

ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
22 MARCH 2012	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL - HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PLAN 2011 - 16

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report is being presented in order to seek approval to implement the Peterborough City Council Highway Maintenance Plan 2011 – 16.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to approve the Highway Maintenance Plan for use with immediate effect.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

3.1

Creating opportunities - tackling inequalities	
Improving health – so that everyone can enjoy a life expectancy of the national average or above and benefit from speedier access to high quality local health and social care services.	Transport networks are an important part of any community in that they allow the free and easy movement of people and goods on a daily basis. Whether the use of Peterborough’s network is for a local journey by foot, bicycle and car or part of a longer journey the continued maintenance and availability of the asset is essential for the wellbeing of individuals and the economy as a whole. With many journeys beginning and ending on local networks the condition of local transport infrastructure is vitally important in order to ensure that vulnerable people particularly the elderly or disabled can feel safe and able to make short journeys to use local amenities at their convenience. Whilst roads are important it is hoped that by providing conditions conducive with the use of more sustainable modes of transport more people will choose to make short trips on foot or bicycle as an alternative to the car with the obvious health benefits.
Supporting vulnerable people – so that everyone can access support and care locally to enable them to maintain independence, should they be affected by disadvantage or disability at any point in their lives.	
Creating strong and supportive communities	
Empowering local communities – so that all communities and individuals are engaged and empowered, and take their opportunities to shape the future of Peterborough.	Through closer links via the Neighbourhood Committee’s local communities will be provided with the opportunity to have their say on what happens in their area. This may be particularly important where the needs within the community do not align with the maintenance need that is based rigidly on set engineering principles. Peterborough can boast a world class, extensive and well integrated road network and despite the City’s continued growth it still has one of the fastest peak and off-peak travel times for a City of it’s size in the country mainly due to its parkway network.
Building pride in Peterborough – so that we recognise, celebrate and take pride in Peterborough’s achievements, its diverse but shared culture and the exciting opportunities for leisure and relaxation.	

Creating the UK's environment capital	
Conserving natural resources – so that we reduce Peterborough's overall consumption of the Earth's natural resources.	Peterborough has an established network of independent footways and cycle ways that allow users in many cases to travel without having to use the road network, in many cases local journeys can be quicker on foot or bicycle than they are in a car. Through the focused maintenance of the footway and cycle way network more people will choose to walk or ride and leave the car at home. The annual slab replacement programme is completed with all waste slabs being crushed, graded and reused as sub-base material on other footway schemes.
Increasing use of sustainable transport – so that Peterborough has the highest proportion of citizens using sustainable transport modes in the UK.	
Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth	
Creating a safe, vibrant city centre and sustainable neighbourhood centres – so that people have more diverse and improved places to visit and enjoy.	Good transport is essential for a successful economy and society. It provides access to jobs, services and schools, gets goods to the shops and allows us to make the most of our free time. Local roads are at the heart of the transport network, and have a key role to play in ensuring that transport delivers the services people need or want. Peterborough has a proven track record of attracting business investment and much of this success is attributable to its strong transport links and quality road infrastructure. The promotion of sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling will support the aim to build strong communities with residents feeling less isolated and more likely to use local networks to access nearby amenities. This can only improve community spirit and make the area feel a better place to live. Continued routine and planned maintenance of the 'highway' asset as well as meeting safety and engineering needs offers significant visual benefit to neighbourhoods and communities and can engender pride in a street.
Increasing economic prosperity – so that the people of Peterborough can work locally, benefiting from a strong local economy that is an attractive destination for business investment, particularly in higher skilled sectors.	
Creating better places to live – so that we provide better places to live for both new and existing communities, ensuring the highest environmental standards of new building	

The advice and procedures outlined in the report facilitate the reporting of network condition against set criteria for National Indicators (formerly BVPI's):

- NI 168 - Condition of Principal roads
- NI 169 - Condition of Non-principal roads
- BVPI 224b* – Condition of Unclassified roads
- BVPI 187* – Condition of Footways (Hierarchy 1, 1a & 2)

* Local Indicator

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP) seeks to update and replace the previous Highway Network Management Plan 2004/05 and whilst not of the same name it is broadly based on the earlier document. The HMP is intended to provide a reference to Councillors, officers and all those with an interest in how Peterborough's highway network maintenance is managed and delivered.

In line with national recommendations Peterborough City Council introduced its initial Highway Network Management Plan in 2004. Since that time advances in technology, maintenance techniques, legislation and environmental awareness have led to the need to update the format and amend the document to reflect the current practices as outlined in the national standard

'Well-maintained Highways' – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management 2005.

The existence and adherence to a developed HMP better equips the authority for the future challenges in managing, maintaining and protecting the valuable highway asset for the benefit of the travelling public.

The table below compares the old and new documents and highlights the updated elements of the latest document: -

Section	Highway Network Management Plan 04/05	Highway Maintenance Plan 11-16	Significant changes
1	Highway Maintenance Strategy	Highway Maintenance Strategy	No significant changes just updated to reflect current Corporate aims and objectives
2	Peterborough's Highway Network	Peterborough's Highway Network	No significant changes however a review of Peterborough's carriageway network has been completed and appropriate hierarchies set that reflect the assets importance for usage: a footway hierarchy review is currently underway.
3	Resources	Resources	No significant changes just updated to reflect current resources
4	2002/03 Review	Highway Inspections	Significant changes – This section is now specific to the Highway Inspections process that previously took 2 pages in the old document compared to 9 in the new. Changes in National Guidance advise that Local Authorities are to take a risk based approach to highway defects and this has been reflected in the addition of a risk register to the plan.
5	Operational Procedures	Operational Procedures	No significant changes – updated to reflect current national survey methods and scheme selection criteria. Annual SCRIM Survey process included as Appendix 3. For the carriageway scheme programme, the results from these surveys form the basis of the carriageway condition score, which is then factored by Hierarchy and Location uplifts
6	Available maintenance methods	Planned maintenance methods	No significant changes
7	Winter Service	Winter Service	Content reduced in latest document as it simply reproduced elements of the companion document the Winter Service Operational Plan

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The updated Highway Maintenance Plan reflects the key changes to the national Code of Practice 'Well maintained Highways'. Whilst the recommendations of the Code are explicitly not mandatory authorities are recommended to adopt the principles of the Code, to adapt them as necessary based upon consideration of local circumstance and apply them consistently.

There are three significant changes to the HMP when compared to the 2004/05 document that also align with recommendations made in the 2005 Code; these are: -

1. the introduction of hierarchies that better reflect the importance for usage of individual assets
2. the introduction of a risk based approach to Highway Safety/Condition inspections
3. the addition of a Skidding Resistance Process

Use of hierarchies

A key recommendation of the 2005 Code was that authorities should develop a Maintenance Network Hierarchy for its highway assets.

These maintenance designations are not directly matched to the existing network classifications such as A B C class roads and it was never intended that these hierarchies be the same because they cover different aspects of network traffic and purpose.

The concept of a maintenance hierarchy is the foundation of a coherent, consistent and auditable maintenance strategy. This hierarchy should reflect the needs, priorities and actual use of each asset in the network and will be used as the main tool in determining policy priorities. Maintenance standards, targets and performance objectives will link to the hierarchy as will the process of establishing levels of service which is crucial to asset management.

The process for defining the hierarchy for carriageways and footways has initially been based upon traffic flows for roads, and defined priorities for footways and cycle ways. In addition, a further assessment has been undertaken to consider the type of road, the role of the route in a local context, and a consideration of functional factors that may influence how the road is managed.

The highway network in Peterborough consists of 882km of carriageway and 1,157km of footway and cycle way maintainable at public expense. In order to address the maintenance needs of the assets the overarching principle provided in Section 58 of the Highways Act is applied. This states that standards of maintenance should be "appropriate for a highway of that character and use by such traffic".

This report seeks approval of a common hierarchy to reflect the network management duty and the requirements for maintenance management based on highway functionality as recommended by the 2005 Code.

Highway Inspection Regime

The updated Highway Inspection process is the most significant change to the original 04/05 document.

The current method of managing highway defects is through the traditional method of prescribed levels of defect severity, based on the old superseded 2001 Code of Practice. Managing highway defects through risk management is now the accepted good practice, as recommended by the 2005 Code. Risk management is espoused by the Insurance Industry, in respect of third party highways liability claims and failure to meet these good practice guidelines could adversely affect the Council's repudiation rates of these claims.

The recommendations represent a policy change in the matter of dealing with the rectification of highway safety defects from prescribed standards to risk assessment. Risk management is the nationally approved methodology for responding to highway safety defects and is enshrined in the latest Code of Practice and supported by major Insurers.

It will lead to a more efficient and effective inspection service and a systematic and consistent inspection regime will assist in the repudiation of third party highway liability claims. It should also assist in enhancing customer benefits, through the improved prioritisation of responding to highway defects.

This report seeks approval of the proposed highway inspection regime and to the principle of determining response to highway defects by risk assessment, including endorsement of the proposed risk register of highway defects.

Skidding Resistance Policy

The maintenance of adequate levels of skidding resistance on running surfaces is a most important aspect of highway maintenance and one that contributes significantly to network safety, particularly for riders of motorcycles. Annual SCRIM surveys (Sideway-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine) provide a method of measuring the wet skidding resistance of the surface of the road network.

The 2005 Code recommends that authorities should have a strategy for the measurement, analysis and maintenance of the highway network in relation to skidding resistance.

The inclusion of the 'Annual SCRIM Survey Process (Appendix 3) provides a structured approach to measurement and monitoring of skidding resistance on the highway network. It allows for the collation of skid resistance measurements and accident data, and a method of scheme prioritisation that relates to accident risk.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant implications relating to the implementation of the Highway Maintenance Plan. Rather its approval and use will allow the Authority to continue to discharge its duty under the Highways Act 1980 "to maintain the highway network in a safe condition for all highway users" whilst also reflecting the recommendations made in the latest National Code of Practice.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Limited consultation was required for Section 4 'Inspections' which has been completely rewritten as compared to the 2004/05 document. This informal consultation was restricted to internal parties affected directly by the safety inspections process with all feedback being considered and amendments made as appropriate. Those consulted were Andy Tatt, Network Group Manager [and former Highway Maintenance Manager], all Highway/Streetworks Inspectors and Sue Addison, Insurance Manager.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Following consideration by the Committee the Highway Maintenance Plan will be referred to the Cabinet for a decision.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance - Code of Practice for Maintenance Management July 2001

Well-maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management July 2005

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A – Highway Maintenance Plan 2011 -16

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