

Aldridge South and Streetly Local Neighbourhood Partnership – 2nd April 2007

Installation of bollards to Public Footpath 39 Aldridge (Lindrosa Road Section)

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update the Aldridge South and Streetly LNP on the proposal to install a vehicle barrier to the right of way at Lindrosa Road.

Recommendations

The LNP decide whether or not to proceed with the amended proposal.

Background

Improving Security in Local Neighbourhoods Programme

Safer Walsall Borough Partnership manages the Improving Security in Local Neighbourhoods Programme which is funded through the Council's Capital Programme. The programme covers a wide range of situational crime prevention measures including gating, fencing, lighting and vehicle barriers. Not surprisingly the demand for this type of intervention is high and as such a clearly defined policy including a prioritisation process was developed and approved by Cabinet in October 2005. The programme is evidence led and based largely on hot spots in terms of recorded levels of crime and disorder. Using these criteria a list of priority sites was identified and approved in November 05.

The programme met its target to complete 10 schemes in 05/06 and will exceed its target by the end 06/07.

Lindrosa Road

Not surprisingly numerous sites were not prioritised and these included a number of locations LNP's had identified for works of this nature. A number of LNP's decided that they wished to utilise their own allocated funding to move these schemes forward. One of these was the proposal by this LNP to install a gate on the section of public footpath that runs from Lindrosa Road to Hardwick Wood.

This site was not prioritised under the programme as the levels of recorded crime and anti social behaviour did not readily support an intervention of this nature and the location was not in or adjacent to any recognisable hot spot.

The footpath in question is a definitive public footpath and as such pedestrians have a legal right of access over it. Any obstruction that would prohibit pedestrian access can therefore not go ahead.

Whilst the partnership were aware of the request and are happy to support the work of LNP's the schemes identified under the above programme needed for capacity issues to be the main priority and addressed in the first instance.

Recent changes in the SWBP have served to facilitate work on this particular intervention and to date since the third quarter of 06 considerable officer time and effort has been put into moving this intervention forward.

The initial proposal was to install a lockable gate across the footpath that whilst allowing pedestrian access would prevent vehicles from proceeding down the track. Further investigation revealed that the footpath was not in fact wide enough for a gate and the required adjacent pedestrian access. The council has of course to comply with all DDA requirements. As such the proposal has been amended and we are now looking at the installation of vehicle bollards.

Consultation

As with any intervention of this nature considerable consultation is undertaken to ensure all interested parties are happy for the work to proceed. Land searches have indicated the section of footpath with which we are interested is unregistered and to date no owner has been identified. We have also placed notices on site requesting that anyone with an interest in the land come forward. To date no response has been received in respect of these notices.

There is some disagreement amongst residents and users of the track as to where the vehicle bollards should in fact be located. Whilst residents have requested the bollards be placed near the entrance to the track on Lindrosa Road the owners of the old piggery have objected strongly to this on the grounds that it does not allow unrestricted access to their property. They have consulted their solicitors in respect of this and have intimated that they not only have a right of access across the land but also are prepared to take out an injunction if the bollards are located in front of the entrance to their property. The council's own legal services department have confirmed the view that the bollards can not now be located in front of the piggery entrance as this may lead to legal actions against WMBC and could infringe on the owners human rights (interfere with enjoyment of properties).

Even if the bollards had been installed at the time the proposal was first put to the LNP the new owners of the piggery could still have objected on the grounds that they did not enjoy unrestricted access. As such it is feasible that the bollards would have then had to be removed.

It would also go against the Situational Crime Interventions Policy if the scheme were to be implemented without complete agreement.

Rail Track and Grounds Maintenance have been consulted and are happy for the scheme to proceed as long as they are issued with keys and can gain access as and when required. The Fire Service also has no objection to the proposal. Whilst the police do not object to the scheme they do not see the site as a problem location and do not consider this to be a priority.

The result of this consultation is that plans have been amended to the installation of removable bollards roughly 7.5 meters after the entrance to the piggery. This is realistically now the only option other than to abandon this proposal and re direct the funds elsewhere.

Crime Reduction Officer

The police crime reduction officer who is qualified to advise on interventions of this nature has stated that whilst from a purely crime reduction point of view the original proposal to locate the bollards/barrier near the entrance was the most preferable option. The

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amended proposal still has merit as a crime reduction measure and is worthy of consideration.

Implementation

A WMBC Landscape Architect has drawn up revised plans (please see attached copy) and obtained a quotation (in line with contract procedure rules) for the installation of one fixed and two removable steel bollards. Sturdy bollards will be installed to reduce the possibility of damage and to present the most effective vehicle barrier. Removable bollards have been specified as the most appropriate type for this site.

The contractor has confirmed that once the order has been placed implementation will be completed within six weeks. As such it is envisaged that if the LNP elects to proceed with the proposal the scheme will be complete by early June 07.

Financial Considerations

Given the current quotation the total cost of the scheme is £2046 (excl VAT). This figure is inclusive of installation, powder coating, padlocks and Landscape Architect fees. It is however after 15 days (as of 16th March) subject to change in response to any variation in steel prices.

It is of consideration that WMBC will be liable for any on going maintenance costs should the bollards be subject to any damage. In this instance it is likely that the LNP will be approached for any assistance it may be able to offer. There is currently no designated budget allocated for on going maintenance issues.

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