

Report to: Community Protection Panel

Date: 10th November 2008

Subject: Alley Gating Progress Report

Report of: Executive Director – Environmental Services

Contact officer: Joyce Swift 01942 486739

Purpose / summary: The purpose of the report is to report progress on the alley gating programme and current evaluation to date.

Alternative options considered and reasons for selecting the one recommendation The alternative would be to cease the alley gating programme

Recommendation / decision: That the Panel note the progress of the alley gating programme and support its continuation subject to available finance.

Key Decision This report does not involve a key decision
The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed.

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Community Safety
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No
Wards affected:	ALL

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes, have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property Officer?

N/A

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **No**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **No**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	X
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	X
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
			X
Comm Prot Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
10 th November 2008			

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 29.10.08

1. Background:

- 1.1 Since 2004, alley gates have been installed within the Borough as a means of safeguarding the rear entrances to houses, protecting them from Burglary and Anti-Social Behaviour. Other outcomes include reducing fear of crime and increasing satisfaction in services. Lockable gates are erected at the ends of rear alleyways so that only residents have access to the properties attached.
- 1.2 In November 2006 Cabinet agreed a revised approach to Alley gating using legislation contained within the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 which effectively allows Authorities to install gates where there is evidence of crime and disorder utilising the new legislation. They also agreed prioritisation of those locations which were hot spots for burglary and anti-social behaviour.

2. Progress:

- 2.1 To date, 669 gates have been erected in 272 sites across the Borough. In those areas, there have been reductions in Burglary and a significant increase in residents' perception of safety. Recent surveys show that before the erection of gates, 83% of residents reported feeling either worried or very worried, compared with only 20% after gates were installed.
- 2.2 Residents were also asked how big a problem teenagers hanging around their alleyway were. Before the erection of gates 37 % of residents reported that they were a big problem compared to 1 % afterwards.
- 2.3 Not only do they act as a measure for reducing crime, they also provide a safe area for children to play and reduce levels of litter and fouling from stray dogs. Part of the developmental work planned for 2009/10 is to increase community activity in existing gated areas and begin to create "green" areas with residents.
- 2.4 There is a rolling programme which focuses on the top 200 priority areas based on the areas that suffer the higher rates of Burglary and Anti-Social Behaviour. There are potentially a further 900 sites across the borough which could benefit from alley gates. Analysis is regularly updated to ensure emerging problem locations are identified and included in the priority locations. Each area is surveyed to determine its suitability for gates; therefore the list is subject to change – as one site becomes unsuitable another may take its place.
- 2.5 It is important that we adopt an evidence based approach to the installation of gates which means we deal with the areas of highest risk first. However we also maintain a degree of flexibility in our approach which allows communities concerns and experiences to be reflected in the installation programme via the PACT process

3. Evaluation.

- 3.1 A recent evaluation carried out on 92 alley gate schemes, comparing the crime data 12 months prior to installation and 12 months after installation, concluded there were substantially less incidents of crime. The table below reflects these changes:

Incidents/crimes	2006/07	2007/08	% change
ASB	176	15	- 91.5%
Criminal Damage	34	5	- 85.3%
Burglary	26	10	- 61.5%

- 3.2 Using Home Office costs as a guide the average cost of a Criminal Damage incident is £850. Therefore we can see the reduction in criminal damage incidents in these areas equates to a saving of £24,650
- 3.3 Similarly for Burglary, the average cost is £3268, which equates to a saving of £52,288
- 3.4 Anti social behaviour, is more difficult to cost however the London School of Economics and Political Science, have recently produced a report entitled 'The Economic and Social costs of Anti-Social Behaviour: A Review' which provides an average cost of £204 per incident using a basket of 13 categories of ASB based on the Home Office definition. Using these figures we calculate savings of £32,844
- 3.5 We are unable to put a financial cost saving on increased reassurance levels. However it is worthy of note that dealing with local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime is one of the measures we are working to within our Local Area Agreement
- 3.6 It is also likely that there have been reductions in other crime types at these locations although we have restricted this analysis to the 3 crime/incident types above. The overall cost saving is £109,782 p.a. for 92 schemes.
- 3.7 The average cost per gating scheme based on 3 gates per site is £3,800 so the total cost for the 92 schemes evaluated comes to £346,600. Based on the costs above, it is anticipated that the savings to the Council and its Partners over five years against these schemes will be £548,910 and this does not take into account the inflationary nature of the social and economic costs of crime per annum.
- 3.8 The manufacturing and construction standards we attach to alley gates should result in a minimum life of 20 years with a minimal amount of maintenance.
- 3.9 From the start of the programme limited funds for alley gates have been provided from a variety of Council and Community Safety Partnership resources and other discreet sources. However £400K was made available over two years 2007/09 from the Housing Capital Programme, which has enabled significant progress with installation.

4. Proposals:

- 4.1 It is clearly evident that public satisfaction with the alley gating programme is growing. The evaluation plainly shows that Crime incidents are falling as a result of these schemes. The demand for alley gating remains high amongst communities within the Borough. It is intended to meet this demand as far as possible; however this will be subject to the availability of financial resources which we will continue to explore.
- 4.2 Further evaluations of the impact of alley gating schemes will be undertaken once alley gates have been installed for at least 12 months.

5. Conclusions:

- 5.1 The alley gating programme is delivering well and further progress can be anticipated with the current available financial resources. Continued longer term progress will be dependant on further finance being identified
- 5.2 It is anticipated that future planned evaluations will provide further evidence of the effectiveness of alley gates. Both reduced crime and disorder and increased residents' satisfaction and perceptions of safety will be among the benefits.