

## **Appendix 5 – Impact Statements and Police Statistics**

I am PC 5530 Nicholas Mansell of the West Midlands Police. My current role is that of Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator for Coventry Police and I have held this position for 5 years.

Coventry City Centre is the single largest demand area within Coventry in terms of calls for service in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB). The city centre area regularly records over 100 calls for service each month. For the month of May 2016, for example, Coventry City Centre recorded 146 calls in relation to ASB.

Begging has always been an issue for Coventry City Centre, as it is for most cities in the country. The police currently can take action when the offence of begging, which is the direct request for money from a person, is either witnessed by a member of the public or by an officer. Most begging offenders will not commit this offence when a uniformed officer is present and most are aware of whom the police officers are even when they are wearing plain clothes. Therefore evidence directly from police officers is limited.

There are very few members of the public that are prepared to give evidence to facilitate further action against an individual who is begging. There are a number of reasons for this which includes seeing the beggar as a victim rather than an offender.

Begging takes place across the city centre but is very limited once outside the ring road. Begging often takes place around car parks near to the payment meters. This is one of the most common locations when calls for service are received by police. Other locations include outside shops and being approached in the street or square. Broadgate is a common location for beggars to approach members of the public and requests for money (spare change) are made.

Whilst many calls for service to the police do not include offers to give evidence, they do complain about intimidating behaviour and sometimes aggressive behaviour of beggars. This is particularly the case when they are asked to move on by a store owner or similar.

Coventry Police do target the beggars and currently we hold 11 Criminal Behaviour Orders against begging offenders. These are individuals who persist in the offence of begging and due to the evidence gained, the police are able to gain conditions set by the court to behaviours they must undertake – such as drug/alcohol treatment and conditions they must not undertake – such as sit on the floor in Coventry City Centre. Sitting on the floor is an excellent example of how an individual sets themselves up to beg without completing any offence.

Begging offences does take up a significant amount of police time and resource and multiple calls for service are received on a daily basis. Gaining Criminal Behaviour Orders is further work that is resource intensive and will take a police officer off the streets for a significant amount of time.

Peddling, the sale of goods by individuals moving through an area is an occupation that West Midlands Police has currently reviewed. The supply of Peddlers Certificates has been considered and it was found that the use of them had become too vague. As the ASB Coordinator I have the task at renewing all Peddlers Certificates and only the ones that fit the specified criteria will be issued. It is

expected that the majority of Peddlers Certificates will not be renewed. This may well lead to an increase in selling without a licence. Coventry Police does not receive many calls for service regarding this issue but does come up within public meetings and forums.

Charity Collectors are not often a subject of police calls for service. Coventry Police does not receive many calls for service regarding this issue but does come up within public meetings and forums, so clarity for all parties about what is allowed and what is not within the City Centre would be welcomed.

Busking is not a call for service received by police. Many verbal comments are made to officers from time to time in relation to the noise level being too high and the quality being too low.

Distribution of publicity materials is not a call for service received by police unless it is of an offensive nature that would fall under criminal legislation.

Skateboarding can be an issue that is reported to police. One area where complaints concerning skateboarding are prevalent is the area outside The Herbert Art Gallery and Cathedral. Large groups of youths are reported to gather and their behaviour both from the group itself in terms of language and behaviour as well as the skateboarding itself has caused members of the public to feel intimidated and annoyed. The skateboards have been reported to pass individuals very closely and there have been reports of collisions. Police are limited in the powers we can use against skateboards unless it fits into Public Order legislation (Harassment Alarm Distress) or Public Nuisance.

End of statement

My name is Adrian Woolford and I am employed by Coventry City Council as a Business Improvement District (BID) Liaison Executive. Within my role I manage the Retail Crime Operation (RCO) and supervise the BID Ambassadors.

The BID's main purpose is to generate footfall into the City Centre through Events, Crime reduction, Cleansing and Greening. We are funded by the businesses themselves and everything we put in place is above the Council's baseline agreement.

Whilst speaking with businesses we get to know their concerns and issues regarding the City Centre and assist where possible. Some of these concerns relate to beggars, street drinkers, noisy buskers and charity collectors, with businesses often saying they feel it is having a negative effect on their business and the perception of the City Centre as a whole.

The BID Ambassadors log any encounters with beggars and street drinkers on our internal database allowing us to keep record of problematic individuals and locations. This information is in turn forwarded to Police and Community Safety on a monthly basis and also if necessary offenders can be brought to light at Local Case Management Forum (LCMF) meetings to discuss further. When approaching a beggar or street drinker to ask them to move on we never know how they may react and could in theory be putting ourselves into a volatile situation. We use the radio link to forward information to the Jackson Road control room too.

Over the past year or so we have noticed an increase in buskers and with no official policy in place it makes it hard to manage them. Businesses are encountering problems with the noise as on occasions the volume interrupts the daily running of the store as staff are unable to hear customers. In the past we have politely asked buskers to turn the volume down, limit the time they are in one spot or even pack up if they are causing too many problems. More recently we have been directing complaints to the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers within the Council as they are looking are tackling the problem going forward.

Charity collectors who can be quite persistent when asking for donations are also a problem, more predominately in the areas of Broadgate and Upper Precinct areas. We have questioned the Council Licencing team over the complaints and how to tackle the problem and on a few occasions they have attended alongside us to question the individuals, but were happy with the documentation provided.

Overall the combination of the aforementioned problems can put a strain on the City Centre as visitors can leave with the wrong perception.

End of Statement

My name is Simon Hutt, I am employed by Coventry City Council as a Street Enforcement Manager. In my role I am responsible for managing a team of Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEO's) that patrol the City Centre and issue penalty notices for littering and similar.

My team regularly inform me about issues that occur within the City Centre that they do not have powers to deal with, which causes them personal frustration but also means members of the public often think they are ignoring issues when in fact they cannot enforce against them. Where appropriate they will approach the person causing the issue but most of them are aware NEO's do not have the power to insist on a resolution.

The most prevalent issue is begging, NEO's regularly remark that the numbers operating in the City Centre has increased over the past 12 months. They will operate in such a way that if they see a person in uniform from the Council or Police they will ensure they do not verbally request anything from people as they know that is the offence. They are also aware that NEO's cannot insist they move on and as such many remain in situ. In fact Police officers also struggle to move them on in some cases.

Beggars are often seen in empty shop doorways but most commonly in car parks around pay stations.

Buskers cause issues for NEO's particularly buskers that use amplification. Whilst we are aware of the code of conduct that was devised some time back, that code is not enforceable and whilst some buskers are amenable to advice offered, some will ignore it. We recognise that enjoyment of buskers is subjective so cannot assess who is "good" or not but to assist businesses and their

employees and to be fair to all buskers, the main principle of insisting buskers move on from their pitch after one hour, not to return to the pitch will work best for all.

Charity subscription collectors are often seen in the City Centre, quite often people will complain to NEO's about them generally as people don't like to feel harassed. Upon checking the conditions under which they are allowed to operate in the City Centre it is clear that often collectors will stray some distance from permitted areas into Broadgate and the High Street. NEO's don't have the powers to insist these collectors return to agreed locations

During school holidays it is noticeable that a number of unauthorised sellers, particularly wristbands will enter the City Centre. They purport to be selling on behalf of charities but it appears only the smallest fraction of money received goes to any charity. The sellers often target mothers with children or young girls and often they feel pressured into purchasing the bands or other products. People often state this to NEO's but they do not formally complain to the Council on the telephone or similar.

Skateboarding as an activity tends only to be problematic in a small number of locations in the City Centre, on the whole the boarders are quite amenable when spoken to, however the manner in which they ride their boards can pose a danger to the public as when they fall off, the boards can often be propelled away from them at some speed, at ankle height.

The noise skateboarding creates can also be very noisy in some locations, the topography and designs of some buildings and areas in the City Centre can amplify this.

Cyclists are regularly complained about to NEO's and where they can get cyclists to stop it will be explained to them that it's not appropriate to ride at speed through pedestrianized areas, but more often than not cyclists will not stop and will carry on.

Historically a problem area for skateboarders and cyclists, particularly on BMX's is around the Herbert art gallery and Cathedral Square. They will often congregate near the front of the gallery and can cause significant nuisance for staff and visitors to both the art gallery and cathedral.

In summary it is my opinion that the management of the City Centre would be greatly improved by assigning officers the powers to deal with various issues, some of which cause significant issues, some less so but the attractiveness of the City Centre to visitors would be enhanced by allowing this.

End of Statement

My name is Paul Bowman. I am the Parking Services Manager for Coventry City Council and I have held the post for 9 years. My responsibilities include the monitoring and enforcement of on and off-street parking throughout Coventry and also for the management of the Council's public and private car parks located in the city centre and out of town.

The management of car parks includes responsibility for the safe operation of the sites and the equipment therein; the security of the assets and money contained in the pay-stations; the safety

and security of the staff and members of the public using the facilities; adding to the customer experience in support of the generation and growth of the local economy.

Car parks are a haven for beggars and begging is particularly problematic in city centre car parks (e.g. Cox Street, New Union Street, The Barracks, Salt Lane) where the individuals concerned position themselves next to the pay stations and prey on the car park customers. Some customers have complained that they have been verbally threatened when they have refused to give the beggars money.

As the Parking Manager, I regularly receive complaints from customers who have been subjected to beggars and other anti-social behaviour in car parks. Many customers have commented that they felt intimidated, threatened, vulnerable, unsafe and that the behaviour of the beggars is totally unacceptable and not what they expect when visiting the city centre. Some customers have also said that they will avoid coming back to the city centre due to the problems caused by beggars and the negative experience that they had.

Some beggars are responsible for the following offenses in car parks:

- ☒ Forcing objects into the coin, ticket or credit / debit card slots in the pay stations causing significant damage to the equipment that can result in a loss of revenue to the Council.
- ☒ Urinating and defecating in the car parks or in the car park equipment, which aside from the stench and the obvious unpleasantness is a health and safety problem that customers and staff are exposed to.
- ☒ Littering

The cost of any repairs and cleaning of the machinery and car parks is an expense that the Council incurs and one that we can ill-afford.

In my opinion a Public Space Protection Order would provide a useful mechanism for controlling the behaviours of beggars and potentially removing them from the car parks. With that in mind, I would very much support any proposal to introduce a PSPO.

End of Statement

My name is Professor Ian Marshall. I am Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Strategic Alignment and External Relations at Coventry University. My portfolio over the years has included responsibility for Students, Research, Student Services, Registry, Library, Information Technology Systems, Recruitment and Admissions Office, Timetabling and Marketing & Communications.

I am also Chair of the University's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Group and am currently in the process of implementing a revised protocol on reporting complaints to the University, with a view to help address and deal with ASB efficiently and effectively.

Skateboarding and associated activities on the University Square has been an issue for a number of years resulting in numerous complaints being received by the University. Large groups of youths congregate on the Square (particularly over the summer months) and cause a great deal of noise and nuisance not to mention the potential danger they impose to members of the public by the manner in which they ride their boards and bikes.

The issue with skateboarding and cycling on the Square has been particularly noticeable to the senior management team at Coventry University as some of our offices adjoin the square and therefore the noise and language used by the youths can be clearly heard. This is not the type of environment we would like our staff, students, potential new students and visitors or members of the public to have to experience. For major events we have to deploy our Protection staff to prevent skateboarding disrupting the event being held on the University Square, in the University, Cathedral or Herbert Art Gallery.

I would like to add that there has also been a great deal of damage caused to the Square by persistent skateboarding over the years hence resulting in an unnecessary expense incurred to the University.

The University would welcome measures to ban skateboarding and cycling altogether from the Square to help safeguard staff, students and members of the public from potential harm. It also is not a good experience for visitors to the Cathedral to be run down while they are trying to get a better view or take photographs.

End of Statement

Dear Sir / Madam,

Ref: Dangers faced by older people from cyclists and skateboarders in the city centre.

Coventry Older Voices, (COV) is a campaigning and influencing group that has approximately 445 members and is still growing. COV represents the views of older people in the city and our goals are;

- Giving people over 50 a stronger and more influential voice in the City.
- Representing the views of older people on important issues, such as transport and health.
- Enabling older people to participate meaningfully in the planning and provision of services locally.
- Building links with public bodies and private companies, both locally and nationally, to influence policies and developments in the City.

I am the Secretary of COV and our Management Committee holds fortnightly meetings and also produces a bi-monthly newsletter and has an active website

<http://coventryoldervoices.org/Index.aspx#> The issue of the dangers faced by older people from

cyclists and skateboarders in the city centre is discussed at Management Committee meeting on a regular basis.

COV members contact me on a regular basis to express concerns about the riding of bikes and skateboards on pavements and pedestrianised areas in the City Centre, and about the danger caused to older people in particular. COV members have reported either experiencing or seeing near misses, with cyclists and skateboarders in the city centre and it can only be a matter of time before we witness a serious accident. These issues were also raised at a Transport and Community Safety event that COV organised in November 2015 in partnership with Cllr Rachael Lancaster.

But although we might agree that it is a real problem, COV members often do not report these incidents to the Council or Police. The general feeling of members is that the police don't seem to have the manpower, time or will to do much about it, bike riders and skateboarders do not seem to regard it as a problem, and although some practical measures have been put in place by the Council in recent years, the situation is largely unchanged.

COV would like to try to address this issue, and believe that it is appropriate for the above reasons for restrictions to be place on cycling and skateboarding in the City Centre.

Yours Faithfully

Abtar Sanga

Secretary

Coventry Older Voices

End of Statement

## Police Statistics

The information below relates to the previous 12 month period as of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 – 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016

### Criminal Offences

There were 40 breaches of Criminal Behaviour Orders relating to begging or other offences in the City Centre. These statistics will not reflect the number of instances a person may have been caught begging prior to going to court and having a Criminal Behaviour Order imposed.

### Reports Received

These are calls received by West Midlands Police that were categorised as “Anti Social Behaviour”

| Type of Incident | Number of calls received |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Begging          | 153                      |
| Cycling          | 11                       |
| Busking          | 6                        |
| Skateboarding    | 6                        |