

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	21 NOVEMBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM: 17	
TITLE:	HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CODE OF PRACTICE & HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR A PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT BOROUGH WIDE
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION AND STREETCARE	WARDS:	
LEAD OFFICER:	SAM SHEAN	TEL:	0118 937 2138
JOB TITLE:	STREETCARE SERVICES MANAGER	E-MAIL:	sam.shean@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report the progress of the implementation of the 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.
- 1.2 To report the progress of Highway Asset Management programme.
- 1.3 To clarify the tolerance between highway safety inspection frequencies.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress made on the 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the progress of the Highway Asset Management programme.
- 2.3 That the Committee approves the clarification of the tolerance for the highway safety inspection regime frequency.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

- 3.2 To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 3.3 To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

4. BACKGROUND

Highway Asset Management: Code of Practice

- 4.1 In October 2016 the UK Roads Liaison Group released Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, which set out 36 recommendations for the implementation of Highway Asset Management. Local Authorities have been given 2 years (from the date of publishing) to adopt the new Code of Practice. Although it is not specified what will happen, should the recommendations in the Code of Practice not be fully adopted within this time scale, the previous Codes of Practice will cease to be recognised and Court rulings will therefore be based on the new Code.
- 4.2 One of the most significant changes in the Code of Practice is that Local Authorities must have a risk based approach to their highway maintenance regimes rather than there being defined standards. It is therefore for each Local Authority to decide their own levels of maintenance and inspection regimes based on what they consider to be acceptable levels of risk.

5. THE PROPOSAL

Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice - Update

- 5.1 Full implementation of all 36 recommendations within 2 years was unrealistic given the resources the Council has available.
- 5.2 The Council, following advice from the Insurance Industry, has been concentrating on key recommendations that we have been advised should be prioritised to ensure highway safety compliance. These prioritised recommendations are:
 - 1. Consistency with other Authorities (recommendation 5)
 - 2. Risked based approach (recommendation 7)
 - 3. Competencies and training (recommendation 15)

Recommendation 5 - Consistency with other Authorities

- 5.3 Discussions between the Berkshire Local Authorities regarding consistency of approach regarding defect definitions, investigatory levels and inspection frequency have taken place. The six Berkshire Local Authorities Highway Managers meet on a regular basis and are working towards meeting recommendation 5 where appropriate. It is noted that each Local Authority

will have their own view on what is appropriate for their area, therefore finding common ground will be a challenge.

Recommendation 7 - Risk based approach

- 5.4 The Neighbourhood Officers are required to risk assess each particular potential defect they find in the carriageway and footway during a safety inspection. Having risk assessed a potential defect the Neighbourhood Officers have the authority to instruct repairs to be carried out on highway 'defects' that do not currently meet the investigatory level should they conclude that the risk of not doing so is too great. Reasons for doing so include, but are not restricted to the following

1. The defect is potentially dangerous due to its location, high level of highway usage and large number of vulnerable users in the area.
2. The defect will potentially meet intervention level before the date it is next due to be inspected.

- 5.5 The Council clarified what an investigatory level defect is at this Committee on 19th March 2018 as follows:

The Council's current investigatory level for a carriageway defect is 50mm depth over an approximate area of 300mm x 300mm.

The Council's current investigatory level for a footway defect is 20mm depth over an approximate area of 300mm x 300mm.

The Council has been working towards introducing a category for highway defects below the investigatory levels stated above. The reason for this is that whilst a defect might not require immediate action it is still a symptom of carriageway deterioration. By noting these defects it will help us to have a better understanding of the state of the roads and therefore plan maintenance more effectively. The new categories will mean that defects that are below investigatory level will be recorded as 'Programmed Works' unless they are below a lower cut off level in which case they will not be recorded. The clarification of these new categories will be approved by the Highway Asset Management Board and brought back this Committee in the near future.

Recommendation 15 - Competencies and training

- 5.6 The Code of Practice recommends that 'the appropriate competency required for asset management should be identified, and training provided where necessary'.
- 5.7 Given the need to have a risk based approach to Highway Maintenance, the Neighbourhood Officers have completed and are undergoing further training to demonstrate that they are competent to carry out on site risk

assessment. Whilst the Neighbourhood Officers are experienced in their role such training will provide formal evidence that they are competent to carry out safety inspections. A form of 'refresher' training will be carried out on an annual basis.

Highway Asset Management Update

- 5.8 In May 2017 Reading Borough Council's Highway Asset Management Policy was published following approval by Committee. The Policy confirmed Reading Borough Council's commitment to Highway Asset Management and outlined how assets will be managed and how progress will be reported, including the establishment of a Highway Asset Management Board (HAM Board)
- 5.9 The Council has produced a draft updated Highway Maintenance Manual, (HMM), which will be in line with the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'. This policy document will be presented to the HAM Board and brought back to this Committee for formal approval.

Asset Management Systems

- 5.10 The Asset Management team have been overseeing the introduction of the Asset Management system. These computer systems will provide a more robust method of recording data, aid the Council in managing Highway Maintenance and improve efficiency of the Highway Teams.
- 5.11 Following the successful introduction of handheld devices used by the Neighbourhood Officers to record defects directly into the Routine Maintenance System (RMS), the Highways & Drainage Operations Manager is now able to assign the defects directly to the works gangs, who have also been issued with the handheld devices, making the whole system fully electronic.
- 5.12 The management of bridges and highways structures has also been moved to the new Asset Management System, which will allow our Term Structural Consultant to carry out inspections via handheld devices.
- 5.13 Street lighting assets are also being moved to a new Asset Management System. The intention is to integrate this system into Reading Borough Council's own website allowing members of the public to report street lighting faults directly into the system removing the need for a third party to pass the information onto the Street Lighting Officer. This system is currently being prepared and should be ready to come into operation early in the next Financial Year.

WAY FORWARD

- 5.14 The Highway Asset Management Team will continue to update the Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM) and incorporate the full 36 recommendations on a priority basis and report progress back to the Highways Asset Management (HAM) Board on a quarterly basis and this Committee on an annual basis.

6 CLARIFICATION OF THE TOLERANCES OF THE HIGHWAY SAFETY INSPECTION FREQUENCY

- 6.1 The Council's current highway safety inspection frequency regime is as follows:

Road Type	Current Frequency
Category A	3 Monthly
Category B & C	6 Monthly
Categories U	Every 18 Months

- 6.2 The Council is proposing to set a tolerance for completing the above inspections to allow some flexibility when inspections cannot be carried out due to illness or leave.
- 6.3 The Council is proposing to allow the following tolerances to inspection times. However, should any of this time be required to complete the affected inspection, then the same amount of time would need to be taken off the next scheduled inspection so that over the 2 consecutive inspection periods the average inspection frequency complies with our stated inspection frequency policy.

Carriageway: Routine Inspection Frequencies			
Carriageway Hierarchy	Inspection Frequency	Inspection Method	Tolerance #
Strategic Route	3 Monthly	Walked	1 Week
Main Distributor	3 Monthly	Walked*	1 Week
Secondary Distributor	6 Monthly	Walked	2 Week
Link Road	18 Months	Walked**	1 Month
Local Access Road	18 Months	Walked	1 Month

** With the exception of the Inner Distribution Road between Great Knollys Street and London Street which is driven because the road is subject to a 40mph and there is no safe walking route on this section.*

***With the exception of Burghfield Road between Underwood Road and the Borough Boundary which is driven because the road has no footways, visibility is restricted due to a hump back railway bridge and high level of goods vehicles*

Where an inspection is carried out late but within the tolerance the next inspection shall still be carried out within the frequency interval of the original planned inspection date

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 The Highway Asset Management Policy and Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice will contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 objectives of:

- Securing the economic success of Reading
- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1 The Highway Asset Management Policy includes managing community expectations about how the Council manages its Highway Assets. As progress is made on implementation of Asset Management new policies and standards will be made available on the Council's website once approved by the Highway Asset Management Board.

8.2 The Highway Asset Management Policy is available on the Council's website.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 The Highway Asset Management Policy and Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice is part of procedures to maintain the Council's existing public highway network. There is no overall change to service delivery at this time only how those service requirements are met. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance and maintain highway structures.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The proposed Highway Asset Management Programme as determined by the Highway Asset Management Policy will be fully funded by the Streetcare Services revenue budget for 2018/19 and the Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) settlement 2018/2019 for bridges and carriageways.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice
- 12.2 HAM Board Governance / Terms of Reference
- 12.3 Highway Asset Management Policy
- 12.4 Draft Highway Maintenance Manual (HMM)