

**A REPORT INTO SECURITY
AT
CHURCHFIELDS
MULTI STOREY CAR PARK
BROMSGROVE**



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Situated in Churchfields Bromsgrove this multi storey carpark serves Bromsgrove Town centre and in particular the Asda Supermarket. The carpark has 6 floors, vehicular access is via ramps pedestrian access is via two stairwells.

As vehicles enter the car park the larger and most commonly used stairwell is situated on the left. This stairwell has two lifts which serve all floors. It has a public entrance on level two.

The second stairwell does not contain any lifts, however on level two there is a fire door that is secured by a break glass panic bolt.

Because of its proximity to the Asda Supermarket shopping trolleys can be found on all floors, these are usually kept in dedicated bays and collected by Asda staff.

The car park is accredited under the Safer Parking Scheme and was last assessed in October 2014. Whilst the car park was awarded a certificate for one year it was noted that the parking areas were generally well presented and well laid out, however the stairwells were deteriorating with many of the air vents damaged and graffiti on the walls, it was recommended that this be remedied as soon as possible.



As highlighted in the 2014 assessment the layout of the parking areas is generally good, well lit and clearly marked.

Since the assessment the level of anti-social behaviour on the car park increased and this is reflected in the condition of the car park and in particular the stairwells.

The car park is covered by a comprehensive CCTV system that is monitored from a central control room situated in Redditch. Whilst the camera technology is old the picture quality is good.

The car park is staffed and they operate from the mobility office situated on the ground floor. Staff are responsible for enforcing parking regulations and do report any incidents that happen on the car park, whilst they will ask unwanted people to leave the car park they are not trained to deal with disorder and therefore cannot be expected to place themselves in a position of potential danger. Likewise any damage or litter is reported by staff. The speed and efficiency with which these reports are dealt with is dependent on other council departments.

The condition of the main stairwell is very poor as the following photographs show the level of graffiti has increased, the walls are dirty and stained and the floor is also dirty. Litter is strewn across the floor, the access doors to the various floors are in poor condition and some of them have window glass missing. The overall impression now is of a poorly maintained and rapidly deteriorating car park, which would certainly not achieve the Safer Parking award.



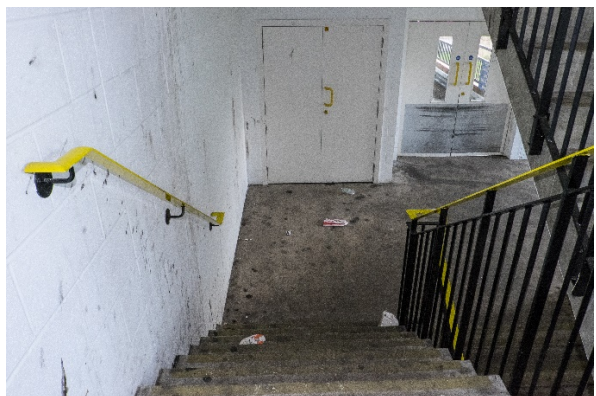
Photographs illustrating the condition of the stairwells. These photographs are of the main stairwell, the one the public use most

Top left: Every air vent has been kicked in.

Top right: Stairwells are dirty and poorly maintained

Second Row: Photographs showing some of the graffiti that has appeared on the walls.

Below: Litter is left in the stairwells adding to the general impression that this car park has



PROBLEM PROFILE

Youths are gaining access to the car park mainly when it is closed and using the top floor to engage in anti-social behaviour. This behaviour has resulted in damage being caused including the broken windows in the doors and graffiti on the walls. In one incident a shopping trolley 'parking' area was badly damaged.

Access is being gained to the car park by climbing up the outside of the building onto level two. They are then opening the level 2 fire door on the opposite side of the car park to let their friends in.



Youths are gaining access to the second floor by climbing up the outside of the building.

In February 2015 a dispersal order for the general area was authorised by the police and as a result several youths were identified and warned about their behaviour as a result of this incidents in and around the car park have dropped.

It is often the case that the type of problems experienced at the car park are cyclic and at some stage in the future it is highly likely that they will reappear.

The priority should be to put measures in place that will break the cycle and prevent future anti-social behaviour and damage, making the car park a safe and welcoming facility for the public to use. By putting in the correct measures, long term it will save the district council money in repairs and general maintenance. In addition it will save on police resources freeing up officers to deal with other issues.

SUGGESTED ACTION(S)

In order to prevent unauthorised people getting onto the car park when it is closed any potential access point needs to be removed. It has been identified that youths are gaining access to the second floor from the footpath that runs parallel to the car park (see photographs below)

Action: Install fencing to the same specification as that on the ground floor along the side of level two this will remove any opportunity for access onto the car park from this location.



Note the railings on the ground floor. Similar railings should be put along this edge of the second floor to prevent access.

The car park has an extensive CCTV system, whilst this is a useful tool for detecting incidents when they are happening it is not providing any deterrent. From talking to staff who monitor the CCTV they do not have the capacity to continually watch the cameras on the car park, therefore they will miss incidents. Consequently installing extra cameras is likely to have little effect. CCTV staff indicated that if incidents or potential incidents were reported to them quickly they could make better use of the existing CCTV cameras.

Action: Staff working on the car park should report any potential incident or suspicious behaviour immediately to the CCTV control room. Control room staff will then have the opportunity to monitor and if need be inform the appropriate authorities so that action can be quickly taken. If an incident requires police attention and the perpetrators are gone before police arrival, early monitoring increases the chances of gaining CCTV evidence to support any future investigation. Their needs to be communication between car park staff and CCTV room staff to ensure that police are informed about appropriate incidents at the time they are happening.

The condition of the stairwells gives the impression that the carpark is not cared for, this encourages further misuse. My information is that misuse damage etc. is reported but it takes a very long time for any action to be taken.

Action 1. All of the walls to the stairwells need repainting with a bright reflective paint, preferably one that graffiti can be easily removed from. In addition the floors need cleaning so that they are also brighter.

Action 2. All doors giving access to the stairwells should be repaired and repainted.

Action 3. A regime needs to be introduced whereby any litter is quickly cleaned up.

Action 4. A check of the stairwells every morning by car park staff would be useful and then reporting any litter graffiti or damage to the appropriate department of the local authority. In turn that department should respond quickly to such reports.

With the imminent opening of the new council offices, council staff will be allocated parking on the top floors. It may well be that the increased use of the car park will reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour during opening hours.

CONCLUSION

Since its inspection under the Safer Parking Scheme in October 2014 the condition of the stairwells to this car park have deteriorated rapidly, to the point that if it were to be assessed now it would not pass. The condition of the stairwells is stopping people from using the car park. A general clean up and repaint would soon solve this. The goal will then be to keep it in pristine condition. In order to do this the people that are causing the damage graffiti etc. need to be deterred. There are two possible ways of doing this, increased CCTV and/or removing the access points.

In my opinion increased CCTV will have very little effect and I strongly recommend that the option to pursue is that which removes the access points, namely fencing along the side of level two.