

Introduction

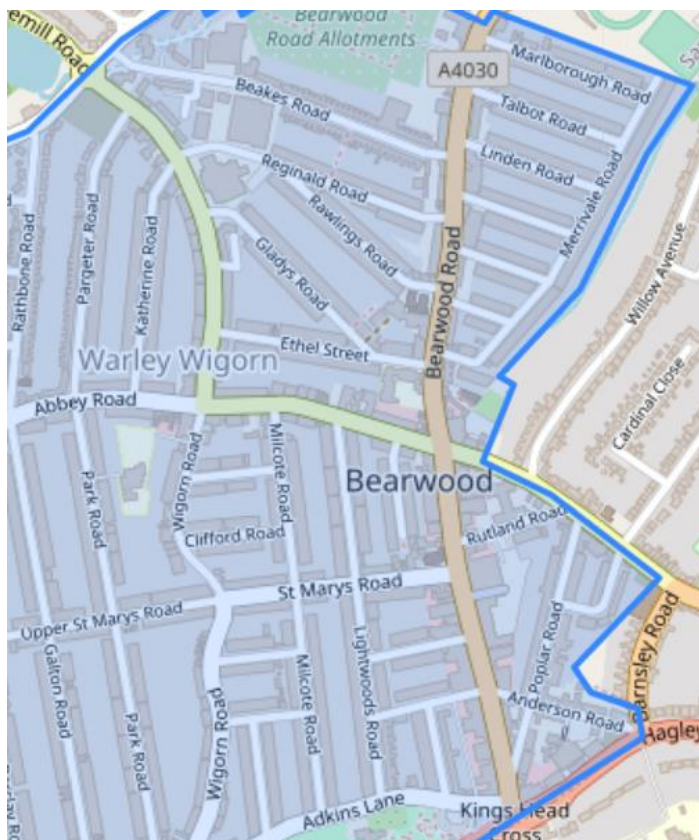
This submission relates to two areas within Sandwell.

Each area similar in many respects. An older main street with areas requiring investment. Some empty stores, offices and flats above. Occasionally larger offices flats and smaller supermarkets between. Alleyways between stores and behind, evidence of graffiti. Genuine businesses working to attract customers to the area.

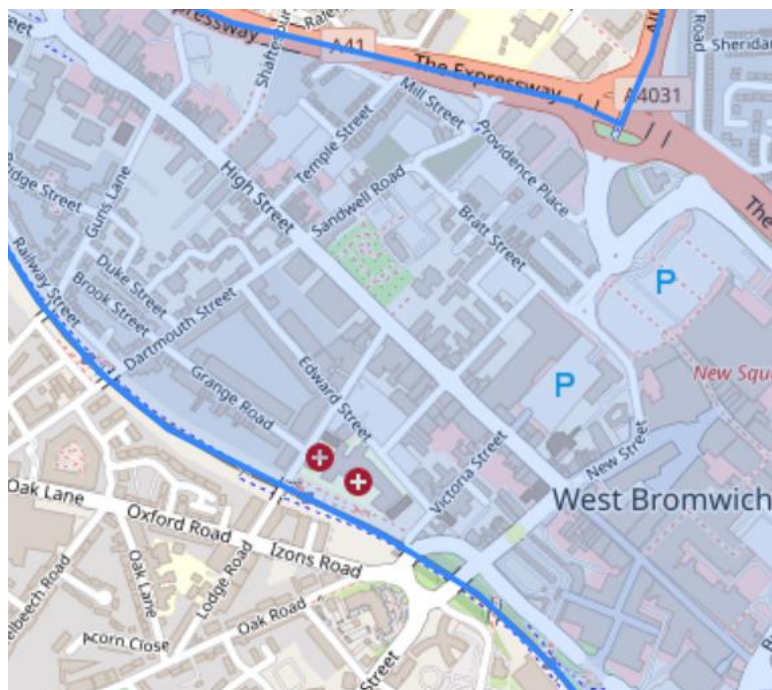
Commercial premises forming the main central shopping and business area arterial routes. Side streets often at right angles off those forming a grid to the surrounding area.

Established residential areas situated behind those businesses and reaching out to areas beyond. Predominantly traditional terraced housing in various states of repair. Some low rise and limited high rise accommodation.

Abbey Ward comprising of Bearwood Road the commercial area extending from the A456 Hagley Road West. Commercial premises with residential streets behind to each side.



West Bromwich Central Ward described locally as the 'Golden Mile'. The commercial area of High Street which becomes Carters Green. Similarly residential streets behind to each side.



In England, the lower layer super output areas (LSOA*) for Census data are ranked into 10 deciles for Deprivation.

- Two thirds of the LSOAs in West Bromwich are in the 30% most deprived LSOA in England (Sandwell- 74.2%)
- 82.2% of the LSOAs in West Bromwich are in the 50% most deprived LSOA in England (Sandwell- 87.1%)
- All the LSOAs in West Bromwich are in the 70% most deprived LSOA in England.
- West Bromwich's Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) Scores are in the 30% most deprived areas in England.

Overall West Bromwich is less deprived than Sandwell but more deprived than England its deprivation score would put it in the 20% most deprived areas in England.

- 81.3% of the LSOAs in Smethwick are in the 30% most deprived LSOA in England (Sandwell- 74.2%)

- 90.6% of the LSOAs in Smethwick are in the 50% most deprived LSOA in England (Sandwell- 87.1%)
- All the LSOAs in Smethwick are in the 60% most deprived LSOA in England.
- Smethwick's Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) Scores are in the 20% (IDACI) & 10% (IDAOPI) most deprived areas in England.

Overall Smethwick is more deprived than England and Sandwell and its deprivation score would put it in the 20% most deprived areas in England.

The highest LSOA's for a combined three-year data period are E01010106 (West Bromwich Central) with 384 offences

These breakdown to

- Vehicle Crime 147
- Burglary 108
- Robbery 76
- Theft from Person 53

E01010106 has a population of 1557 and 463 households.

E01010107 (West Bromwich Central) with 326 offences, detailed:

- Burglary 129
- Vehicle Crime 103
- Theft from Person 57
- Robbery 37

E01010107 has a population of 1751 and 593 households.

E01009927 (Abbey) with 329 offences, detailed:

- Burglary 113
- Vehicle Crime 95
- Robbery 91
- Theft from Person 30

E01009927 has a population of 1564 and 657 households.

Access & Movement

Vehicle access given the structure of these areas is along the main central routes. Some one way systems and into neighbouring streets. Limited car parks and parking on residential side streets. Busier closer to the shopping area.

Pedestrian access via footpaths to frontages of the main streets and shops. Footpaths to side streets, access pathways between some stores and to their rear.

Recommendations

Within commercial areas walkways and cut through areas which have evolved over the years. Unnecessary and unofficial routes to the rear of premises increasing the availability of hidden areas and their vulnerability. There are indications that some existing gating could be utilised. A need to work with businesses to encourage a sense of community.

Gating for the commercial and residential areas.

To the residential areas access to the rear of properties, restricting access and walkways to terraced houses reducing their availability and attraction to offenders.



Structure

Where possible access to the side and rear of properties should be restricted, but this may not be practical in all cases. Work should be done to improve door and window security at vulnerable properties, to help negate easier side and rear access. Regular narrow walkways off the main street such as by Aldi and next to the Midland pub for example can be areas of congregation and anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations

The business commercial area of the main arterial routes should not be in conflict with the side access and residential areas. Each to compliment the other. It is accepted there will be some overlap and vehicles for example attending businesses parking in residential streets. This increases natural surveillance to the housing. Work with businesses and residents with gating for the benefit of both communities.



Surveillance

Natural surveillance in the commercial areas increasing at busier times. To the residential areas at usual rush hour and school times and any local public buildings.

There is cctv but this has reduced over the years as systems have become obsolete and not replaced. Areas with no cctv which is utilised by offenders.

Recommendations

There is some natural surveillance and cctv in parts. There are indications that offenders aware of where cctv is not in use take advantage of these areas for crime and escape routes. A combination of restricting access and increasing surveillance via cctv. There is already a commitment from the council to take over daily viewing, funding and maintenance of any cctv added within this scheme.

Ownership

Again a split between commercial and residential. Many businesses taking ownership of their premises. To a more varied degree on areas in close proximity.

Recommendations

Increased ownership and respect for an area and its community should be encouraged. With the commitment and temporary employment of an individual to work with the businesses, employees and local residents encouraging and promoting crime reduction measures. This will gain a sense of community ownership of problems and measures to address them.



Physical protection

Many stores have shuttering for out of hours in varying degree of condition. Some particularly empty premises may suffer from damage or graffiti. Private houses, varying quality of security often depending on rental, divided to flats or owner occupied.

Recommendations

Encourage the addition and use of any current physical protection measures. Adding and increased use of gating. In commercial premises encouraging the demarcation and physical security between public and private areas.

In residential areas the addition of gating where necessary, including other crime reduction measures such as additional trellis, property marking and signage, with other potential measures through support organisations, victims relatives and volunteers.

Any work completed should be to Secured by Design standards where possible. Ensuring businesses and residents are aware of Secured by Design products.



Activity

Stores depending on their commercial use. Dining and take away premises increasing evening activity. Residential as with others can be vulnerable at quiet times and hours of darkness.

Recommendations

Within the recommended additional cctv the siting to cover the majority of routes and suspected criminal activity. Liaison with local policing to cover as many areas of activity as possible. This in conjunction with securing of unofficial escape routes.

Management and maintenance

Stores with some maintenance. Again this may depend on landlords, their level of investment on their property and to a degree dependant on current occupants and their staff.

Recommendations

Working with businesses encouraging repair and maintenance. Instilling a pride in their area. Good management and routine for employees security and securing of rear gating. Guiding and encouraging the use of main frontage access routes where there is maximum natural surveillance. There are indications that gates may only be secured when premises themselves are secured. Rear access available through the day. Good rule setting and management can reduce access to concealed vulnerable rear areas

Working with victims of residential crime in encouraging management and maintenance. Scoping for voluntary organisations with limited additional funds where necessary to add gating, window locks, property marking. Garden maintenance if necessary particularly the older and vulnerable victims.

Conclusion

The proposal of additional cctv and a crime reduction initiative providing permanent physical measures is practical.

Cctv to the main streets with signage for both the public and businesses assisting the police in prevention and detection. Additionally advice and encouragement to protect themselves and their customers and community.

The use of a number of known crime reduction measures to residents particularly victims of crime for public support, reassurance and increased safety.