

**To:** Ashford Joint Transportation Board

**By:** Neil Tree – (Team Leader) Road and Footway Asset Team

**Date:** **8 December 2020**

**Subject:** Footway Preservation Treatments

**Classification:** Information only

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**Summary: This report outlines the purpose and reasons footway slurry sealing preservative treatments are used in Kent.**

## 1. Introduction

- (1) Kent is facing significant challenges in maintaining a safe and reliable highway network during a time of diminishing resource and ageing highway assets. Recognising this, Kent County Council (KCC) introduced a new approach to highway maintenance based on using asset management methodology and understanding our assets' condition and their lifecycles. A key element of our approach is the use of preservation treatments to protect our footways and extend their life.
- (2) We maintain around 4,000 miles footway network, of this around 89% is of bituminous construction. It is estimated that it would cost in the region of £102 million to address the part of the footway network that our condition surveys have identified as "maintenance needed soon".
- (3) We inspect our footways visually. The data is collected and used to assess the condition of the entire footway network. We use this data together with reports from councillors, parish councils, local highway operations teams and community groups to establish how we can best use our available budget and what techniques we can use to repair renew and protect our footways.
- (4) To achieve maximum value for money, we identify which sections of pavement can receive protection surface treatment and those that have deteriorated to a point where the surface needs to be removed and replaced. Our footway works programmes strike a balance between these different treatments to achieve the best overall condition across the county. Whilst there are many priorities, our programme seeks to prioritise high footfall areas and those with higher populations of older and disabled people.

## 2. Ashford sites and treatment

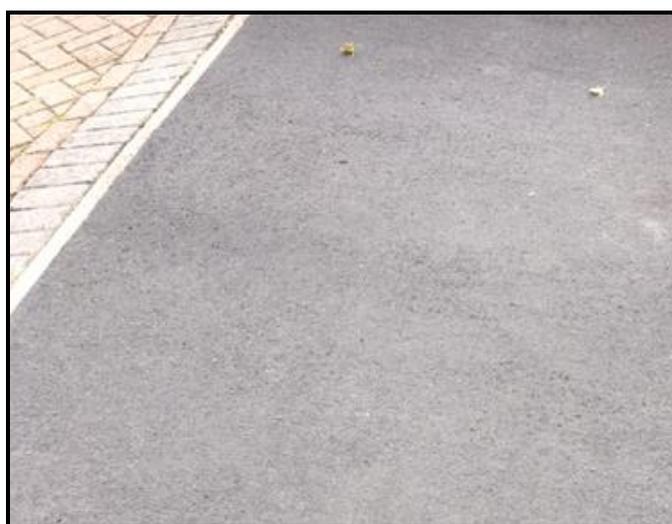
- (1) Godinton Road, Kings Avenue, Eastern Avenue, Western Avenue and James Street were identified and assessed as suitable to receive a footway slurry seal treatment. This type of treatment is preservative in nature and is used when a footway shows signs of minor deterioration but overall, structurally sound. The purpose is to extend the life of the footway by sealing these minor defects and cracks from the ingress of water. The freeze/thaw effect of water ingress during the winter months, if not prevented, can cause a rapid decline in the structural integrity of the footway and hence require a more evasive and costly solution.
- (2) The process begins approximately two weeks prior to the new surface being applied with the footway being weed sprayed. This is followed, immediately before the application of the new surface, by a power wash which ensures the surface is clean and free of weeds, dust and debris.
- (3) Footway slurry seal is a cold mixed asphalt that consists of graded aggregate, binder, fines and additives. These are mixed and then applied to the footway. It is quick to apply meaning less disruption to the pedestrians, residents and local businesses. As it is cold applied it has a low carbon footprint.

## 3. Finished surface

- (1) After the initial application of the treatment the new surface does appear very dark in colour and is also very coarse in texture. This is normal for this type of material, but as shown by the pictures its appearance does markedly change over the following months to look more like a traditional asphalt.



Shortly after treatment



Treatment after 1 year

- (2) We do deliver notices in advance of the works to inform residents of the works, and in the notice we explain that this initial appearance is quite a contrast from what they may expect, but that it will “bed-in” to become more like a traditional footway material.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- (1) Footway slurry seal has been successfully used throughout Kent for many years and offers very good value for money. This enables our funding to go further to ensure every pound of taxpayers’ money is spent wisely.
- (2) Slurry sealing is a recognised protection treatment in the lifecycle of a footway. Utilising the treatment at the right time it will successfully extend the footway for up to ten years. Without this treatment the number of footways we would be able to repair in Kent would be limited. For that reason, slurry sealing suitable footways will remain part of KCC’s approach to maintaining its footway network.
- (3) Kent recognise, that although some small areas of remedial action has been carried out in the Ashford area, there are some areas that we will monitor over the winter months, with a view to carrying out a further final coat in the new summer season.

#### **6. Recommendations**

6 Members are asked to note this report.

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