
Executive

3rd August 2004

Report of the Acting Director of Environment and Development Services

Back Lane Resurfacing Policy

Summary

1. This reports seeks Members' advice on the way forward in respect of a policy for resurfacing back lanes. It gives 2 options, with analysis and asks Members to make a decision as to which option would best form the current policy, in line with the York Pride Initiative.

Background

2. The current policy was approved in February 2002, by the Director of Environment and Development Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport.
3. The current policy with regards to maintenance of back lanes is clearly set out in the Policy Statement, attached as Annex 3 (d). It states that "back lanes will be repaired and resurfaced, in black top, in all cases."

Discussion

4. The current policy has worked well, but it is felt that with the inception of the York Pride initiative Members' advice should be sought in respect of this element of the Policy Statement.
5. In order that Members can fully consider all the implications in respect of a change in the policy, the following information should be noted.
 - The total length of back lanes, within the City of York Council's network area, is around 25 kilometres.
 - 22.3 kilometres of these lanes are above 3 metres in width, the rest being less, typically between 1 and 2m wide.
 - Many of the lanes 3 metres wide, or wider, are used as pick up points for the Council's refuse collection service.
 - Approximately a third of the back lanes are constructed in slag pavements [Rosemary setts], photograph of slag pavements is attached as Annex 1). The remainder are mainly constructed of black top or concrete, with other materials making up a very small percentage.

Consultations

6. Prior to the last review of the paving policy, comments of the Disabled Persons' Advisory Group were sought. Their comments were that they preferred a black top surface, to a modular surface, as it generally provided a smoother surface and was less likely to have trips. They also commented that black top was generally less slippery than modular surfaces and, in particular, York stone surfaces, when wet, which makes it more difficult for them to walk on. Slag pavements, when wet, have the same slippery characteristics as York stone and Members will need to consider this issue, when reviewing the policy.

Options

7. (A) Maintain the status quo, i.e. back lanes will be repaired and resurfaced in bitumen macadam, in all cases.

(B) Back lanes will be repaired and resurfaced using the existing materials, in all cases.

Analysis

8. Option (A)

- In view of the comments of the Disabled Persons' Advisory Group it is felt that they would most welcome the status quo, i.e. retention of the black top option.
- Members should note the cost to reconstruct back lanes in black top is the least expensive option of all reconstruction costs, typically being half that of reconstructing in slag pavements.
- Some residents do not like the look of black top and would prefer to keep the existing character of back lanes.
- Members should note that any maintenance work in black top will mean that the lane can be used immediately the repair has been effected, and alternatively, should the lane be reconstructed in black, it is possible it could be opened every night in order that residents can continue to access the rear of their properties.

9. Option (B)

- Should Members decide they wish to change the policy statement and adopt Option (B), then the character and nature of every back lane in York would be maintained.
- -As indicated in Para 5 a third of the existing back lanes are constructed in slag pavements. Should Members choose to maintain back lanes in slag pavements, then it should be noted these modules are no longer manufactured anywhere, This would mean either a short length of the back lane would have to be reconstructed in an alternative material, or it would have to be totally reconstructed in an alternative material, in order to facilitate future maintenance

- Members should also note that the highway authority has to provide utility services with specialist materials, when they are reinstating their code regulated works. Should members choose Option (A), then there would always be a plentiful supply of materials to provide to Utility Services at cost. However, should Members choose Option (B) it is possible that we would be in a position of not being able to provide such materials, and there being no other source, the utilities would reinstate in a material that would best match in and be safe.
- Option (B) would also increase costs on the day to day maintenance budget. This is because it is possible to do a smaller repair to make an area safe using black top, than resurfacing in modules. The reason is, when using bitmac, edges can be shaped to meet the existing contours, but with a modular surface it is necessary to meet all adjacent modules, at the same level, which usually can only be done with a larger repair.
- Option (B) would lead to back lanes being closed for longer periods than at present. This is because lanes constructed in setts are bedded on concrete and curing time is required before it can be trafficked.

Financial Implications

10. Clearly, a change to the existing Policy Statement, if Option (B) is chosen, would have major implications on both the resurfacing and reconstruction budget and certainly on the day to day basic maintenance budget. Typically reconstructing in black costs £60.00 per sq metre, in slag pavements costs £130.00 per sq metre and in concrete costs £80.00 per sq metre.
11. The cost of a change in the policy for Basic maintenance [day to day budget for urgent repairs] is the annual cost of back lane repairs going from £10,000 to £45,000 , or reducing the urgent repairs from 500m² / year to 115m² / year.

Legal Implications

12. The City of York Council, in its capacity as the Highway Authority, has a duty under Section 41 of the 1980 Highways Act to maintain the public highway.

Human Resources and other implications

13. There are no Human Resources implications.

Recommendations

14. Members are asked to consider the options, carefully consider the analysis and advise Officers as to whether or not they wish to change the Policy Statement or maintain the status quo.

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Background Papers:

Current Paving Policy.

ANNEX 1

