
REPORT TO THE CHIEF HIGHWAYS OFFICER

DATE: AUGUST 2010

Subject: Design & Cost Report

Scheme Title: GATING ORDER – Back Hovinghams / Dorsets & Sandhurst Avenue, Leeds 8
Capital Scheme Number:

Electoral Wards Affected:

GIPTON AND HAREHILLS

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods is promoting the installation of gates across carriageways in the Harehills area of the Gipton and Harehills Ward to temporarily close the highways due to high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. The proposal has the support of the community and all relevant bodies. This report seeks the approval of The Chief Highways Officer to initiate the legal process for the highways closure.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek authority to temporarily close a small number of adopted highways. These highways are back streets at the rear of properties at the following address (see Appendix 1 & 2 – Map of area / photos): Harehills Lane, Hovingham Terrace, Hovingham Mount, Hovingham Avenue, Hovingham Grove, Dorset Road, Dorset Avenue, Dorset Mount, Sandhurst Avenue. These carriageways are in the Gipton and Harehills Ward.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Section 129A to 129G of the Highways Act allows for the making of a gating order to temporary close a highway in response to high levels of anti-social behavior and crime. The legal provision came into effect on 01 April 2006. The adopted status of the highway is unchanged by the order.

- 2.2 These highways run at the rear of properties in Harehills and have been the focus for anti-social behavior (ASB) and crime for many years. The area is a heavily built-up residential area with a mixed, changing population. There are approximately 600 households with 1700 residents in this Super Output Area (Leeds 053A). The crime domain at 1004 is ranked in the worst 5 percent in England (out of a total of 32,482 LSOA).
- 2.3 Residents have voiced their concerns and anger over the rise in crime and particularly ASB to West Yorkshire Police, Elected Members and council officers. Many of the residents have reported incidents of crime and ASB where offenders have used the highway as a place to congregate and commit crime and anti-social behaviour and to make good their escape from the Police. .
- 2.4 Many of the problems occurring in these back roads come from youths congregating in it. The congregation of youths in these roads has led to the occurrence of several incidents of anti social behaviour, incorporating criminal damage, nuisance, under age drinking and vandalism. The highways have also facilitated arise in burglaries and other associated acquisitive crimes. Many of the residents have spoken to ward members about their experiences of crime and ASB along with an increased fear of crime as well as witnessing actual threats and intimidation from congregations of youths, which continues to be a particular problem at the moment.
- 2.5 Much of the recorded crime for the area is focused in and around the streets incorporating these highways (see Appendix 3 – crime stats). For many years, the area has suffered from high levels of crime. These have ranged from burglary dwelling, criminal damage and assaults to vehicle crime and ASB.
- 2.6 These highways have also been the subject of much ASB and continue to attract undesirables who view the back streets as locations out of sight and hence suitable locations to carry out ASB. Police patrols have taken place in the area to try and reduce the problems occurring there. Neighbourhood Wardens and Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) have been deployed in the area to provide back up cover when police patrols are not possible, and the area has recently become part of a Police Dispersal zone (see Appendix 4 – Copy of Dispersal Order).
- 2.7 Much of the crime and ASB is being attributed to local youths and known offenders living in the area. Meetings involving local community groups have met with key representatives from the Police and the council, including ward members in order to address some of the youth congregation issues and the associated intimidation and threats by youths to local residents. Residents have been encouraged to report any incidents in confidence, yet unfortunately it appears that there is still huge underreporting. It is hoped that gating will discourage youths from other streets from congregating in ones where they have no need to be in. It is also hopeful that a more secure gated environment will encourage residents to look out for one another and report any incidents.
- 2.8 There is also another issue affecting properties in this area. Acquisitive crime continues to occur in these streets and therefore the area remains a Police hotspot for these issues. Rear entry burglaries still occur, particularly as residents leave rear doors and windows open in the summer months. There has also been a worrying rise in the occurrence of robbery, some of which occurs in the back streets, and some of this is attributable to local youths as well as known offenders living nearby.

2.9 The effects of making the order for properties adjoining or adjacent to these highways subject to the gating would be positive. All residents and owners of property in the area were contacted as part of the consultation and the majority of respondents were in agreement that gating these highways would improve their quality of life and reduce crime and ASB.

2.10 A planning application to gate this highway will be submitted September 2010.

3.0 MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Design Proposals/Scheme Description

3.1.1 The alternative solutions considered for addressing the crime and anti-social behavior occurring within close proximity to these highways have been successful at the time of implementation but they are often not sustainable and due to their short nature, have limited results. It is now proposed to temporarily close these highways by means of a gating order with a view to stopping the antisocial behaviour and crime which is believed to be associated with them.

3.1.2 Self locking gates no higher than 2.4m with matching fencing in galvanised powder coated steel will be installed at both ends of the highways to prevent access to them for those not living in the immediate vicinity (see Appendix 5 – gate design).

3.1.3 All gates used in alleygate schemes

3.1.3 The gates will be locked 24 hours a day. Residents whose properties back onto these highways shall be able to request a key for the gates. These keys will be available from Environment and Neighbourhoods' Community Safety unit. The gate locks will be numbered in accordance with the master key system devised by LCC Community Safety. Emergency and other services have already got access to master keys which would open these proposed gates. Any council departments requiring access to the paths will also be able to request keys for the gates, although many already have master keys for the area, e.g. streetscene services.

3.1.4 Gough-Kelly Ltd will carry out future maintenance of the gates. A commuted sum has been provided for this purpose from Inner East Area Committee for a period of 5 years.

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. The Alleygating Coordinator at Leeds Community Safety will carry out the annual review for these gates.

3.2 Consultations

3.2.1 Ward Members: Ward members have been extremely vocal in their support for alleygating at this location and they have no objections to the proposals.

3.2.2 Residents: In 2007, a pre-consultation took place with local residents living adjacent or adjoining the highways in question. The majority were in favour of alleygating but at that time there was no additional funding to support a gating scheme as large as this one. There were also one or two owners of end properties who were opposed to the gates.

As problems persisted, and in some cases increased, funding was applied for in order to gate up the streets mentioned above. A further consultation, once again with all affected residents and owners was

carried out from January to mid Feb 2010, with re-visits to properties not responding to the consultation taking place in March 2010 and carried out by the local Neighbourhood wardens. An additional door to door consultation took place June 2010 with gable end property residents and owners who still had not responded, and also with residents who had objected. This was completed early July 2010.

- 3.2.3 Police: NE Leeds Police Division has implemented various strategies to address the problems in this area through the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and support proposals to gate these highways up. This will help Police apprehend offenders who have used the highways as a means of committing crime and / or ASB in the past.
- 3.2.4 Community Safety: Environment and Neighbourhoods – Community Safety section is satisfied that the crime element is sufficient to apply for a Gating Order.
- 3.2.5 Highways: Development Department will be consulted over the proposals. Highways users will need to take alternative routes which will incur short detours. Alternative routes exist along the streets listed above in 1.1 (see Appendix 1).
- 3.2.6 Rights of Way: City Development Directorate Department was consulted July 2010. No objections were received.
- 3.2.7 Utilities: Utility and other service providers were contacted in February and June 2010 regarding the proposed gating scheme. No objections were received.
- 3.2.8 Emergencies Services: The Fire, Health and Police Authorities were contacted originally in 2007 regarding the proposed gating scheme. They have formed part of the ongoing proposals ever since. No objections were received.
- 3.2.9 Prescribed Organisations, Local Footpath User Groups and Local Access Forum: Will be consulted September 2010.

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 short detours, referred to in 3.2.5 above. It is unlikely that those who had used the highways 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 November 2010.

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 Inner East Area Committee will fully fund the proposed scheme 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. It is unsustainable to deploy council or police officers to this area on a permanent basis. It is clear that physical barriers would go some way in preventing anti-social or criminal elements that do not live in the vicinity, from entering the carriageways.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Chief Highway Officer is requested to:
- i) approve the gating of the rear carriageways to streets listed at 1.1 in accordance with the attached drawing in accordance with Section 129A of the highways Act 1980; and
 - ii) request Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) to advertise the notice of intention to make a Gating Order for the rear carriageways to streets listed in 1.1 in accordance with the attached drawing and, in the event that no objections are received, for the Orders to be made and brought into operation.