
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

13th March 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities – Councillor A Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

St Michaels

Title:

6 month update:

Response to a petition regarding concerns over; anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of Priors Harnall and Cawthorne Close.

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

A petition of 39 signatures, sponsored by Councillors Welsh, O’Boyle and Akhtar St Michael’s Ward Councillors, regarding concerns over; anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of Priors Harnall and Cawthorne Close, notably focussed around the greenspace to the rear of 16 – 22 Priors Harnall, was submitted to the Council on 14th June 2017. This was presented before the Cabinet member in July 2017.

An outcome of the meeting was that the police and council agreed to carry out more proactive patrols in the area. It was also agreed to adapt a lamp column within the grassed area adjacent to both streets so that it can accommodate a CCTV camera in readiness for the lighter nights. This will allow the monitoring of any ASB throughout the summer months when footfall is perhaps much higher. Additional patrols have been carried out by both the police and the council to ensure that any ASB can be monitored.

The police have also agreed to look into increased youth provision during the summer months.

Reporting of incidents by local residents to both the police and the council over the previous 6 months [Summer 2017] have been sparse.

This report details actions taken by the City Council and West Midlands Police.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:-

1. Request West Midlands Police and Council officers to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents requests for assistance.
2. Encourage residents to set up and create an active Neighbourhood Watch in the 2 area's and report incidents of concern to Police and the Council as soon as they occur.
3. Request that some form of youth engagement be initiated in the area before the warmer weather arrives to mitigate the impact that large numbers of children may have on the area.
4. Look at the use of CCTV in the area if it felt that there is a need to monitor criminal activity.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities meeting agenda 27th July, 2017 and minutes

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

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On 14th June 2017, a petition signed by 39 people was received by the Council. The petition highlights residents' concerns with anti-social behaviour notably that young children and youths congregate around the green open space between Priors Harnall and Cawthorne Close in the St Michaels Ward. The residents highlight that young children are playing ball games within the grassed area within Cawthorne Close. They also state that in the evening there are older youths who congregate to the rear of the garage area and it is believed that they are taking drugs.
- 1.2 Residents feel intimidated and are regularly disturbed by the activity of these groups and state that there are also numerous incidents of dog fouling, littering and fly tipping in the same area. This makes the area look dirty and untidy and encourages more flytipping. Residents are keen to have the issues addressed at the earliest opportunity.

2. Options

2.1 Initial recommendations [prior to 27 July 2017 meeting with the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities]:

The Cabinet Member was recommended to:-

1. Request West Midlands Police and Council officers to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents requests for assistance.
2. Encourage residents to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area and report incidents of concern to Police and the Council as soon as they occur. A scheme currently operates in Cawthorne Close but there is no record of an active one in Priors Harnall.
3. Request that some form of youth engagement be initiated in the area, the police have agreed that once the lighter nights and warmer weather arrives they will look to ensure that there is more provision for youths in the area.

2.2 At the meeting on 27 July 2017 the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities decision was to:

1. Request West Midlands Police and Council officers to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents requests for assistance.
2. Encourage residents to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area, with the support of officers and to report incidents of concern to Police and the Council as soon as they occur.
3. Request that some form of youth engagement be initiated in the area, with the assistance of the Positive Youth Foundation.
4. Request that Council officers, Ward Councillors and local residents consider the feasibility of a camera, with signage, in an appropriate place.
5. Agree that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities discuss and investigate further, with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, the ownership of the land and potential solutions.

6. Request that a progress report back be considered in 6 months' time and the Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the meeting.

3. Results

3.1 Review of the issues raised by the petition: Update on the actions taken:

- 3.1.1 Request West Midlands Police and Council officers to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents requests for assistance. Officers will monitor the sites and report back on extent of the issue.

Issues of an ASB or Police nature: Update on issues in the area. Officers have made contact with the local policing team to ascertain if there had been any further issues of an ASB or Police nature in the 6 month period since the original petition was raised.

- **Cawthorne close:**

- No reports

- **Priors Harnall:**

- 3 reports in August 2017 concerning the same incident of youths climbing on garages.

Issues of an environmental nature: Officers have checked the council's database for both locations and have ascertained that in the 12 month period 01/01/2017 til 01/01/2018 there were the following:

- **Cawthorne close:**

- 3 incidents of flytipping reported to street services. [One since the petition]
- 1 abandoned vehicle reported [in Feb 2017 – before the petition]
- No other reports.

- **Priors Harnall:**

- 3 incidents of flytipping reported to street services [one since the petition]
- 1 reported to enviro crime [bed base and child's toy]
- 1 abandoned vehicle reported [since the petition- in Dec 2017]
- No other reports

- 3.1.2 Residents were encouraged to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area, records show that residents from Cawthorne Close has one set up, and that Priors Harnall have made initial enquiries.

- 3.1.3 The local policing team are looking to work with partner agencies in the community In order to provide youth engagement, this is intended to commence once the warmer weather arrives.

- 3.1.4 It was agreed that a lamp column on the green space would be adapted to as to assist the police and the council in identifying perpetrators of ASB. Officers had requested that a lamp column be adapted in the area, this had been delayed due to matters out of our control however it has now been installed in readiness for the lighter nights.

- 3.1.5 Agree that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities discuss and investigate further, with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, the ownership of the land and potential solutions.

The council own the land and it is officially designated as highways land, however due to logistical and operational arrangements it is maintained by the streetpride and grounds teams.

Several residents wanted the land to be closed off and turned into an allotment garden, however once this was raised with colleagues in highways / streetpride and also public health, they all felt that the land should remain how it is. It is a valuable piece of greenspace in a heavily built up area. Other residents had approached us and claimed that they enjoyed having a space where their children could play, within sight of their houses.

- 3.1.6 As part of the original petition it was agreed that a review would be undertaken 6 months' from the original meeting. It was originally noted that the Police and crime commissioner could be invited, however in light of the low levels of reporting of issues this was not pursued. – I think if the evidence base had backed up the claims then officers could have requested that the Police and Crime Commissioner look into the matter – particularly around perceived issues with policing levels, however as there had been no further referrals of note it was felt that this would not have been a worthwhile use of his time.

4 Timetable for implementing this decision

Officers from the Council and the Police will continue to monitor the area and respond to all referrals from residents in a timely manner and meet with residents when needed.

5 Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Services

5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report, all costs will be met from core budgets.

5.2 Legal implications

The Council has powers under the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 to obtain orders in relation to individuals or areas where there is evidence of behaviour which is persistent and continuing and causes harassment alarm and distress to members of the community or is unreasonable and has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. Informal approaches should be considered in the first instance.

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 Council Plan in improving the quality of life for Coventry people by making communities safer and our city cleaner and greener.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

See paragraph 4.1 above.

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 Council has a zero tolerance approach to fly tipping, littering and dog fouling. Where evidence is available, Council officers will take legal action against the perpetrators.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s): Martin McHugh

Name and job title: Street Enforcement Manager
Directorate: Place Directorate

Tel and email contact: 02476 831809
martin.mchugh@coventry.gov.uk

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Craig Hickin	Head of Environmental Services	Place Directorate	20/02/2018	02.03.2018
Graham Hood	Head of Streetpride and Greenspaces	Place Directorate	20/02/2018	02.03.2018
Michelle Rose	Governance Services Officer	Resources Directorate	20/02/2018	5.03.2018
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Cath Crosby	Lead Accountant	Resources Directorate	20/02/2018	20/02/2018
Legal: Gill Carter	Regulatory Crime & Licensing Lawyer	Resources Directorate	20/02/2018	20/02/2018
Andrew Walster	Assistant Director	Place Directorate	20/02/2018	20/02/2018
Members: Name				
Cllr Abdul Khan	Cabinet Member for Policing & Equalities		20/02/2018	20/02/2018

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Appendices : NA