

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for Places, Councillor Eric Bell)	Executive Cabinet	12 August 2010

ALLEYGATES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise Members of the findings of an evaluation of Chorley Council's alleygate project, and make recommendations relating to the future of the project.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. It is recommended that, based upon restricted Police evidence, the alley gate project be brought to an end.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. The report outlines the findings relating to the evaluation of several of the implemented alley schemes across Chorley Borough footprint. The report covers the impact the installation of alley gates has had on crime, perception and confidence. The report also makes recommendations relating to future arrangements relating to alleygate project in Chorley.
4. It has become evident that there are very few offences where entry is gained via an alleyway (approximately 1.3% of all crime), and although gating the alley may reduce these offences, the fact that the actual numbers are so low may mean that the scheme has very little effect on levels of crime overall. There is little evidence to suggest that there is a problem with crime facilitated by alleyways in Chorley.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

5. There is little evidence to suggest that the implementation of alley gates on Chorley Borough has reduced crime in the areas they have been installed.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. Continue with the alleygate project in its current format.
7. Whilst there is evidence to suggest residents in alley gated areas feel that crime has reduced even when, in some cases, increases have been recorded. There are more cost effective ongoing initiatives which continue to tackle serious acquisitive crime as well as confidence and perception levels of residents within the borough e.g. MATAAC, Chorley Smile, weeks of action, Smart Water programs (anti burglary marking device), the development of a comprehensive neighbourhood watch scheme, development of prolific priority offender programs, cross boarder criminality investigations and Auto Number Plate Recognition

(ANPR) days.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	x	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	x
Involving people in their communities	x	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	x

BACKGROUND

9. Alley gating schemes aim to prevent offenders and other unwanted visitors from accessing the rear of properties by installing lockable gates in alleyways shared by numerous houses. The idea is that the gates increase the effort of crime e.g. any potential offenders would have to climb the gate in order to gain access to the rear of properties.
10. From the national picture, it is clear that alley gates were originally envisaged as part of the Reducing Burglary Initiative and were installed specifically to tackle the problem of domestic burglary.
11. The tackling of serious acquisitive crime, including burglary, is one of Chorley Community Safety Partnership priorities. There are currently 53 separate schemes in place across Chorley which were installed between April 2005 and March 2010.
12. Over the past 5 years Chorley Council has allocated a total of £173,391.94 to deliver the alley gate program. A budget of £36,780 has been allocated in the 2010//11 capital programme.

Year	Capital Spend
2005/06	£38,060.68
2006/07	£11,668.95
2007/08	£59,403.88
2008/09	£28,454.13
2009/10	£35,804.30
Total	£173,391.94

13. Lancashire Constabulary was commissioned to evaluate several of the schemes which have been in situ for at least 12 months. This report sets out the background to the Chorley's Alley gate project, the findings of Lancashire Constabulary evaluations and recommendations relating to the future of the project.
14. In order to enable accurate comparisons, crime data has been analysed for several schemes which had been in place for at least 12 months. This encompassed 65 alley gates across 30 separate schemes.
15. Although there are many examples of successful schemes nationally, they are often large scale and implemented to deal with very high rates of domestic burglary. It is important to remember that the alley gating scheme in Chorley is fairly small and the levels of crime in each area are not high enough to measure change with any significance. In addition, there

are a wide range of initiatives going on at any one time that may have an impact on crime and disorder in Chorley therefore any changes as a result of alley gating are difficult to define.

16. Due to the locations of the alley gate schemes and the low numbers of crimes in these small areas, data has been examined for the police incident location which the scheme falls within. In addition, as the incident locations were changed in April 2006, it has only been possible to go back as far as that date. More detailed evaluation has been carried out on one of the larger schemes however due to time scale and data limitations it has not been possible to do this for every scheme.
17. From looking at the available evidence, it would appear that alley gating in Chorley has little impact on the already low levels of crime in the area. It has become evident that there are very few offences where entry is gained via an alleyway (approximately 1.3% of all crime), and although gating the alley may reduce these offences, the fact that the actual numbers are so low may mean that the scheme has very little effect on levels of crime overall.
18. From examining the Chorley East alley gating scheme in detail, it would appear that the alley gates may prevent burglary dwelling being facilitated by the alleyway. However, there is some evidence of displacement from the rear of the property to the front when looking at burglary dwelling and no apparent reductions in crime overall. This would suggest that other methods, not just aimed at reducing entry via the alleyway, may be more effective in reducing burglary dwelling overall and other types of crime.
19. During 2009, a survey was sent out to around 400 Chorley residents who lived in an area where an alley gate scheme had been installed for at least 6 months. Of the 400 surveys that were sent out, a total of 177 responses were received – the analysis focused on completed answers only. Of the 177 respondents, 64% were female with over 40% of respondents being over the age of 60 years old. 94% stated 'White British' as their ethnic background.
20. From the results of the opinion surveys, it is clear that the residents in alley gated areas feel that crime has reduced even when, in some cases, increases have been recorded. Alley gating is a very visible indication of the work that is done to address local issues around crime and disorder and continuation of the scheme may go towards increasing public confidence in the CDRP as well as reducing fear of crime.
21. There is little evidence to suggest that there is a problem with crime facilitated by alleyways in Chorley. If the programme is to be continued with the purpose of reducing crime, schemes should be installed in response to an identified ongoing problem particular to an alleyway rather than planning the schemes to be installed for the year.
22. If the schemes are continued to be implemented using the current process, it is unlikely that they will contribute to any further reductions in crime. However, they may contribute towards an increase in public perception and confidence.
23. It should be noted since the introduction of the alley gates project several other more cost effective initiatives have been introduced to tackle and improve the perception and confidence of residents and the tackling of Serious Acquisitive Crime including but not limited to MATAC, Chorley Smile, weeks of action, Smart Water programs (anti burglary marking device), the development of a comprehensive neighbourhood watch scheme, development of prolific priority offered programs, cross boarder criminality investigations and Auto Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) days.
24. There is significant capital and revenue cost associated with the alleygate program and it is evident that the installation of alley gates has not significantly tackled Serious Acquisitive Crime. The full alleygate evaluation report produced by Lancashire Constabulary is shown as Report 21 on tonight's agenda. It is confidential and not for public viewing as it is a restricted document..

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

25. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	x	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

26. The report sets out the total costs of the Programme ending in this financial year 2010/11. The report effectively means that no future funding is committed as the evaluation has determined that crime facilitated by alleyways is not a problem in Chorley.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Paul Lowe	5758	23/07/10	Alleygate