

Decision Maker: Environment Portfolio Holder

**For Pre-decision Scrutiny by the Environment PDS Committee
on 25th June 2013**

Date: 25th June 2013

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE POLICY

Contact Officer: Garry Warner, Head of Highways
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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

To consider a revised policy for the treatment of vehicle crossovers and hard footway verges during planned maintenance schemes.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Environment Portfolio Holder agrees:-

A revised policy for the treatment of vehicle crossovers and hard footway verges during planned maintenance schemes, as set out in the attached report.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: New Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment:
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: No additional cost:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Highways – planned footway maintenance
 4. Total current budget for this head: £1.094m
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget 2013/14
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 3 fte
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 3 fte
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Borough wide
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: n/a

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 In November 2012, the Environment Portfolio Holder approved the recommendations of the Highway Assets Working Group (HAWG) to change the policy for planned footway projects with respect to the materials used.
- 3.2 The previous policy for footway maintenance required schemes involving the reconstruction of slabbed footways to utilise 'like-for-like' materials, with existing vehicle crossings being built using block paving, even when they were of concrete or flexible asphalt construction.
- 3.3 Having considered data from insurance claims, the HAWG accepted this approach where maintenance projects are restricted to the repair of defective areas and existing vehicle crossing materials are retained to provide a similar level of service at a reduced cost. Following the trial scheme in Oxhathw Crescent, the revised policy was adopted for future year's works.
- 3.4 While this policy has been effective in roads with asphalt surfaced vehicle crossing and footway verges, and the cost reductions achieved, it has caused problems where concrete crossings and footway verges require maintenance. This is mainly due to the difficulties in protecting the concrete surface from the weather and damage during the curing period.
- 3.5 In most of our roads we have slabbed footways with a mixture of concrete and asphalt surfaced vehicle crossings. Having considered the costs involved it is proposed that all vehicle crossings and hard footway verges are maintained using asphalt materials. This would not impact on the use of slabbed paving for footways, and should produce a more consistent finish in the street for a similar outlay. The use of asphalt materials would also reduce disruption to residence as the closure of vehicle access to properties would be reduced from 5 days to 24 hours.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Environment Portfolio Plan 2013-16 includes the key aim of maintaining roads, pavements and street lighting in a good condition. The borough's carriageways and footways have a high profile and are used by most residents and businesses on a daily basis. Maintaining these assets will contribute to the Council's vision of providing a place where people choose to live and do business and links well with policy priorities of a quality environment, vibrant thriving town centres and supporting independence /safer communities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Planned maintenance works for borough footways are funded from the annual revenue highway maintenance budget of £1.094m. The proposed policy change would be cost neutral and would not impact on the budget for these works.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Under the Highways Act 1980 the Council as Highway Authority has duties to ensure the safe passage of users of the highway and to maintain the highway.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Personnel implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	ES11126 – Planned Highway Maintenance Programme 2012/13