

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor J Innes

29 January 2018

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Petition – CCTV to be Installed at Lentons Lane Cemetery

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**Is this a key decision?**

‘No – Although the residents visiting the cemetery may reside in all wards across the city, it is anticipated that the impact of the proposals will not be significant’.

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**Executive Summary:**

This report responds to a petition containing 474 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council and dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The petition is supported by Councillor Cllr Seaman and requests that the Council install CCTV at Lentons Lane Cemetery following a thefts from a number of graves.

The petition reads:-

I am starting this petition to get CCTV installed at Lentons Lane Cemetery after someone has pinched the lights off my baby’s grave and off many other graves. It is about time something is done as it has happened plenty of times before and seems to be getting more and more regular.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for (City Services) is asked to note:

- 1 The number of reported issues of anti-social behaviour recorded at Lentons Lane and other cemeteries over the past 12 months.
- 2 The cost of installing CCTV at Lentons Lane Cemetery estimated at and its limited effectiveness.
- 3 The actions being taken by the Bereavement Service to reduce antisocial behaviour at the Cemetery.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**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:** Petition – To get CCTV Installed at Lentons Lane Cemetery

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 There are 6 cemeteries administered by Coventry City Council and in the past there has been a number of requests for CCTV to be fitted into all of these sites. Such requests have needed to be balanced against a number of considerations:
- The majority of visitors to the cemeteries and crematorium Gardens of Remembrance want to visit a loved one's final resting place in peace and without interruption from others. Many people feel to have cameras up and watching them as they spend time in reflection is an invasion of their privacy.
  - It is impossible to be able to supply a standard level of security cover for all individuals who have a grave or memorial in the Gardens of Remembrance. With the general landscaping of all sites including hedges and trees etc. vision would be obscured for most graves which are not in direct line of a camera.
  - The quality of any footage obtained by CCTV would likely be insufficient to enable perpetrators to be identified particularly during the evening periods and perpetrators will take action to disguise their identities.
  - The initial costs to set up such a system would likely exceed £30,000 and in addition there would be on going monitoring costs. The cost would be unjustifiable taking in to account the low number of incidents of actual vandalism we experience within the cemeteries.
- 1.2 Overall the number of high value incidents regarding vandalism is very low and there have been no such reports made to the Bereavement service the last 4 years.
- 1.3 There are a small number of occasions throughout the year when low value, high sentimental items are taken off graves and out of the Gardens of Remembrance (these items consist of flowers both fresh and artificial, small ornaments and pots etc.). Although theft off a grave or from an individual garden in the Gardens of Remembrance is highly distressing to the family concerned the relatively few incidents do not indicate wide spread or major vandalism issue within the cemeteries administered by Coventry City Council.
- 1.4 We do not believe the introduction of cameras and the very limited impact they would have would in any way deter the sorts of occurrences we experience within the cemeteries.
- 1.5 Fortunately there are relatively few such occurrences however we are very much aware of the impact this can have on individuals and take the matter extremely seriously. In an on-going effort to keep the occurrences low we maintain regular communications and support from the local Community Officers ensuring a regular presence within the cemeteries by means of patrolling when in the area and we continue to lock cemetery sites in the evening.
- 1.6 Over the last 12 month period (Dec. 2016 – Dec. 2017) 36 reports of low value thefts from graves and the Gardens of Remembrance have been reported to Bereavement Services (Canley Cemetery 15, Windmill Road Cemetery 2, Walsgrave Cemetery 1, Lentons Lane cemetery 10, London Road Cemetery 2, St Pauls Cemetery 1 and Gardens of Remembrance 5).
- 1.7 There has been 1 report of anti-social behaviour at Lentons Lane - youths shooting and killing a duck using a catapult.

- 1.8 Signs have been erected in Lentons Lane Cemetery advising visitors how to report theft and anti-social behaviour providing various methods of communication including telephone numbers, email addresses and guidance regarding the need to report such matters to the police.
- 1.9 Reviews and meetings are currently taking place regarding the activities around the opening and closure of the gates, regular patrols by the Local Community Policing units and patrols carried out by Coventry City Council Communications Centre.
- 1.10 Enquiries are ongoing regarding the pedestrian gate and the options available to remove the potential access of vehicles, but maintain easy access for wheelchairs etc.
- 1.11 Enquiries are ongoing regarding the setup of a direct complaints system for acts of theft to be pin marked on a map accessed via the Bereavement Services web pages.

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

- 2.1 The option of installing of CCTV within the cemetery has been rejected on privacy grounds, its disproportionately high cost and limited effectiveness.
- 2.2 The option to do nothing has also been rejected and we will continue to work with the local police service with a view to maintaining regular patrols of the Cemetery, record all incidents reported to us and ensure the site is secured during the evening periods.

## **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 A meeting took place during November 2017 at Lentons Lane Cemetery with petitioners and attended by the Cabinet Member for City Services and Council Services Officers. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for petitioners to express their experiences and concerns, obtain views and identify potential practical ways forward to help address some of the problems experienced.

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

- 4.1 To be agreed subject to approval of a recommendation within this report.

## **5 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

- 5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

- 5.2 Legal implications

None at present

## **Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?**

Cemeteries and other green spaces are highly valued by the citizens of Coventry and contribute greatly to improving the quality of life to those that live and work in the City and also helps address health inequalities.

**6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile.

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

Continued maintenance of the site will be delivered using existing resources.

**6.4 Equalities / EIA**

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

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

No direct impact

**6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

There are no implications.

**Report author(s):**

**Name and job title:**

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Rob Parkes	Team Leader, Place, Legal Services	Place	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2018	9 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018
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Liz Knight	Governance Services Officer	Place	18 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018
Mandy Thomas	Bereavement Service Manager	Place	2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 2018	4 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2019
Andrew Walster	Assistant Director (Streetscene and Regulatory Services)	Place	10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018	11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018
Councillor J Innes	Cabinet Member for City Services	-	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2018	15 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2017

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