

THE SIGERS, EASTCOTE – PETITION REQUESTING THE INSTALLATION OF CCTV CAMERAS – FOLLOW UP MEETING

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Improvement, Partnerships and Community Safety
Officer Contact	Ed Shaylor, Planning, Environment and Community Services
Papers with report	None

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	This report follows a previous Petition Hearing in relation to a petition received by the Council to express concerns about vandalism and asking for CCTV cameras to be installed in The Sigers, Eastcote. The petition was received in Democratic Services on 16 December 2009 and the first Petition Hearing was held on 18 March 2010.
Financial Cost	Nil cost
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Eastcote and East Ruislip

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member for Improvement, Partnerships and Community Safety discusses with petitioners in detail their concerns, and advises as follows:

- 1. The Council has encouraged the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team to patrol The Sigers more frequently on Friday and Saturday evenings after 23:00, as this tends to be the peak times of the incidents after the pubs close. The police agreed to this and have done so;**
- 2. A portable wireless CCTV camera was purchased by the Council following the first Petition and was installed in The Sigers in June 2010;**
- 3. The number of incidents in The Sigers which have been reported by residents or detected by the camera has not been high during the period since the camera was installed. It is therefore proposed to move the camera to a higher priority location;**
- 4. Permanent CCTV in The Sigers is not a practical solution to the problem, as it would not be proportionate to the problem and would not satisfy the requirement of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA); and**

5. **Residents are advised to continue to report incidents when they occur so that the level of problem in the area can be re-assessed in future.**

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

To address the concerns of the residents and update them on progress since the Petition Hearing on 18 March 2010.

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.

Comments of the Policy Overview Committee(s)

None at this stage.

Supporting Information

At the Petition Hearing on 18 March 2010, the Cabinet Member resolved that:

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.
2. the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team had 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. officers investigate the purchase of a modern wireless temporary CCTV to be installed in The Sigers. That, in consultation with the lead petitioner, Chairman of Eastcote Residents Association and Ward Councillors, the best location for the camera be discussed. That the camera be installed for an experimental period of 3 months with a report back to the Cabinet Member at the conclusion of the temporary period for a further decision to be made.

The following incidents have been recorded by the camera:

- On 19 June 2010, a graffiti 'tag' was sprayed on the wall of 34 The Sigers. The incident was captured on the CCTV and passed to Police, but it has not been possible to identify the culprit.
- On 16 July 2010, the Council received a complaint about a gang of 25 youths allegedly behaving in an extremely disruptive manner. The images were viewed and did not seem to substantiate the severity of the complaint. Local enquiries revealed this was a 16th birthday party. The immediate neighbours were spoken to and agreed that they had

been informed and there were no problems except that a. A number of uninvited guests turned up. The girl's father asked them to leave and they did.

- On 3 September 2010, a car was damaged outside 34 The Sigers. Unfortunately, the view of the car was obstructed by the tree and was not, therefore captured on the camera.

There have been no other incidents captured by the camera. A review of police records shows no other incidents reported in The Sigers during this period.

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?

Removing the camera could have the effect of increasing the number of incidents, if the camera has provided a deterrent. This would need to be monitored.

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.

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 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

Petition received.