

THE SIGERS, EASTCOTE – PETITION REQUEST FOR CCTV

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Improvement, Partnerships and Community Safety
Officer Contact	Ed Shaylor – Head of Community Safety
Papers with report	None

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	This report seeks to respond to a petition received by the Council to express concerns about vandalism and asking for CCTV cameras to be installed in The Sigers. The petition was received at Democratic Services on 16 th December 2009.
Financial Cost	Nil cost
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Eastcote and East Ruislip

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member:

Notes the views of the petitioners, and advises as follows:

1. Solutions to the problems in the area are not obvious due to the sporadic nature of the incidents and the residential nature of the area which makes surveillance difficult.
2. The local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team have been asked to patrol The Sigers more frequently on Friday and Saturday evenings between 23:00 - 03.00, as these tend to be the peak times of the incidents after the pubs close.
3. Individual residents could purchase their own CCTV to be directed to the front of their property covering their own front garden area and part of the street where they park their cars. Suitable systems are relatively inexpensive and modern CCTV Cameras claim to capture up to 30 metres night time vision range.
4. Residents could look into a private security firm patrolling The Sigers on Friday and Saturday evenings.
5. Permanent CCTV in the Sigers is not a practical solution to the problem.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The lead petitioner has asked for permanent CCTV cameras to be put in The Sigers, but the sporadic nature of incidents makes them difficult to capture on CCTV. For permanent CCTV to be effective there would need to be too many cameras (due to the shape of the road) in a relatively small road where the collateral intrusion would be too great. It would also be too expensive.

Some years ago a stand alone CCTV was supplied by the Community Safety Team to a resident in The Sigers for 6 months, but no incidents were reported during this period.

The Council's Community Safety Team has received details of 14 incidents over a 6 month period from the 28th August 2009 to the 18th December 2009. Examples of incidents being reported are garden walls being kicked over, plants pulled out, tubs upended, bricks from the walls used to smash car windows, windscreen wipers and wing mirrors torn off, graffiti on walls and fences, and eggs thrown at windows and walls.

The Police have confirmed 7 crimes reported to them over the last 12 months. However it should be noted that the 2 houses at the entrance to The Sigers have an address of Field End Road, even though both their front doors are in The Sigers, at least one of these properties have experienced more than one incident, consequently these incidents would not be counted in the Police records as The Sigers.

It is noted that residents find the acts of vandalism so bad that every Friday and Saturday night they do not park their cars in the street, they park them in another road, in an attempt to limit the amount of damage caused to their property.

The likely source of the problem behaviour is people taking short cuts through the alley.

Alternative options considered

Dummy CCTV cameras could be secured to a lamp post. The Council discourages the use of dummy cameras as they give an impression of safety without the ability to provide any evidence if an incident were to occur.

Fencing the whole strip of footpath on The Sigers side would be unlawful, even though access can be gained from another entrance. The footpath is also too narrow to permit fencing and it is not possible to widen it as the road is too narrow.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority resulting from the recommendations noted by this report.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The measures recommended should reduce or help to detect incidents.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

Consultation has been conducted with Hillingdon Police and will continue via the tasking forums.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Legal

The Council is a “relevant public authority” for the purposes of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000(RIPA) and, therefore, would have to obtain specific authorisation if it wished to carry out a covert investigation into the vandalism that is taking place in The Sigers. However, the Act does not apply to the residents of The Sigers and they could install cameras individually or as a group without having to obtain approval from either the Council or the police. Consequently residents would not have to justify the presence of the cameras and could keep the cameras in place indefinitely. The evidence obtained could potentially still be used in criminal proceedings, provided the court was satisfied that to do so would not result in an unfair trial.

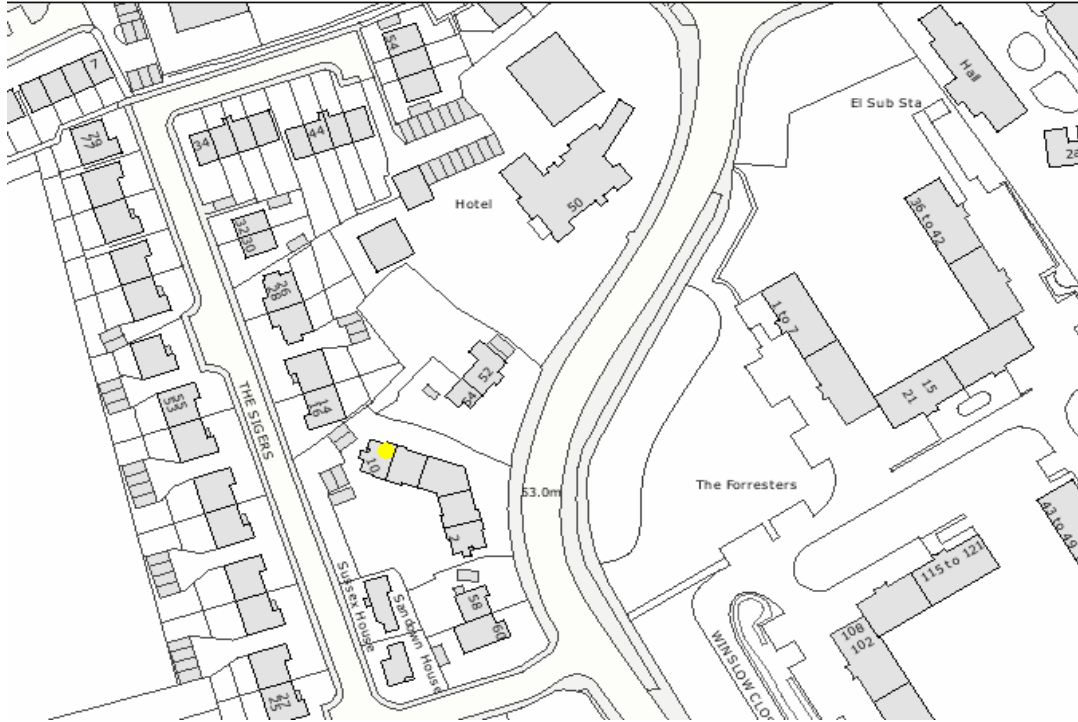
The Borough Solicitor will take whatever action he can to support the Police, the Environment and Consumer Protection and Community Safety teams and local residents to tackle the anti-social behaviour identified in this report. This will include providing advice and instituting prosecutions under the anti-social behaviour legislation if appropriate.

Under the Constitution the Cabinet Member has the general delegated power to deal with petitions and to accept the recommendation to note the views of the petitioners and provide advice on the action that is proposed by the Council’s Community Safety Team. However, there must be a full consideration of all representations by the Cabinet Member, including those that do not accord with the officer’s recommendation, before a decision is reached.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

The Sigers



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