

3rd July 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities)

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director – People

Ward(s) affected:

St. Michaels

Title:

Report in response to a petition calling on the Council to request Whitefriars Housing Group to take action to address incidents of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour taking place on an area of Whitefriars` land on the corner of Keppel Street/Wright Street

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

A petition containing 22 signatories was submitted on 29th April 2014 by Councillor Akhtar.

The petition relates to environmental issues and anti-social behaviour on an area of Whitefriars` own land in Hillfields and calls on the City Council to request Whitefriars Housing Group to take appropriate action.

The area is a stretch of wasteland situated on the corner of Keppel Street and Wright Street. Local residents are asking that the land be secured to prevent unauthorised access and inappropriate use, or for it to be redeveloped.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:-

1. Note the results of enquiries into the matter.
2. Endorse the action taken to date to address the issues outlined by local residents.
3. Request Police to continue to patrol the area responding swiftly to any issues raised or identified and to exercise their powers to obtain identities and disperse groups of individuals that are likely to cause nuisance or offending behaviour.
4. Request Officers to continue to monitor the issues associated with this land as part of the Hillfields Action Plan

5. Request Officers to explore opportunities to undertake targeted monitoring and surveillance in this location in order to deter and detect perpetrators of crime and nuisance, particularly fly-tipping.

List of Appendices included:

Copy of petition text – Appendix 1

Map indicating location of land – Appendix 2

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Report in response to a petition calling on the Council to ask Whitefriars Housing Group to take action to address incidents of flytipping and anti-social behaviour taking place on Whitefriars' land on the corner of Keppel Street/Wright Street.

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 A petition containing 22 signatories was submitted by Cllr Akhtar on the 29th April 2014. The petition calls on the Council to ask Whitefriars Housing Group to take action to address a number of problems arising on their land on the corner of Keppel Street and Wright Street.
- 1.2 The petition states that the location attracts repeated fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour due to it being open wasteland. There are a number of residential properties situated nearby. A copy of the petition text is attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 1.3 The lead petitioner has indicated local residents would like to see this land secured and redeveloped.
- 1.4 Police reports for the period March 2013 to March 2014 record 11 incidents of crime for both Keppel Street and Wright Street. These were not directly related to the site in question. Additionally, 9 incidents of anti-social behaviour were reported to the Police for the same two streets including reports of nuisance ball games.
- 1.5 City Council records show 5 reports of Anti-Social Behaviour specific to Keppel Street, none of which took place on the land itself. There were no reports relating to Wright Street. However, the City Council systems do indicate a total of 33 reports of environmental issues (30 for Keppel Street and 3 for Wright Street), all fly-tipping except one which was for an abandoned vehicle.
- 1.6 Whitefriars Housing Group advised that they have received two calls during the last 12 months associated with this land including one call as a direct response to this petition. Their Response Team continues to monitor the area between the hours of 22:00 and 03:00 at least three times a week.
- 1.7 West Midlands Police do patrol the area and take details of anyone causing nuisance and annoyance in order to refer them to the relevant multi-agency forum for further appropriate action.
- 1.8 Whitefriars Housing Group inspected the area and removed rubbish and litter and scheduled an overall clear-up of the site on the 29th May 2014. This will then continue to form part of their weekly clean up and inspection schedule.
- 1.9 In addition, an area of shrubbery at the junction of Cambridge Street with Keppel Street will be cleaned in order to add further value to the works carried out, and bulk items were removed on the 30th May 2014.
- 1.10 Residents have been re-issued with contact details for reporting incidents as and when they occur.

- 1.11 Officers have arranged for additional monitoring of the site by local Police Officers patrols and have requested that Youth workers work to engage young residents who may be using the site.
- 1.12 Whitefriars Housing Group has indicated that there are no plans to develop this site at the present time.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The site is very open and therefore attractive to young groups gathering to socialise in the area: the Local Neighbourhood Policing Team will provide additional monitoring through targeted patrols to the site and will ensure details of those involved in or causing nuisance behaviour are shared with relevant agencies to take appropriate action.
- 2.2 Whitefriars Housing Group, as owners of this land, will undertake regular inspections of the area and remove rubbish and litter as required. During the last 12 months, only 2 reports were made to them directly. Most reporting is made to the City Council in this respect. Environmental Services will ensure that all reports are shared with Whitefriars.
- 2.3 Relevant contact details and methods of reporting have been re-issued to the residents in order that they can report issues directly to Whitefriars Housing Group.
- 2.4 Whitefriars Housing Group Response Team monitors the area, as duties allow, outside normal office hours.

3 Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 The Lead petitioner has been contacted by the Community Safety Officer and residents have been encouraged to report incidents as they occur to the land owner for on-going maintenance and action. The lead Petitioner also reports that he was unaware of any further issues on this piece of land and all seemed quiet at the present time.
- 3.2 Whitefriars Housing Group were contacted about the petition and indicated that they had no immediate plans to develop the site.
- 3.3 Police were consulted in relation to the level of crime and nuisance being reported to them. Their records indicated issues mainly associated with residential households in the two streets that led off the land as opposed to the site itself.
- 3.4 City Council systems were checked to obtain level of incidents being reported in relation to the site which confirmed significant levels of fly-tipping.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The Local Safer Neighbourhood Group will monitor the issues associated with this land as part of the Hillfields Action Plan

5 Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Removal of fly-tipping is carried out by Whitefriars Housing Group at their own expense.

5.2 Legal implications

None

6 Other implications

None

6.10 How will this contribute to the Council Plan?

Crime and Disorder

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour through partnership working is central to the delivery of the Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment 2014/15.

6.11 How is risk being managed?

1. The Community Safety Officer continues to monitor crime and disorder levels in the area.
2. Police and Whitefriars Housing Group continue to incorporate the area in their patrol strategies and work schedule and will monitor behaviour of individuals.

6.12 What is the impact on the organisation?

None.

6.13 Equalities / EIA

N/A

6.14 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

N/A

6.15 Implications for partner organisations?

N/A

Report author(s):

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Councillor Townshend	Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities)		20.6.2014	20.6.2014

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Appendices