
Report of Director of Neighborhoods and Housing

To Director of City Services and the Director of Development

Date: 5th February 2008

Subject: Gating Order – Back Stratford Terrace (Middle & Upper sections), Beeston, Leeds

Electoral Wards Affected:

City and Hunslet

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Executive Summary

The Director of Neighborhoods and Housing is promoting the installation of gates across a carriageway in the Stratford Terrace area of the City and Hunslet Ward to temporarily close the highway due to high levels of crime. The proposal has the support of the community and all relevant bodies. This report seeks the approval of the Director of City Services to initiate the legal process for the highway closure.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority to temporarily close the carriageway. The carriageway runs at the rear of Stratford Terrace and Stratford Street. This carriageway is situated in the City and Hunslet Ward.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Section 129A to 129G of the Highways Act allows for the making of a gating order to temporarily close a highway in response to high levels of anti-social behavior and crime. The legal provision came into effect on 1st April 2006. The adopted status of the highway is unchanged by the order.

2.2 This back road is split into 3 parts, and alleygating has already been erected at the bottom end of Back Stratford Terrace adjacent to properties numbered 2-58 Stratford Terrace and 27-77 Stratford Street. This back road has been the focus for anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime for a number of years. Since the completion of this gating scheme, there has been a noticeable difference in the improved

security to the gated area. Unfortunately this has encouraged youth nuisance and traffic problems to be shifted to the other sections of Back Stratford Terrace at the rear of properties 60-88 & 90-116 Stratford Terrace and 79-105 & 107-133 Stratford Street. The area is a built-up residential location with a changing population. There are 775 households with 1564 residents in the Stratford Terrace LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Areas). The crime domain at 5026, is ranked in the worst 15 percent in England.

- 2.3 Residents have voiced their concerns over the rise in crime and ASB to West Yorkshire Police, Elected Members and council officers. A number of residents have been victims of crime and criminal damage where offenders have used the back road to commit crime and ASB incidents.
- 2.4 Leeds City Council's Neighbourhoods and Housing Department – Community Safety, ASBU, and Area Management - received emails and phone calls from residents demanding action to address the issues. Local ward councilors have also expressed their concern with the issues occurring in the area. Meetings with residents have also taken place to ascertain the extent of the problems in the area.
- 2.5 Back Stratford Terrace is part of a tight network of streets that is visible from the main roads. It is located just off 'Stratford Square' – a notorious gathering place for gangs of troublesome youths – and is used as a route for quick escape from the area. West Yorkshire Police South Leeds Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT) is aware that Back Stratford Terrace provides an ideal location for ASB and criminal activity. Due to the close proximity of the back road to Stratford Square, there have been many reports from residents about ASB, criminal damage and noise nuisance. There has also been a rise in people's fear of crime in the area due to the numbers of congregating youths there. With the lower section of Back Stratford Terrace having now been gated, the problems in the other two sections have been exacerbated to a point where they also now require gating to alleviate these problems.
- 2.6 Residents living adjacent to the back road continue to leave their rear doors and windows open during the day, and this may explain why the burglary rate in the area is higher than the average Leeds burglary rate per 1000 households / population. Whilst the back road is fairly visible, it still provides some coverage to criminals carrying out these activities. Much work has been done by the Police and other agencies, such as Neighbourhood Wardens to tackle this problem.
- 2.7 This back road makes an ideal 'rat run' for motor vehicles moving around the estate. Many adjacent properties house young families and there is concern amongst residents that they cannot allow their children out in the back road to play due to the numbers and speeds of motor vehicles using the back road.
- 2.8 The NPT along with other agencies continue working hard to address some of these issues by visiting residents and working closely with local community groups to alleviate some of the issues. Various strategies have been implemented in the area to address the youth congregation and associated problems, and alleygating now joins that list. Continuous initiatives include increasing patrols in the area at different times of the day by the Police, PCSO's and Neighbourhood Wardens. Unfortunately a constant uniformed presence is unsustainable and the problems in the area have persisted.
- 2.9 The effects of making the order for properties adjoining or adjacent to the highway subject to gating would be positive. All residents and owners of any rented property along with lettings agents who look after property in the affected area were contacted as part of the consultation and all were in agreement that gating the back road would improve their quality of life and reduce their fear of crime and ASB.

2.10 The residents concerns are supported by the crime figures. There have been a total of 158 crimes in the Stratford Terrace area (March 2005-March 2007). This accounts for 0.5% of the total crime within the City and Hunslet ward. Indeed over the last six months from June 2007 to end 2007, various recorded crime in the proposed vicinity shows an increase compared to the city average rate (see Appendix 1). Increases in the rate of burglary dwellings, criminal damage and violent crime along with almost double the rate of reported ASB incidences in the area highlight worrying problems in the area proposed for gating.

2.11 A Planning application to gate the back road will be submitted mid-January 2008.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Design Proposals / Scheme Description

3.1.1 Work continues in the area to eradicate the problems. Despite this, the area continues to suffer from crime and ASB. It is now proposed to temporarily close the highway by means of a gating order with a view to stopping the ASB and crime which is believed to be associated with the back road.

3.1.2 Self locking gates no higher than 2.3m with matching fencing in galvanized powder coated steel will be installed at both ends of the back road to prevent access for those not living in the immediate vicinity.

3.1.3 The gates will be locked 24 hours a day. Residents living in the streets connected by the back road will be provided with a key on request from Neighbourhoods and Housing's Community Safety Service. The gate locks will be numbered in accordance with the system devised by LCC Community Safety. Emergency and other services will be provided with keys on request. City Services Street Cleaning and WYP will also be provided with keys.

3.1.4 Community Safety will carry out future maintenance of the gates. A commuted sum has been provided for this purpose.

3.1.5 Leeds City Council is required to keep a Register of all Gating Orders, to be available to the public and reviewed annually to determine whether the gating measures are still required. Leeds Community Safety will carry out the annual review for these gates.

3.2 Consultations

3.2.1 Ward Members: All ward members have been actively involved in promoting these gating orders. Leeds Community safety will pay 50% of the funding for the project with the rest coming via the Inner South Leeds Area Committee capital budget.

3.2.2 Residents: On 6th July 2007 all residents in the adjoining and adjacent area were sent postal consultation packs to ascertain their views about the possibility of alleygating in the area. Packs were also sent to landlords and lettings agents of property in the affected area. Residents not responding to the postal consultation were re-visited by the alleygating officer so that a better response to the consultation could be received. Residents and / or owners living in gable-end properties were visited separately to discuss gate design and location, and to gather permissions from them for any works to their property to go ahead.

3.2.3 Police: Both before and after the erection of the alleygates to the lower section of Back Stratford Terrace, much work continues to be carried out by the NPT. There have been a number of operations in the area post-alleygating dealing with different aspects of crime occurring there. Operations dealing with vehicle crime and court

finances have taken place with a fair amount of success. There continues to be a two-fold initiative to combat the sneak-in burglary in the area. The first element of this involves speaking with residents and offering to 'Smartwater' (security mark) their property. The second element involves the referral of local residents to CASAC for target hardening (locks, alarms, lighting, etc). Again, these initiatives prove popular and continue to have a positive effect in the area but it is felt alleygating will not only complement these, but provide a much sterner deterrent towards the ongoing issues. It is also felt that by completing the final two sections of Back Stratford Terrace, it will help reduce the problems faced by residents living in the non-gated parts of this back road. A Police dispersal zone operates just outside the area which Back Sandhurst Terrace falls in and thus this may explain why youth congregation has moved back into the vicinity of Back Stratford Terrace. It is now felt necessary that alleygating be implemented into the remainder of this highway to prevent this problem from persisting.

- 3.2.4 Community Safety: Neighbourhoods and Housing – Community Safety section is satisfied that the crime element is sufficient to apply for a Gating Order.
- 3.2.5 Highways: Development Department and City Services have both been consulted and have no objections to the proposals. Highways users will need to take alternative routes which will incur a detour of approximately 15 metres, however this inconvenience has to be placed in context of the community safety situation. An alternative route exists via the main streets (Stratford Terrace, Stratford Street, Lodge Lane and Bude Road. These provide reasonable alternative routes as they add very little time (seconds) to the journey and provide a safer and more visible route.
- 3.2.6 Rights of Way: Learning and Leisure Department has been consulted and have no objections to the proposals.
- 3.2.7 Utilities: Utility and other service providers were contacted regarding the proposed gating scheme. No objections were received.
- 3.2.8 Emergencies Services: The Fire, Health and Police Authorities were contacted regarding the proposed gating scheme. No objections were received.
- 3.2.9 Leeds Local Access Forum: Consultation has taken place with this organisation.

3.3 Gating Order Publicity

- 3.3.1 Home Office Guidance regarding publicity relating to the making of Gating Order will be followed.

3.4 Implications for Highways Users

- 3.4.1 The implications for highways users is that there will be a loss of amenity so non-resident users will have to take alternative routes that will incur a detour of 15 metres, referred to in 3.2.5 above. It is unlikely that those who had used the back road as a short cut will resort to having to use vehicles if the amenity is lost.

3.5 Programme

- 3.5.1 It is anticipated that subject to approval these proposals will be implemented in March 2008.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

4.1 The proposals contained in this report comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and help to contribute to the safety and well being of the people in the community.

5.0 Health Impact

5.1 It is not anticipated that there would be an adverse impact on the health of the users if the amenity was lost as the proposed alternative routes will add very little to journey times and the alternatives are safe pedestrian routes. This meets Leeds Travelwise policy of discouraging private car use and promoting walking to school.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

6.1 Funding has been secured from Leeds Community Safety and the Inner South Leeds Area Committee for installation and maintenance of the gates and fencing, all legal and administration costs and provision of keys.

6.2 Funding does not cover support for a Public Inquiry. This will only be required if there are overwhelming objections to the Gating Orders and in such unlikely circumstances, the continued promotion of the scheme will be reviewed.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Despite a range of initiatives being implemented in the problem area, the issues still persist when there is not a uniformed presence in the area or at different times of the year when youth congregation grows. It is unsustainable to deploy council or police officers to this area on a permanent basis. It is clear that a physical barrier would prevent anti-social or criminal youth, who do not live in the vicinity, from entering the back road.

8.0 Recommendations

DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

8.1 The Director is requested to:

- i) approve the gating of Back Stratford Terrace (Middle and Upper sections) leading from Bude Road to Westbourne Avenue and from Westbourne Avenue to Lodge Lane in accordance with the attached drawing in accordance with Section 129A of the highways Act 1980;
- ii) request the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to advertise the notices of intention to make Gating Orders and, in the event that no representations as to whether or not the proposed gating order should be made in response to the notice or are otherwise received, for the Orders to be made and brought into operation.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

8.2 The Director is requested to note the content of this report.