

31st July 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities) – Councillor Townshend

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director – People

**Ward(s) affected:**

St. Michael's

**Title:**

Progress report on action being taken in Hillfields to address Community Safety Issues highlighted by a number of petitions previously submitted over the last eighteen months

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

A number of petitions were submitted during the course of 2012/13. The petitions when reviewed collectively identified recurring themes in relation to public place nuisance behaviour and problematic households.

Officers developed a strategy and action plan to address these issues across a number of locations within the Hillfields area in order to drive down incidents and provide a more proactive approach to prevent such taking place.

This report provides a performance update on the measures implemented from the action plan. The action plan (appendix 1) continues to be monitored, updated and revised with the St. Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:-

1. Note and endorse the measures taken by Officers to date as outlined in the report and progress against the action plan attached as Appendix 1.
2. Request members of the St Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group to continue to deliver against and monitor, regularly review, and update the action plan in accordance with local issues identified and reported incidents.
3. Request Police to continue to dedicate patrols to hotspot locations within the Hillfields area, responding swiftly to any issues raised or identified and to take appropriate action including use of their powers to obtain identities and disperse individuals in groups that are likely to cause public nuisance and/or offending behaviour, should it become necessary.

4. Request Officers to continue to contact and communicate with relevant community leaders and invite them to meet with professionals and Ward Members, with a view to reviewing tactics and approaches being applied.
5. Acknowledge that a monthly schedule of Community Payback work has been agreed with the Probation Service.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Hillfields Action Plan

**Background papers:**

None

**Other useful documents**

1. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). 28 / 02 / 2013
2. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & equalities). 02 / 05 / 2013
3. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). 04 / 07 / 2013
4. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). 04 / 09 / 2013
5. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). 03 / 10 / 2013
6. Cabinet Member (Community Safety & Equalities). 27/ 03 / 2014

**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 on action being taken in Hillfields to address Community Safety Issues highlighted by a number of petitions previously submitted over the last eighteen months

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A number of petitions were submitted during the course of 2012/13. The petitions when reviewed collectively identified recurring themes in relation to public place nuisance behaviour and problematic households.
- 1.2 Officers developed a strategy and action plan to address these issues across a number of locations within the Hillfields area in order to drive down incidents and provide a more proactive approach to prevent such taking place. The plan was approved by Cabinet Member on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- 1.3 Public place nuisance featured as a recurring theme in a number of different locations within the area and requiring extensive resources from a number of agencies. A multi-agency approach was agreed providing a strategy and co-ordinated plan of action for Hillfields in an attempt to manage and prevent issues taking place, including:
  - A communication strategy aimed at improving public confidence and encouraging reporting of incidents.
  - Referring to the multi-agency case management forum any individuals identified as committing or being involved in offending or behaviour likely to cause nuisance and annoyance
  - Officers continuing to identify opportunities to engage new groups and members of the community, to solve local issues.
  - Targeting deployment of uniformed and other street-based patrols and resources including deployment of CCTV in various locations as necessary and maximising use of community assets and establishments.
  - Youth Provision and work with young people in the area through the Youth Service and the Positive Futures programme and organised activities.
  - Supporting families with young children through the Children's Centre and family support services.
  - Referring individuals who are abusing drugs and alcohol to relevant treatment and support programmes available in Coventry.
  - Scheduling dedicated Police patrols and operations throughout the year.
  - Actively managing problematic commercial premises through partnership working including Licensing and Trading Standards teams.
- 1.4 Environmental issues continue to concern residents and therefore Officers have undertaken an environmental survey to ensure a more strategic approach to these specific issues is applied. Emphasis has been placed on the partnership approach to address littering, fly-tipping, flyposting, environmental clean-ups, grass mowing, graffiti removal, weed/detritus removal, area inspections, and general maintenance.
- 1.5 Incidents of crime and nuisance recorded by the Police for the months of April to June 2014 inclusive totalled 435 reports, compared to 321 reports in the previous 3 months. Additionally, the City Council received 46 reports of nuisance behaviour associated with this area, compared to 66 reports in the previous 3 months. Whilst there has been an increase in the incidents compared to the same period last year, much work has taken place to encourage residents to report incidents in order that agencies can target their action where most needed. Encouraging residents to report incidents was a recommendation from the previous Cabinet Member meeting.

- 1.6 A number of problematic households have also been identified as causing nuisance and annoyance to neighbours and services working in the area. A co-ordinated approach involving a range of agencies has resulted in action being taken against 23 households, ranging from treatment and support through to additional enforcement action. Individual multi-agency plans have also been developed for each household. The effectiveness of the interventions and progress against each of these plans is monitored and reviewed by statutory agencies at the relevant local case management forum. This targeted work resulted in an immediate 36% reduction in nuisance behaviour from the same households when Officers interrogated reported incidents. However, there is still more work to do working with specific households and continuing to intervene with nuisance in residential dwellings at the first incident.
- 1.7 Currently the Local Case Management Forum manages a number of problematic households as identified on a monthly basis by the partnership analyst. These households are identified by reviewing reported incidents to the Police, Social Landlords and the Council Domestic Noise Team. This then enables officers to determine the best course of action based on the nature of the incidents, volume, and severity. Agencies then work together in implementing the agreed action in order to address the issues at each property. Providing that local residents are encouraged, and feel able to report incidents as and when they occur, agencies are confident that any emerging issues or problematic households or individuals can be addressed in this way.
- 1.8 A monthly schedule of Community Payback work has been agreed with the Probation Service. This will involve Community Payback carrying out a scheduled programme of work in Hillfields that will enhance the work of other agencies and organisations taking action in the area. Some of this work will take place alongside residents where this is appropriate.

## **2 Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 A number of issues have been raised by residents that identify particular locations of concern. These have formed the basis of the Hillfields Action Plan. This plan highlights the issues raised by location and the actions taken to address the issues. These actions are ongoing and the plan serves as a 'living document' to help monitor actions and progress of the responses to issues.
- 2.2 The possibility of a Gating Order to close the Public Right Of Way (RA208) running between Harnall Lane East and Berry Street remains on hold as there is no clear preference from residents as to whether this is required. There is also an insufficient evidence to support this measure in line with the Gating Order legislation, policy, and procedures. Community Payback will work in this and other entry-ways in the programme of works for Community Safety.
- 2.3 Cameras have been deployed in targeted locations for the purpose of evidence gathering and to deter crime and nuisance behaviour. This also provides public reassurance.
- 2.4 The most heavily fly-tipped streets have been identified and these areas will receive concerted action. They are allocated to an individual Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer who will carry out regular patrols of the street, survey rear and front gardens for accumulations of refuse, and take measures with the owners of the homes to remove this rubbish. Any fly-tips on the street are treated as 'environmental grime scenes'. These areas are 'taped off' and residents' doors are knocked in attempts to establish from where the waste has originated.

- 2.5 The actions outlined above have been evaluated by the agencies overseeing delivery of the plan and the St Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group. Residents and Officers report significant improvements in the location to Council Officers but value the opportunity to continue with the action plan to ensure that this continues and that targeted works are carried out in specific locations as the need arises.

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The Hillfields Action plan is regularly considered and updated by members of the St Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group. This allows residents and Officers the opportunity to target works and actions in the most effective way, for each individual location.
- 3.2 Communication between residents and Officers from the area continues to strengthen. Contact numbers for agencies are distributed in the community to help new residents in the reporting of issues and incidences. Access to agencies and organisations is readily available to residents in the local area at easily accessible venues. Residents continue to be encouraged to report incidences as they occur to the relevant organisation.
- 3.3 Officers continue to develop good working relationships with the residents who engage with many hard to reach groups and communities within the area.
- 3.4 Referrals of suitably identified individuals and families continue to be made to the multi-agency Local Case Management Forum.
- 3.5 The City Council's Environmental and Housing Enforcement Team has undertaken a survey of all entry ways in order to assist with formulating a strategic approach to addressing the environmental issues associated with such. Analysis of this information is under way and a schedule of works will be formulated and agreed by the Environmental Crime Team. Clearance of these entry ways will be completed in partnership with the Community Payback initiative. The Community Development Team will be working with local people to engender their support and participation.

### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 The Local Safer Neighbourhood Group will monitor the action plan and its impact at each monthly meeting and ensure that the plan is effective in responding to the issues.
- 4.2 The Local Case Management Forum meets on a monthly basis and agrees measures, interventions and enforcement action on a case by case basis.
- 4.3 Actions associated with the environmental crime survey will be added to the Hillfields Action Plan for implementation over the course of the next financial year.

### **5 Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report, other than costs associated with a Community Payback scheme that will be met by Partnership funding from the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner to the Coventry Police & Crime Board. This programme of works is estimated to be £1,800 for the 2014/2015 financial year.

**5.2 Legal implications**

None

**6 Other implications**

None

**6.1 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.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

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

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

None

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

N/A

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

The purpose of taking action to address graffiti, vandalism, and fly-tipping is in an attempt to improve the environment and wellbeing of the community.

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

The multi-agency action plan outlines the individual and collective commitments from agencies to respond to the issues in the petition.

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## Appendices