

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Development Services
2.	Date:	2 February 2009
3.	Title:	Petition regarding controlled access to Schoolfield Drive from Rosehill Park
4.	Programme Area:	Environment & Development Services

5. Summary:

Options for dealing with anti-social behaviour in Schoolfield Drive, Rawmarsh are outlined following receipt of a petition from local residents regarding the matter.

6. Recommendations:

That the petition be noted and the issue of anti social behaviour on Schoolfield Drive be dealt with via the Safer Neighbourhoods Team working closely with Green Spaces staff where appropriate.

7. Proposals and Details:

Following receipt of a petition to control access from Rosehill Park to Schoolfield Drive, Rawmarsh from residents of eight addresses on Schoolfield Drive and nine addresses on Thorogate, a meeting was held with the residents to investigate the issues raised. These all relate to various forms of anti-social behaviour on Schoolfield Drive and the perception that the perpetrators are using Rosehill Park to access Schoolfield Drive. The reported anti social behaviour on Schoolfield Drive has included damage to property, thefts from gardens and nuisance from youths entering private gardens. The people responsible for this anti-social behaviour are transient and not resident on Schoolfield Drive. The petitioners believe that by removing or controlling access to Rosehill Park the perpetrators will no longer use Schoolfield Drive for access and this will reduce the incidence of nuisance behaviour there.

The pedestrian link through Rosehill Park to Schoolfield Drive has existed for more than 40 years and links housing areas with Rosehill Park as well as giving access for residents to the south and west of Rosehill Park with the Rawmarsh Thorogate Primary School and other community facilities.

The options available in response to the petition are as follows:

Option 1 – Permanently close the access from Schoolfield Drive. This would disadvantage many current users of the footpath link and discourage walking to school for some primary school children and their carers. There is also the possibility that following a decision to close the access a public right of way could be claimed which would restrict future options for controlled access and would lead to further expense to reopen the access point. This may also set a precedent for other access points on to green space.

Option 2 – Controlled access. The cost to the authority of locking and unlocking a gate by a contractor would be approximately £2000 per annum, as well as the capital cost of providing a lockable gate and additional fencing. Locking a gate to prevent access during hours of darkness may encourage an increase in trespass to adjoining gardens as existing users try to continue use of the route. This may also set a precedent for other access points on to green space which would be difficult to sustain.

Option 3 – Retain the open pedestrian access and deal with the issues of anti social behaviour on Schoolfield Drive by targeting the resources of the Safer Neighbourhoods Team via the Neighbourhood Action Group.

8. Finance:

Option 1 – Approximately £5000

Option 2 – Approximately £5000 plus £2000 per annum.

Option 3 – No additional cost

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

Risks relating to options 1 & 2 are that the problem of anti-social behaviour may just be displaced and will still need to be dealt with at another location. A public right of way could be claimed over the route through Rosehill Park restricting future options. Option 1 could also represent the application of a permanent solution to what might be a temporary problem.

Risks relating to option 3 are that the resources available to the Safer Neighbourhoods Team are insufficient to reduce the anti-social behaviour issues at this location. However both Police and Council records relating to issues on Schoolfield Drive show low levels of anti-social behaviour being reported (3 over a one year period).

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

The closing of this footpath link would reduce residents' access to this important green space as well as discourage walking to local schools and the school's use of the park as an educational resource. This could therefore be to the detriment of Council objectives relating to health and education

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

Residents' Petition received 13th October 2008.

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