

NORTHFIELD PARK & NORTHFIELD CLOSE HAYES

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Community, Commerce and Regeneration
Officer Contact(s)	Ed Shaylor, Residents Services
Papers with report	Appendix A - location map

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	<p>This report seeks to respond to a petition 45 valid signatories received by the Council about concerns for public safety and anti-social behaviour taking place in and around Northfield Park and Northfield Close, Hayes.</p> <p>Residents' request is for the installation of CCTV camera, continuous monitoring of their street to alleviate crime issues, better street lighting and the cutting and pruning of trees at Northfield Park & Northfield Close, Hayes.</p>
Contribution to our plans and strategies	This report contributes to the Safer Hillingdon Partnership Plan.
Financial Cost	£13,000 (estimate for street lighting) £250 (estimate for CCTV) £1,000 (estimate for tree pruning and pollarding)
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Pinkwell

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member notes the views of the petitioners and:

- 1) Considers the installation of temporary CCTV from time to time to detect or deter crime and disorderly behaviour as it occurs.
- 2) Agrees that publicly owned trees in the area are pollarded and pruned as soon as is practicable.
- 3) Notes that the upgrading and replacement of street lighting in Northfield Park and Northfield Close has been recommended as part of the general programme of street lighting replacement in the Borough.

Reasons for recommendations

The Council has a number of mobile CCTV cameras that can be deployed for up to 12 weeks at a time in response to resident concerns about crime and disorder. Not only can these cameras collect evidence to support the police and/or local authority to carry out enforcement and prosecution work, they can provide useful information about levels of crime in an area if any future applications are made for permanent CCTV or other crime prevention measures.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The possibility of fixed permanent CCTV has been considered, but the costs are considerable and when installing CCTV, the Council has to consider necessity, proportionality and the likelihood of intrusion into the privacy of people not connected with the disorderly behaviour. Since the closure of the "Victoria" public house the anti-social behaviour associated with the pub has now significantly reduced. The deployment of temporary CCTV would enable an assessment to be made as to whether the problem is a temporary one, capable of resolution, which would avoid some of the problems associated with a permanent installation.

It has been considered whether improving street lighting could be brought forward. However, there is currently no provision for this within the Street Lighting budget so it has been entered onto a priority list for consideration for future improvement.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

Petitioners have described the following issues in the area of Northfield Park and Northfield Close:

- Drug dealing.
- Car related crimes.
- Harassment of residents on the street (especially targeting women and girls).
- Youths sitting on boundary walls of private homes.
- Street prostitution.

The petition was started in late July 2014 and continued to gather signatures into early September 2014. The petition was received by the Council in October 2014. However, much of the disorder and criminal activity described was linked to the operation of the "Victoria" public house on near-by North Hyde Road (see Appendix A - location map).

The "Victoria" pub was shut down on 15 May 2014 as a result of an emergency Licensing Review held due to a police drugs operation. This closure was temporary pending the outcome of a full Licence Review on 11 June 2014. At the Licence Review the Committee removed the premises licence on a permanent basis. However, the Licensee successfully applied for an Interim Relief Order at the High Court so the pub was able to open again on 17 July 2014. Over the summer months the Council successfully argued against this High Court decision and the pub was closed again until further notice on 27 August 2014.

The pub also launched an appeal at the Magistrates Court against the revocation of premises licence in late October which was lost so the premises remains closed. Any new operator would need to apply for their own premises licence in the usual way.

Since the closure of the pub, the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Investigations Team have not received any complaints from residents about anti-social behaviour. This has been supported by the Police who have supplied the Council's officers with a report describing the positive impact the pub's closure has had on the environment of the neighbourhood.

The overgrown trees, however, do make the area feel unsafe, and consequently the Council's Green Spaces Team have agreed to pollard and prune the trees on these roads.

The Street Lighting Team recognise that the current lighting levels in these roads could be improved, but this would require a number of new lamp columns, removal of some other columns and upgrading of the remaining columns. The estimate for this work is £13,000.

The Community Safety team have contacted the lead petitioner to discuss other steps that could be taken to support residents in making their neighbourhood safer. The lead petitioner has been put in touch with Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch steering group to discuss refreshing a local Neighbourhood Watch and how residents may use a private CCTV system to provide added security and reassurance.

Financial Implications

The cost of purchasing and installing a temporary CCTV camera is estimated at £250. This can be met from the existing Community Safety budget. The cost of pollarding and pruning the trees has been estimated at £1,000 and can be met from the existing Trees budget within Green Spaces.

The costs of improving the lighting in Northfield Park are an estimated £10,000 (4 new columns, removal of 2 existing columns and upgrading of 6 existing columns). The costs to improve the lighting in Northfield Close are an estimated £3,000 (1 new column, removal of 1 existing column and upgrading of an existing column). There is currently no provision for this within the Street Lighting budget as this is newly identified work.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

Pruning the trees will improve the environment of the area. Temporary CCTV will provide reassurance to residents; it could also have some deterrent effect on low level anti-social behaviour and assist with any enforcement activity that may take place.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

Consultation has been conducted with the lead petitioner, local police and London Borough of Hillingdon ASB Investigations Team, Licensing service, Green Spaces and Street Lighting service.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate finance has reviewed the report and the financial implications, noting that the costs of using temporary CCTV equipment on an ad-hoc basis and pruning trees would be contained within existing revenue budgets.

Legal

The delegation to oversee initiatives in relation to CCTV and community safety rests with the Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration as set out in Article 7.08 paragraph (e) 1 of the Council Constitution. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides local authorities with the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the works recommended under this report would fall within the range of activities permitted by Section 1.

Any installation of CCTV cameras (whether permanent or temporary) must be in accordance with the Information Commissioner's Office CCTV Code of Practice. In particular this will require a balancing exercise in respect of the intrusion into the privacy of large numbers of law abiding people by placing them under surveillance and recording their movements as they go about their day-to-day activities against the nature of the problem sought to be addressed i.e. in this case anti-social behaviour. This will include consideration of whether a better or more proportionate solution to the problem exists, perhaps in this case the street lighting and trees works alone. The Council's CCTV Code of Practice and the Home Office Guidance on Covert Surveillance should also be considered when implementing any CCTV schemes.

If CCTV is to be installed appropriate signage must be placed in accordance with the above mentioned guidance and codes of practice. Any recorded material should be stored in a way that maintains the integrity of the information. This is to ensure that the rights of individuals recorded by surveillance systems are protected and that the information can be used effectively for its intended purpose.

There are no special legal implications for the recommendations in relation to tree works and street lighting mentioned in the report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.