

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD 14 JUNE 2011

- Subject:** **Bonded Gravel Surfaces on Footpaths within the Stanhope Estate**
- Director/Head of Service:** Director of Kent Highway Services
- Decision Issues:** These matters are within the authority of the Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council
- Decision:** For information
- CCC Ward/KCC Division:** **Ashford Stanhope**
- Summary:** This report sets out details of a petition that has been received requesting the removal of bonded gravel on the footpaths within the Stanhope estates. The report covers Kent Highways summary of the key issues with the change of surfacing due to the redevelopment of the area as per planning permission 06/01895/AS and the financial implications to change the surface material on the footpaths.
- For Information:** **This report is for Members' decision.**
- Classification:** THIS REPORT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Background

The Stanhope Estate was built in the 1960's and in March 2001, as part of the Government's drive to promote partnerships between the public and private sectors, the council was granted Private Finance Initiative (PFI) pathfinder status. In December 2001, an outline case was prepared detailing proposals for the refurbishment, regeneration and management of approximately 770 council homes in the Stanhope area of the Borough. These proposals were submitted to the Department for Transport, Local Government and regions and were approved in June 2002.

The PFI initiative was designed to act as a catalyst for change. The physical regeneration of the estate was to improve the perception of the estate and increase ownership of the social inclusion agenda of residents, while allowing residents to share in the increased prosperity that the growth would bring about.

The proposal also covered highway works to help improve the appearance of the development. The internal roads were of concrete construction with limited footway provisions that added to the perception of the development as being

a typical "Council Estate". Therefore, as an important perceptual element in the regeneration of the estate the contract allowed for treatment to the roads and footways surfaces.

In October 2003 an outline master plan was drafted and the Ashford Highway Unit made the following Comment:

"I note the intention to repave the existing cul-de-sacs with sett or block paving to create the home zone scenario. This treatment will either mean that a) the existing surface level is raised by the thickness of the sets/ blocks and subsequently the floor levels of the adjacent garages must also be raised or b) that the complete highway area is reconstructed to accommodate the new paving. Both of these options will incur significant costs to the project. I would therefore suggest that a coloured surfacing be applied to the existing surface instead."

In May 2004 Gleeson's were appointed as the contractor for the works, detailed above, to provide high quality social housing for a period of 30 years. This also involved the refurbishment of the properties to bring them up to the "Decent Homes Standard", and maintaining them throughout the life of the contract including management of the homes and surrounding areas.

In September 2006 outline planning permission was granted under reference number 05/01629/AS. The area was divided into four phases that were then subject to separate full planning applications. Following planning applications were made to cover the proposals under the PFI initiative:

Area 1 – Lynsted, Luddenham, Sheldwich, Eastry and Crundale Close
(06/01892/AS)

Area 2 – Bredgar, Leaveland, Brenchley and Kilndown Close
(06/01893/AS)

Area 3 – Frittenden, Badlesmere, Newenden, Otterden and Hextable Close
(06/01894/AS)

Area 4 – Speldhurst Close (06/01895/AS)

All of the above planning applications were supported by a single Design and Accessibility Statement prepared by the consultants, Chrysalis, which explained the objectives and the materials to be used on the highway within the estate. This Statement sets out the materials to be used within in the highway hierarchy with the aim of defining the areas. Planning permission for all four areas was granted on the 28 September 2006.

The Design and Accessibility Statement, page 21, states:

"For the secondary pedestrian's links we are proposing a simple covering of bound gravel to transform the tired and patchwork appearance of the existing

tarmac. Again this comes in a number of colours and we anticipate residents to play a key part in the final appearance of their local neighbourhood”.

This proposal is in line with advice given in the Kent Design Technical Appendix ‘Making It Happen’ which was adopted by the County Council in July 2006.

The footways within the Stanhope Estate were therefore overlaid with bonded gravel surfacing material to avoid extensive accommodation work to the existing thresholds levels and cost implications involved.

The highway works were carried out under Section 278 agreements between Kent Highway Services (KHS), Ashford Borough Council (As land owner) and Dennes Construction Limited who worked on behalf of Gleeson Homes Development Limited.

Petition

During and after the re-development of the Stanhope Estate, between 2006 and 2010, KHS received a number of complaints regarding the footway surfacing.

This was followed by a petition from residents on 3 February 2011, containing 256 signatures, expressing concerns due to the injuries children sustained due to trip or fall on the new footways with bonded gravel surfacing. The petition suggests that bonded gravel is not a suitable material for a high use pedestrian area, particularly where children are involved, and requests that the bonded gravel surfacing material be removed and replaced with a more conventional material. Pictures of the injured children have also been sent in with the petition, however, these are not included in the report for legal reasons.

Discussion and financial implications

Removal of the Surface Dressing from the Footpaths:

The bonded gravel surfacing can not be easily removed or overlaid due to the level constraints explained previously. It will therefore be necessary to plane off the existing surface before new material can be applied..

The area of footways involved totals 11,500 square metres and the remedial works are estimated to be in the region of £300,000. There is no funding allocation for this type of remedial work.

Conclusion

The new footway surfacing has achieved the intended objective of improving the perception of the development as contained in the PFI brief and the “Design and Access Statement” submitted in support of the planning applications for the site.

The Stanhope Estate covers 13 separate roads that are now mainly adopted as maintainable highway, with a total footway area of 11500 square metres.

KHS has received 2 claims for incidents within these areas since adoption in 2007 neither of which was successful. This is a relatively low number considering the size of the area involved.

Any remedial action is now the responsibility of KHS, including costs involved. The estimated cost of remedial works is £300,000 with no funding allocation in the current financial year.

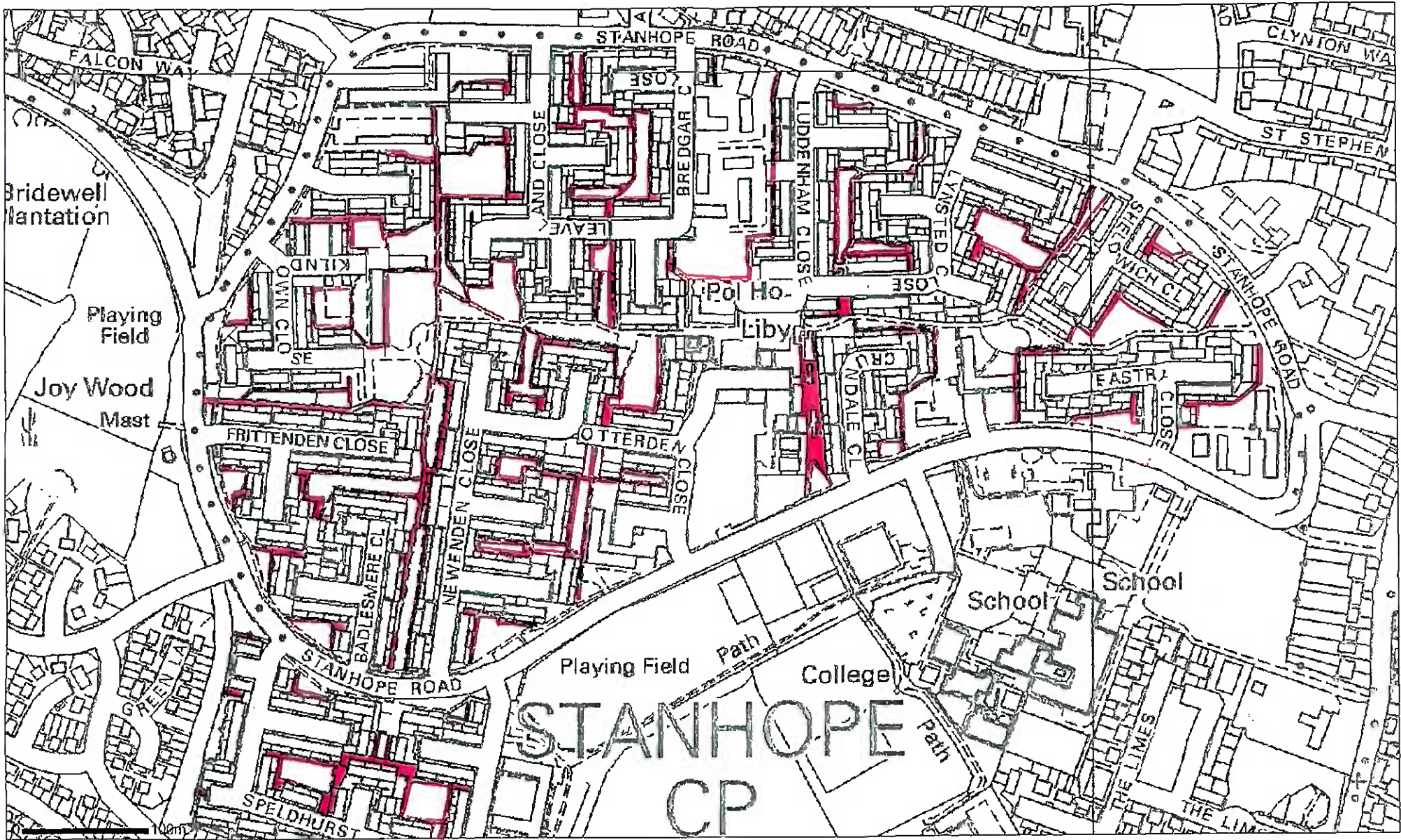
Stage three Safety Audit of the adopted highway has not highlighted the footway surfacing as a safety concern.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that members accept the petition, note the report and also note that no further action is required, however, the situation will be kept under review, as is the case with the entire highway in Kent on a regular basis.

Contact Officers

Nasser Sarrafan – County Transport & Development Manager, KHS
Jamie Hare – Agreements Manager, KHS



Test Map

Produced using KentView by initials on Monday, 14 March 2011 at 14:19

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— FOOTPATHS WITH BONDED GRAVEL