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Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities)

31<sup>st</sup> July 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Policing and Equalities - Councillor Townshend

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director – People

**Ward(s) affected:**

Westwood

**Title:**

**Progress report in response to a petition regarding the amount of dog fouling and littering in the Westwood Ward**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

A petition was originally submitted to the Council, in December 2013, from residents who live in the Westwood Ward area of the city. They requested that the City Council take action to tackle dog fouling and general littering in this area.

Officers submitted a report in March 2014 and Cabinet Member requested a further progress report be submitted after three months.

This reports details the actions taken and the progress made in tackling this issue.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- (1) Acknowledge and endorse the work carried out in Westwood Ward to reduce incidences of dog fouling and littering.
- (2) Instruct officers to continue patrols in these areas and to take action as appropriate.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix A: Signage used during the initiative

**Other useful background papers:**

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:**

**Progress report in response to a petition regarding the amount of dog fouling and littering in the Westwood Ward**

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A petition consisting of 32 signatures from residents who live in the Westwood Ward area of the city was submitted on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The petition requested the City Council take action to tackle dog fouling and general littering in the area. Officers reported on actions taken at the Cabinet Member meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- 1.2 Further to that report, Cabinet Member requested that officers continue the monitoring of the Westwood estate for the next three months and where necessary, take appropriate action to ensure that the reduced levels of littering and dog fouling are sustained. Cabinet Member also authorised the use of all and any evidence-gathering equipment and instructed officers to take appropriate enforcement action in those cases where appropriate criteria are met. He requested a further report to be submitted detailing progress in relation to these issues, and to include details of all forms of enforcement action taken.
- 1.3 The tactics used by the team in addressing this issue are similar to those used elsewhere in the City. In the last financial year, Council Officers have issued over 600 fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and littering offences. It is the Council's policy to prosecute those who refuse to pay these fixed penalty notices and over 60 offenders have been prosecuted during this period

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Westwood Ward is a sizeable geographical area and therefore, in an attempt to concentrate our resources where they are needed most, our officers surveyed the Ward and also used details of previously reported cases to identify the 20 most affected streets.
- 2.2 A Local Environmental Quality Survey (LEQ) was undertaken of these specific streets at the beginning of the initiative as a baseline to determine the effectiveness of this programme. The average grading was C+. An LEQ measures and grades the condition of an area looking at issues that affect the public from day to day, such as dog foul and littering. (Grade A is the best rating and indicates that an area was litter and detritus free, whilst Grade D is the worst rating and indicates that a street is heavily littered, with significant accumulations). Following the LEQ assessment the streets were swept by colleagues in Street Scene and Green Spaces.
- 2.3 Over the next three months our officers:
  - Patrolled these 'hot spot' areas;
  - Erected 'no dog fouling' signs on lamp posts in the streets in question and stencilled pavements with "no dog fouling" signs;
  - 'Door-knocked' and hand-delivered postcards requesting information from residents seeking intelligence on who was causing the problem (see Appendix 1).
- 2.4 Very little intelligence was received from local people during the initiative, but we were able to serve two fixed penalty notices for dog fouling.
- 2.5 A further LEQ was carried out in these same streets during the last week in June 2014 and the average grade had risen to B. Most notably, there had been a 75% reduction in dog fouling. We therefore drew the conclusion that whilst the 'door knocking' - did not generate

any intelligence, it nevertheless acted as publicity for the initiative and raised the profile locally and as such was worthwhile.

- 2.6 Officers considered the use of surveillance equipment and obtained legal advice. On the basis of that advice a decision was taken to use only officer surveillance and intelligence from local people (see section 5 below).
- 2.7 **Recommendation.** Cabinet Member is recommended to instruct officers to continue patrols in these areas and to take action as appropriate.
3. **Results of consultation undertaken**  
Officers met with the lead petitioner and other residents in the affected area to understand the issues.
4. **Timetable for implementing this decision**  
Measures have already been put in place and Officers will continue to monitor the situation.
5. **Comments from the Executive Director, Resources**  
**Finance:** On-going work is funded from existing resources.  
**Legal:** Failure to clear away dog foul is an offence under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005, and littering an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, for which offenders can be (and are) prosecuted.

The use of covert cameras is governed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). From 1 November 2012, local authority 'Authorising Officers' may not authorise 'directed surveillance' unless it is for the purpose of preventing or detecting a criminal offence which carries a prison sentence of at least six months. Neither the offences of failing to clear up dog foul, nor littering carry a custodial sentence and therefore the local authority is unable to use covert cameras for this purpose.

6. **Other implications**  
None

**6.1.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

- 6.1.2 There are clear research findings that show that the local environmental quality in a person's living environment has a significant impact on their health and well-being. Residents in areas which have a low environmental quality often have an increased "fear of crime". This particular service contributes to the Council Plan key objective of 'creating and attractive, cleaner and greener city'.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

None

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

None

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

See 6.1.1

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

None

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[www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings)

## Appendix A: Signage used during the initiative

- New No Dog Fouling signs were placed on lamp posts



- No Dog Fouling Stencils were placed in walkways of hot streets



A door knocking exercise was carried out where we actually spoke to the residents of these streets to gain information on possible offenders or times it may be happening and also 'No Dog Fouling cards' were posted through all letterboxes requesting Information

