

2 November 2021

Kelly Ansell  
Service Director – Communities  
Environment and Community  
(via email only)

Dear Kelly,

### **Make Ashley Road Safe Petition**

Thank you for the opportunity to review and add comment to the report that Andrew Williams and Sophie Sajic, of BCP Council have constructed for the Cabinet meeting on 24 November 2021, following the “Make Ashley Road Safe Petition”. I am aware that Dorset Police provided information for the report to assist the Cabinet’s wider perspective on the background, action taken, and action proposed in Ashley Road, Poole.

The report clearly articulates the concerns that have been reflected in the petition, which has sought public and business proprietors’ signatures, and which has challenged the partnership response from BCP Council and Dorset Police.

It is pleasing to note from the report that partnership collaboration is robust and that strong, strategic oversight between partners occurs following a structured process through the newly formed Multi-agency Safer Communities Strategic Group and which the Partnership Coordination Tactical Group (PCG) feeds into.

I acknowledge that, despite the public concerns raised through the petition, crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the area has shown a reduction and provides a comparative perspective against nearby Poole town. Although the report reflects that “the current levels of reported ASB and crime do not warrant priority status for Ashley Road”, I would like to assure members that this does not mean that Dorset Police should be complacent and that I am reassured that the SARA groups are under review through the PCG process in light of the holistic picture and any review would naturally include Ashley Road.

It is important to understand that such a partnership collaboration is essential to make a difference to communities’ safety and their perception of residing and working within a safe and pleasant locality, and this forms the vision of my new Police and Crime Plan which has been just been published. For members ease I attach a link to the plan.

<https://www.dorset.pcc.police.uk/delivering-the-police-and-crime-plan/the-police-and-crime-plan/>

As the members will be aware and as reflected in my plan, I have had the pleasure of speaking with, and hearing from, thousands of people who live and work across Dorset throughout the last three and a half years, to identify and understand the community priorities and assist me in developing my plan. It has been clear that the public support my vision that this county should be the safest in England and Wales and such a vision is ambitious, and it will only be achieved through bold and transformative activity. Some of this activity will take time, and skilful collaboration with partner agencies locally, regionally and nationally to realise. I have developed the plan to cover two terms of office and delivery of such a plan will not be completed overnight. Members should not underestimate the partnership work involved but be reassured that as stated, strong collaboration exists and has considered Ashley Road in its delivery plans.

My campaign also placed me in a strong position to develop the plan in just over five months of office and, broadly speaking, several months earlier than other Police and Crime Commissioners, reflecting my intent and knowledge of the issues to push on with and to bring about the change that the public has asked for.

The plan is set around six priority areas, following extensive consultation with members of the public. These are:

- Cut Crime and ASB
- Make Policing More Visible and Better Connected
- Put Victims and Communities First
- Fight Violent Crime and High Harm
- Fight Rural Crime
- Make Every Penny Count

It is also appropriate to point out that because I had campaigned for over three years and engaged with many individuals, businesses and stakeholders, following my election, I was in a position to also implement a 100-day plan by working with the Chief Constable to commence immediate action around issues of concern, and in parallel the development of the Police and Crime Plan.

Without rehearsing the detail of the plan which members can read, there are several points that are worth highlighting.

- Members should be reassured that following my taking up post, I promptly visited priority areas across the county including Ashley Road in June, with the BCP Council Community Safety portfolio leader, neighbourhood policing supervision and governance to jointly understand the local issues and any action required.
- As a result of priority area visits members should be aware that the Chief Constable launched “Operation Relentless” to provide a robust focus on tackling the problem of anti-social behaviour wherever it occurs and provide a clear reminder to everyone that the Force takes a tough approach to this pernicious issue and sends a sharp message that it will not be tolerated.
- I also launched the “Operation Relentless Community Fund” which made grants of up to £5000 available to help Dorset community groups and charities act in their local areas. It is disappointing that despite a strong petition regarding issues affecting the community of Ashley Road, no applications for funding were received by my office.
- With regard to the concern relating to shops and businesses, I have worked extensively with business related stakeholders both locally and nationally to explore mechanisms to enable staff to feel safe in their working day and the public safe to visit such premises. I have appointed a business lead within my Office to jointly explore with the Force, innovative approaches to assist the reporting of business-related crime and am hosting a business-related stakeholder round table before the end of this year to develop this further.
- As the petition mentions drugs misuse, members should be aware that I have taken on the joint national portfolio responsibility for addiction and substance misuse and this allows me to strongly lead and influence national change in the area of this business to the benefit of Dorset. I have worked with South West Police and Crime Commissioners on this issue and

we have agreed that the vision for the region is to make it a hostile place to deal drugs. This joined up approach will see collaboration across the county boundaries focus on taking the fight to individuals who impact on the fabric of our communities.

- I have also ensured that the additional growth of officers that Dorset Police are receiving as a result of the Police Uplift programme, will be predominantly deployed to Neighbourhood and patrol front line policing teams to promote that visibility and problem solving occurs within the communities, and Poole will see growth alongside other force areas.

I would like to again reassure members that, as the elected voice of the public, my Police and Crime plan is a vehicle to bring about the change that residents and businesses have requested, but this will not be overnight and will remain dynamic. It will also have the ability to flex should new threats emerge.

Please be assured that the public voice counts and, it can be said, has counted in Ashley Road as reflected in the report.

It is important to reiterate that there is no place for complacency with what could be seen as business as usual, and partner agencies should welcome public challenge to consider whether their plans consider the current intelligence picture, as has been asked through the petition.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'D.J. Sidwick'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large 'S' at the end.

David Sidwick  
Police and Crime Commissioner