

Appendix 4 – Partner Impact Statements

West Midlands Police

I am Police Inspector 4474 Mark Teago of the West Midlands Police currently stationed at Coventry Central Police Station and I manage the Partnerships Team within Coventry.

Coventry is the second largest city in the West Midlands region. Within Coventry, the police have experienced a significant increase in demand and crime since 2015. One area which has seen a substantial increase in demand and serious violence is the council ward of St Michaels. St Michaels covers a wide and varied area of the city centre including; City Centre, Hillfields, Gosford Green and the lower section of Foleshill. The 2015 report of indices of deprivation puts a number of areas of St Micheals ward as some of the most deprived in the county.

This demand in St Michaels has come in a variety of forms. At the serious end of the spectrum, this includes gang related activity, drug dealing, drug misuse and violence including the use of weapons such as knives and firearms. There are a multitude of contributing factors, including alcohol and substance misuse. One of the most concerning factors within this criminality is the fact that many of the offenders and victims involved are young people with ages below 18 years of age. This leads in turn to increased concerns around children being exploited for criminal purposes and sexual exploitation.

There are concerns around young people being at risk of exploitation within specific areas of the city centre. The open areas encompassing area of Millennium Place are consistently talked about by young people as a common meeting place and where criminal activities occur. These young people are often deemed as being at risk of exploitation or regularly go missing. There have been three reported physical assaults by young females deemed at risk of exploitation which have taken place in Millennium Place.

Locally, the Community Safety Partnership, the Children’s Safeguarding Board, particularly YOS and Children’s Services and a wide range of other groups and partners have been heavily focused on combating the exploitation of children. We have a number of multi-agency forums, initiatives and work addressing the issues associated with exploitation.

Intelligence and proactive policing to combat a number of the issues highlighted, has identified the city centre as a meeting place for drug dealing. With this comes an increased rate of crime and violence, often fuelled by different criminal groups attempting to control the drugs trade within an area. This includes both urban street gangs (USGs) and organised criminal groups (OCGs). This had led to the discharge of firearms and other weapon enabled crime .

This is just one of a complex set of reasons why we have seen a significant increase in serious violent crime within the area. Within Coventry Police, we have a dedicated team of officers (Astana Team) working alongside partners, focused on dismantling USGs and OCGs in the long term, with targeted initiatives taking place in short term to catch and convict offenders and divert and rehabilitate where opportunities arise.

The police statistics show a very concerning picture of violence and serious crime within St Michaels. We have seen just over 600 offences last financial year involving injury being caused by violent crime. We have also seen a number of violent incidents within the night time economy of the city.

The presence of such prominent violence is having a significant impact on the law abiding community of St Michaels who live, visit or work here. This in turn is affecting their confidence and having a detrimental effect. An example of this is the most recent Coventry Council household survey, which has seen a decrease in the number of people who state they feel safe at night within the city.

Within the ward of St Michaels, we have identified a number of geographical areas of concern. Millennium Place, Lady Herberts Gardens, Swanswell Street and Swanswell Park. In terms of violence, offences involving the misuse of drugs are higher within the areas of Lady Herberts Gardens, Priory Place, Village Square in Hillfields and the immediate surrounding area. Offences involving anti-social behaviour are higher within the areas of Millennium Place going all the way through to Village Square in Hillfields and includes Charles street.

One area of significant concern is around knife crime, due to the often devastating nature of the offences. Over the last financial year the ward of St Michaels had over 100 incidents involving knives, making the city centre a hotspot for such offences. Locally, a number of initiatives are ongoing to prevent young people carrying knives.

These include:

Coventry has the most schools in the region with active 'Mentors in Violence Prevention' schemes. This scheme was first pioneered in Glasgow, with their Public Health approach to treating violence as a disease, and seen nationally as best practice. Locally two charities have been able to access over sixty thousand pounds in Home Office funding to tackle knife crime within the City. We have various multi agency responses to those believed involved in knife crime and violent crime. We have also recently applied for other Home Office funding, in which we aim to tackle the issues under three strands:

- Front line professionals and communities awareness training. Priority will be given to those professionals, families and communities resident in the key areas. Training will include awareness raising (risk indicators) and response (how can they help their family & their communities and how to identify / access the right help at the right time)
- Prevention activity delivered in schools in the targeted areas, which includes primary and secondary. The objective to build resilience, de-glamourise the lifestyle, providing alternative role models and narratives, increase confidence to manage conflict and respond to peer pressure . It will also include young people on alternative education programmes and those who have recently transitioned to the secondary population or are at risk of exclusion
- Intervention activity, using a whole family approach, targeting families in high-risk area is using risk characteristics that include those identified in EIFs Preventing Gang And Youth Violence report. This will include intensive case management. Mentoring including as a mentor and developing others as mentors including those identified in the relevant communities. This strand reflects research evidence in terms of its delivery model ensuring that it builds on the protective factors for Youth Violence, providing alternative role models and parenting support groups to increase their confidence in managing their children's behaviour.

This is just some of the preventative work being done in the city around gang violence and knife crime.

RECENT INCIDENTS

Over the previous six months Coventry has seen an increase in violent offences. We have had a number of serious offences within the city centre and surrounding areas of Hillfields and Far Gosford Street. This includes:

In the early hours of Saturday 1st September 2018, we had the tragic murder of Fidel Glasgow, who was found in Hertford Place and subsequently died as a result of his injuries. This matter remains an on-going murder investigation. Subsequently the night club linked to this incident has been subject of licencing hearing and closed.

Over the weekend of 7th & 8th September 2018 one male was arrested for possession of a knife and two knives were located in searches outside night clubs. In the early hours of Sunday morning over the same weekend, two victims where subject to serious assaults, one of these assaults involved the use of a knife.

On the 18th September 2018 there was a discharge of a firearm in Far Gosford Street where two males where injured with shot gun pellets, one receiving 20 pellets to the leg.

On the 20th September 2018 two males were arrested on suspicion of knife point robbery after a large group of youths had committed a number of knife point robberies in the city centre.

On the 9th October, council CCTV identified a group of concern; they believed were involved in using illicit drugs and directed police officers to the group. One male aged 19 years within this group was searched and subsequently arrested for possession of a large combat knife.

On the 17th October 2018 a male linked to drug dealing in Millennium Place was stabbed in Hillfields. He received slash wounds to his arms, head and a puncture wound to his abdomen. From the victims clothing at Walsgrave hospital officers recovered class A drugs.

On the 22nd October 2018, whilst officers were assisting paramedic with a seriously injured person, they were made aware of a male attempt to hide an eight inch kitchen knife in a bush.

On the 31st October 2018 a firework was thrown from a car at pedestrians in Millennium Place, clearly this could have had devastating results. Again on the 4th November 2018 numerous reports of fireworks being thrown at members of the public in Millennium Place.

On the 1st of November 2018, three males committed a violent robbery and were subsequently caught in Spon End area of Coventry.

On the 4th November 2018 an officer was assaulted in Hales Street.

On the 11th November 2018 a live shotgun cartridge was recovered from Millennium Place.

On the 22nd November 2018 two males were arrested for possession of drugs in Lady Herberts Gardens .

To address these issues a number of initiatives and proactive operations are being run by the police and Community Safety Partnership. Currently West Midlands Police is running Operation Poprad, which has involved significant extra resources from other areas of West Midlands Police coming to Coventry to target issues within St Michaels Ward. Locally, staff have been diverted from other areas to support the city centre. This has resulted in a number of significant arrests and intervention. However this resource intensive activity is not sustainable as a long term solution.

We have a robust offender management strategy in place, but to deal with these incidents we have had to prioritise violent offenders over other acquisitive crime nominals. We have also used civil injunctions and criminal behaviour orders against a number of individuals.

A high proportion of the offences are committed by large groups who habitually loiter in a number of areas within the St Michaels wards. We have seen these groups move around the St Michaels ward to avoid police attention. This is after we have tackled issues in specific areas, with the use of tactics such as CCTV and even the use of police unmanned aerial vehicle. The volume and severity of offending of these groups, is having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those living within St Michaels.

A 'Coventry Violence Summit' is to take place on 28th January 2019. We know that violence has a devastating impact on individuals, families and local communities. To effectively deal with violence (and its root causes) we need a multi-agency approach, including working with schools, councils, parents and local communities. The causes are complex and will take a long term commitment from all statutory and non-statutory partners.

A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) under the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for the ward of St Michaels would be extremely beneficial in our attempts to reduce violence and keep our communities safer. It will greatly support policing the variety of criminal and anti-social behaviours outlined. In itself, it will not solve the issues, but will be a one of the key tools that we can use alongside a range of other measures. As it is preventative in nature, it will be one of the core tools we would use to address issues before they escalate into serious criminal offences.

Business Improvement District (BID)

On behalf of Coventry BID and the businesses within the Ring Road I would like to confirm that we are 100% in favour of the proposed plans.

Many of our businesses within the ring road have experienced many issues of anti-social behaviour and I would like to make a special note of the following physical areas –

Lady Herberts Gardens – Drug taking, weapons, sexual activity

The bottom of Bishops Street by Pure Gym, where it meets Silver Street – Gang fighting, drug taking and drug dealing

Broadgate – fast bike riding, excessive begging

Alleyway between Bullyard and Shelton Square – fast bike riding

Walkway by Cuckoo Lane – excessive begging

The Burges – sporadic times of gang related crime, drug dealing and drug taking especially in the Palmer Lane area

Priory Visitor Centre – drug dealing and drug taking, fighting, rough sleeping, sexual activity

White Street coach park/subway and Pool Meadow – excessive drug taking and drug dealing

Spon Street – excessive begging especially experienced by the NTE businesses

We have several service areas where drug taking is causing specific issues, including West Orchards, back of Upper Precinct, Hertford Street, Barracks car park, and behind the businesses at the back of City Arcade. I have taken the liberty of copying in several of my business owners who have personal experience to add to the BID details here.

With the current PSPO we have not seen any significant improvements to the problems we have been experiencing, but are whole heartedly behind the extension of the area to ensure that the city centre problems are not just pushed outside of the Ring Road, but that they cover the whole ward.

Kind regards

Trish

Trish Willetts

BID Director

Whitefriars Housing

I am Bal Basi, and I work as the Neighbourhood Services Manager for Coventry, on behalf of Whitefriars Housing Association. Whitefriars Housing owns and rents around 18,500 properties in Coventry, managing the income, tenancy management, lettings, and anti social behaviour associated with these properties. Whitefriars is part of the WM Housing Group, which works across the West Midlands, which manages over 30,000 properties.

We have a high concentration of properties within the St Michaels ward, in particular within Hillfields and Spon End. We have seen a noted increase in ASB within these areas, in particular an increase in aggressive and violent behaviour, which in turn has seen an increase in our own incident reporting.

Spon End

Over the past 2 years in Spon End we have encountered a number of issues, predominantly linked to the dealing and taking of drugs. Impacts of this on our Housing Management function and our residents has been flat takeovers and the associated violence, intimidation, and general anti-social behaviour which follows.

These issues have been identified at different times in different blocks within the Spon End area, and the layout of the estate lends itself to making any anti-social activity easier. Whilst reports have reduced we are aware of known nominals still in the area who will continue to attract drug users, and continue to impact on residents and businesses in Spon End.

Hillfields

In Hillfields the issues are with drug dealers, drug users, general substance and alcohol misuse, rough sleeping, prostitution and the associated anti-social and criminal behaviour that goes with it. This area in particular has been resource intensive in terms of housing management, and has also meant that we have spent a disproportionate amount of time focusing on this area.

In Hillfields Village Square and the surrounding area, there is open drug dealing which attracts the drug users, who then trespass in our high-rise blocks and surrounding area to take those drugs causing a nuisance, annoyance, misery and a serious health and safety risk to our residents, staff, visitors and contractors. Our Response Team play a never ending game of cat and mouse with these people to remove them from our blocks and then have to clean up the drug paraphernalia and biohazards they leave behind which takes them away from their other duties which residents pay a lot of money for. Despite good links with the local police, they too are limited and cannot deal with the sheer volume of people and incidents.

The drug and gang issues in Hillfields have led to various violent incidents including assaults, stabbings and shootings and has made staff and residents in the area fearful of leaving their homes after dark. In Hillfields, we continue to have major problems with drug dealing gangs affecting our housing management function by dealing inside and outside our blocks. Hillfields House is the worst at the moment with gangs of Somalians and Kurds using the chute room balconies to deal / use.

We have a large proportion of vulnerable tenants who are targeted by the nominals. This is in the form of financial abuse, physical violence and enticing them into addiction. While we can consider options such as injunctions, as a not-for-profit association, we cannot endlessly fund measures like this. This is massively impacting on our housing management function and we cannot sustain this level moving forward.

Foleshill, Paradise and Stoke Heath

Most of our Foleshill housing stock, in particular Falkener House, is not in the PSPO area and we fear that the intense work happening around Hillfields will push the problems and the people responsible for them further out of the area towards places like Falkener House, Longfield House, Paradise House and Alpha House in Stoke Heath. We are already seeing displacement to these blocks from Hillfields.

Gosford

We have received a number of reports from local tenants of needles being left in alley ways in the area in particular Gulson Road, Bramble Street and Harper Road. The old monastery on the corner of Gulson Rd and London Rd is also a hot spot for drug users and needles. Our tenants are very concerned about the potential risk of needle stick injuries.

Working Actively To Change Hillfields (WATCH)

WATCH community centre located in the heart of Hillfields Coventry, founded 21 years ago after two local residents came together to encourage a positive change for the area, founder members are still actively involved as organisation members and regularly provide an insight to the needs and ideas of local residents.

We support and seek to involve people facing disadvantage, social exclusion and deprivation, people from minority and culturally under-represented groups; those who consider themselves consumers engaged with and wishing to be informed about these cultures; and persons who live in socially or linguistically isolated communities. WATCH aims to deliver demand-led support services and training in partnership with local organisations and statutory agencies.

The WATCH community hub has been a Hate Crime reporting centre for a number of years actively supporting the local policing team and social housing landlords WM Hosing Group through a number of community engage initiatives and events to encourage local residents and businesses to access police support indirectly.

During the last 2 years our organisation staff and visitors to the centre have witnessed an increase in the number of serious and escalating crimes take place within the immediate vicinity (in Hillfields Square) and the surrounding areas. This increase began with open drug dealing and gangs of groups forming in different spots on what is the deemed the “front line” there has been a steady increasing the number of drug users and street prostitution close to the village square. The presence of these large groups has reduced the feeling of community and staff Police safety who have on several occasions not felt able to take action due to the size and unpredictable nature of the groups (who often carry concealed weapons or items that could be used as a weapon such as; bottles)..

Direct quote from a local resident, **“I feel more scared now coming across Hillfields Square than I did 20, 30 years ago when it was really bad!”**

Local residents and business owners and employee’s feel scared about accessing their local services, fear of attack or being caught up in cross fire of crime is high.

Business owners and residents fear reporting to the police for repercussions as they are often threatened verbally by local gang members, this is in addition to feeling that not enough is being done to tackle the issues and antisocial behaviour taking place in Hillfields. Individuals often come to WATCH for our support to report incidents on their behalf in hope their needs will be listened to and action taken.

Within the last 6 months in addition to drug dealing there have been a number of aggravated arguments and fights between groups. Initially taking place late and night or the early hours when the area was quiet but this has escalated in the last 2 months to almost

daily to weekly occurrences at peak times from as early as 9 am when children, families and local workers are accessing the area continuing throughout the day (police cars and officers have been witnessed driving past on many of these occasions, and they have told us that this is often due to their own safety as stated above).

There have been two knife crimes resulting in two stabbings in Hillfields square on 20th September and late October and the following week there was a drive by shooting.

In recent weeks, with support of local businesses and residents reports we were able to help the Police to recover 3 knives hidden by gangs in local bushes, near bins and buildings.

WATCH remains vigilant of these activities and to increase staff and public safety has increased security measures within the centre and installed a number of CCTV cameras in and on the outside of the centre. However there are still several potential significant dangers to residents and employees while gangs continue to operate in the area to the current level.

We strongly support and welcome the PSPO aim to dispersing gangs within the local neighbourhood.

McDonalds Restaurants

I would welcome this PSPO for St. Michaels Ward.

My particular issues are based around Cross Cheaping / The Burges with large gangs of young people intimidating my customers outside of my McDonald's restaurant, and occasionally inside.

Blatant drug dealing at all times around the area and a real issue with beggars around the area and in the store harassing customers and staff.

Rough sleepers are around the top of Cross Cheaping at all times and this brings drug dealers and gangs of young people to the area to trade.

I have worked closely with the Police over the last few months and their support has helped but they need more powers of dispersal.

John

John Kiely | Proprietor | Jake Restaurants Ltd T/A McDonald's
Address: 26 Cross Cheaping, Coventry

Coventry Cathedral

Coventry Cathedral has experienced a considerable amount of anti-social behaviour across the precinct. We have particular problems with general rowdiness, drunkenness, skate boarding, drug dealing/taking, and couples having sex. We would therefore support an action which would enable enforcement authorities to tackle these issues on our land. We also play host to a number of individual rough sleepers (mainly in the summer months) and would appreciate a means of tackling this behaviour as well.

However, whilst we support the ability to deal with anti-social behaviour, we are also aware that we are often host to groups assembling for entirely legitimate purposes. Some of these groups can themselves be rowdy and emotional. They may be guests at the student ball in the Ruins, for example, or people gathering for a vigil or political purpose to express a point of view. We would not want such people to be criminalised by any over-enthusiastic use of powers to disperse and are anxious that inappropriate use of intervention could harm our ability to offer a welcoming, safe space for a range of people in a range of circumstances.

We will continue to work with the authorities to keep our staff, visitors and buildings safe and welcome a range of powers to do this, but wish to stress the point that these must be used sensitively.

Priory Place Visitors Centre

Further to the recent emails I can confirm the following issues are still happening in and around the Priory

1: Rough sleepers, numerous occasions bedding and other related mess left behind. We have people sleeping in the main doorway and by the upstairs door. This has been very intimidating for our volunteers to have to ask them to move. On more than one occasion we have had to radio for assistance to help move them on, especially more recently a middle aged white male has become very aggressive especially around 2-3pm shouting and abusive language threatening and intimidating our volunteers and visitors.

2: drug selling and smoking is a daily occurrence under the walk way, it is a known location for drop off and pick-ups of drugs. This leads to a number of unsavoury characters hanging around the Priory. Not an image we wish our visitors to see.

3: we still have the odd incidence of indecent behaviour although not as obvious as it used to be.

4: The area at night is so dark we are unable to open the building for certain events as our visitors and volunteers have felt intimidated and frightened to walk across the bridge, behind Nandos or even walking up the steps from the BBC priory Place.

5: We have had to ask people to leave the gardens due to drug dealing on a number of occasions

6: During the summer we have a number of mass (30+) youths gathering in the garden area, police attended

I trust that gives a flavour of the issues we have been experiencing this year.

Far Gosford St/FARGO

Trish Willets has forwarded this to me and I would like to respond on behalf of FarGo Village and general Far Gosford St area.

FarGo Village - anti –social behaviour, groups of young people hanging around, being aggressive, shouting and smoking weed and drug taking

Drug dealing outside the FV gates on both Far Gosford St and Grafton St and on the Street - done in a very transparent way with no concern about being seen

Drug dealing in the car park on Far Gosford St and in the church yard

Anti-social behaviour in the church yard which has led to knife crime and a recent shooting – groups drinking and fighting at sporadic times

Anti social behaviour in the small car park by Sainsburys/Unite , drug dealing and gang related violence recorded recently

Tail gating into the university accommodation

Rough sleeping

Positive Youth Foundation

Dear Liam

I write to you following your request for an impact statement relating to the proposed PSPO.

The Positive Youth Foundation (PYF) is a charity which supports young people to succeed in life. We aim to raise the aspirations of young people and develop pathways in to positive destinations. In recent times, we have had significant involvement in supporting young people to navigate challenges around violence and anti-social behaviour. We frequently champion young people as positive forces within their communities, but in equal measure, challenge young people in relation to unacceptable behaviours.

If managed sensitively and with young people and the wider communities interest at the centre, we broadly support the introduction of a managed PSPO, however, would need more detail before an official response can be logged. This will require in depth consideration in relation to the liberties of the vast majority of young people and community members, which we have confidence in as we have a very positive relationship with our Police and Community Safety colleagues.

PYF would consider supporting any training elements that may be required around liaising with young people, as well as provide guidance as to local provision where young people will be attending, in order for Police colleagues to recognise when groups of young people may gather due to positive activities such as local sports, music and creative provision within the vicinity of the PSPO. This we feel will be a critical element of the order, as young people participating in positive community activity need to be protected from any potential mismanagement at a delivery level.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



Rashid Bhat

CEO