

Subject: Gating of passageway underneath Market Gates Shopping Centre

Report to: Executive Leadership Team, 17th September 2018
Economic Development Committee, 8th October 2018

Report by: Kate Watts, Strategic Director

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This report updates Members of Economic Development Committee with regards to gating the passageway underneath Market Gates Shopping Centre and asks Members to;

- Note the content of this report and note that no decision to close the Market Gates toilets would be made until the Marketplace redevelopment is confirmed in due course

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The passageway underneath Market Gates has been subject to anti-social behaviour, on and off for a number of years. The passageway itself runs underneath Market Gates alongside a section of the Town Wall and allows access to the public toilets.
- 1.2 In October 2017 the Economic Development Committee received a proposal to gate this area to help prevent anti-social behaviour and subsequently approved this proposal, allocating £15,000 of money from the Town Centre Initiative Reserve to fund this work.
- 1.3 As a result of this agreement officers from conservation, property services and community safety worked to progress the gating of this area, while a number of shorter term initiatives were undertaken which included;
 - Homelessness Outreach worker from Herringhouse Trust engaged with

people sleeping rough in this area to determine their housing and other needs

- Police officers engaged / patrolled the area on a more frequent basis to monitor the area and to act as a deterrent / preventative measure
- GYB Services and Market Gates undertook more frequent cleansing of the area on an as and when needed basis rather than as per “schedule”

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 To be able to progress the gating of this area scheduled ancient monument consent was sought from Historic England. As a result of on-going dialogue between Historic England and the Council there was some delay in obtaining an answer about these proposals.

2.2 However Historic England more recently confirmed that they would not support these proposals due to the impact that the gating of this area would have on the Boroughs historical Town Wall, of which this gated area would need to adjoin. Their comments included concerns about the gating causing significant detriment to the setting of the Town Wall and the impact of restricting access to a public heritage asset.

2.3 Following on from this decision, officers have reviewed the current level of anti-social behaviour occurring in this area, and it is clear that rough sleeping has declined, but that on occasions;

- Young people have been accessing the Town Wall to run along the top
- People use the steps and alleyway to misuse drugs – both smoking and injecting
- People urinate in the covered part of the alleyway – both into the archways and against the wall of the public loo

2.4 Without gaining permission to gate this area from Historic England it is difficult to undertake further physical works to reduce this anti-social behavior. Other options have been considered such as putting a physical barrier in each of the Town Wall arches, but this comes at a greater cost and would not fully prevent access to this area and again Historic England consent may be difficult to obtain.

- 2.5 Closing the toilets would reduce footfall in this area and as such could help to reduce anti-social behavior. Members should note that The Council's Environment Committee have resolved to keep the Market Gates toilets open until the Marketplace redevelopment is confirmed, at which point they would review whether these toilets would need to remain open.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Committee is requested to:

- Note the content of this report and note that no decision to close the Market Gates toilets would be made until the Marketplace redevelopment is confirmed in due course

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	N/A
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	N/A
Existing Council Policies:	Town Centre Masterplan
Financial Implications:	No
Legal Implications (including human rights):	N/A
Risk Implications:	Yes as anti-social behaviour may continue without further intervention
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	N/A
Crime & Disorder:	Yes
Every Child Matters:	N/A

