

CABINET STATEMENT

TITLE: ALLEY GATING

DATE: 18th April 2007

BY: Councillor Paul Cannon, Cabinet Member for Communities

I am pleased to inform Members that we, as promised at the last election, have introduced “Alley Gating” in 3 pilot areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf. These pilot areas are Boot Lane in Aberdare, the back of Mound Road in the Maes-y-coed area of Pontypridd, and the back of Edmunds Street in Tylorstown.

Alley Gating is an innovative method of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in lanes or alleys that are susceptible to such activity. I am sure many Members will have knowledge or experience of threatening or intimidating behaviour, acts of vandalism or people creating a general nuisance, in lanes and alleys. This can make the lives of residents in adjacent properties a misery and severely impact upon their quality of life.

High quality, fully lockable gates have been installed at either end of the 3 pilot lanes and keys are being allocated to residents for access purposes as well as to the necessary police, emergency and maintenance services who also need to be able to gain access.

The people who won't be able to gain access are the ones who would be going into the lanes to cause trouble: fly tippers, graffiti artists, vandals, under age drinkers, drug users, and thieves, to give a few examples.

We are waiting for the locks to be installed so that the gates can be officially opened or in this case closed! We expect this by the end of next week at the latest. I wanted to inform Members tonight as the scheme will definitely be going live before the next Council meeting on 9 May.

Residents are supportive of this scheme – which I was glad to see when I visited the 3 pilot areas recently. Responses to a questionnaire distributed to residents of the three lanes showed that a high number of people had serious concerns about issues such as youth annoyance and vandalism.

Alley Gating earned national recognition when it was named as Best Community Initiative at the annual Association of Public Service Excellence awards in 2005. Figures from 2002-2005 show its track record of success. Alley Gating led to a 73% reduction in domestic burglaries, a 60% reduction in commercial burglaries, a 74% reduction in vehicle thefts, and a 44% reduction in thefts from vehicles.

I have been reminded by my colleague Councillor Clayton Willis that we do already have in RCT some gated alleys in the Ty Nant / Beddau area thanks to local initiative and the Community Council. Alley Gating has also had good results in the Vale of Glamorgan where it has been introduced.

But with these 3 pilots, the Council is showing firm policy initiative in the direction of Alley Gating. For a period of 3 months, we will be monitoring the success of the Alley Gating pilots in terms of how they have improved residents' quality of life and reduced community concerns before considering the case for rolling this out to other parts of the county borough.

Community safety is a leading priority for the Council and I believe that Alley Gating will be an important further step in reducing the blight of crime and anti-social behaviour and improving the lives of decent law-abiding residents in Rhondda Cynon Taf.