

CORRESPONDENCE (2)

KENT HIGHWAYS SERVICES and RTW TOWN FORUM

Tarmac/Signage/Street Columns/Roundabouts

From: Louise.Codman@kent.gov.uk – Community Liaison Team Leader, Kent Highways Services

To: Christopher Thomas – RTW Town Forum

Cc: Richard.Highgate@kent.gov.uk – NRASWA Coordinator, Kent Highways Services

(NRASWA = New Roads and Street Works Act 1991)

Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2009

Subject: Tarmac/Signage/Street Columns/Roundabouts

re: Mount Pleasant Brick Pavement

additional INFO:

last year, in August 2008, Mount Pleasant Road's brick pavement (on east and west sides) was replaced partly with tarmac patches

Dear Mr Thomas

as per your email to Susan Laporte regarding Mount Pleasant, please see the following response.

1.
What is the definition of routine works? To what spend value are works treated as routine?

Routine works are those deemed necessary to maintain the condition of the highway and to keep it in a state of good repair. These works normally consist of small, localised repairs such as potholes, or more substantial repairs where larger scale patching is necessary.

It is difficult to quantify an upper limit for routine works, however, as a guide Community Operations can carry out patching works covering an area of approximately 100m sq .

2.
What was the tendering process in allowing Ringway Highway Services become the sole contractor for minor works for and on behalf of Kent Highway Services? Was this process the same with Jacobs for Tunbridge Wells Borough Council? How long have they been such "alliance" outfits?

Following extensive research and consultation with other local authorities KCC Cabinet approved, in 2006, the Alliance and single contractor provider model for service based highway maintenance (for example winter service and gully emptying) along with maintenance scheme delivery for projects up to £1 million in value (although there are no workload guarantees and we are currently going out to the market for resurfacing projects).

The contract is for an initial 5 years and can be extended for a further 5 years (so up to 2016) .

3.
Please explain the difference between Alliance Partner and Alliance Contractor and what does the term alliance mean?

We term the contractual relationship an alliance as to the public we want to show a single 'brand' so all vehicles are KHS rather than the contractor company logo. The alliance word attempts to

indicate that the client (KCC) contractor and consultant all play a part and should work together to deliver a service to Kents residents .

4.

The methodology of tendering I have yet to see explained in full and I require to know how this process is undertaken? What specifications are put forward in tendering and what guarantees are offered?

Is tendering based upon cost only or is it based upon quality? Is the tendering process enacted by KHS identical to all other County Councils across the country and identical to those of TWBC?

Due to the size of the contract European procurement legislation came into effect and we advertised across Europe,. The contract is based on the most up to date and recommended NEC (new engineering contract) and was assessed on both quality (service delivery) and cost. As you can imagine a large number of contractors were interested and we assessed in great detail 3 companies by undertaking site visits to other local authorities which involved the KCC Cabinet member .

Cabinet approved the appointment of Ringway in January 2006 and the contract started in the summer of that year .

5.

Why do you make reference to TWBC in regards to Mt Pleasant when in one sentence you imply you invoked the tarmac abomination on grounds of health and safety (did you?), yet in another sentence you say the works on Mt Pleasant would be tendered for by TWBC?

At what point did you/your dept liaise with TWBC before laying the tarmac?

As in our previous email dated 24 June, the works to maintain safety to members of the public were as a result of tree movement which had moved the blocks and created a trip hazard. In addition, one of the areas is within the area of the designated disabled bay and we were conscious that those members of the public with mobility or impaired vision issues would be at risk from the raised blocks. In order to maintain safety to them, it would felt that the tarmacadam infill was an appropriate interim measure. As stated previously, the permanent works will have to be carried out in consultation with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

With regard to your comment regarding liaison with TWBC, they were informed after the safety works had taken place .

6.

I am rather confused as to who is actually meeting the cost of this work. Please clarify exactly if either TWBC or KCC will face the costs of work on Mt Pleasant Road?

Any works on Mt Pleasant Road would be met by Kent Highways although consideration will also be given to any development of the cinema site and if Section 106 monies could be made available.

7.

As a tree is an inanimate object and is going nowhere. I would therefore be pleased if you could enlighten me as to exactly how many meetings have been undertaken to establish the required new scheme to handle the "root" problem. A tree expert should hardly be daunted by such a simple equation. I still regard the length of time that is being taken to remedy this situation as wholly unwarranted and without reason. Paris seems to deal with numerous trees quite satisfactorily.

Root pruning is not an exact science and relies on co-operation of all the Alliance members (KHS, Ringway & Jacobs). The process is that where there is disturbance of a pavement surface, it is the responsibility of the Operations Team to have the surface of the footpath removed and the roots exposed.

An arboriculturist will visit the site at a convenient time to see if root pruning can be undertaken. The criteria used is that roots 50mm or over in diameter cannot be removed as it is likely that instability of the tree will occur. If there are masses of smaller roots then root pruning can be undertaken. Pruning of the crown should not be carried out at the same time as root pruning as this will cause stress from which the tree could die.

If root pruning cannot be carried out because of the size of the roots then the next step is to ask the Community Delivery Team Leader to investigate whether or not an engineering solution can be found to overcome the problem. Assuming that there is not a viable engineering solution, it will be necessary to remove the tree including the roots and plant a replacement tree.

this process was undertaken by our arboricultrist and at that time no significant root pruning could be undertaken. The short term engineering solution was to provide the tarmacadam infill whilst the long term future of the trees was considered alongside the proposed cinema development.

8.

I am intrigued by the message in this latest email from you as against the one dated 24th June 2009 thereunder. In this latest email you say that "as in Mt Pleasant, this of course would have to follow a robust tendering process conducted by TWBC." As you may understand this is totally different from the previous email in which you stated "As soon as a decision is made, the works will be carried out by our alliance contractor to make permanent repairs to the areas."

I trust you will understand my concern over this contradiction in terms, which I find of most serious concern.

My comments have been taken out of context here, I mentioned larger works are commissioned by the borough council, as in Mount Pleasant, this of course would have to follow a robust tendering process, conducted by TWBC.

9.

I do note the involvement of the Cinema Site design engineers and ask how many times they have been consulted to date?

I have no information as to how many times developers have been consulted to date. This would be carried out by the Planning department at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Finally, I have sent a further copy of this email to our streetworks team and hopefully they will respond directly to you as per Richard Highgate's email.

Louise Codman
Community Liaison Team Leader
Kent Highway Services
Tel - 01622 798310
email - louise.codman@kent.gov.uk

=====

From: richard.highgate@kent.gov.uk
To: Christopher Thomas – RTW Town Forum
Sent: Wednesday, 1 July 2009

Subject: Mount Pleasant Road (CSM 16289893) - temporary reinstatements

Dear Mr Thomas

Thank you for your comment concerning temporary reinstatements in Mount Pleasant Road Tunbridge Wells. I have Ask the RASWA inspector to investigate and pursue with the correct undertaker

kind regards

Richard Highgate

NRASWA Co-ordinator (NRASWA = New Roads and Street Works Act 1991)

Kent Highway Services

Doubleday House

Aylesford

Kent

ME20 7BU

Phone 01622 798355

Fax 01622 605887

=====

Who is the correct undertaker and why no mention of a robust tendering process in the reply from Mr Highgate?

I look forward to receiving your most comprehensive reply and, as stated previously, look to a speedy resolution to this long running affair.

Kind regards

Christopher Thomas

Chairman

Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum