

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities held at 3.00
pm on Thursday, 27 July 2017

Present:

Members: Councillor A Khan (Chair)
Councillor P Akhtar (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor D Welsh

In Attendance: A. Bhayat
G. Farrelley PC 7253 (West Midlands Police)
Alderman Gazey
Local residents

Employees (by Directorate):

Place: G Carter, C Hickin, M McHugh, M Rose

Apologies: Councillor A Andrews

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th March, 2017 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

3. Petition - Response to a petition regarding concerns over anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of Priors Harnall and Cawthorne Close

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive of Place which responded to a petition bearing 48 signatures, sponsored by Councillor's N Akhtar, O' Boyle and Welsh the St. Michaels Ward Councillors, which had been submitted to the City Council on 16th June, 2017. The petition requested help with various concerns over anti- social behaviour in the vicinity of Priors Harnall and Cawthorne Close, notably focussed around the greenspace to the rear of 16-22 Priors Harnall.

The report noted that the recorded data from June 2016 to June 2017 showed 3 reports directly to Cawthorne Close, of those 2 were regarding abandoned vehicles and one was pest control. Priors Harnell showed no reports related to anti-social behaviour over the same period of time. The Council therefore had no reports relating to the behaviour described in the petition. Police data for the same time showed 14 logs for Cawthorne Close and 11 logs for Priors Harnall.

Officers had made contact with the lead petitioner and had been on a site visit which a number of residents attended along with Ward Councillors and another meeting had taken place with the local policing team. The report noted that West Midlands Police and the Council were monitoring the situation. Extra patrols would take place as duties allow and individuals found to be causing issues would be challenged and appropriate action taken. The area was also on a regular fortnightly cleansing schedule by the Barrow man and a 5 weekly schedule for the mechanical sweeper. In addition, specific visits were undertaken to collect reported fly tipping from council land. All cases of fly tipping would be investigated, with the appropriate course of action depending on any evidence found at the scene and witnesses to the offence(s).

In taking this matter forward the following recommendations were made to the Cabinet Member:

- 1 Request West Midlands Police and the Council to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents request for assistance.
- 2 Encourage residents to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area and report incidents of concern to Police as soon as they occur. Encourage residents to engage with the police via WMNow online messaging service <http://www.wmnow.co.uk/>.
- 3 Encourage community groups to engage with the children in the area and attempt to focus their energy in a more constructive way. Police have referred this to Sidney Stringer Academy and it is hoped the positive youth foundation may offer some assistance.

Councillor's N Akhtar, O' Boyle and Welsh and the petition organiser attended the meeting, together with other affected residents and a representative from West Midlands Police.

The petition organiser, Ward Councillors and other residents who indicated they wished to contribute were invited to speak about the difficulties experienced by local residents. A number of anti-social behaviours were causing concern in the area including littering, fly tipping, dog fouling, drug and alcohol use, gangs, violence, prostitution and dog fights. Residents had cleared rubbish and witnessed syringes and condoms. This anti-social behaviour had been taking place over a long period of time and the report recognised that residents felt distressed and intimidated and were regularly disturbed by the activity of groups of people. Possible reasons for low reporting included high tolerance levels and residents spoke about frustrations around their experience of reporting incidents and their fear of retribution.

The officer representing West Midlands Police spoke about ongoing work in the area, reporting that they would continue with work and also the new reporting application. Residents were advised that due to the financial constraints to the Council and Police, resources were targeted towards need and therefore evidence was needed for responses, however they were not advised to put themselves or anyone else in any danger. Residents were also advised that they could request on reporting that they remain anonymous and the Police would not follow up the response with a visit to the reporter.

The Cabinet Member discussed the following issues with the local residents, Ward Councillors, Police and officers:

- Video footage sent in by residents
- A recent article in the Coventry Telegraph which referred to a neighbouring street
- Fencing the area similar to a neighbouring street
- Allotments as another potential solution
- Cameras and signage
- Involving local schools
- Youth engagement
- Police presence
- An Official Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- Land ownership
- Staying safe

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1) Request West Midlands Police and Council officers to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents requests for assistance.**
- 2) Encourage residents to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area, with the support of officers and to report incidents of concern to Police and the Council as soon as they occur.**
- 3) Request that some form of youth engagement be initiated in the area, with the assistance of the Positive Youth Foundation.**
- 4) Request that Council officers, Ward Councillors and local residents consider the feasibility of a camera, with signage, in an appropriate place.**
- 5) Agree that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities discuss and investigate further, with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, the ownership of the land and potential solutions.**
- 6) Request that a progress report back be considered in 6 months' time and the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the meeting.**

4. Outstanding Issues Report

There were no outstanding issues.

5. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 4.50 pm)