

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20th June 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health and Community

SUBJECT: Green Lane, Widnes. Resident's petition for closure of access point to playing fields and Resident's petition for alleygating at the r/o No's 2-20 Green Lane.

WARDS: Broadheath

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the PPB of the respective considerations relating to the closure and alleygating request.

RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The closure request (footpath to playing fields) be declined
- (2) The alleygating (originally commenced in 2001) be completed by replacing the lock and erecting a side panel to deny access.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In November 2005 a petition with 45 signatures was received by HBC from residents in Green Lane, Widnes. The petition was a request for closure of a footpath leading from Green Lane to St. George's Playing Fields. The nature of the complaint was that the location attracted antisocial young people who caused nuisance criminal damage and general disorder in the area to the annoyance of residents.

In February 2006 a separate petition with 15 signatures was received by HBC from residents occupying property No's. 2-20 Green Lane. The petition was a request for closure / alleygating of the rear of these properties where it adjoined the cul-de-sac St. Thomas's Court (LHT Housing property). The nature of the complaint was that the open alleyway attracted young people who engaged in under-age drinking and general antisocial behaviour including the scattering of rubbish and interference and criminal damage to rubbish bins.

Following the November 05 petition I visited the location and spoke with a number of residents. They confirmed that there is youth nuisance in the area, particularly at weekends and that the path provided a conduit for these youths onto and from the playing fields. The person who had sent in the petition, Mr. Mullarkey, No. 25 was not at home on that occasion but I later spoke with his wife. I acknowledged receipt of the petition and told her that the matter was under investigation and that when I had more information I would be in contact.

I then made enquiries as to the status of the footpath and the potential for closure. I found that it is a Strategic Route within the Greenways Project linking with the Borough's footpath network.

I contacted Sgt. Neil Yates, Widnes Police whose Community Action Team (CAT) patrol this area. The location is not one that is regarded as an anti-social behaviour or crime 'hotspot', however Sgt. Yates agreed to give the location attention. On 13.04.06 I again spoke with Mrs. Mullarkey whose husband had forwarded the petition. She said the police 'have been brilliant' and that the situation is much improved although there are still sporadic nuisance issues.

I have relayed this feedback to Sgt. Yates and requested continued attention.

Insofar as the second petition relating to the alleyway at the rear of No's. 2-20 is concerned, I visited this location with Simon Walker, Environmental Enforcement Officer. We saw that the alleyway backs onto St. Thomas's Court. There is a partial fence and an alleygate with a broken lock separating the alley from St. Thomas's Court. The alleyway was untidy and there was refuse scattered around. The indication was that the open nature of the location caused by the incomplete fence and damaged alleygate led to a negative perception of ownership.

I have established that the fence is the property of LHT Housing. LHT have commissioned the work to complete the fence and this is scheduled for 26.04.06.

I have liaised with Janice Weston over the need to replace the lock and side panel on the alleygate. This restoration work on the alleygate will be put to the next Area Panel.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The footwalk leading to the playing fields being a Strategic Route within the Greenways Project linking with the Borough's footpath network precludes closure.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

RISK ANALYSIS

The key risks/opportunities associated with the proposed action and an outline of the key control measures proposed in relation to these risks should be included.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Any Equality and Diversity implications arising as a result of the proposed action should be included.

REASON(S) FOR DECISION

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

(NB 8.0, 9.0 AND 10.0 ONLY IF KEY DECISION)

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer

Alan Carr
Anti-social Behaviour Coordinator
18.04.06