
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

26th July 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Policing and Equalities – Councillor Abdul Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

St Michaels

Title:

Response to a petition regarding concerns over; environmental issues, anti-social and criminal behaviour and a lack of police assistance in the vicinity of Winchester Street.

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

A petition of 15 signatures, sponsored by Councillor O'Boyle, St Michael's Ward Councillor, regarding concerns over; environmental issues, anti-social and criminal behaviour and a lack of police assistance in the vicinity of Winchester Street was submitted to the Council on 20th May 2018.

The petition specifically mentions acts of criminal damage to vehicles by persons unknown and the presence of litter throughout the area as a result of the activity of sex workers.

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 a Neighbourhood Watch in the area and report incidents of concern to Police and the Council as soon as they occur.
3. Look at the possibility of installing CCTV within the area to deter antisocial and criminal activity.

List of Appendices included:

None

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

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:

Response to a petition regarding concerns over; environmental issues, anti-social and criminal behaviour and a lack of police assistance in the vicinity of Winchester Street

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 On 24th May 2018, a petition signed by 15 people was received by the Council. The petition highlights residents' concerns with regards to anti-social and criminal behaviour and a perceived lack of action by the council and the police in dealing with these issues.
- 1.2 The main issue concerned a spate of incidents [18th – 19th May 2018] during which a large number of local resident's vehicles were damaged by unknown persons. Residents felt that the police could have done more on this occasion.
- 1.3 Another issue of concern was that the area is affected by litter which often includes condoms which are believed to emanate from sex workers within the area. Residents want to know what can be done to ensure the area is kept in a clean state.
- 1.4 Residents feel that the activity of the sex workers in the area make it an unsafe place for young children to play and grow up. This makes the area look dirty and untidy and discourages the children from playing outside. Residents are keen to have the issues addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.5 Coventry City Council recorded data regarding litter and refuse complaints from June 2017 to June 2018 shows;

30 reports directly related to Winchester Street. Of those reports, **18 were as a result of council officers logging the issues.**

Another notable street in the area is that of Colchester Street, [due to the proximity of the 2 streets it is difficult to treat either in isolation], and over the same period June 2017 to June 2018 shows;

68 reports directly related to Colchester Street. Of those reports, **44 were as a result of council officers logging the issue.**

Both Streets are patrolled regularly, at least once a week by officers from the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team and referrals are made to ensure the area is kept clean.

- 1.6 The Councils Street Cleansing Team carry out cleaning schedules once a week on a Wednesday in both Winchester Street and Colchester Street, their operatives will also visit the area as a result of specific complaints as and when they are reported. The operatives also visit the neighbouring Raglan Street and Vauxhall Street every Friday and will pick up additional litter as and when they see it.
- 1.7 In addition, specific visits are undertaken to collect reported fly tipping from council land. All cases of littering and fly tipping are investigated, with the appropriate course of action depending on any evidence found at the scene and witnesses to the offence(s).
- 1.8 Police data for the same period shows **a total of 49 logs for Winchester Street and 69 logs for Colchester Street.** A large proportion of these logs relate to one individual who has been evicted from the area earlier this year. Other logs relate to regular Police business and are not relevant for the purposes of this report.

1.9 Police undertake targeted operations to educate those involved in sex work and enforce against those sex workers and the associated antisocial behaviour that it brings.

2. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

2.1 In response to the petition, officers from the Council and the Police have made contact with the lead petitioner.

2.2 West Midlands Police and the Council are monitoring the situation. Extra patrols take place as duties allow and individuals found to be causing issues are challenged and appropriate action taken.

2.3 The issues around the specific incidents on the 18th to 19th May 2018 form part of an ongoing police investigation and therefore the police are unable to comment further at this moment in time.

2.4 In taking this matter forward the following recommendations are made to Cabinet Member:

2.4.1 Request West Midlands Police and the Council to continue their monitoring of the area and respond accordingly to residents request for assistance.

2.4.2 Encourage residents to set up a Neighbourhood Watch in the area as there are none in the area and report incidents of concern to Police as soon as they occur. [Details of how to set this up have been passed to the lead petitioner].

2.4.3 To look at the possibility to install temporary deployable cameras to highlight and discourage crime in the area and also look at ways in which the issues here could possibly be designed out in some way.

3. **Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 Officers and the Police have been in regular contact with the lead petitioner

4 **Timetable for implementing this decision**

4.1 Officers from the Council and the Police will monitor the area and meet with residents when needed. A meeting **shall be arranged** with the ward councillors to visit the site to take a look at the issues and to speak to residents about their concerns.

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 to try to address anti-social behaviour through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 dependant on the type of behaviour and the available evidence.

6 Other implications

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 littering and fly tipping. Where evidence is available, Council officers will take legal action against the perpetrators.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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