

31st July 2014

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Policing and Equalities - Councillor Townshend

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director, People Directorate

**Ward(s) affected:**

**Bablake**

**Title:**

Report in response to petition regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in Thompson's Road, Keresley, Coventry

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

A petition containing 7 signatories was submitted by Councillor David Galliers on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The petition requests that action be taken by agencies to address anti-social behaviour, particularly nuisance from off road motorbikes taking place in Thompson's Rd, Keresley, Coventry. (Appendix 1 refers).

This report provides an overview of action taken to date to address these issues and makes recommendations for continued monitoring and action against perpetrators of the nuisance behaviour.

**Recommendations:**

**Cabinet Member is recommended to:-**

1. Note and endorse the measures implemented by partner agencies to address the issues outlined in the petition and identified through further investigation by officers.
2. Request Officers to monitor and review the effectiveness of initial actions taken and continue to work with residents and the wider community to improve the security to areas of land facilitating the nuisance behaviour, whilst taking action against the perpetrators.
3. Request Officers to explore the most relevant legislation that may compel landowners to take or at least permit action to prevent access to their land and subsequent nuisance to residents.

4. Request Officers to provide a report back on the outcome of recommendation 2 and 3 to a Cabinet Member meeting in the Autumn in order to ensure the outcome of monitoring during the Summer months can be included in the report.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1 – Petition

**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 in response to petition regarding anti-social behaviour in Thompson's Road, Keresley, Coventry**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A Petition containing 7 signatories was submitted by Councillor David Galliers on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013. The petition requested action to be taken to address anti-social behaviour taking place in Thompson's Road in the Bablake ward of Coventry.
- 1.2 Incidents of nuisance caused by off road biking taking place on a stretch of farm land in Thompson's Road has been the subject of periodical interventions over the last 2-3 years. This off road biking is noisy and potentially dangerous to local residents as the route used to access the land is residential.
- 1.3 Officers from various agencies have been working together to address these issues and in doing so have developed a targeted plan of action which includes a combination of working with the land owner to design out the opportunities to enter onto the land itself whilst taking action against the perpetrators.
- 1.4 The land that directly adjoins the top of Thompsons Rd is privately owned by an individual. This in turn leads onto land that is owned by Queens College Oxford and in turn is rented to a tenant farmer, this is the land surrounding Bunson's Wood. Additionally, there is a large bridle path that runs alongside the entire length of this land which is a public right of way and potentially enables people the opportunity to trespass onto the land at various access points, should they damage the perimeter and create further openings. However, it should be noted that any plans to close this public right of way is likely to attract considerable opposition due to level of use by the local community.
- 1.5 Queens College Oxford are amenable to taking action to address the access issues however, the only practical measure to do so would involve the digging of a ditch on their neighbour's privately owned land. The College's tenanted farmer agreed to do this work, but the other landowner was not prepared to allow that to happen.
- 1.6 The City Council's Planning Department have advised that if the landowner is not permitting access onto their land and if the current material use of the land is not changed, there are no enforcement powers available to them to take any action. Furthermore, the legal requirements in relation to hedgerows can only be enforced if the breaches (size of opening) in the hedgerow are five metres or more wide. In the case of Thompson's Road, the current breach in the hedgerow is approximately 2 metres wide.
- 1.7 The City Council's Legal Department is currently reviewing various forms of legislation including Crime and Nuisance powers that may provide opportunities to require the private landowner to take, or allow, prompt action to repair breaches/gaps in the perimeter of this land that enables encroachment by unauthorised people and vehicles including bikers that then cause nuisance and annoyance to surrounding neighbours.
- 1.8 Police recorded 14 reports of nuisance behaviour during 2012, of which 9 were specific to nuisance associated with off road biking. In 2013, this reduced to 6 reports of which 2 were specific to the off road biking issue. However, in 2014 to the present date, there have been 10 reports, all of which are concerned with off road biking.
- 1.9 Action by agencies includes a street briefing held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013 to reassure the community that reductions in crime continued and to encourage reporting as and when the

incidents occur so that Officers could monitor patterns and trends in the behaviour. A further written communication was hand delivered to residents' homes on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to remind them of the importance of continuing to report descriptions of bikers and their bikes. This letter provided additional reporting mechanisms and reassurances for residents in reporting anonymously through the Parish Council website.

- 1.10 Officers from the Community Safety Team have met with the Local Police team to review the intelligence and reported incidents in order to identify perpetrators and problematic households in this area. A number of those households are owned by Housing Associations and therefore their tenants are responsible for the conduct and behaviour of family members and visitors to their homes and in the surrounding area. This led to a number of joint visits conducted and tenancy enforcement warnings were issued. The behaviour of the individuals in these properties is also being closely monitored by the Local Multi-agency Case Management Forum.
- 1.11 A number of site visits were conducted to the area, paying particular attention to the top of the road and access to Bunson's Wood which resulted in Officers identifying and subsequently installing two "A Frame" barriers onto the privately owned land to limit vehicular access. The funding to support this was provided by the countryside rangers.
- 1.12 Police have the power to seize bikes that are believed to be used for off road riding in areas where this is not permitted. In 2013, Police seized a total of 26 off road bikes and a further 14 in 2014 to the present date, some of which were from properties in the Keresley area. Information from local residents to support Police in doing this is very important therefore, Officers continue to work with the community to improve their ability to make further seizures.
- 1.13 A Dome Hawk camera has been deployed to this location and acts as a deterrent to all offending behaviour providing coverage of the whole road. As new CCTV equipment increases in availability then this will be considered for replacement of the existing camera by the Local Police Team. Footage will be used to identify perpetrators and assist with seizing further bikes.

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

The local Safer Neighbourhood Group is a multi-agency forum that tasks and co-ordinates various agencies resources to ensure a collective approach is applied by all. This forum can monitor and review the effectiveness of the action implemented so far by partner agencies. This group will continue to monitor and analyse calls made by residents in Thompson's Road and ensure appropriate resources and interventions are applied to address such. Invitations for a representative from Thompson's Road to join this forum in order to ensure on going community intelligence and perspective is provided and joint problem solving can be achieved

## **3 Results of consultation/actions undertaken**

- 3.1 There have been a number of agencies involved in identifying and addressing issues in the area. These have included the Community Safety Team, Local Police, Midland Heart and the Parish Council. We have engaged with affected homeowners and had discussions with landowners and tenants. Councillor Galliers has had an overview of much of the process.
- 3.2 There has been a number of site visits and residents have been spoken to via the Ward Forum, the Safer Neighbourhood Group as well as street briefings and letters sent to households

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

Monitoring of on-going crime and nuisance will be carried out by the Bablake Safer Neighbourhood Group in order to continually review action, impact and resolution. Should individuals be identified as perpetrators of nuisance or anti-social behaviour they will be managed via the North West Local Case Management Forum.

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

5.1 Financial implications  
None

5.2 Legal implications  
None, in that the current recommendations are effectively to monitor the situation and consider options.

**6. Other implications**  
None

**6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**  
Reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour are key priorities for the Local Authority and in the Coventry Community Safety Plan 2014-15 as identified by the Community Safety Partnership annual Strategic Assessments.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**  
Risk will be managed through proactive work by partner agencies and on-going monitoring and guidance from the Bablake Safer Neighbourhood Group.

**6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**  
Any additional resources required will be within operational capacities of partner agencies.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**  
This is not considered to have any impact on equality matters, all victims of anti-social behaviour should be risk assessed when reporting incidents to see if they are vulnerable in any way through their age, disabilities or similar.

**6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**  
None

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**  
Implementation of the recommended actions should result in an improvement in Community Safety and improve the quality of life of residents adversely affected by previous incidents.

#### **Report author(s):**

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**Directorate:** People Directorate, Community Safety Team

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Marcus Fothergill	Principal Planning Officer	Place Directorate		
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Legal: David Williams	Senior Solicitor	Resources	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
Planning: Jim Newton	Acting Head of Planning	Place	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
Deputy Director: Sara Roach	Deputy Director	People	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2014
Members: Councillor Philip Townshend	Deputy Leader – Coventry City Council Chair of Coventry Police, Crime & Community Safety Board			

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## PETITION TO COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

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**Petition Organiser contact details (You will be the contact for this petition):**

Councillor acting as sponsor (if any)..... **Cllr David Galliers**

**PETITION ISSUE Briefly describe your issue, problem or request and what you want the Council to do (please repeat on every page):**

Off road motorbikes accessing Bunsons Wood. The noise is unbearable for residents and a danger to children playing on the street. The off road bikers access and exit the woods through a "gap" in the fence. They leave at high speed so not to be spotted or identified but are unaware of children playing behind gates and shrubs. This is currently very dangerous for children, residents and the public. Thompsons Road also experiences anti-social behaviour from residents on the street and from surrounding streets. The ASB has included using the street as a race track for quad and off road bikes, physical fighting between residents, damage to property, breaking into cars on the street and more serious incidents of burglary. We the undersigned residents of Thompsons Road urge the City Council and the Police to take urgent steps to prevent illegal biking along our road and into Bunsen's Wood in order to avoid accidents involving young children playing in the road and the noise and distress caused to residents. As a minimum, we request the installation of permanent barriers between our road and the wood and a modern CCTV camera to replace the outmoded Dornehawk currently in place.

Print your full name	Address (house number, street and postcode)	Signature