

## **Briefing note – Bank St, Melksham**

### History

The high level footway at Bank Street is over 100 years old and was likely to be constructed to allow access to be maintained in times of flood. Prior to its construction it is likely that the properties on Bank Street would have had steps leading directly to a lower level footway.

### Current Construction

The footway has at some time been surfaced using in-situ concrete slabs. The slabs are supported at cellar shafts with corrugated iron sheeting and steel beams. The cellar shafts, originally to allow the tipping of coal into the cellars, are capped by manhole covers close to the front edge of the footway.

The concrete shows signs of cracking in places and the surface has been broken and reinstated with tarmac in places as a result of utility works.

A number of properties along Bank Street have low thresholds and there is very little level difference between the footway surface and the entrance to the properties.

It is thought that only 4 of the cellars remain, three of which have accessible shafts. These are situated at no.15 (Bewley Undertakers), no.17 (Conservative Club) and The Grapes Inn.

### Option 1 – slab replacement

A report prepared by consultants Mouchel in 2008 suggested that the existing concrete slabs be removed and a new footway constructed. This would require pre-cast concrete lintels to span across the access shafts to support the footway. The footway surface would consist of footway paving slabs consistent with those used elsewhere in the town centre.

This option however could potentially cause damage to the wall associated with the high level footway and the in-filled cellar shafts and steps may cause structural issues should the materials shift. Utility apparatus is also present in the existing footway.

The estimated costs of the works (based on 2008 prices) were in the region of £80,000. This does not include a figure for traffic management, utility diversion works or any potential reconstruction of the wall or cellar in-fills. Bearing these elements in mind, alongside rate increases, it is likely that this work would cost closer to £150,000.

### Option 2

A second option for improving the surface of the footway is to remove the tarmac in-fills and reinstate these areas and any other uneven patches with in-situ concrete. This will help to achieve a level surface. This footway could then be retextured using a shot-blasting process to create a slip-resistant surface.

This process has been used elsewhere (e.g. The Brittox in Devizes) however this has mainly been in locations where the surface does not have a significant level difference to the

carriageway. It is likely to cause a contractor some concern should they be required to use their shot blasting equipment on the high level pavement at Bank Street.

### Option 3 – concrete infill and HFS

This option would include the concrete infill as per option 2 and further work to overlay the footway with a high friction surface. It is felt this option is likely to be the most cost effective and practical solution to improve the footway surface on Bank Street. Further discussion with a surfacing contractor will need to take place to identify the most appropriate high friction product for Bank Street in order to achieve a long lasting solution.

It is estimated that this option would cost in the region of £20,00

### Recommendation

It is recommended that option 3 be considered for further investigation and implementation.