

## Norwich Highway Gating Trial

A Joint Report by  
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Community Protection

### Summary

This report seeks to update Members on the status of the proposed Norwich highways gating pilot.

The Norwich trial, in the vicinity of Magpie Road and Magdalen Road, has been unable to satisfy the legal requirements for gating in terms of level of crime and anti-social behaviour.

It is therefore recommended that the Norwich Gating Trial is not progressed at this time and, if possible, a substitute site found.

## 1. Background

- 1.1. In July 2006, Cabinet were informed of a new power under Section 2 of the [Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005](#) to make a 'Gating Order' to prevent or regulate passage along a highway (usually an alleyway) in order to prevent crime or anti-social behaviour.
- 1.2. At that time, Cabinet approved undertaking pilot gating schemes in Gt Yarmouth and Norwich. In July 2007, a third trial, in King's Lynn, was also approved.
- 1.3. The trials will inform the development of a policy to define how this power will be used in Norfolk. This will need to ensure that judgements on restricting access to certain residential highways, balance crime and anti-social behaviour issues with other priorities, such as sustainable travel, safer routes to school, health, and recreation.
- 1.4 In May 2008, members of the Review Panel were updated on the progress of the three pilot gating schemes.

## 2. Approved Pilots

- 2.1. Gating Orders are a new area for the County Council. In order to properly assess the likely issues, some piloting was undertaken. This would inform our policy development and approach in this area. It was also agreed that the pilots would need to be fully evaluated before consideration of any further

proposals for gating orders.

2.2. Following consultation with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn. The following pilots were agreed:

- Dolman Square, Great Yarmouth: a single alleyway which has been the subject of longstanding antisocial issues;
- Pilot Street, King's Lynn: a single point gating of an alleyway currently showing significant crime, disorder and antisocial issues associated with the night time economy;
- A network of alleyways off part of Magdalen Road, Norwich

2.3. The pilot areas are of different scales, so it will be useful in looking at both individual alleyways, and several alleyways in a block. It is proposed to operate each pilot for 12 months following the installation of the gates.

2.5 The remainder of this report will focus on the development and progress of the proposed Magdalen Road network pilot.

### 3. **Progress to Date**

3.1. **Magdalen Road/Magpie Road, Norwich** - The schemes in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth are relatively small in scale requiring only one alleyway to be 'gated'. The proposed pilot in Norwich is a much larger scheme looking at an area or zonal approach to gating.

3.1.1. The scheme was brought to the County Council's attention following consultations with the CDRP. The proposed Norwich gating scheme comprises the provision and erection of more than 40 gates at a cost of, in the region of, £80k. Funding for the gates, their erection and their maintenance will be met by the local CDRP.

3.1.2. For the period of April 2005 to August 2006 Norfolk Constabulary record, 108 crimes in the area in question. For the period of April 2006 to August 2007, 79 offences were reported in the same area. This is a reduction of 27%. Only 16 crimes relate to use of the alleyways to gain access to the rear of houses, and over half involved insecure buildings / property.

3.1.3. Detailed inspection of anti-social behaviour reports between April 2006 to August 2007 shows little evidence that the alleyways are being used – the majority of complaints were either regarding malicious communications or noise nuisance / inconsiderate parking by local residents or the inappropriate use of the park on Shipstone by local youths.

3.1.4. The volume of reported crime in Norwich has reduced by over 25% without the gating pilot. This combined with the fact that of the 16 incidents where access was gained via the rear of the premises, over half involved insecure buildings / property, there is insufficient evidence of crime facilitated by the alleyways to pursue a Gating Order. In addition, the benefits of installing over 40 gates at a

cost of in excess of £80k would not be a cost-effective, proportionate response.

- 3.1.5. A Gating Order could also be pursued with evidence that the alleyways are being used for persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB) rather than for reasons of crime reduction. However, Police records show little evidence that the alleyways are being used in this way.
- 3.1.6. To assess whether specific issues of crime and anti-social behaviour were occurring but not being reported to the Police two public meetings were held. The first was held in late October 2007 where the proposals and the findings from the police records were discussed. The agreed way forward from this meeting was that those members of the public in attendance were given Police reporting diary sheets on which they were asked to keep records of all incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.1.7. A follow-up public meeting was held in February 2008 and was attended by five residents (two of whom were local Ward Councillors). At this meeting the Police reported having received only three anti-social behaviour report diaries.
- 3.1.8. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence to justify pursuing a gating Order at this time. This is the view of the CDRP and Police.

#### **4. Local Member's View:**

- 4.1 The local Member, Councillor Ward, is aware of outcome of the investigation and the monitoring of ASB figures. She understands and supports the proposed withdrawal at this time. Councillor Ward also recognises that local ASB figures could increase in future and if this occurs she has requested that the gating proposals are considered again at that time.

#### **5. Substitute Scheme**

- 4.1 During the period since the Review Panel considered this matter in May 2008 a possible substitute pilot scheme has been nominated by the Police. It is located in Clover Hill Estate, Bowthorpe, in the vicinity of Walcot Close and Goodhale Street, and may involve the gating of a number of pedestrian walkways.
- 4.2 The area itself has become the focus of crime and antisocial behaviour, resulting in damage to local houses by local youths who use the walkways to evade the Police.
- 4.3 It is considered that the nominated area is worthy of further investigation together with the possibility of gating to attempt to eliminate this behaviour

#### **6. Cabinet's View**

- 6.1 This matter was reported to cabinet at their meeting on 14 July 2008. The Cabinet Member for P&T will update this meeting on their comments/recommendations.

## 7. **Resource Implications**

- 7.1. **Finance** : Piloting will be accommodated within existing resources within Planning & Transportation, in relation to the statutory process of consultation and making of Gating Orders. The funding of these processes for any subsequent orders will need to be considered as part of the evaluation of the piloting.

Local police and district councils will support the process, specifically in providing personnel for initial consultation, with the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership funding the provision of gates, and their maintenance.

- 7.2. **Staff** : None.

- 7.3. **Property** : None.

- 7.4. **IT** : None.

## 8. **Other Implications**

- 8.1. **Legal Implications** : None.

- 8.2. **Human Rights** : None.

- 8.3. **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)** :

These trials will inform the development of a policy to define how this power will be used in Norfolk, and a full Equality Impact Assessment will be prepared as part of this policy development. In the meantime, no equality issues have been identified'.

- 8.4. **Equal Opportunities** : None.

- 8.5. **Communications** : None.

## 9. **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

- 9.1. Use of the new power under the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 provides a clear focus for the County Council to show how it is delivering under the wider general duty under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act (1998) – to do all that it can to reduce crime and disorder in Norfolk.

- 9.2. This is an important contribution to the County Council's role as one of the statutory partners on Norfolk's 7 CDRPs. This will help to make crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots safer, and improve the quality of life in these communities – a key measure in Norfolk's new LAA.

## 10. **Risk Implications/Assessment**

- 10.1. Piloting enables the Council to better assess/mitigate risks in considering more extensive use of gating Orders.

## 11. **Alternative Options**

- 11.1. Piloting better enables the Council to consider the merits of gating Orders as opposed to other alternatives for dealing with crime/antisocial behaviour in certain areas.

## 12. **Conclusion**

- 12.1. In general, the gating schemes have progressed much as anticipated; however, the overall process has taken somewhat longer than expected. This is in the main due to working with new legislation for the first time. We now have a much more realistic understanding of timescales for the gating process and this can be built upon in the future.
- 12.2. There is no substantive evidence from Police and CDRP data sources to support the proposed area gating in the vicinity of Magdalen Road/Magpie Road. As a consequence, it is recommended (and supported by the CDRP and Police) that no further work is undertaken on gating proposals in this area of Norwich at this time and further consideration be given to finding a substitute scheme, with supporting information.

## **Action Required**

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report;
- (ii) to support the recommendation to withdraw from gating proposals in Magdalen Road/Magpie Road area of Norwich City at this time, and
- (iii) support the substitution of the Bowthorpe pilot, if found to be suitable, in lieu of the above scheme.

## **Background Papers**

1. Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 17
2. Clean Neighbourhoods and Environments Act 2005.
3. Review Panel/Cabinet Report July 2006.
4. Cabinet (Urgent Business) Report July 2007.
5. Review Panel Report May 2008.

## **Officer Contact**

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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