



# **The Harrow Gating Policy and Procedures**

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**Written by**

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## Foreword

There is a direct link between making places cleaner, greener and safer and improving the quality of life for people. Areas that are well maintained attract less crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and are used more by their local communities. Gates are used in neighbouring boroughs and across the country as an effective way of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and help reduce the fear of crime and restore community confidence.

## Executive summary

The Harrow Alley Gating Policy seeks to clarify the roles and responsibilities for all involved in alley gating. This includes council staff, partner agencies such as the police or probation and members of the community. Its main purpose is to clarify in what circumstances gates will be prioritised, how these decisions will be made and who will be responsible for ensuring the project reaches a successful completion.

## Background

Findings in the Harrow CDRP Strategic Assessment 2008, the MORI Public Satisfaction Survey 2007 and the ASB Unit's Customer Survey 2008 all illustrated a growing problem with fly tipping, litter and rubbish.

The Harrow Alley Gate Project was initiated as a result of an increase in the level of reports of ASB problems in alleyways across Harrow. These problems include fly tipping, graffiti, rowdy behaviour and criminal activity such as drug taking and rear access burglaries.

In September 2007, Harrow Council's ASB Co-ordinator met with neighbouring boroughs which were using gates to solve such problems and as a result, began working with local councillors, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Public Realm, Environmental Health and residents to install alley gates in problem alleyways across Harrow.

Alley gating is a situational crime prevention technique that aims to reduce the likelihood of crime and ASB, by restricting access to alleyways. A gate can prevent opportunistic criminals who are looking for concealed places to commit their offences and helps restore a sense of community and safety for those living near alleyways.

By gating off an area, residents and businesses whose properties back on to the alleyway are the only people who can access these spaces. This reduces the likelihood of outsiders coming into an area to commit ASB and crime. If such an incident does occur once the gate is installed, the act of restricting access helps assist with investigations to determine who is committing crime and ASB within the alleyway.

## Context

There are an estimated 500 alleyways in the London Borough of Harrow with approximately 1,000 alleyway entrances. The majority of these always are private service roads meaning that the council does not have a responsibility to maintain them.

The growing problem and level of concern reported by the public directly to the council's ASB Unit led to some of the first Harrow Alley Gate Projects. Since January 2008, 21 gates have been installed across the borough, 20 gates will be installed from July – September 2008 and an additional 10 gates are proposed.

There has already been widespread support for alley gates across the council and within the local community. The demand for alley gates is increasing rapidly, whilst with the number of requests and enquiries in relation to alley gates coming into the ASB Unit is increasing on a weekly basis. The current system is ad hoc and unprioritised and a co-ordinated, efficient and effective system is needed to ensure that work is targeted and prioritised.

## Vision

To create a long-term sustainable improvement in Harrow by using alley gates to make areas safer, cleaner and greener.

## Priorities

The Harrow Alley Gating Policy has direct links with the following corporate priorities;

1. Delivering cleaner streets, better environmental services and keeping crime low.
2. Improving the way we work for our residents.
3. Developing communities where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

The priorities of the Harrow Alley Gating Policy are:

1. To introduce a prioritised approach to alley gating that ensures effectiveness in expending a finite resource.
2. To establish criteria for choosing where to install alley gates
3. Where areas are not prioritised by partners, to provide a self-service kit on the web for residents and business to use themselves.
4. To engage and empower the community to tackle environmental crime.

The outcomes of Harrow Alley Gating Policy are:

1. To improve efficiency and effectiveness of the Harrow Alley Gating Projects
2. To reduce fly-tipping, litter and ASB in alleyways
3. To clarify roles and responsibilities for both members of the public and partner agencies such as the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Public Realm and Environmental Health.

## Performance Indicators

There are a number of performance indicators that may benefit from alley gating. These include:

- National indicator 195 - Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) - The delivery of the gating policy will directly assist with the enforcement of measures against environmental crime and serve to support improvements in this area. Gates prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and therefore help reduce the fear of crime.
- BVPi 199a - Street and Environmental Cleanliness – litter/detritus. Current indicator: Performance currently “Needs prompt attention” (Red). The delivery of the environmental crime gating policy will directly support enforcement of environmental crime and serve to support improvements in this area.
- NI 199b Street and Environmental Cleanliness – graffiti. Current indicator: Performance currently “Excellent” (Green). The delivery of the gating policy will act as a deterrent to those committing acts of graffiti and support improved public realm response in this key area

- Flagship Actions – Deliver cleaner streets, better environmental services and keep crime low. Reference 1.7 – Tackle environmental crime and reduce fly-tipping, graffiti by installing alley gates in problem areas. Measurement: Achieve the Gold Standard on the LGA Reputation Campaign in relation to Grot Spots in Neighbourhoods and Protecting the Environment. The gating policy will directly support the delivery of an enhanced enforcement regime through the Environmental Enforcement Team and the Public Realm Blitz Team.
- Local Area Agreement Stretch Target, National Indicator 17 - Perceptions of Anti Social Behaviour (green) – These indicators have specific sub criteria relating to fly tipping, littering and graffiti which will be directly supported by the Policy.
- National indicators 24 and 25 - Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour - These indicators have specific sub criteria relating to fly tipping, littering and graffiti which will be directly supported by the Policy. Current procedures clearly demonstrate partnership working and all projects to date have received excellent feedback from local businesses and residents.

## Consultation

The following agencies and were consulted with whilst drafting this policy;

Elected Members  
Public Realm  
Environmental Health  
Highways  
Metropolitan Police  
London Fire Brigade  
London Probation Service  
Harrow Police Community Consultative Group

## The Harrow Alley Gating Process

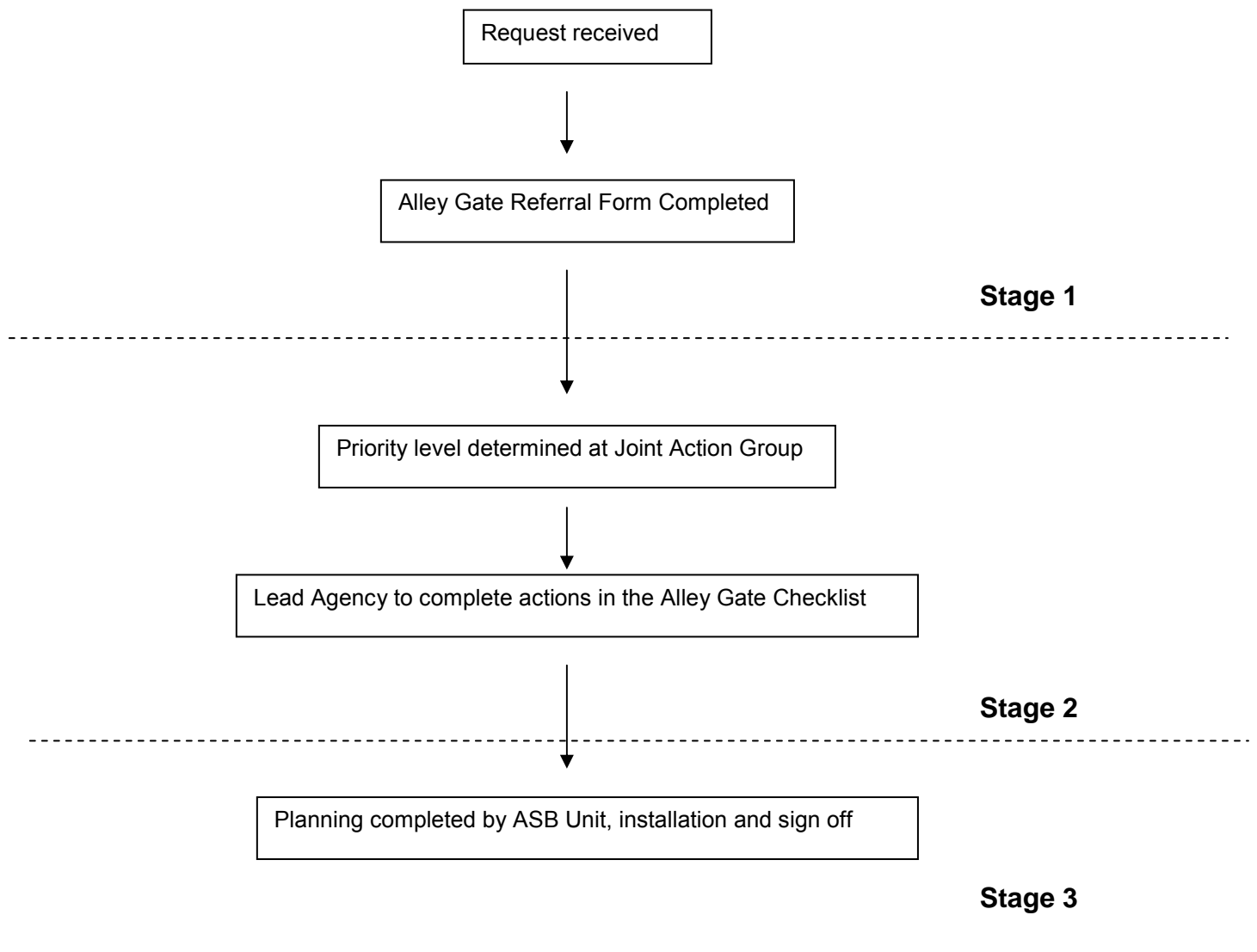
The Council will only consider alley gate proposals from the following leads;

Elected Members  
The ASB Unit  
Public Realm  
Environmental Health  
Safer Neighbourhood Teams  
The London Fire Brigade

It will be the responsibility of these lead agencies to complete an Alley Gate Request Form (Appendix A).

Once a lead agency has received an Alley Gate Request Form, it will take this to the multi agency Joint Action Group which will decide if a gate is the most suitable remedy and determine what level of priority the project should receive. This is referred to as Stage 1 in the diagram below.

Figure1. The Harrow Alley Gating Process



Projects will only proceed to Stage 3 in circumstances where it is deemed that a gate higher than 2 metres is required. If this is the case, the ASB Unit will work in partnership with the

Planning Department to ensure that planning applications are processed as quickly as possible.

### Criteria for prioritisation

The Council will prioritise the provision of gates according to a simple scoring scheme. This is based on considering both need and the financial contributions obtained for a gate.

Table 1. Priority Matrix

	Need for gates	Financial Contributions
Priority 1	High	High
Priority 2	High	Low
Priority 3	Low	High
Priority 4	Low	Low

The Priority Matrix presented in Table 1. illustrates 4 different priority levels for a gate. The council will focus on priorities 1 and 2, where there is a high need for a gate. If there are low financial contributions available from businesses and residents, the Council may consider other sources of funding, such as through the Priority Action Team's budget. It is important to stress that residents and business are encouraged to contribute to payment for gates as this will help increase the level of priority.

The Council would not consider priorities 3 and 4 but residents would be directed to a self-service kit on the Councils intranet to help them install their own alley gates.

### Determining the need for a gate

To ensure gates are installed in areas where there is the greatest need the following points system will be used.

Table 2. Need Scoring System

Problem	Points	Total
Repeat incidents of fly-tipping	Less than 2 = 0 2-5 = 10 Greater than 5 = 20	
Repeat incidents of litter/rubbish complaints	Less than 2 = 0 2-5 = 10 Greater than 5 = 20	
Repeat incidents of ASB	Less than 2 = 0 2-5 = 10 Greater than 5 = 20	
Reports to the police	Less than 2 = 0 2-5 = 10 Greater than 5 = 20	
Reports to the fire brigade	Less than 2 = 0 2-5 = 10 Greater than 5 = 20	
Total Points		

Need will be assessed on the various problems and agreed by the Joint Action Group members.

### Determining Financial Contributions

The average cost per gate is approximately £2,000. This does not include the cost of keys or VAT. Projects will be prioritised not only on need but also on the ability to pay for a gate. Once the local lead had been identified, they will be asked to speak with their neighbours and determine what percentage cost of the gate they can cover. It does not matter if one resident is willing to pay more than others, this is encouraged. What is important, is that as much money as possible is collected to pay for the gate. Gates that can be paid for will be prioritised before those where no funds can be collected.

Table 3. Financial Contribution Scoring Scheme

% of total cost of gate	Points
Nil	0
25%	10
50%	20
75%	30
100%	40

By adding together the points obtained for need and for financial contribution an overall score will be given and this will determine the level that the project is to be prioritised. These overall scores are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Priority levels for gates

Level	Points
Priority 1	60 or more
Priority 2	40 – 59 points
Priority 3	20 - 39
Priority 4	Less than 20

Once a priority level has been determined this will only change at the request of a lead agency.

If an area is deemed a number 1 priority in terms of need but the cost of the gate cannot be met by residents, businesses or from other funding sources such as Priority Action Teams, the project will be put on hold until the required funds are obtained.

### Timeframe

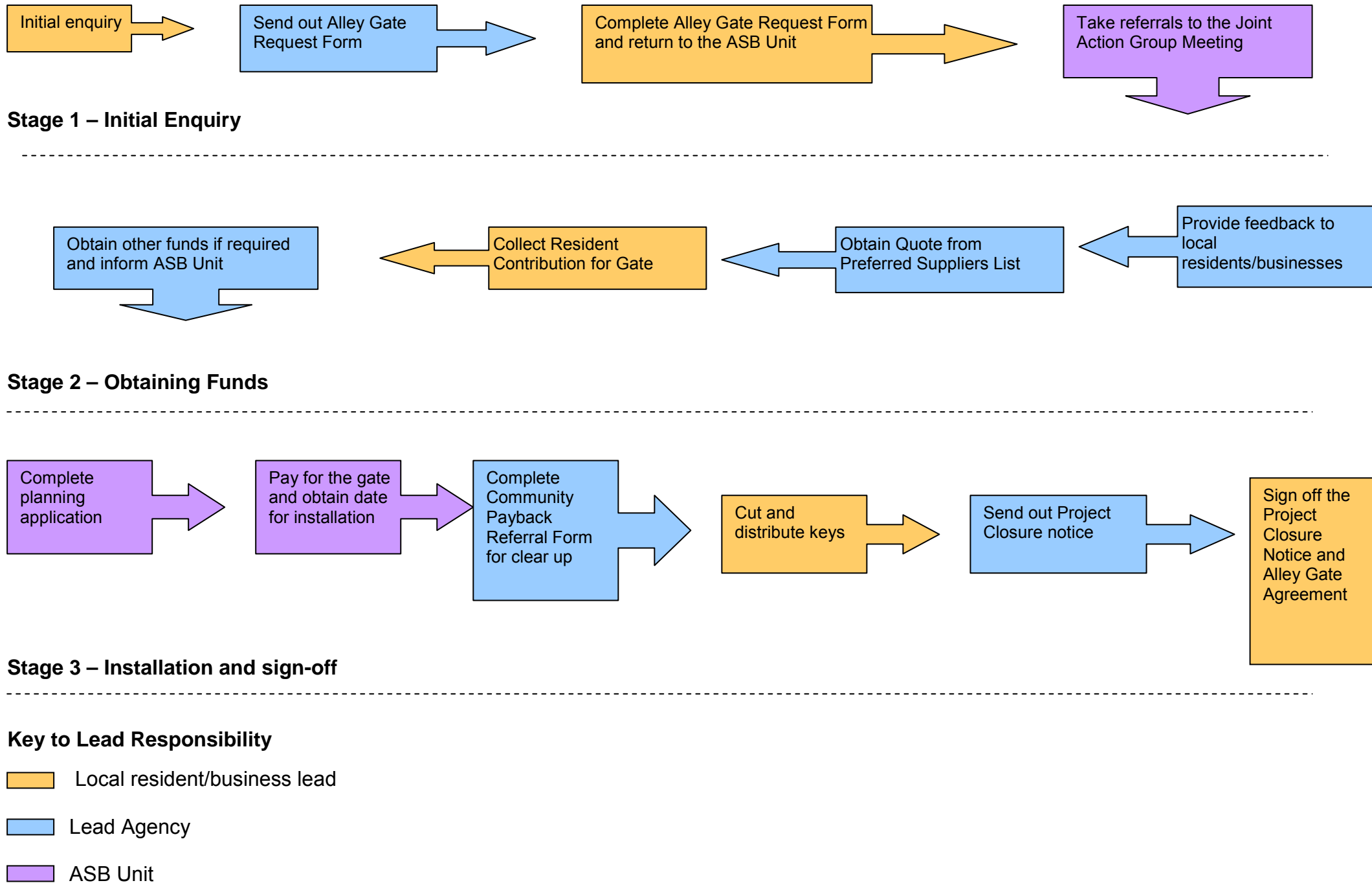
The Council will endeavour to install an alley gate within 6 months from when a decision is made at the Joint Action Group.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the ASB Unit and the local residents/businesses are presented in Figure 2. This illustrates the flow of actions required from initial enquiry right through to project closure. The local resident/business lead is identified as a key agent in this process as they are not only required to take the lead and inform their neighbours about the project but must also collect funds to pay for the gate and distribute keys.



**Figure 2. The Alley Gate Process and Responsibility Flow Diagram**



## Monitoring this policy

The Harrow Alley Gating Policy will be monitored operationally by the Joint Action Group and strategically through the ASB Strategic Group.

An action plan will be developed and monitored by the ASB Strategic Group. This action plan will include specific tasks around publicity, development of a self service kit and monitoring of the process and outcomes for each project.

At each Joint Action Group new referrals will be discussed and decisions made regarding the level of priority it should be placed at.

The effectiveness of the gates will be assessed quarterly through the ASB Strategic Group meeting.



## Alley Gating Referral Form

Can you please complete the following form and return it to your initial point of contact. This may have been an elected member, the ASB Unit, Public Realm, Environmental Health or your Local Safer Neighbourhood Team. This information will help us determine if your alleyway is suitable for gating.

### 1. Personal Details

Name.....

Address.....Postcode.....

Location of Alleyway.....

Telephone Number.....

Email address.....

### 2. What are the major issues in your alleyway?

- |                |                          |                       |                          |                          |                          |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fly tipping    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Anti-social behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dog Fouling              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Noise Nuisance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Graffiti /Vandalism   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Litter                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Graffiti       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loitering             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Drug taking or dealing   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dumped Rubbish | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mice/Rats             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other criminal behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### 3. Approximately how many houses does your alleyway serve?

- |                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11-20        | <input type="checkbox"/> 40- 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30        | <input type="checkbox"/> 51+    |

### 4. Does your area have one of the following?

- Residents Association
- Neighbourhood Watch

5. Alley gating requires a strong level of commitment from the residents/property owners. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the residents' commitment to making your alleyway a safer place? (With 1 being very low and 10 being very high).

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

### 6. How many gates would be required? (i.e. How many entrances to the alleyway?)

No of gates.....

7. Do you know who owns the alley? (please state details here):

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Has a local resident lead been identified who can work with the council and partners to help deliver this project? If yes, please provide details.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. If the average cost of a gate is £2,000, what percentage of this do you think all of the residents/property owners would be willing to contribute?

- Nil
- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

\*\*Please note that gates will be prioritised according to need and willingness to pay.

8. If there is any other information you would like to give us, please use the space below:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire, please return this to your initial point of contact. They will provide feedback to you within the next 8 weeks.*

