
**Decision Session - Cabinet Member for
Communities**

18 March 2015

Report of the Assistant Director of Housing & Community Safety.

**Petition – Street Drinking in Lowther Street, Penley Grove Street,
Townend Street and surrounding areas.**

Summary

1. On 14 January 2015 the Council received a petition with 633 signatures regarding street dinking in Lowther Street, Penley Grove Street, Townend Street and the surrounding areas. The petition stated:

‘We the undersigned do call on City of York Council to investigate the increase of street drinkers’ use of the area surrounding Lowther Street, Penley Grove Street and Townend Street. We also call on the council to designate these streets as “no alcohol areas” for the benefit of the majority of residents’.

Background

2. A 633 signature petition has been submitted to City of York Council (CYC) by individuals living, working or visiting shops within The Groves area of York. The petition calls on the City of York Council to investigate the increase of street drinkers using the area surrounding Lowther Street, Penley Grove Street and Townend Street. It also calls on the Council to designate these streets as “no alcohol areas” for the benefit of the majority of residents. These streets are not covered by the existing Designated Public Place Order on Union Terrace and are not covered by the Alcohol Restriction Zone.
3. The petition has been signed mainly by residents living in the streets which make up The Groves area of York with a few individuals who have visited the shops or who work in the area.
4. The Groves is a district of York, covering the area just north of the city centre between Huntington Road and Haxby Road. The district is near York Hospital and the city ring road. It consists largely of close-knit terraces, the majority of which date from before the First World War.

Around 1955, a large number of very small terraced houses were demolished to make way for flats and maisonettes which were built between Garden Street, Penley Grove/Townend Street and Lowther Street; this area has a residents' association.

5. The Groves area contains a mixture of privately owned and rented properties along with council housing. Lowther Street is the main area for local shopping, with an Indian restaurant and takeaway, Chinese takeaway, and a small supermarket. In Penley Grove Street there is a grocery shop. Lowther Street is a busy route for traffic during rush hours, although a one-way system manages traffic on this and Penley Grove/Townend Street.
6. The Groves includes a primary school, Park Grove School, the Young Groves Centre, Door 84, and St Thomas' Church. The local Police team works with the community and the area crime rate is one of the lowest in York.
7. Information from Crime Mapping UK from 2014 shows that on average, 17 incidents of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) are reported in The Groves area per month compared to an average of 308 overall reports of ASB in the York North Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) area.

Street Drinking in The Groves

8. Over the last 12 years, street drinking in The Groves area of York has regularly been reported as an issue of concern to the residents who live there.
9. In 2010, following an increase in the numbers of complaints about individuals drinking in the streets and harassing tourists arriving by coach to the City, a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) for Union Terrace Car Park was introduced making it possible for the Police to seize alcohol in connection with anti-social or criminal behaviour in that area.
10. Since the DPPO was introduced, the surrounding area has been closely monitored to identify any displacement into the residential areas. The monitoring has shown no evidence of displacement of anti-social behaviour into the residential areas of the Groves. However, there are periodically increases in reports of anti-social behaviour in this area, which when tackled by the SNT goes quiet for extensive periods of time.

11. These issues are very much a priority for the Safer Neighbourhood Team in this area and they have this area as a priority for high visibility foot patrols and are actively working with the ASB Hub to target those individuals who create the highest level of nuisance in this area.

Historic action being taken to address issues in The Groves

12. The Council have for many years worked in partnership with the Police and the local community to address problem in this area as they arise.
 - In 2003 Safer York Partnership set up The Groves Task Group which was a multi-agency problem solving group involving officers from CYC and the Police as well as Elected Members and representatives of the Residents Association. The area also formed part of the first alleygating programme in the city;
 - In 2005, The Groves was an area chosen to pilot the new Neighbourhood Policing model. This included Safer York Partnership working with the Ward Planning Team to deliver initiatives aimed at supporting the community to tackle issues of anti-social behaviour and crime in this area;
 - In 2005, the Nightsafe Task Group took over the work of the Groves Task Group and continued the work with the community to tackle issues of alcohol related anti-social behaviour in the area;
 - In 2010 the decision to pursue a DPPO for Union Terrace car park was taken as set out above.

Current and future action

13. Over the last few years the Police and the council have continued to work with the community to address issues as they arise. Following the establishment of the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Hub in May 2014, The Groves has been identified as a 'hotspot' location for multi-agency action to address problems in this area. The Community Safety Manager, Neighbourhood Safety Manager and ASB Hub Police Officers have been working with community groups and regularly attended meetings with residents and Elected Members in this area to identify actions which will help in tackling the issues, for example:
 - Police Officers from the ASB Hub have been involved in targeted campaigns to challenge street drinking behaviour;

- Individual properties and individuals have been targeted where issues have been reported;
 - Meetings have been held in relation to Union Terrace which has included input from local residents;
 - Evidence is being collated to support a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).
14. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 changed the powers and interventions for addressing ASB and street drinking. As a result we have been reviewing the new powers and we are in the process of perusing Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) against two of the frequent perpetrators of ASB in this area.
 15. Within the Act, a new intervention a 'Public Space Protection Order' has also been introduced that replaces the Designated Public Place Order (DPPO), Gating Orders, and Dog Control Orders. The aim of this new intervention being that it should make things more streamlined and therefore more effective to achieve improved quality of life in public spaces.
 16. Evidence is currently being collected and should the evidence support it, an application to the courts for a PSPO will be made which will cover the whole of the Groves as opposed to the existing DPPO which only covers part of the area and not the area highlighted in the petition. Should the evidence support an application for a PSPO, if granted, this existing course of action would meet the wishes of signatories to the petition.
 17. The area will continue to be monitored by the ASB Hub through its case management system and in collaboration with the Safer Neighbourhood Team. In addition, the expansion of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team and granting of Community Safety Accreditation Scheme Powers to the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers will provide an additional uniformed resource, which can be deployed in this area.

Consultation

18. Details of engagement with the local community have been highlighted within the body of the report. The council is currently working on the process for the PSPO of which public consultation is an important part. Public meetings are planned to take place which will including the local residents association.

Options

19. **Option 1** – Acknowledge receipt of the petition, note the ongoing work of the Council and its partners to collect the evidence and subject to the evidence supporting it, pursue a Public Space Protection Order for this area of The Groves.
20. **Option 2** – Ask officers to consider other options to address the issues highlighted by the petition

Analysis

21. The majority of the analysis is set out within the body of the report.
22. The approach that the Council and its partners have taken to determine the most appropriate interventions to address the problems that are being experienced in The Groves has been evidenced led, based upon reported incidents of ASB. It is critical for the council and its partners that any decision to pursue such orders is evidenced based to ensure that any action taken is proportionate to the problems that are being encountered. Agreeing option 1 will ensure that this evidenced based approach is continued. Should the evidence support the introduction of a PSPO, this will meet the request of the signatories of the petition.

Council Plan

23. The recommended course of action supports the Council Plan priority to “Build Strong Communities”, through ensuring that ASB is tackled and communities are supported.

Implications

24. The implications arising directly from this report are:
 - **Financial** – The costs associated with the application for a PSPO for this area of The Groves can be met from within existing budgets.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications.
 - **Equalities** – There are no direct equalities implications. Any equalities impact of the decision to pursue a PSPO will be considered as part of the legal application to the courts
 - **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications.

- **Crime and Disorder** – There are no direct crime and disorder implication arising from this report. However, subject to the evidence supporting an application for a PSPO, and the courts agreement to said application, the prohibitions on activities within the agreed area will have a positive impact on reducing crime and disorder and improve the quality of life for residents.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – There are no IT implications
- **Property** – There are no property implications
- **Other** – There are no other implications

Risk Management

25. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

26. The Cabinet Member is asked to approve:

Option 1: To acknowledge receipt of the petition, note the ongoing work of the Council and its partners to, subject to the evidence supporting it, pursue a Public Space Protection Order for this area of The Groves.

Reason: To ensure that the appropriate action is taken to ensure ASB behaviour is appropriately tackled within the city.

Author:

Steve Waddington
Assistant Director of Housing
and Community Safety

Tel No.x4016

Chief Officer:

Sally Burns
Director of Communities and
Neighbourhoods

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Wards Affected: Guildhall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Abbreviations

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

Designated Public Place Order (DPPO)

City of York Council (CYC)

Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).

Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO)