

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 7 June 2007
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community
SUBJECT: Alleygates
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To finalise a procedure for managing all issues relating to alleygates.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the operational procedures, as outlined in paragraph 4 below, be approved.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Executive Board received a paper regarding alleygates on 7 December 2006. At the meeting they requested that a small Member/Officer group be established to consider the working practices around alleygates, and, where possible to streamline the operation.

3.2 £34k was approved by Full Council in the budget 2007/08 as a growth item to recognise the fact that there has never been a budget to cope with the ongoing maintenance of alleygates.

3.3 The Working Group has met on four occasions to establish a draft operational procedure.

4.0 PROPOSED OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

4.1 The Working Group felt that a simple approach should be adopted that is easily understandable by the public. Currently there is confusion about who to go to for what.

4.2 The following procedure is recommended. Halton Direct Link (HDL) will be the one-stop shop for alleygates.

All requests/issues should at first be made to HDL. A publicity campaign needs to be mounted to promote this idea.

On receipt of a call or visit regarding alleygates HDL will make an assessment of the action required using a standard checklist. As a result of this, HDL will route the customer to the most appropriate service to help. The areas to be covered are: -

a) Repair and Maintenance Issues

HDL will work through a checklist to determine the nature of the problem. They will then refer the matter to PROPERTY SERVICES.

The group considered the best options for a maintenance regime. It examined previous maintenance needs, and also consulted with contractors as to the best possible approach. It concluded that it was more cost-effective to repair gates 'as and when', rather than trying to take a preventative approach. However, painting the gates was an exception. The group concluded that this was required on a regular basis, and that this became a task for those serving community orders. This would reduce costs of maintenance. Property Services will take responsibility for the maintenance regime, and will appoint a single contractor for alleygates.

b) Lost Keys

HDL will ascertain location and gate type. They will then ask the user to visit HDL, who will issue them with new keys upon proof of ID and replacement cost.

c) New Gates

All requests for new gates should in the first instance be directed to HDL, who will identify precise locations, and pass the request to the Community Safety Team.

Upon receipt of request Community Safety will visit location to assess viability of proposals. They will report their findings to the relevant Area Forum.

AREA FORUM will consider request in light of Community Safety advice. They will decide if funding is available and whether they wish to proceed. They will advise Community Safety of their decision.

Community Safety will liaise with residents regarding the decision, via the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's).

If the decision is to install gates, Community Safety will commission Property Services to design scheme, obtain planning permission, commission contractor to supply and erect gates.

d) Neighbourhood Issue

In all instances any disputes/concerns etc will be directed to COMMUNITY SAFETY, who will arrange for a PCSO visit to ascertain problem and take appropriate action.

4.3 Halton Direct Link, with IT Services, will produce standard interrogation forms for each of the above areas.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Budget provision rests with the growth maintenance budget or with Area Forums. Staff are already in place to operate the revised procedures, and HDL will levy no charge. New gates will be funded by Area Forums, as agreed by Executive Board on 7th December, unless alternative grant funding can be identified. From the research of the Working Group, the budget was deemed to be enough to match need and it was agreed to monitor this and report any significant changes through the Annual Budget management processes.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The proposed procedures are designed to make the service understandable to the public, and to ensure there is adequate budget provision to continue to support a highly valued service.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Local consultation is always carried out before gates are fitted and any issues would be identified as part of that consultation.

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

None.