

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Update on Petition Regarding Anti-Social Behaviour

Summary

1. This report advises Members of the actions taken by various agencies since 14th January 2008 to address anti-social behaviour in Rawcliffe. This is an update report following the initial report on actions taken in response to receipt of a petition by residents.
2. Members are asked to note the actions taken by Safer York Partnership and the safer neighbourhoods policing team, and to support the recommendations outlined in para 25.

Background

3. Since January 2007, as part of an initiative to increase policing at a local level, dedicated Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Teams have been allocated to each of the wards in York. Part of their remit is to respond to the community safety concerns reported by communities and to work with partners to address those concerns. Safer York Partnership co-ordinates and facilitates multi-agency problem solving and works with the residents and the relevant agencies to develop plans to address concerns relating to unlawful activities including nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

Analysis

4. In October 2007, a small group of Rawcliffe residents approached the police, council, their MP and Safer York Partnership raising concerns about the increase in anti-social behaviour in Rawcliffe. This included the submission of an 88 signature petition to full Council.
5. A multi-agency problem solving meeting involving the Ward Councillors, representatives from the Safer Neighbourhoods Policing Team, City of York Council Youth Services and Safer York Partnership was held on 14th November to develop an action plan to address the issues. This action plan has subsequently been updated following a further meeting on 23rd April. A copy of the revised action plan is attached at Annex 1.

Police Response

6. The Clifton Without, Rawcliffe and Skelton Safer Neighbourhoods Policing teams have continued to patrol regularly in the area and to liaise with residents. Since January 2008, the number of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour has fallen. However, with lighter and warmer evenings, the number of incidents may increase again. A verbal update on the current position will be given at the meeting.
7. Rawcliffe continues to be a priority patrol area on the police daily tasking sheet and numbers of incidents are continually being monitored to ensure police presence at peak times. However, the Safer Neighbourhoods team acknowledges that whilst they can undertake patrols in the area, the problem cannot be resolved through policing alone, and other measures may need to be considered.

Multi-agency Response

8. Safer York Partnership's Architectural Liaison Officer has undertaken several site visits to the area. He has produced a comprehensive report outlining a number of **options** that could be considered in order to attempt to "design out" some of the problems of anti-social behaviour in the area. These are discussed in detail as follows:

9. Control of access

The area in question is accessed via a number of pathways. Some of these pathways are regularly abused by motorcyclists using them as shortcuts. This access could be reduced by use of a kissing gate. The gate would need to be of a style that allows access for mobility scooters and pushchairs but prohibits vehicles eg. the Woodstock gate shown at Annex 2:

Recommendation 1:

That an application be made for Target Hardening funding to provide a suitable kissing gate aimed at reducing access for motor vehicles

10. Children's' Play Area

The majority of reported incidents relate to the children's play area. Whilst this play area is popular with parents and small children during the day, in the evening it becomes blighted by large groups of youths gathering on the equipment, often leaving substantial amounts of litter and broken bottles. There are a number of other play areas within the vicinity of the Rawcliffe Grange estate, none of which suffer from the same levels of disorder. The location of this play area on the edge of the recreation ground, means that it is not subject to the same levels of natural surveillance available to the other play areas. A number of options have been considered:

- a) Carry out consultation with residents on use of the play park with a view to its removal
- b) Replace the existing fencing with higher fencing and a lockable gate
- c) Carry out surveillance via CCTV in the area
- d) Display clear signage to emphasise age and useage

The Parish Council have invested a substantial amount of money to provide equipment in the play area. The area is widely used during the day by young children. Whilst it is possible that further evidence of abuse could be obtained from CCTV footage, perpetrators of anti-social behaviour tend to be more aware of CCTV and will swap clothing, hide their faces etc to avoid recognition. Both the Police and Safer York Partnership believe there is sufficient evidence to suggest that anti-social behaviour is an issue in this location and recommend option (b) as a means of addressing the problems.

Recommendation 2:

That an application be made to the Ward Committee, Target Hardening and Safer York Partnership to provide funding to increase the height of the fencing, provide a lockable gate and to contract Mayfair Security to undertake to lock the gate during the evening/overnight.

11. CCTV

CCTV can, in some locations, act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. This may be provided by fitting either a live camera to record footage and aid recognition of the perpetrators or by fitting a dummy camera merely to act as a deterrent. National Research shows that neither are effective given that perpetrators soon realise when cameras are false and will often hide their face and or swap clothing to reduce the chance of positive identification. The Police and Safer York Partnership are of the opinion that sufficient evidence is already in existence to identify the problems that residents are experiencing in this area. Therefore any funding and/or problem solving work should focus on reducing the problem rather than the use of CCTV as a means of gathering further evidence.

12. Skateboard Park

The skateboard park is still under Barratts ownership. Whilst problems are periodically reported in relation to anti-social behaviour on the skateboard park, the majority of complaints refer to the recreation ground and play area. However, by reducing vehicle access to the recreation ground, and increasing security around the play area, the problem may be displaced. This may potentially increase problems relating to the skateboard park. Locking the skateboard park during the evening/overnight would prevent this displacement from occurring combined with clear signage indicating the type and time of useage that is permitted. Barratts have stated that they are willing to fund the lock and contract Mayfair to secure the skateboard park until the development is formally adopted by City of York Council. At that point, the local authority would become responsible for the security.

Recommendation 3:

To request that Barratts provide a lock and contract Mayfair Security to secure the skateboard park until the development is formally adopted by City of York Council and, thereafter, the costs of security be funded in the same way as recommendation 2 above.

13. Deflection Activities

Youth Services have undertaken detached youth work in the Rawcliffe area since the problem was first highlighted in November. However, the success of such initiatives during the winter months has been limited as colder, damp weather tends to prohibit the young people from being outdoors. All encounters with young people in the area have been positive and those spoken to were receptive to the idea of providing a youth shelter at a suitable location.

Safer York Partnership believes that the measures outlined in paragraphs 10 – 12 above will reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour in this area. This may result in some displacement, either locally or to adjacent areas of the city. It is therefore suggested that future incidents be monitored closely to determine whether provision of a youth shelter would assist and, if so, the NPT to work with partners to identify a suitable location for it to be placed.

Recommendation 4:

That further consideration be given to the placement of a youth shelter in the area following analysis of patterns and levels of behaviour following implementation of the measures outlined in paras 10 - 12.

Corporate Priorities

14. Resolving the issues of anti-social behaviour in this area will impact on the following Council's corporate aims and priorities:
15. Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York.

Implications

16. Financial

The recommendation will require some funding. Full costings are currently being identified.

17. Human Resources (HR)

There are no human resources implications

18. Equalities

Consideration has been given to the impact on pushchair users and users of mobility scooters in relation to the provision of a gateway that will deny access to motor vehicles

19. Legal

There are no legal implications

20. Crime and Disorder

The main purpose of this report is to identify solutions to reduce crime and disorder.

21. Information Technology (IT)

There are no IT implications.

22. Property

There are no property implications

23. Other

There may be Highways issues relating to some of the specific recommendations regarding reducing access to pathways for motorcycles. Consultation will be undertaken once the full survey of the area is complete.

Risk Management

24. There are no physical, financial or legal risks associated with the implementation of recommendations contained in this report.

Recommendations

25. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to:

- 1) Note the action to date as outlined in the revised plan attached at Annex 1
- 2) Approve the recommendations made by Safer York Partnership as follows:

Recommendation 1:

That an application be made for Target Hardening funding to provide a suitable kissing gate aimed at reducing access for motor vehicles

Recommendation 2:

That an application be made to the Ward Committee, Target Hardening and Safer York Partnership to provide funding to increase the height of the fencing, provide a lockable gate and to contract Mayfair Security to undertake to lock the gate during the evening/overnight.

Recommendation 3:

To request that Barratts provide a lock and contract Mayfair Security to secure the skateboard park until the development is formally adopted by City of York Council and, thereafter, the costs of security be funded in the same way as recommendation 2 above.

Recommendation 4:

That further consideration be given to the placement of a youth shelter in the area following analysis of patterns and levels of behaviour following implementation of the measures outlined in paras 10 - 12.

Reason: To address anti-social behaviour in Rawcliffe.

Contact Details

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

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Report Approved



Date 21/5/08

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

There are no specialist implications

Wards Affected: Skelton, Rawcliffe, Clifton Without (Specifically Rawcliffe)

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Petition Regarding Anti-Social Behaviour 14th January 2008

Annex One
Revised Action Plan

Annex Two
Examples of gates to restrict access