

Report to: Community Protection Panel

Date: 16th March 2009

Subject: Alley gating Programme

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 recommended: 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 i.e. before

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	
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?

No

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
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
16 th March 2009			

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 2 March 2009

1. Background:

- 1.1 Since 2004, alley gates have been installed as a means of safe guarding 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 To date, 1000 gates have been erected in 320 sites across the Borough. In those areas, there have been reductions in Burglary and a significant increase in residents' perception of safety following the evaluation carried out last July and reported to Panel last November. Since this time we have seen an overall decrease of 12.4% in Burglary this year compared to last year.
- 1.3 The table below highlights some significant reductions against two crime types across the whole of the Borough year to date.

Crime	2007/08	2008/09	% change	LAA Target
Burglary	1549	1356	-12%	-7.5%
Criminal Damage	5897	5633	-4%	-3.5%

2. Progress:

- 2.1 We are continuing with 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.

3. Priority List:

- 3.1 The Alley gate process has refined its methodology to reflect only crimes and incidents which make reference to the rear of the property. We have also included:
 - Crime data that now records actual crimes which takes place in the alley ways to the rear of houses, rather than in the past, when all points of entry were included i.e. via the front of the property.
 - Crimes and incidents are now expanded to include the following; Burglary, Burglary other, criminal damage, small deliberate fires, fly tipping and anti social behaviour reported to the Police.
 - Also improved is how we identify actual 'alleyways' using GIS (Geographical Information Systems)

4. PACT (Partners & Communities Together) Community Consultation Route

- 4.1 We have recently added a community engagement element to our Alley gate process. Briefly, we will ask PACT staff to conduct community consultations relating to crime in specific alley ways and whether the community see alley gates as a solution. If a threshold is met, we will proceed with the process and will extend the area that we consult in if needed.

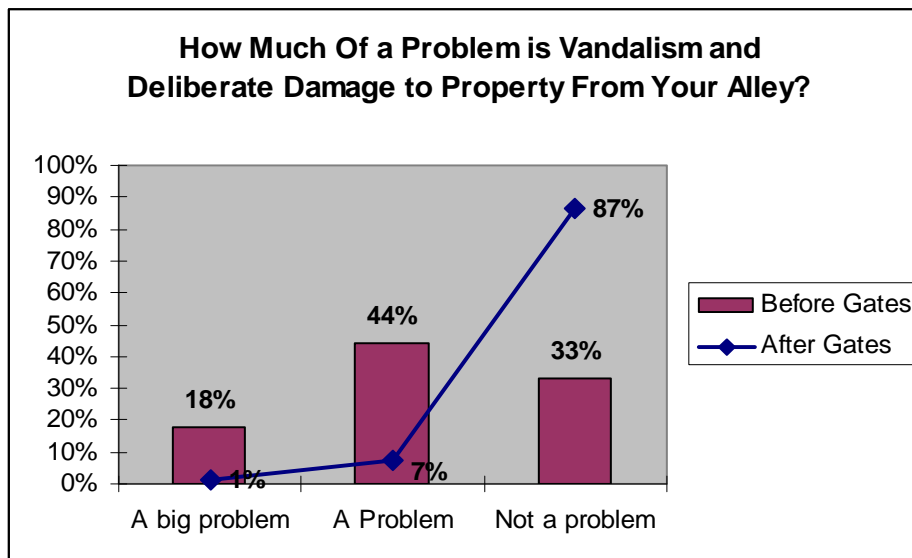
5. Impact of Alley gate Project

5.1 From an evaluation conducted in August 2008 on the first 92 schemes we found that:

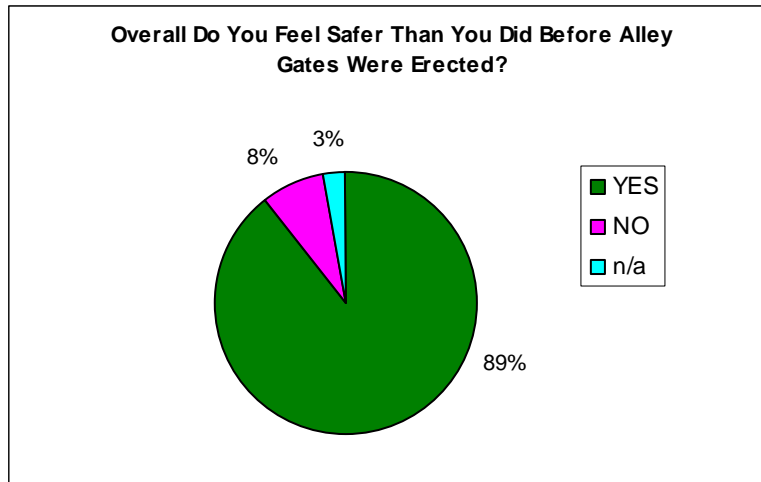
- There were 161 fewer reports of anti-social behaviour (176 down to 15)
- 29 fewer reports of criminal damage (34 down to 5)
- 16 fewer reports of Burglary offences (26 down to 10, although these 10 occurred in the main from the front or from insecurities)
- We are repeating this evaluation in March to refresh the data and across a greater number of schemes; this will include a cost benefit analysis.

5.2 We carried out a perception survey with 188 residents that asked how people viewed alley gates and the advantages they might have brought. The results areas follows:

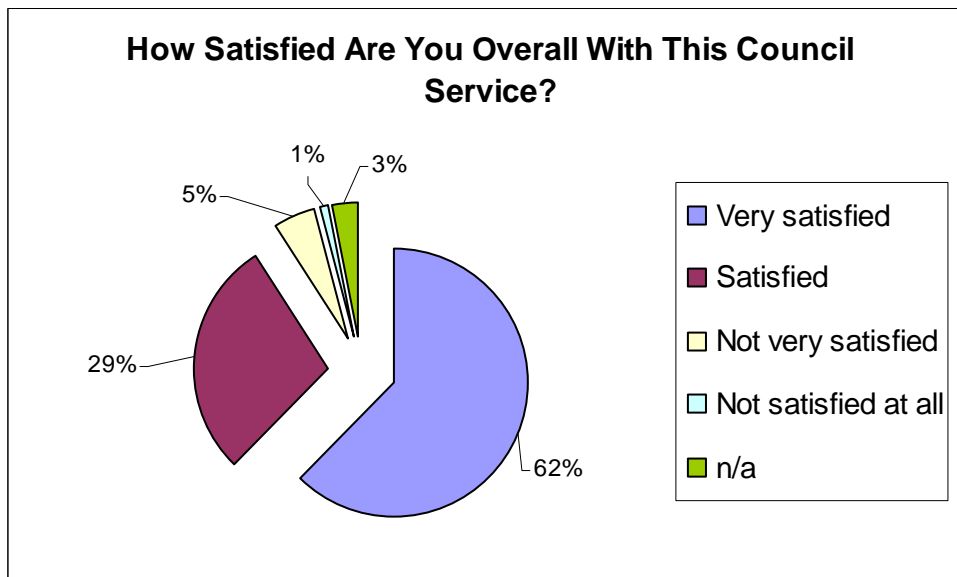
- **Experience of crime** – 39% of respondents stated they had been the victim of a burglary prior to alley gates being installed, some on multiple occasions. In an overwhelming 86% of these cases the burglar had entered the property from the back (via the alley). 95% of respondents answered this question and 62% rated vandalism or criminal damage as a problem or a big problem prior to gates being installed. This dropped to 8% after the installation of the gates with 87% of respondents stating that vandalism and criminal damage was not a problem post installation.



5.3 **Fear Of Crime** - In terms of reducing fear of crime, the survey results clearly show that alley gates are very effective, with 89% of respondents stating that they feel safer than they did before alley gates were erected. When walking in their alley since the gates were installed, 90% of people said they feel safe or very safe in the day and 80% also agreed with this at night.



- In terms of specific crimes, fear of burglary shows the most significant decrease dropping from 84% of people claiming to have been worried or very worried prior to gates to 20% post installation of gates.
- Quality of Life and General Satisfaction - 85% of respondents felt having alley gates had improved their quality of life with an overwhelming 91% stating that they were satisfied or very satisfied with this council service.



6. Proposals:

- 6.1 It is clearly evident that public satisfaction with the alley gating programme is growing. The crime data plainly shows that Crime incidents are falling. 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.
- 6.2 It is almost 12 months since the last evaluation was completed and sufficient time has now elapsed since the first Alley gates were installed to be able to compare crime data before and after the gates were installed. As a result we now need to commission further analysis and evaluation which should demonstrate and evidence the full impact on crime reduction that alley gates have contributed towards.

7. Conclusions:

- 7.1 The alley gating programme is delivering well and further significant progress can be anticipated with the current available financial resources. Continued longer term progress will be dependant on further finance being identified
- 7.2 It is anticipated that further evaluation 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.