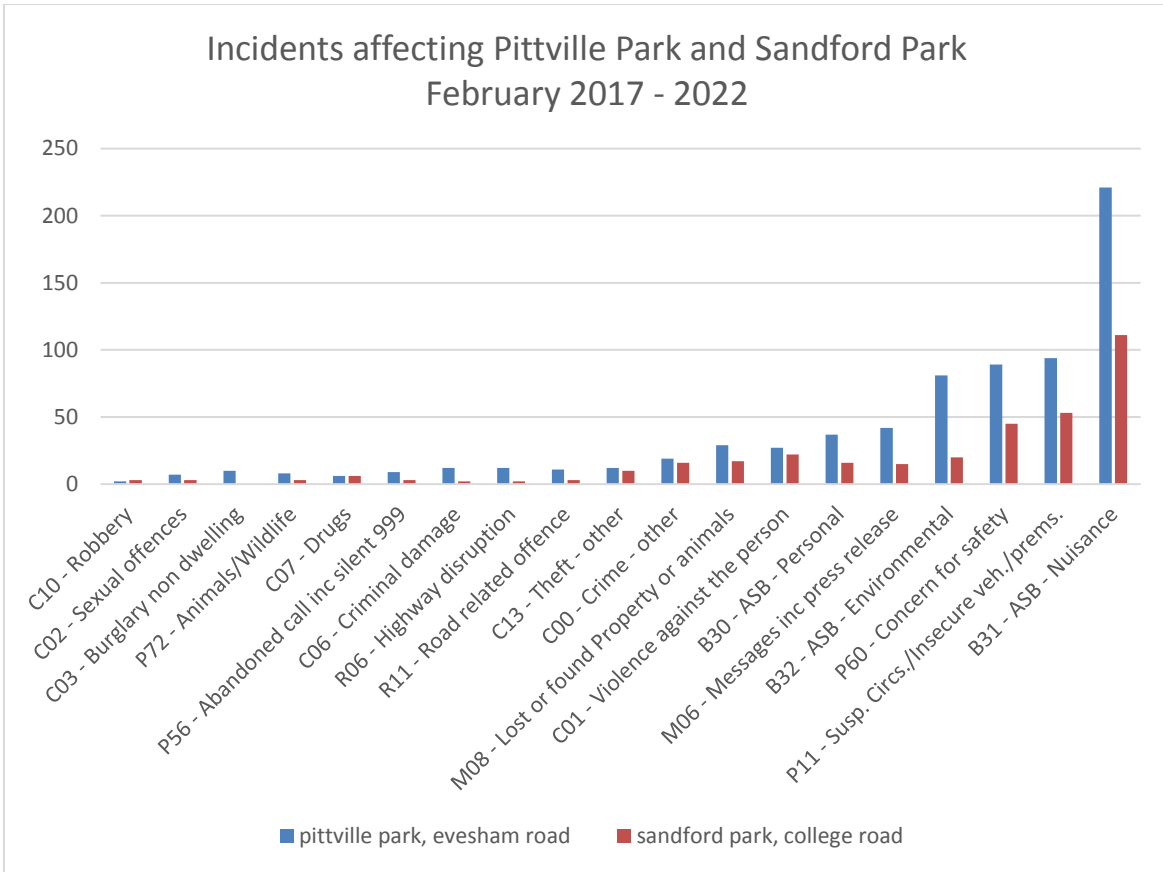
Academic research relating to parks and public open spaces is very limited, but the academic research regarding the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has been discussed more openly following the tragic death of Sarah Everard.

Crime and incident history

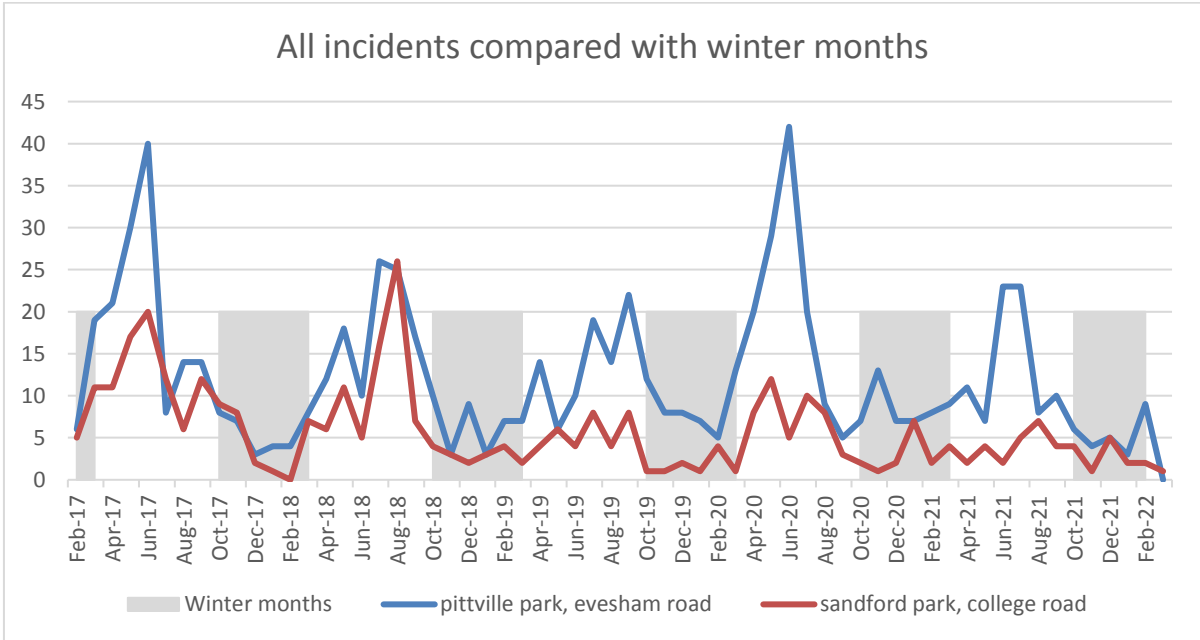


Each park within Cheltenham was included in this assessment covering the past 5 years, both Sandford Park and Pittville Park show the highest number of reported incidents.



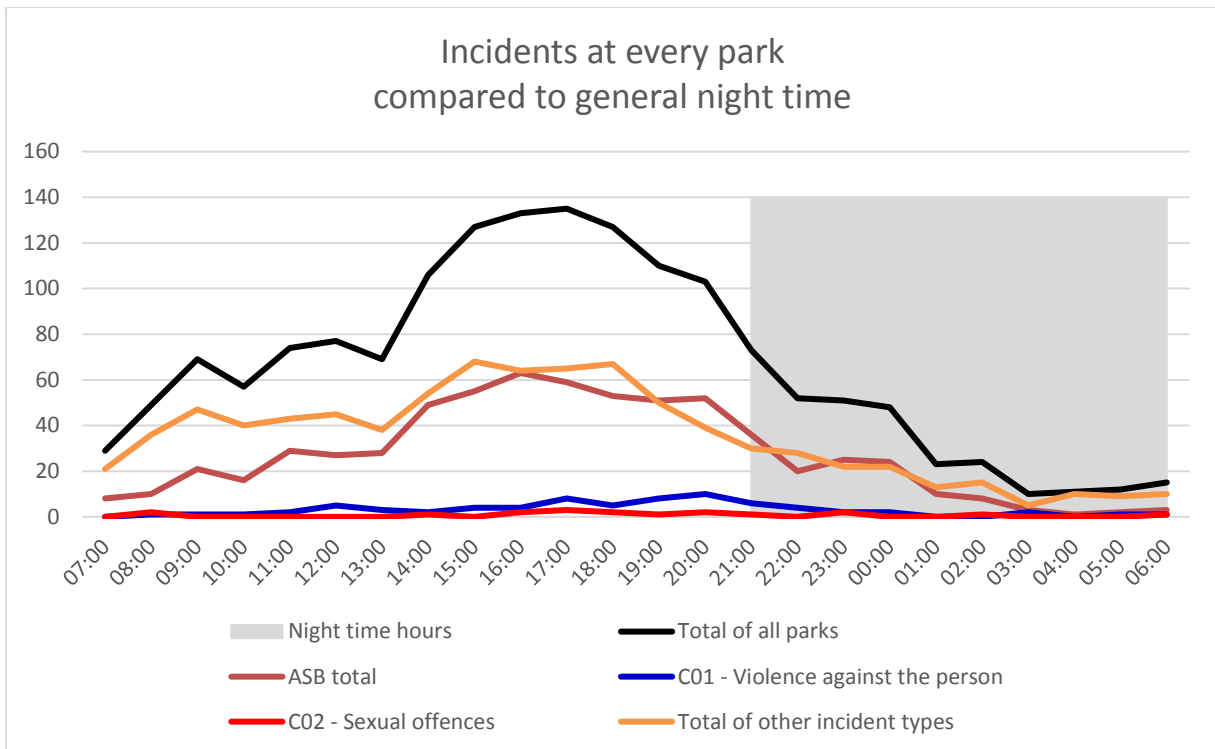


Although the petition is focused on Sandford Park, the results detailing Pittville Park would suggest that every park and public space in Cheltenham needs to be considered.



The affects winter can have on Incident reporting within the two main parks, it also demonstrates the effects of the first Covid lock down that started in April 2020.





By comparing the various incidents, it's possible to separate ASB, Violence and Sexual offences. All other offences have been combined and closely match ASB.

The monthly break down of incident and the hourly assessment suggests most issues occur during the daytime hours of the summer months. As the majority of the incidents related to ASB, would the provision of extra light encourage this behaviour through the night? Could the winter weather and the dark discourage people using the park or public space? Would the reports remain low because no one is there to report the criminal activity?

Before additional lighting is proposed in any park, it would be useful to

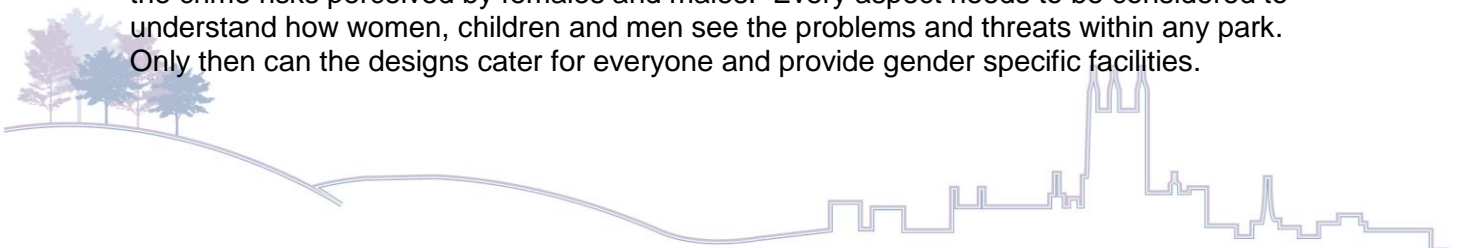
- Produce a detailed assessment and Lux plan of the current lighting.
- Identify if the tree canopy and other foliage is adding to the problem and if it needs pruning.
- Understand the ecology and ecosystem of each park or public space, and understand the impact additional lighting or human activity may have.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety require more than simply improving the lighting, a multitude of other elements need to be considered.

Horrifying public crimes can, and do, occur in well-lighted subway stations when no effective eyes are present. They virtually never occur in darkened theatres where many people and eyes are present. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Poor designs can also create a false sense of safety, which in turn would place an individual at risk. Any crime prevention initiative needs to be carefully planned, looking at every aspect of the park and how it is used; considering every option and the impact it will have on the other crime prevention measure, community and the environmental ecosystems.

To reduce **Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)** any design needs to understand the crime risks perceived by females and males. Every aspect needs to be considered to understand how women, children and men see the problems and threats within any park. Only then can the designs cater for everyone and provide gender specific facilities.



The design and remodelling of any park is a serious commitment to improve the environment and reduce crime, but one of the key factors that cannot be controlled is the final use. If and how the community with use this public space.

Activity is a fundamental element of crime prevention, people using the parks creates a sense of ownership which in turn develops respect and appreciation. With more using this public space, natural surveillance is increased which reduces crime and anti-social behaviour.

To understand how the parks are currently used and what could be changed, it would be useful to know

- Who uses or visits all the parks.
- If people would like to use the park at night, no point making changes if it's not needed.
- Would specific groups want to use the park and for what purpose.
- Understand why people don't wish to use the park at night? Fear of crime, too dark, etc.
- Identify activities that would increase visitor numbers after dark.

The proposed addition of more artificial lighting through the parks needs to address the delicate balance between visitor numbers and the need to reduce crime; the need to address light pollution and maintain dark skies; and the impact it will have on the nature and the ecology.

If the current petition is taken forward, the changes to the park could be partly funded by the Central Government funding scheme 'Safer Streets'. As with any public bids for funding, this process is never certain. Should this funding be considered by Cheltenham Borough Council, then the Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner would need to get involved and submit the application on your behalf.

Prepared by
Crime Prevention Design Advisor
Gloucestershire Constabulary

Research described in the Petition

Street Lighting and Crime: Diffusion of Benefits in the Stoke-On-Trent Project – Kate Painter and David Farrington, Cambridge University 1992-3

The financial benefits of improved street lighting, based on crime reduction – Kate Painter and David Farrington, British Journal of Criminology 2001 combined the results of Stoke-on-Trent and Dudley.

Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime - Welsh + Farrington 2008

