

15. GLOUCESTER PLACE, WINDSOR - PETITION

CABINET: 26 JUNE 2008

MEMBER REPORTING: COUNCILLOR RAYNER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To register a petition of 22 signatures from residents in Gloucester Place, Windsor requesting support and funding to restore the historic surface and provide additional improved drainage. The petition is also supported by all 3 Ward Councillors.

2. MEMBER'S RECOMMENDATION: That

- a) to acknowledge the petition and address the public concerns about the maintenance of Gloucester Place a prioritization model be completed to bid for funds for option 3 and be submitted for assessment.
- b) the Lead Petitioner be advised of Cabinet's decision.
- c) the Lead Member writes to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to advise them of Cabinet's decision.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Wards Affected

Castle Without

3.2 Relevant Matters Upon Which Decision is Based & Reasons Supporting Recommendation

A petition has been submitted by residents of Gloucester Place, Windsor requesting support for funding to restore the existing historic surface and to provide additional drainage. The petition carries the support of all three Ward Members.

Gloucester Place was built in the mid 19th century and falls within the Inner Windsor Conservation Area. It forms part of the adopted highway which is maintainable at public expense and is approximately 144 metres in length with an average width of 4.5 metres. The road is located in a conservation area and is of historic interest. The relevant extract from the Listed Buildings Register is as follows:

“Gloucester Place is a narrow cul-de-sac with semi-detached early C19 cottage/villas set in gardens, along either side. The road is paved with long stone setts laid parallel with the cobbled gutters to form carriageway of axel width”.

The Royal Borough has a considerable number of historic buildings and protected views that it is important to preserve. It is therefore important to maintain the character of Gloucester Place as there are not many streets like this that were built for 19th century horse and cart traffic. In respect of historic street surfaces in conservation areas the Borough has undertaken to:

- 1. Maintain and restore historic paving where it survives
- 2. Expose and restore historic paving in appropriate locations
- 3. Seek expert conservation advice before carrying out repairs to historic surfaces
- 4. Respect local designs and details

5. Reinstate lost surfaces of high quality that make up important townscape
6. Adapt local designs to address new problems

Current Condition

The road and footway have been subjected to a gradual deterioration over a number of years and a large proportion of the existing cobblestones have been overlaid with tarmac that is wearing off in places. This has had a detrimental impact on the visual appearance and is not currently reflecting the above commitment that the Borough has taken to the preservation of historic surfaces. (see photographs in Annex A). The cobblestone channels and granite kerbs to the footway are uneven and require relaying to restore levels and falls. The granite kerbs laid parallel are generally of reasonable line and level and the surface between them has been covered in tarmac. At this stage without further investigation it has been assumed that there are no setts under this area of tarmac.

The Council is required by Government to undertake coarse visual surveys (CVI) of the unclassified road network as part of Best Value Performance Indicator BV224B. The results for Gloucester Place indicate that its condition currently falls outside of the required condition index threshold and is therefore rated as in need of attention. It should be noted however that the results in 2006/7 for BV224B indicated that approximately 28% of the unclassified network is in need of attention (approx 120km).

Drainage

There have been incidents of partial flooding particularly from the junction with Kings Ride Road. Two new gullies were installed at this location to alleviate this problem, however the main length of Gloucester Place is only served by one gully that is connected to a 150mm diameter highway drain. This system discharges into a large culvert on Crown Estate land that serves the nearby Bourne ditch.

3.3 Options Available and Risk Assessment

	Option	Comments
1.	Do Nothing	Not an option as the Council have a statutory requirement to carry out safety inspections/repairs. This option does not contribute to maintaining or restoring the historic surface in line with Planning Policy Guidance. Does not contribute to improving BV224b.
2.	Essential Remove tarmac from cobblestones and relay localised areas that are uneven. High pressure jet highway drain and clean gully.	Will contribute to preserving and enhancing the historic surface and appearance. In addition this option will ensure that the existing drainage is functioning. This option will have no impact to improving BV224b. Estimated Cost £7,000

	Option	Comments
3.	<p>Intermediate</p> <p>Remove tarmac from cobblestones and relay localised areas that are uneven.</p> <p>Relay granite kerbing adjacent to footway and resurface footway.</p> <p>Upgrade the existing highway drain to 225mm diameter and provide additional gullies.</p> <p>Seek external funding with suitable partner.</p>	<p>Will help restore and preserve the important historic surface and will resolve flooding problems. This option will provide improvements for pedestrians and vulnerable highway users.</p> <p>Estimated Cost £45,000</p> <p>Recommended Proiritization Model to be submitted for assessment</p>
4.	<p>Comprehensive Refurbishment</p> <p>Relay and point the whole historic surface and adjacent areas, importing natural stone or appropriate materials where necessary in line with the Council's Conservation Officer.</p> <p>Relay granite kerbing adjacent to footway and resurface footway.</p> <p>Upgrade the existing highway drain to 225mm diameter and provide additional gullies.</p> <p>(As this is an historic street it may be possible with support of a suitable partner to apply for external funding towards this extensive project)</p>	<p>Most expensive option but will fully restore and preserve the important historic surface and resolve flooding problems. This option will also provide improvements for pedestrians and vulnerable highway users. Minimal benefits on improving BV224B as the street is not very long.</p> <p>Due to the relatively narrow street and nature of the works there would be issues to do with parking and access whilst works are in progress.</p> <p>Estimated Cost £70,000</p> <p>If external funding could be achieved this would become the preferred option.</p>

Risk Assessment Summary:

Option 1 - Do Nothing

This option does ensure that the Borough meets its statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 to inspect and maintain the highway in a safe condition and therefore minimise the risk of claims. There is a medium to high risk to both the service and reputation in terms of failure to restore the historic surface. It is therefore highly likely that this will result in adverse publicity or criticism from a small section of the local community.

Option 2 - Essential

There are medium risks associated with failure to fully restore the historic surface that could lead to adverse publicity. This option is the minimum that could be implemented as an interim measure pending a successful bid for other funding. This would assist in offsetting the impact of this risk in the short-term as the essential works will help address both the Borough's

statutory duty, improve the functioning of the highway drain and provide a welcome improvement to the general appearance.

Option 3 – Intermediate

There are medium risks associated with securing capital funding for this option as currently the roads programme is fully committed in 2008/9. There is some flexibility to include additional schemes in 2009/10 but this will depend on it’s relative priority compared to other schemes. If the scheme is delayed then it will no doubt result in adverse publicity. The higher cost of these works compared to other economical treatments may mean that other schemes would have to be deferred which in the short term will have a detrimental impact on the BVPI 224b results for unclassified roads. As part of normal procedures contact will be made with the public utilities to establish whether their apparatus is affected by these works and/or needs replacing before the work takes place.

Option 4 – Comprehensive Refurbishment

There is a high risk that external funding could not be obtained and if this was the case then it would have a medium impact to both the reputation and service through failure to restore the historic surface.

3.4 Relevant National/Regional Guidance

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15; Planning and the Historic Environment
Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

3.5 Relevant Council Policies/Strategies

Register of Listed Buildings Planning & Policy Guidance for working in Conservation areas
Local Plan Inner Windsor Conservation Area Statement 1998

3.5.1 The recommendations contained in this report also contribute to the Community Strategy in the following ways:

	Relevant? Yes / No
Key Themes:	
Supporting Children & Younger People	No
Supporting Adults & Older People	No
A Thriving, Cleaner, Greener Borough	Yes
Safer & Stronger Communities	Yes

4. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

Consultation has been carried out with the Council’s Conservation Officer and she has advised that the historic surface will need to be restored using exactly the same materials as it is using the existing natural stone materials.

5. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The Panel received a presentation on the proposed report being submitted to Cabinet on 26 June 2008 on the petition requesting the resurfacing of Gloucester Place. The Panel was informed that Gloucester Place was a ‘Listed Building’ due to the nature and historical significance of the road (*This has been found subsequently to be incorrect. The buildings in*

the road are listed, and the road surface is included in the general description of the area, but is not itself listed). The access and logistics to resurface the road would present problems and the work would have to be in keeping with the area, and the materials need to be carefully selected. In all there was a 620m² area to be resurfaced at a cost of £70,000, with the works taking 6-8 weeks.

Arising from the discussion, the Panel recommended that external funding be sought from English Heritage, requested clarification on the Listed Building status of the road and that road surface of granite slabs and cobbles should be retained. However, the Panel were of the opinion that there was insufficient information available at the meeting and therefore requested that it be brought back to the next meeting on 30 June, with the petitioners being informed accordingly.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be advised of the Panel's comments as outlined above. The Lead Member will write to the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny to update the Panel following Cabinet's decision.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

Option 2 - Essential (£7k)

The cost of this work would be met from revenue

Option 3 – Intermediate (£45k)

The roads programme for 2008/9/10 was approved by Capital Prioritisation Sub Committee on 20 March 2008 and is currently fully committed for 2008/9. There is however still some flexibility to include some higher priority schemes in 2009/10 that are deemed worthy of funding.

Option 4 – Comprehensive Refurbishment (£70k)

It has been recommended by Overview & Scrutiny that external funding of £70k is sought from English Heritage.

In the event of a bid for external funding being unsuccessful then the scheme could be treated as an environmental enhancement project and a separate prioritisation model submitted to Capital Prioritisation Committee for funding in 2009/10.

6.2 Legal & Human Rights Act

This report does not affect any victims as defined under the Act.

6.4 Planning

The site is in a Conservation Area where the Council has a statutory requirement to give special attention in the exercise of any planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. In addition there is a statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting in the exercise of listed building control. Whilst the works proposed would not require formal

planning permission or listed building consent, these statutory requirements are the tests that would be applied to any new development, and it would be good practice for the Council to consider its proposed actions against these tests.

6.5 Sustainable Development

Re-use and preservation of existing high quality natural stone materials

6.6 Diversity and Equality

In terms of the councils equality impact assessment policy the recommendations in this report have no negative equality and diversity implications

Background Papers: Petition; Photo

