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**To: Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board 4    Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Subject: Impact of Covid-19 on the Hot Streets Surveillance Project**

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**1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 Members requested details of the progress that is being made regarding the flytipping surveillance project designed to tackle fly-tipping in some of our worst affected streets.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) are recommended to:
- 1) Note the actions and programmes in place to deliver this project.
  - 2) Request that a further report is brought back to the Board in October 2021.
  - 3) Make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities.

**3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 For a number of years, we have successfully deployed surveillance equipment in areas of the city that are vulnerable to 'commercial' and 'large scale' fly tipping; these tend to be semi-rural locations. This type of camera surveillance though, has not been systematically used in residential areas.
- 3.2 Over half of the City's fly tipping occurs in three wards. Fly-tipping reports are monitored and analysed in terms of location and the type of waste deposited; this data is recorded right down to street level. These streets, which almost exclusively suffer from fly tipped domestic waste are deemed 'Hot Streets'.
- 3.3 At any one time we target and monitor 30 of these 'hot streets', but there is a recognition that we no longer have the officer resources to patrol our 'hot streets' as frequently as we once did. The problem is compounded by the fact that many residents, are too frightened to report what they know, or have seen.
- 3.4 Our plan was to use this type of 'overt' camera surveillance in some of these 'hot streets'. It would be necessary to use appropriate signage in the street to alert residents and visitors that cameras are in operation. We know from experience, that the majority, of domestic fly tipping is by local people and they fly tip in their own neighbourhood. Our aim was not necessarily to identify offenders, although the equipment has the potential to capture evidence, but deter people from this activity and lead to long term behaviour change.
- 3.5 It was also recognised that these same streets that suffer the highest levels of fly tipping, also suffer disproportionately from other types of crime. The data collected by these cameras will also be made available to the Police when requested.

3.6 In a report to this Board in September 2019 we stated our intentions to 'pilot' this type of surveillance from April 2020 and we would evaluate the effectiveness of the programme to determine if there is benefit in its continuance and/or expansion.

#### **4 Project delivery**

4.1 The project was designed to pilot this approach in 6 of these 'hot streets'. The streets in question were chosen because we believed that they were best suited for the deployment of this equipment.

4.2 In order, to achieve the correct level of surveillance, it was necessary in most cases, to deploy two cameras per street. Each of the cameras, are mounted on specially adapted lampposts from which they will be powered. The cameras are capable of storing 30 days of data and our officers are able to examine the data remotely.

4.3 The six streets where the cameras have been deployed are as follows:

- Cross Road, Foleshill (3 cameras)
- Broad Street, Foleshill (2 cameras)
- Crabmill Lane, Foleshill (2 cameras)
- Caludon Road, Upper Stoke (2 cameras)
- Eld Road, Foleshill (1 camera)
- Station Street East, Foleshill (2 cameras)

4.4 It was intended that the cameras would be installed in April 2020 and by now we would have had 12 months of data on their effectiveness. Unfortunately, the start of the project coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and we have experienced a series of delays.

4.5 We experienced delays in receiving the cameras and then in arranging for the necessary works for the lamppost adaption/replacement to 'house' the cameras. We finally managed to install the cameras but not until September 2020.

4.6 In addition, we also experienced officer resource issues as follows:

4.6.1 The start of this project coincided with our successful bid into the Home Office's 'Safer Streets Fund' (SSF), which was designed to tackle acquisitive crime. In late July 2020 Coventry received notification that it was the only successful bid from the West Midlands. Funding totalled £550K and the project needed to be delivered and the money spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The officers project managing this initiative are the same officers who were delivering the 'Hot Street' cameras surveillance project; because of the tighter deadlines, the SSF initiative had to take priority.

4.6.2 During the COVID-19 pandemic we have needed to prioritise what services our officers could perform. The following are a list of the pressures that this service has experienced:

- At various points during the past 12 months we have had reduced resources owing to some officers having to 'shield' at various points in the pandemic, others that have contracted the virus and others having to 'self-isolate' because of exposure to the virus.
- Other 'reactive' services have needed to take priority i.e. the noise nuisance service. It was important to ensure that we had officers available to respond to and monitor noise nuisance across the 7 day-a-week shifts, which operate from 9am to 3am the following day. With so many people being confined to their homes, noise nuisance very quickly became an important issue for our residents!
- Officers from this service have also need to be trained and have provided cover and resilience to ensure the continued operation of the Council's 24/7 control room and to Bereavement Services to ensure the continued operation of the Council's crematoria.

## **5 Future planned delivery**

- 5.1 This project remains an important part in developing options for tackling the perennial problem of fly tipping. It is anticipated that in April, we will have the necessary officer resource to continue the work in delivering this pilot.
- 5.2 The necessary project infrastructure is already in place, so we will just need to begin using the 'softer' project elements mentioned in paragraph 3.4 above.
- 5.3 We intend to use 'nudge theory' and actively inform residents in the relevant streets that we are watching! This will be achieved by the use of signs, leaflets, pavement stencils and door knocking. Examples can be seen in Appendix 1. It is absolutely vital that we maximise the publicity of using these cameras in those immediate localities if we are to change the behaviour of residents.

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Appendix One: Nudge Theory materials

