
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

22 January 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Policing and Equalities – Councillor Townshend

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected:

St. Michael's

Title: Progress report on the Hillfields Community Safety Action Plan

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

During 2012-13 the Council received a number of petitions which when reviewed collectively identified recurring themes in relation to public place nuisance behaviour and some problematic households across a number of locations within the Hillfields area.

Officers developed a strategy and action plan to address these issues to provide a more proactive approach to prevent the same taking place.

This report provides a performance update on the measures implemented from the action plan and progress against additional recommendations made by Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities) on 31st July 2014.

The action plan (appendix 1) continues to be monitored, updated, and revised via the St. Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:-

1. Note the work of officers and agree that this continues.
2. Request members of the St Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group to continue to deliver against, monitor, and 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 exercise 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 implement the use of the current Section 60 powers or alternative new power when comes into force.

4. Endorse the monthly schedule of Community Payback work which has been developed with the Community Rehabilitation Service and request Officers to review the effectiveness of this initiative; working alongside community representatives and City Council staff for implementing new ways of working.

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
7. Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities). 31/ 07/ 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: Hillfields Community Safety Action Plan.

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 During 2012-13 the Council received a number of petitions which when reviewed collectively identified recurring themes.
- 1.2 Public place nuisance featured as a recurring theme in a number of different locations within the Hillfields area, requiring extensive resources from a number of agencies. A multi-agency approach was agreed providing a strategy and coordinated plan of action in an attempt to manage and prevent issues. The plan was presented and subsequently approved by Cabinet Member on 27th March 2014.
- 1.3 A further Cabinet Member meeting was held on 31st July 2014 to review the progress and effectiveness of the plan, when Officers were asked:-

To work with Local Police 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, via on-going regular meetings.

To develop a Community Payback work programme with the Community Rehabilitation Service for priority locations in the City but with specific attention to the Hillfields area to deal with environmental issues.

To write to Chair of Licensing Committee opposing all and any applications for 24-hour licensing in the Hillfields area.

To ask the Deputy Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) to oversee an up-to-date assessment of work undertaken by the Council and West Midlands Police and other statutory and voluntary Agencies to address issues relating to the presence of sex workers in the Hillfields area.

- 1.4 Incidents of crime and nuisance recorded by the Police for the months of July to October 2014 inclusive totalled 437 reports, compared to 435 reports in April to June 2014 and 321 in January to March 2014. Whilst there has been a slight increase in numbers the proactive work of Officers in the Community may have encouraged more reporting.
- 1.5 Additionally the City Council received 53 reports of nuisance behaviour associated with this area during July to October, compared to 46 reports during April to June 2014 and 66 reports in January to March. Although crime and nuisance incidents also show an increase on the previous quarter, this is a predictable and expected rise in line with the summer season.
- 1.6 All further recommendations were implemented by Officers including the letter to Chair of Licensing Committee sent on 10th November 2014.
- 1.7 Local Police Officers have met with Community Leaders to review the issues in the Hillfields area and this partnership continues to strengthen. Issues raised have been incorporated into the Hillfields Action Plan.
- 1.8 Tackling nuisance behaviour in Hillfields remains a key priority for all agencies in the area: there are very good working relationships between the neighbourhood policing team and officers in the Community Safety team and housing associations. Reports are still regularly

requested through partnership data analysts. This allows us to monitor the number of incidents in the area generally and also enables them to proactively identify any problematic households and/or potentially vulnerable residents. These addresses then receive joint visits from local Police and relevant partner agencies to make the household aware of our concerns for their behaviour or their wellbeing, and provide opportunities to provide advice and resolve or alleviate issues.

- 1.9 There have been some seasonal increases in incidents associated with the new student academic year, which have been addressed promptly by linking in with the Police University liaison officer assigned to the University. Problematic or vulnerable households are referred into either the Local Case Management Forum if they are causing issues, or the Harm Reduction Forum if professionals have concerns about the vulnerability of an individual.
- 1.10 A monthly schedule of Community Payback work has been developed by Officers from the Community Safety Team, Environmental, and Street Services working with the Community Rehabilitation Service. This initiative has been funded by the Coventry Police & Crime Board using Partnership funding. The specific focus for this programme will be delivered in Hillfields as a priority area.
- 1.11 A briefing note was prepared and forwarded to the Deputy Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities) in respect of her work to assess the works carried out by officers to address issues of the presence of sex workers in the Hillfields area. Sex workers continue to be managed through the Sex Workers case management partnership forum for the Coventry Police & Crime Board.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Residents raised some issues which identified particular locations of concern, which 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 insufficient evidence to support this measure in line with the Gating Order legislation, policy, and procedures.
- 2.3 Cameras have been deployed in various locations for the purpose of evidence gathering, to deter crime and nuisance behaviour, and to provide some measure of public reassurance.
- 2.4 Community Payback has commenced work in the area and will continue to work with partner organisations and residents to fulfil the schedule of works.
- 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.

- 2.6 Officers have been working with Whitefriars Housing Group regarding their land at Wright Street and Kepple Street to address environmental nuisance. A further Cabinet Member report was presented to Cabinet Member on 2nd October 2014.

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.
- 3.3 Officers continue to develop good working relationships with the residents and are engaging 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 Environmental clean-ups are on-going in the area.
- 3.6 Works have been undertaken to improve the layout of the Village Square.

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 of 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 from Community Safety Partnership funding for 2014/2015.

5.2 Legal implications

None

6 Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

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 flytipping, 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