

Date: 7 January 2022



Cllr Solomon  
Executive Member for Neighbourhoods  
& Community Services  
**Sent via Email**

North Somerset Council  
Town Hall  
Walliscote Grove Road  
Weston-super-Mare  
BS23 1UJ

Dear Cllr Solomon,

**Re: Part night lighting – Weston Village / Locking Castle**

I'm seeking your help with trying to improve community safety in Weston Village / Locking Castle and specifically dealing with attempted crimes that happen at night.

This is a complex issue and will involve the need for cross-organisational working but I believe that North Somerset Council can play a key role in this by reconsidering or tailoring its 'part night lighting' policy in Weston Village / Locking Castle.

I understand that as part of the decision about which streetlights should be turned off between Midnight and 5am a risk assessment is undertaken which includes reviewing crime statistics for the area – but this is too linear an approach to use as most crimes go unreported and there should be more flexibility to incorporate local intelligence from Police and local members.

I recently met with Avon and Somerset Police to discuss the ASB and crime issues in my ward and I was concerned to hear that the police are hearing about more and more incidents involving individuals walking around Weston Village / Locking Castle and trying car and garage door handles in an attempt to gain entry and steal items.

The police have been successful in prosecuting – and sending to prison – one of the individuals involved in this but I'm concerned that more needs to happen and one of the solutions to either deter or to increase the chances of catching the individuals, is to deviate from North Somerset Council's 'part night lighting' policy in certain areas of the ward.

Like many areas we've seen an increase in the use of Ring doorbells or personal security cameras and these are really important assets to help capture evidence – which may then be used to prosecute or find the individuals involved. From my discussions with the Police it is clear that although the use of cameras is growing in the ward, the images can sometimes be too dark or blurry to provide a clear enough image that can be used to identify the individual. Were the council to depart from this policy – even if it's just in specific streets or for a few months – I believe we'd have a better chance of acquiring clearer images and being able to deter or identify the individuals involved. I'm therefore asking the council to meet with me and the Police and to specifically discuss which areas in the ward should have their streetlights left on longer.

I'm also asking the council to reconsider their 'part night lighting' policy and incorporate more flexibility and intelligence-led decisions where Police and local members can share on the ground intelligence that could lead to quick changes to street-lighting in targeted areas (potentially as part of an ongoing operation). This approach would allow for a more

co-ordinated and swift response which would be more reactive to ongoing situations, rather than rely on statistics which are often underreported and delayed, and are too sluggish to make a difference.

To give you an example in the month of October there were 8 reports of vehicle crime most of which came from a few streets within the ward. In September this were 2 and August there were 6 – again they tend to cluster around certain areas. Since October I've also seen an increase in communication from residents about vehicle crime so it's possible this trend has continued. It's also important to remember that crime is often unreported so the numbers will almost certainly be greater.

I'm concerned that although there are crime statistics demonstrating an issue in the ward that when these considered alongside areas like central Weston they will be considered insignificant to warrant a change of policy. However, every area is different and should be judged on its own merits and considering that both myself and the Police are hearing the same thing I'd hope this local intelligence would be enough to consider a rethink in Weston Village / Locking Castle.

This is an issue that I know will be of interest to the residents I represent so for the purpose of transparency I'll public publish this letter so they are aware.

I look forward to hearing from you further and to discussing how we can make the community safer.

Kind regards



Cllr. Ciaran Cronnelly  
North Somerset Councillor for Winterstoke Ward