

Assembly

10 October 2012

Title: Response to Petition- Thamesview Community Safety Issue	
Report of: Divisional Director Community Safety and Public Protection	
Open	For Decision
Wards Affected: Thames	Key Decision:
Report Author: Katherine Gilcreest	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2457 E-mail: Katherine.gilcreest@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Divisional Director:	Glynis Rogers, Divisional Director Community Safety and Public Protection
Accountable Director:	Anne Bristow, Corporate Director Adult & Community Services
Summary: On the 13 August 2012 the Council received a petition of 125 valid signatures, that is signatures of people of different households. The petition prayer states: "We, the undersigned, want to improve the safety of our community. We wish to request the Council of Barking and Dagenham to arrange further warden patrols and security cameras on our streets." In accordance with the Council's procedures for petitions, the lead petitioner, Nadira Begum, has been invited to the meeting of the Assembly to present the petition.	
Recommendation The Assembly is recommended to: (i) note the action taken to respond to the concerns raised in the petition and the substantial decrease in burglary offences resulting from this work; and (ii) agree that all reasonable steps to respond to this petition are being taken.	
Reason(s) Under the Council's Petition Scheme set out on the Council's website, petitioners are entitled to a debate at full Assembly if the petition has the support of 100 or more signatures from different addresses in the borough. As this petition reaches that threshold it has triggered the requirement for a debate at Assembly.	

Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Early in July 2012 the issue of an increase in levels of domestic burglary on Thamesview Estate was identified by the Police.
- 1.2 Research into burglary patterns show that when a property is burgled any properties within a 200 metre radius are at an increased risk of burglary. Therefore to limit the impact on the whole estate and to prevent burglary in the area escalating further, a partnership meeting with the Council and the Police was arranged to formulate a plan to reduce burglary on the estate.
- 1.3 It was identified in July that over the previous 20 weeks (from the middle of March 2012) there had been 40 residential burglary offences within Thamesview Estate. This was an average of 2 residential burglaries per week. These offences had occurred predominantly in side roads off Bastable Avenue and had occurred between the hours of 9.00 and 17.00. Items stolen were a variety of items including jewellery, cash and smaller electrical items.
- 1.4 As a result a partnership action plan was put in place to deal with the burglary issue in Thamesview. This action plan included:
 - Community Safety Coordinators from the Council's Community Safety Team holding a crime prevention road show on the estate to raise awareness and help residents to secure their homes
 - The tenant funded Estates Police Team undertaking high visibility patrols on the estate during the hours when the offences were occurring.
 - The Estates Police Team being tasked to revisit all the victims of burglary to ensure that there were no gaps in intelligence or evidence
 - Other actions around identifying possible suspects and disrupting any other potential criminal activity on the estate.
- 1.5 During July 2012 the Community Safety Team held a crime prevention road show in Abbey Ward. At this road show the Community Safety Coordinator for the area was approached by a resident of Thames Ward, who is a member of the Police Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel for Thames and an active member of the community. This resident suggested that Thamesview Estate would benefit from a similar event. This resident also advised that another resident (the lead petitioner) was organising a petition to request that the Council and the Police tackle the issue of burglary on the estate. It was agreed that officers from the Community Safety Team would contact the lead petitioner to discuss whether we could hold a crime prevention road show on Thamesview Estate and discuss actions the partnership were taking to reduce burglary in Thames ward. The lead Petitioner was contacted and an appointment was made to visit her to discuss the matter further on the 13 August 2012.
- 1.6 On the 13 August 2012 following telephone contact with the lead petitioner, a visit was made to her home by officers from the Community Safety Team to discuss the proposal of holding a crime prevention road show on the estate. At this meeting the petition was handed to officers. The actions that had been outlined in the partnership action plan were explained to the lead petitioner and discussions took place with her about how we could involve her and the wider community in work to combat burglary on the estate. During this meeting the proposals around the crime

prevention road show were clarified and it was agreed that the lead petitioner would support and assist with this event in order to help engage as many residents as possible in the crime prevention agenda and help tackle burglary on the estate.

- 1.7 The crime prevention road show took place on Thamesview estate on the 30 August 2012. This event was supported by the lead petitioner and also by the resident referred to at 1.5. The event included:
- Community Safety Coordinators provided crime prevention tools like property marking kits, window alarms, purse cables, purse bells and explained to members of the public how to use these tools
 - Crime prevention literature was given out
 - Residents were offered services of the Safer Homes Project. The Safer Homes Project is a service jointly funded by the Council, the Police and Victim Support and provides free additional home security and support. This service is targeted at victims of crime to prevent re-victimisation and also to prevent specific types of crime, particularly burglary.
 - Thames Safer Neighbourhood Team signed residents up to Neighbourhood Link which gives people information about crime and disorder in their area to raise awareness of the issues and disseminate accurate information (for more information please see <http://www.neighbourhoodlink.met.police.uk/registration>)
 - Neighbourhood Watch was promoted
 - Residents were given advice and assistance to use the Immobilise scheme, which protects electrical equipment like mobile phones (for more information please see <http://www.immobilise.com>)
 - The Safer Transport Team marked bikes and gave crime prevention advice related to safer travel.
- 1.8 Approximately 100 residents were engaged with at this event. The possibility of holding a similar further event when the schools had returned from holidays was discussed with the lead petitioner at this event and it was agreed that this would be considered.
- 1.9 A partnership review meeting was held on the 3 September 2012. Burglary figures on the estate were reviewed and there had been a reduction in burglary since the implementation of the action plan. As mentioned in 1.2 when the partnership plan was initiated in July 2012 there had been 40 reported burglaries between 12/3/2012 and 29/7/12 (a 20 week period). This was an average of 2 burglary offences being reported per week on Thamesview Estate. In the period after the initiation of the action plan (between 30/7/12 and 2/9/12, which was a 5 week period) there was 1 offence. This was an average of 0.2 offences per week. This fall in offences is also shown in the graph attached as **appendix 1**.
- 1.10 It was agreed at the review meeting on the 3 September that:
- the high visibility and other work of the Estates Police Team should continue
 - residents and businesses which have been identified as vulnerable will be given further support by the Safer Neighbourhood Team to increase their confidence
 - a further crime prevention road show specifically targeting parents collecting children from school will be arranged and again members from the community will be asked to support this

- further work around disruption of general criminal activity should continue as detailed in the plan
- there was a need to increase intelligence around possible suspects. A leaflet/poster campaign was planned to commence during September.
- The action plan would be reviewed again on the 1 October 2012

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 The petition requests consideration be given to the installation of additional public space CCTV and additional Police patrols as a way of combating burglary.

3. Options Appraisal

- 3.1 The partnership considered the following options when putting together the plan to reduce burglary in Thamesview:
- 3.2 The Estates Police Team has been tasked to provide an additional presence in relation to this issue, both in terms of high visibility patrols and plain clothed operations on the estate. These tactics are working, and there has been a reduction in burglary since the plan was initiated. Thames ward has been a default patrolling location for the Estates Police Team since the team's inception May 2010. Therefore when the aim of the action plan (to reduce burglary) has been achieved, the Estates Police Team will still provide a presence on the estate along with the Safer Neighbourhood Team as part of their core duties, when tasked to do so.
- 3.3 When the Council considers whether additional public space CCTV should be provided, various factors are considered. These factors are:
- Whether there is already public space CCTV in the location- There are already 5 public space CCTV cameras located on the Thamesview estate in the vicinity of Bastable Avenue.
 - If it is physically possible or practical to locate further cameras- The offences which prompted the petition were widely spread, mainly on side roads and more remote locations which means that a large number of public space CCTV camera would be required. Many of the locations were also adjacent to alleyways or fields and so suspects would have numerous ways to approach and leave the area. Therefore additional public space CCTV would be unlikely to be an effective deterrent in this case.
 - Whether public space CCTV is the most effective tool for deterring the crime type being reported- In the case of burglary increasing the home security of residents is a more effective tactic as this will stop the offence occurring rather than public space CCTV which is generally used to gather evidence following the crime having been committed. In many of the offences in Thamesview access was gained at the rear of the property and therefore public space CCTV would be unlikely to have captured the offence being committed. Home CCTV systems can be a useful deterrent in terms of burglary as cameras can be placed around the property. The Council through the Safer Homes project has access to a small number of home CCTV systems. These are prioritised for high risk victims and homes which have experienced multiple burglaries. This project also provides advice and assistance regarding value for money home CCTV systems which are available from DIY stores and via the internet.

- Cost- A single public space CCTV camera costs in the region of 25K, with further on-going costs in terms of maintenance and staff to monitor cameras. The Council currently has to make large reductions across all budgets and there is currently no budget for additional CCTV.

3.4 Additional CCTV has therefore been considered and is not deemed to be an appropriate response. However, additional police patrols have been delivered as well as an action plan which focuses on prevention, community engagement, intelligence and enforcement. These measures are currently delivering a reduction in burglary in this area.

3.5 It is therefore proposed that the partnership action plan to tackle burglary continues with the continued engagement and involvement of the community.

4. Consultation

4.1 The lead petitioner has been consulted since receiving the petition and her views in terms of effective ways to engage the community in crime prevention have been welcomed and her suggestions taken forward.

4.2 The crime prevention road show on the 31 August 2012 enabled staff from across the partnership to engage with the community of Thamesview Estate and almost all the residents spoken to at this event were supportive of the steps that were being taken to tackle burglary on the estate.

4.3 Burglary is a ward priority for Thames Safer Neighbourhood Team and the work done in respect of this was fed back to the ward panel on the 24 September 2012. The lead petitioner was not a ward panel member prior to the petition but will be coming to these meetings in future when she is able to and this will enable the work to be sustained.

4.4 A meeting with the lead petitioner and relevant Members and Officers was held on the 27 September 2012 to review the actions that had been taken in response to the petition.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Martin Sharp
Telephone and email: 020 8227 5711; martin.sharp@lbbd.gov.uk

5.1 Community Safety holds a small fund for crime reduction activities which is derived from grant funding from the Mayor of London's Office and this has contributed towards the crime prevention activities outlined in this report. Other activities have been delivered from existing police and Council resources.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Alison Stuart
Telephone and email: 01375 652 040; astuart@thurrock.gov.uk

6.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as a responsible authority, the Council has statutory responsibilities to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the environment.

6.2 Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council has an obligation to make a scheme for the handling of petitions made to the authority. The Council has made such a scheme and the petition in this matter is brought and dealt with under the said scheme.

7. Other Implications

All other implications are detailed below.

7.1 Risk Management

The Council has a published process for responding to petitions from over 100 signatures from different addresses in the borough. We also have a legal duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to work in partnership to prevent and reduce crime and disorder. The burglary action plan that has been detailed in this report has been delivered in line with these duties and to address any reputational risk.

7.2 Contractual Issues

There are no contractual issues

7.3 Staffing Issues

The work outlined above undertaken in response to this petition are to be delivered within existing partnership resources.

7.4 Customer Impact

Crime and disorder is continually raised as one of residents' key concerns. The Community Safety Partnership has made great strides in addressing the concerns of residents over the past few years and there has been a significant improvement in performance. We are aware of the high customer impact issues like burglary have on communities and this is reflected in the response. People on lower incomes are often more likely to be targeted in terms of offences like burglary as they are less able to afford expensive crime prevention tools like burglar alarms or CCTV. Crime prevention road shows are a way to engage and support more disadvantaged communities and the crime prevention road show held in Thamesview engaged with both a high number of residents from across the estate, but also a large number of residents from the Muslim community. This was relevant as this community had concerns about Asian gold being a target and therefore this community being more at risk of burglary.

7.5 Safeguarding Children

Effectively responding to crime and disorder has links to safeguarding children and these have been considered in the formulation of the action plan to deal with the issue highlighted by the petition.

7.6 Health Issues

Being a victim of crime has an adverse effect on health and wellbeing. The crime prevention work undertaken seeks to deliver reassurance and therefore has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the community in this area.

7.7 Crime and Disorder Issues

S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to integrate consideration of the impact on crime and disorder of any decision, policy, activity or strategy that it performs. The authority is required to ensure that there is no negative impact on crime and disorder of any such decisions. The work outlined in this report in response to the petition is intended to improve community safety and increase confidence in the Partnership: there are no negative impacts arising from this work.

7.8 Property / Asset Issues

None

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

Partnership action plan to reduce burglary on Thames View Estate

Space-Time Patterns of Risk: A Cross National Assessment of Residential Burglary Victimization (UCL, Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science)

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Chart showing residential burglaries in Thames View