

CRANBROOK TRAIN STATION AND CAR PARK CCTV

Introduction

On 19 February 2024, Cllr Henry Gent, one of the County Councillors representing Cranbrook, raised the issue of the lack of CCTV covering the train station and train station car park in Cranbrook in light of recent incidents of crime and vandalism in that location.

Devon County Council's Position

Devon County Council's Deputy Director – Planning had advised as follows:

Apologies for the delay in coming back to you but I've received feedback from [name] at South Western Railway and also ran things back through our in-house legal teams for further advice on what we may be able to do under the terms of our agreement with the New Community Partners who transferred the land to us when we built the station.

My response from [name] is that South Western Railway can only use camera footage for areas within their station lease areas which doesn't include the car park. There may be some options to consider – DCC could lease the car park to South Western Railway...they could then introduce CCTV and have greater responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of the car park, which would improve security of the site – in order to do this, they would likely need to install pay and display parking to cover the costs (nominal so as not to put rail passengers off using the station). I should add this has not been discussed with their commercial teams but would be consistent with approaches we've seen elsewhere in Devon with GWR. He also mentioned a new fund potentially available to the industry which he thought he could make a case for the not inconsiderable investment in CCTV and even potentially car port solar panels but would need exploring further.

Alternatively, DCC could retain management of the car park and introduce CCTV. With the current revenue pressures, I would strongly recommend introducing a nominal pay and display charge to cover ongoing DCC costs of management and maintenance of the car park – any surplus revenue would support and develop local transport schemes and/or community traffic initiatives as per the rules and requirements of our Civil Parking Enforcement operations.

With both of the above options, I've sought legal advice on whether there are any restrictive covenants imposed by the New Community Partners when they transferred the land to DCC. There is nothing in the transfer to DCC which prevents the introduction of a P&D or parking charges generally. If we were to lease to a partner, under the terms of our agreement we would not need a deed of covenant as the leaseholder would be a Franchise Rail Operator operating under a franchise agreement, so this doesn't present an issue either.

In summary, in either option to introduce CCTV at the car park to improve security at Cranbrook Station, there would likely need to be a nominal pay and display charge to generate some revenue income to cover the ongoing management / maintenance costs (at Okehampton Station it is £2 for the full day). [Name] did warn that the

presence of CCTV does not guarantee it will stop or reduce incidences of damage – it may form more of a deterrent, but they do still have issues at some of their stations, especially for cycles, even though CCTV is in place. We'd also need to consider what the potential impacts are, i.e. with cars spilling onto the highway and parking on the road where it is free / unrestricted.

Town Council's Position

It appears that both Devon County Council and South Western Railway inextricably link CCTV and charging for parking. The solution, if there is one, is to pursue one without the other. If CCTV were to be installed in conjunction with parking charges, the parking would be substantially displaced into the surrounding streets within easy walking distance with the result that parked vehicles would again be left unprotected by the CCTV. The installation of CCTV needs to be decoupled from parking charges. Parking charges are acceptable and are paid by the public where there is no alternative on-street free parking. Cranbrook station is not in such a location.

A third option might be for the Town Council to request that Devon County Council transfer the car park to the Town Council and the latter could subject the car park to its regime of installing, managing and maintaining CCTV installations. One CCTV installation with infrastructure readily available costs in region of £10,000.

The introduction of car parking charges would result in a risk of cars being parked along Burrough Fields and further into the town along Younghayes Road and residential areas.

Recommendation

To enter into conversations with the County Council regarding the transfer of the train station car park to Cranbrook Town Council.