

Annex 4: Minutes of Public Meeting

Alley-gating Meeting Micklegate - 24th March 2014

75 Local Residents were in attendance

Apologies:

Cllr J Gunnell

Introductions:

Cllr S Fraser (Ward Cllr)

Ian Cunningham (Safer York Partnership, Senior Crime Analyst),

Emily Tones (Ass. Rights of Way Officer).

Declaration of interest:

Cllr S Fraser lives on a street which has been gated.

Cllr D Merrett gave introduction and overview to streets proposed for gating and current status.

Ian Cunningham explained that since 2004, have been asked to investigate, and where practically possible to implement alley-gating schemes.

Experience has shown that schemes work best in terraced areas with alleyways. Have done some 'small' schemes in Micklegate and larger schemes in Clifton, the Groves and Holgate. In Clifton and Holgate crimes have fall by significant percentages.

When looking at Micklegate, 4 streets come out to be best in terms of cost effectiveness. In other areas have found no evidence of displacement of opportunistic crime. There is an established legal process, which involves consultation with local residents, Police and other emergency services.

A scheme would only be proposed and consulted upon it there is a good case. There is a cost associated with the process not least to put legal notices in newspapers.

With regards to waste collection, City of York Council Transformation initiative is delivering lots of different outcomes including front door collections and more recycling.

Cost benefit example: a Burglary takes/costs £3 ½ k to clear up. In regard to these schemes, a reduction in 4/5 burglaries would cover the cost.

Process: Bishopthorpe Road - Nunmill Street consultation received 22 replies out of 68
(15 yes 7 no).

Cllr S Fraser: Bishopthorpe Road – Nunmill Street in a different position than others which are already in statutory consultation. Bishopthorpe Road – Nunmill Street objections were to do with vehicular use. Large houses with garages to the rear some indication that some residents might be changing their minds. The previous result was finely balanced much more than other schemes there would still be vehicular access.

Resident: Under the waste transformation would this be a front door collection? Houses on Bishopthorpe Road have significant steps up to them, not level access, and currently have perfectly functional rear alleyway collection.

Response: Rear collections can experience obstructions in rear alleyways; subsidence due to weight of vehicles an issue, also takes more time to collect from rear alleyways.

Resident: Not more viable to collect from the front.

Cllr D M: there is enormous pressure on budgets and Council is having to find the cheapest way to collect.

Ian Cunningham: The proposals for alley-gates are about bringing crime down. These are 2 things happening at the same time and they are not connected.

Resident: Bishopthorpe Road – Nunmill Street would require a black bag system because of steps.

Cllr D M: Black bags confirmed and measures to support residents.

Cllr S F: On the even side of Millfield Road was early scheme:

- 1) Ease of gating being a dead end.
- 2) Crime and disorder and fly tipping. When the scheme was brought in there was concern from residents regarding taking bags through the house now this is never raised as an issue. Residents were unhappy but got used to it

Resident: Separate issues, security and waste collections. The risk is opportunistic crime, residents are happy for bin men to know the code.

Ian Cunningham: This has been suggested to Waste Services, if council is looking for efficiencies on services then could look to move people to front door collections. Codes to gates will be given to emergency services.

Resident: There is a big mix in the area of people who own their own houses and tenants

(A discussion took place on who might have the codes).

Resident: A question was raised as to the timescale for changing the code.

Ian Cunningham: There isn't a set regime for changing codes in other areas. The codes have been changed on the basis of evidence of crime e.g. In Clifton a scheme of 600 houses in 5 years codes have been changed 2 or 3 times.

In terms of physical reduction in crime combined with efforts of services, crime is hugely reduced in areas where alley-gates have been installed. Statistics for Alley-gating are published in paper and on Council website.

Resident: Have been in area 2-3 years and there have been a high number of burglaries. There is complacency in room.

Resident – Thank you to the council for wanting to invest in our area, if we got gates installed will cleaning machines be able to access the alleyways?

Cllr D M: Once alleyways are gated we do not regularly clean them, it's not so much of an issue. Gated alleyways are cleaned on request.

Resident: I have found crime statistics quite difficult to read, how do our streets compare with others in the area?

Ian Cunningham: City of York Council currently have 70 request for alley-gating, we work out the crime rate and use this as an evidence base to work out prioritisation and concentrate efforts on the potential schemes with the biggest impact.

Resident: I/we adjacent to Thorpe St alleyway and experience anti-social behaviour, race day nuisance, fly-tipping alley-gating would stop this and reduce the burglary risk.

Cllr S F: When Ian does the statistics he considers, burglaries, antisocial behaviour and fly-tipping.

Resident: Crime statistics show a reduction from 20 in 2012 to 12 in 2013 I have been burgled 3 times and on Police advice installed an alarm box on the premises.

Thorpe St – Russell St 2 – 6
Scott St – Nunmill St 22 – 6

Resident: I can't see what all the fuss is about, I love going through alleyways it's so different to walking on Scarcroft Rd. It's a wonderful feature of the area.

Resident: (Nunmill St) I have lived here for 3 years and myself and neighbours have suffered graffiti, had a brick through the window, bike stolen and an alley-gate scheme would prevent race goers urinating in the alleyway and the alley being used for police evasion.

Resident: I own a house on Carnot, St Leeman Rd. The gate at the bottom of Carnot Street is left open 80% of the time. Only 10 house holders care. There is more fly-tipping than ever before.

Resident: Shouldn't residents take responsibilities for keeping the back alleyways clean and clear.

Emily Tones: A central bin collection point, but this means that the gates can't be shut until all of the bins in.

Resident:- I observe that the 4 proposals are different. One is very different to the others, maybe solutions appropriate to one and not the another.

Resident: I live at the very top of the Nunmill / Scott Street with a view down the alleyway, during the day am surprised at how many characters pass by. Have called the Police numerous times was burgled 5 years ago - there were 20 burglaries in a week then someone was caught and burglaries stopped. City of York Council has identified highest crime rates for whole of York based on the area rather than specific streets.

Ian Cunningham: Most streets which have back alleyways have put in request. PC. Dave White pushed hard to have gates here because back alleyways are the best opportunity for crime in the area. It could be that this is one of the last opportunities where there is the money to implement the schemes.

Resident: Couldn't there be a compromise on waste collection?

Resident: I moved from Southbank to Southlands Road, I have been burgled once and called the Police twice, have had someone tried my window and have witnessed drug dealing.

Resident: I am a regular dog walker on Scott Street and have regularly moved people on who are hanging around.

Resident: I have lived in the area since 1976 there have been burglaries but I question whether we are complacent and whether it's the fear of crime which

can be out of scale. I don't want to live in a gated area or to be frightened into it.

Resident: Nunmill / Bishopthorpe Rd alleyway if certain alleys are picked (gated) argument is crime is opportunistic what is needed is a an integrated approach.

Ian Cunningham: Fair comments, prefer to do all of the proposed alleyways or we don't block schemes are preferable. This is about residents coming together to debate and come to an outcome.

Residents: I'm in favour of the scheme, one of my neighbours had sports car broken into, got in through back of house to steal the keys. Arguments against are sentimental against a practical solution. Gates are generally closed and respected accompanied by overall benefit no graffiti, reduced burglary. How will the issue be resolved?

Cllr D M: Will produce a report and a decision will be made.

Resident: What about the noise from the gates?

Cllr S F: There was an issue with one gate on the even side of Millfield Road by a B&B, the noise was deadened by using rubber stoppers and owner of the B&B has not raised the issue since.

Emily Tones: Results of the consultation to date

	Properties	Yes	No	
Millfield/Thorpe	89	35	6	
Thorpe/Russell	86	35	14	
Russell/Scott	89	33	10	
Scott/Nunmill	39	34	8	
Bishopthorpe/Nunmill	68	18	10	
“ “ Second cons	68		15	7

35 Formal objections.

Resident: On Bishopthorpe Rd there are 12 garages.

Resident: In favour based on opportunistic crime. Take the waste collection out of issue then this would lessen objections.

Cllr D M: When we had the first set of returns we went to Waste Services to get a scheme, comments will be fed back.

Resident: I am a big fan of City of York Council and this is another problem that they have the ability to solve. We know about budgets and surely we can come up with a solution.

Cllr DM: We will take a straw poll – no promises but will help assess resident opinion.

Resident: 2 way system currently recycling out the front and rubbish out the back. Been in the area 3 years and there was a burglary locally in the first week we moved in. Children can still play out the back. Don't want to be in a negative position wholeheartedly support it.

Resident: (Scott St) I don't see a social benefit. I don't see ASB on race days. I don't think it's sentimental or whimsical to want an open neighbourhood. I have had graffiti, the area is being targeted because people have requested gates. The figures show less than half the people are for the gates. They will be left open, tradesmen will have the codes. I have been burgled, it's horrible a real intrusion and affects you. I don't think that gates will reduce this.

Resident: How do back alleys function as a source of community? If so, people need to clear up after your dog, broken glass they could function better with gates?

Resident: Thorpe/Russell is the only alley without a light, can't we have more?

Resident: I got burgled a month after lights were fitted.

Ian Cunningham: In streets proposed for gating, we looked at other schemes; fake alarm boxes, lights, trellising: gating has the biggest impact on crime.

Resident: A black sack system on Bishopthorpe Rd; it won't work putting 2 weeks worth of rubbish out the front in a tourist & business area.

Resident: There were 35 formal objections; there are other means to address petty crime, there is no proportion. In Thorpe St lots of children knocking balls around there and how often are alleyways used to walk through to Nunmill or Shopping Centre?

Resident: Would have been happier for my son to play out in back alleyway if alley had been gated.

Resident: What are the stats on crime moving, if gate one and not others, this would be an issue for residents?

Resident: Not obsessed about crime, sensible measures to reduce risk, lighting more expensive.

Resident: If Alley-gating area, do all 5 or none.

Resident: I'm a car owner with garage at the back, I'm not trying to stop gates, I'm for the project.

Resident: I'm a car owner and for the scheme.

Resident: I'm a garage owner and was worried about the position of the gates. Now you've moved the position of the gates I'm for the scheme.

Emily Tones: After initial concerns re feedback on position of gates, we met with residents. There was concern about ability to turn. Gates will not be an obstruction for vehicles. The width of a gate on vehicular alley is 2.5mtrs which is standard parking space width.

Resident: A couple of times people have mentioned dodgy characters. This is natural insecurities seeing someone with hood up or out late doesn't equal crimes.

Resident: In Manchester and Liverpool alley-gating has shown to significantly reduce crimes. I'm interested as went to school in Liverpool and have lived in Manchester.

Resident: For practicality gate Russell/Thorpe, East/West instead of North/South.

Emily Tones: The formal consultation will restrict walkthrough.

Resident: Protect the same amount of properties if gate North/South can it be looked at.

Emily Tones: Response from the 1st Consultation mixed views - some people wanted gates moved forwards and protect more properties. If consensus is North/South can we have a straw pole?

Resident: I do appreciate how much time and effort put into consultation. The scheme needs strong support.

Resident: Bishopthorpe/Nunmill is used by car owners, it is the way to access homes most the time and garages without risk of damage.

Concerned about practicalities;

What do people have to do to open/close gates?

How will it work for the infirm / elderly / disabled?

Opening car door in narrow alley is difficult and compromises access.

Security issues - gating is not the only way of preventing it, what about CCTV?

Concerned, getting in and out of car - will be more vulnerable.

Finally Bishopthorpe Rd is different for refuse collections, you can't separate the issues here CYC has looked at collections at the front and there are Health and Safety concerns for refuse collections. The steps are steep and difficult for the elderly / infirm, in winter particularly. The effect on the disabled will be counter to DDA legislation.

Resident: It should be all in or all out.

Resident: For gated alleyways, not a gated community. Not frightened of crime.

Resident: Philosophical argument, feel the community would become a gated community, a compromise would be have some open areas, some able to be walked through and some protected.

Resident to Cllr S F: was there a felling of reduction in community with installation of alley-gates?

Cllr S F: My image of a gated community is that you drive up the gate and then onto estate. Don't think it had that effect. When gating first came in the then CYC Administration made the policy decision not to collect waste from back alleyways, the policy remains. Given constraints on CYC it's difficult to persuade Waste Management Services because of resources and practicalities. Officers have put a lot of work into trying to resolve issues and there have been amendments, changing the position of gates to address concerns and tailor the scheme. It's unfair to accuse them of partiality, there is a limited budget for alley-gating. If the sachem does not go ahead then the next scheme down the list will get the resource. Unlikely, when we would next have a budget to develop similar schemes.

Issue 1- those seeking to retain back of property waste collection, of those who would otherwise be against, support the scheme if retained back alley waste collection?

Issue 2: Short cuts through, behind Scarcroft, those who want to retain short cut through.

21 for retention of cut throughs
26 against (full gate)

Cllr D M: Will need to make a decision on objections received during statutory consultations. All those in favour of schemes leave aside:

Bishopthorpe/Nunmill:

For 21

Against 17

Bishopthorpe Rd / Nunmill

For 7/8

Against 4/5

Resident: Rubbish is relevant

Emily Tones: Will prepare a report for decision at OIC asap. If a decision is taken then a letter will be sent to residents giving 6 weeks notice during which time applications can be made to The High Court. After 6 weeks the procurement process starts with a view for installation in 2 / 3 months

Cllr DM: Thanked residents for coming and closed meeting