



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Break in at Belfast Zoo on 7 May 2012
Date:	14 June 2012
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Mark Challis, Zoo Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
	<p>A number of youths (approximately six individuals) broke into the zoo grounds on the evening of Monday 7 May 2012.</p> <p>Intervention from on site security staff, zoo staff and the PSNI (using a helicopter) meant that the youths were quickly escorted from the grounds. Subsequently, two youths were detained by the PSNI.</p> <p>During the evening, some vandalism took place, and three zoo owned Shetland ponies were released from a paddock in the old zoo area.</p> <p>The three ponies were recaptured and returned to secure holding in the Zoo Farm. None were harmed during the incident.</p> <p>There was significant media interest in the incident both on the evening of the break-in and the following day.</p> <p>Subsequently, a review of security measures at the Zoo has taken place.</p>

2	Key Issues
	<p>Incidents of this nature are extremely rare.</p> <p>Given that the youths appeared to have been on site for a short period, apart from the release of the three ponies, vandalism that took place during the evening was relatively minor, and was isolated to damage to a door at the Friends of the Zoo room, the forcing of doors to a 'porta-cabin' and a boiler</p>

	<p>room, and a fire extinguisher was set off.</p> <p>The Committee should be aware of the following work that is currently being undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security resources on the zoo site during the evening and night times has been increased, including security guards, mobile vehicles and patrols using dogs; • A significant portion of the zoo's boundary fence, where it borders the Cave Hill Country Park, was renewed two years ago. We are currently considering, with staff from Property the potential to renew further sections of the boundary fence; • CCTV cameras are in place and will be reviewed as to their effectiveness. • The zoo has an excellent working relationship with the PSNI, who will continue to maintain a close vigilance in and around the Zoo site. <p>Staff from the zoo and corporate communications worked together closely to manage a significant number of media requests in the period immediately following the break in. There was also huge public interest, and the zoo received many messages of good will and support.</p> <p>While the structures of the animal enclosures, and the security of the same, in the main zoo is maintained to a high standard, areas of the 'off show' old zoo, where the ponies were being temporarily held, are becoming aged and in poor condition. It will be necessary to give proper consideration to the construction of purpose built facilities for the isolation, quarantine and holding of zoo stock in off show areas in the medium term.</p> <p>The Committee should also be aware of the ongoing PSNI investigation into the break in.</p>
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3	<p>Resource Implications</p> <p><u>Financial</u> The situation will be kept under close review. It is currently planned for the increases in security provision to extend to at least the end of the summer period. The total cost of this (ie guards, vehicle and foot patrols) is estimated to be £19,000.</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> There are some human resources required in the monitoring of the security provision, and the liaison with our security providers.</p> <p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> It is anticipated that the enhancements made to security in the zoo will reduce the potential for break ins and vandalism. There are however, significant implications for site safety, protection of buildings and other assets, and</p>
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	animal welfare should similar events occur in the future.
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4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	There are no equality and good relations considerations.

5	Recommendations
	It is recommended that the Committee note the above report and the increased cost of security provision at the zoo following the recent break in.

6	Decision Tracking
	The zoo manager will be responsible for implementing the changes and overseeing security arrangements for the zoo.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	PSNI: Police Service of Northern Ireland CCTV: Closed Circuit Television

8	Documents Attached
	No attachments.