

REVIEW FINDINGS: “A Review of Alley Gating in Hillingdon”

Committee name	Residents’ Services Select Committee
Officer reporting	Liz Penny – Democratic Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1 – Updated Scoping Report Appendix 2 – Guidance on Policy Reviews Appendix 3 – Minutes of previous meetings relating to the review
Ward	All Wards

HEADLINES

Background

As part of the review into Alley Gating in Hillingdon, Members will be advised to start considering findings, conclusions and early draft recommendations in relation to the review for broader discussion and stocktake of the review to-date. These will be with the intention of enhancing the current alley gating scheme offered to residents.

Summary

The Committee has, to date, held three witness sessions. The intention of these sessions was to obtain feedback from a range of stakeholders with a view to enhancing the current alley gating scheme. At the first witness session Members heard from key officers representing the Council’s Community Engagement Team and received testimony from a number of residents who had personal experience of the scheme. The second witness session was attended by officers from the Council’s ASB and Environmental Protection Team, together with representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service. Finally, at the third witness session, the Committee heard from external witnesses representing Ealing Council.

Members are now requested to start to consider their early collective findings so these can be worked up in more detail, and ultimately incorporated into the final report to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee consider possible conclusions, findings and early draft recommendations in relation to the review.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In considering this item, Members should bear in mind the following:

1) Scoping report – looking at the original parameters of the review

The updated review scoping report is attached so Members can be reminded of the original Terms of Reference as set out below, and whether the Committee has met these:

1. to gain a thorough understanding of the Council’s current alley gating scheme and what it entails;

2. to scrutinise a service that was established some 17 years ago and review its effectiveness;
3. to explore ways in which the current alley gating scheme in Hillingdon could be improved in terms of its efficiency and ability to meet the security needs of local residents;
4. to look at other local authorities and housing organisations that have established similar schemes for any best practice;
5. To review the success of older gating schemes in the Borough and explore if there are challenges faced by residents; and
6. subject to the Committee's findings, to make any conclusions, propose actions, service and policy recommendations to the decision-making Cabinet.

2) Policy review guidance

Members will recall the guidance issued in July 2022 on undertaking policy reviews. This guidance is attached to this report for reference again, and Members are asked to take into account Point 4 on Findings and draft recommendations and in particular whether they:

- Meet the initial aims / objectives of the review (as above)
- Be SMART, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- Not be a short-term fix, but a lasting outcome
- Consider the financial aspect, e.g. cost neutral, provide savings or if at a cost, then affordable – and if possible aligned with the MTFP (budget planning process)
- Are based on a broad evidence base as possible and 'user or resident' insight
- Not create additional bureaucracy, e.g. if it relates to a policy, then to seek to review or amend existing policies (unless there is an absolute imperative for a new policy)
- If publicity or wider engagement or education is recommended, to target such communications as best as possible rather than generally
- Consider 'conclusions' as well as any specific recommendations.

3) Minutes of previous meetings

Attached as Appendix 3 are the minutes of previous meetings relating to the review, which may assist in Members' considerations.

4) Possible areas for emerging recommendations

In discussion with the Chairman, Members may wish to consider the following 'areas' to develop and refine possible findings, conclusions and draft recommendations:

1. How to raise awareness of residents' responsibilities in relation to their alley gating schemes;
2. How to ensure alley gates are used effectively to enhance security;
3. How best to support residents, particularly in relation to older alley gating schemes;
4. How to offer support with matters relating to funding / maintenance of alley gates;
5. Improved promotion of the scheme on the Council's website;
6. How to make best use of the discretionary funding available to support the repair or refurbishment of gates where schemes have been successfully running for over 10 years.

Committee Members may also wish to bring their own findings and thoughts based upon the various witness testimony received.

Democratic Services will then “road-test” any draft recommendations from the Committee, looking at their feasibility with the relevant service area and report back to the Committee to a subsequent meeting, in preparation for shaping the final draft report for the Committee’s approval.

RESIDENT BENEFIT

The aim of the review into the alley gating scheme is to hear testimonies from stakeholders as to how the scheme can be improved, in addition to what is currently working well.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.