



HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CODE OF PRACTICE

A Guide to Highway Policies & Procedures

April 2014

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1.0 Introduction

A key requirement of a local highways authority is to ensure that their highway network is safe and convenient for the movement of people and goods. The main purpose of highway maintenance is to deliver a safe, serviceable and sustainable network. This needs to contribute to the wider objectives of asset management, integrated transport, corporate policy and continuous improvement.

The objectives of highway maintenance can be grouped under the following headings: as defined within The Code of Practice for Highway Management ('Well Maintained Highways' – July 2005 updated September 2013 – "The Code of Practice")

Network Safety

- i) Complying with statutory obligations
- ii) Meeting users' needs

Network Serviceability

- i) Ensuring availability
- ii) Achieving integrity
- iii) Maintaining reliability
- iv) Enhancing quality

Network Sustainability

- i) Minimising cost over time
- ii) Maximising value to the community
- iii) Maximising environmental contribution

1.1 Scope of Highway Maintenance

Highway Maintenance is a wide ranging function, including the following general types of activity:

- reactive maintenance; responding to inspections / reports, complaints or emergencies.
- routine maintenance; scheduled inspections / surveys or activities providing works or services to a regular consistent schedule e.g. patching works, gully cleansing etc.
- programmed maintenance; providing larger schemes primarily of resurfacing, reconditioning or reconstruction to a planned schedule.
- regulatory maintenance; inspecting and regulating the activities of others e.g. statutory undertakers. In Tameside this is undertaken by the Traffic Manager under the GMRAPS (Greater Manchester Road Activities Permit Scheme) system.
- winter services; providing gritting and clearance of snow and ice.

- weather and other emergencies; providing a planned emergency response.

1.2 The need for Highway Risk Management Inspections

Under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, Tameside MBC has a statutory duty with regards to highways maintainable at public expense. Neglecting this duty can lead to claims against the council for damages resulting from a failure to maintain the highway. Under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, the highway authority can use a “*Special Defence*” in respect of action against it for damages for non-repair of the highway if it can prove that it has taken such care as was reasonable. Part of the defence rests upon:

“Whether the highway authority knew, or could reasonably have been expected to know, that the condition of the part of the highway to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway”.

This means that highway authorities have to show that they carry out Highway Risk Management Inspections in accordance with their policies and national guidance. Highway Risk Management Inspection reports are part of the evidence used to show that the highway authority has acted reasonably.

Section 58 of the Highways Act also says;

“The court shall in particular have regard to

- a) The character of the highway and the traffic which was reasonably to be expected to use it;*
- b) The standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic;*
- c) The state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway.”*

Case history demonstrates that highway authorities should also record customer reports of highway defects, however not all defects which the authority becomes aware of either by inspection or customer report need to be repaired. Records from the highways record system Symology’s ‘Insight Enterprise’ system may be used as evidence to show that the highway authority has acted reasonably.

The Insight Enterprise system provides a single database for the recording and tracking of customer enquiries, the management of routine highway risk inspections, register of Utility openings, asset inventory and management and works ordering.

1.3 The scope of this document

This document contains details of policies for inspections and procedures related to the general operational activities in the **Risk Management of the Highway**. It contains details of the measures undertaken by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to ensure the safety of users of the highway. This is achieved through a variety of repairs and maintenance regimes, together with comprehensive planned and ad-hoc inspections of adopted highways, linked to a prioritised programme of remedial works.

Each year, the council allocates its financial resources with due consideration to strategic aims and priorities. The highway maintenance budget is one area of allocation, which is split into a number of service delivery areas each with a dedicated budget. The Council recognises that the safety of highway users is paramount and has an allocated budget for undertaking urgent repairs identified during safety inspections and customer reports within target response times.

This policy document has been written to clearly set out the Tameside MBC standards and operational processes with regard to the delivery of highway inspections and repairs. The standards we have set out are proportional to ensure we provide an effective and deliverable service that is sustainable with the resources available. Recent financial challenges and the expectation of the need for further year on year efficiencies has resulted in the examination of our services to ensure we remain focused on key areas such as inspections and repair to our highways network.

The Council has a team of officers specially trained to undertake the safety inspections and deal with the management of the highway network on behalf of the Borough.

1.4 Highway Service

The Council's Highway Service provides the borough's residents and business community with the following front line maintenance services:

- Planned Structural Maintenance Works
- Minor Works
- Highway Drainage
- Street Lighting and Illuminated Street Furniture
- Winter Maintenance Activities

1.5 Policy Review

The standards set out in this document are deliverable with current resource allocations and will be reviewed regularly with regards to changes in materials, technology and future financial challenges.

2.0 Inspections

Inspections undertaken by the Highway Service can be categorised in two main areas – **Risk Management Inspections** and **Structural Condition Surveys**.

2.1 Risk Management Inspections

2.1.1 Risk Management Inspections (Routine)

Planned Risk Management Inspections are carried out at specified frequencies dependant upon the hierarchy category of each highway. Tameside MBC has identified hierarchy categories for roads and footways that as a minimum reflect the categories set out in The Code of Practice and in a number of locations, to a higher standard, based on a detailed understanding of our local highway network. During the inspections, defects which exceed the minimum intervention levels outlined in this document, are identified and processed for repair.

The intervention levels are identified in the following table and have been determined in line with The Code of Practice.

Risk Management Inspectors also identify defects which are passed to other bodies, for example:

- Defective Utility Apparatus (e.g. water stop tap boxes)
- Defective Utility Trenches
- Overhanging Vegetation
- Trees obscuring Street Signs and Lights
- Unsafe Walls / Buildings.
- Other danger to the highway users.

2.1.2 Risk Management Inspections (Reactive)

These inspections are usually in response to a complaint by a member of the public or an Officer of the council seeing a problem on the highway. These are responded to by the Risk Management team.

2.2 Structural Condition

In addition to inspections to identify and record defects, surveys are undertaken to record the overall condition of roads and footways. This information is used to identify sections of the highway network where planned maintenance works should be considered.

The condition of the carriageway network is determined by a series of surveys carried out by independent, accredited contractors. The type and frequency of survey is dependent on the classification of the carriageway; for Classified Roads a SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment of National Network of Roads) survey is carried out on 50% of the network annually (in one direction of the full network) giving 100% coverage over two years. For Unclassified Roads a CVI (Coarse Visual Inspection) is carried out on 25% of the network annually (giving 100% coverage over four years).

The SCANNER survey is a driven inspection at traffic speed that uses automated road condition survey machines to measure a range of condition parameters including ride quality, rutting depth, intensity of cracking, texture depth and edge condition.

CVI surveys are driven inspections at low speed where an accredited surveyor identifies and manually records the road surface condition.

For footways, the Risk Management Inspectors undertake annual walked condition surveys similar to a FNS (Footway Network Survey). A rating of 1-4 based on their visual survey is recorded for the whole length of each footway in a street;

Visual Condition;	1,	As new
	2,	Good
	3,	Below Average
	4,	Poor

Previously, Tameside MBC had operated a 1-9 rating system. However, this was found to be too detailed for efficient use when identifying locations where planned works should be considered. Data recorded under the 1-9 system has been retained for records purposes.

Survey results are recorded in the council's Highway Asset Register.

3.0 Hierarchy of Network

The Code of Practice defines hierarchy categories for footways and carriageways – these are detailed below. As previously stated, many footways and roads in Tameside are categorised to a higher hierarchy standard based on local knowledge of how the network operates.

3.1.1 Footways Categories;

Cat	Category Name	Description
1(a)	Prestige Walking Zones	Very busy areas of towns and cities with high public space and streetscene contribution.
1	Primary Walking Routes	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes.
2	Secondary Walking Routes	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres etc.
3	Link Footways	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways.
4	Local Access Footways	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs.

3.1.2 Carriageways Categories

Cat	Hierarchy Description	Type of Road General Description	Description
1	Motorway	Limited access motorway regulations apply	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use.
2	Strategic Route	Trunk and some Principal 'A' roads between Primary Destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short - medium distance traffic	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety.
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B and C class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. In built up areas these roads have 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On-street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons.
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions	In Rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 30 mph speed limits random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking.
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-sacs.

Motorways and Trunk Roads are the responsibility of The Highways Agency and therefore do not form part of the Risk Management Inspection regime.

3.2 Methodology of Inspections

Planned Risk Management Inspections are carried out on foot and defects are noted on a hand held Data Capture Device (DCD). It is normal practice that the inspector walks down one side of the street inspecting the footway and to the centre line of the carriageway. The Inspector then walks down the opposite side of the street and inspects the footway and to the centre line of the carriageway and logs all found defects as appropriate.

Defects are generally classified in one of two categories:

Category 1 - those that require prompt attention because they represent an immediate or imminent hazard or because there is a risk of short-term structural deterioration. Category 1 defects will be attended to within 24 hours.

Category 2 - all other defects.

The table below is based upon The Code of Practice.

3.2.1 Carriageways, including cycle lanes

National Classification	Local	2	3a	3b	4a	4b	A
Carriageway Hierarchy	Town Centre	Strategic Roads	Main Distributor	Secondary Distributor	Link Roads	Local Access Roads	On Road Cycle-Lanes
Frequency of Inspection	1 Month	3 Months	4 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months	As per main carriageway
Intervention Level	30mm	40mm	40mm	40mm	40mm	40mm	As per main carriageway
Response Time (working days)	10	20	20	20	20	20	As per main carriageway

3.3 Footways

National Classification	1a	1	2	3	4
Footway Hierarchy	Prestige Walking Town Centre	Primary Walking	Secondary Walking	Link Footway	Local Access Footway
Frequency of Inspection	1 Month	2 Month	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months
Intervention Level	20mm	25mm	25mm	25mm	25mm
Response Time (working days)	10	20	20	20	20

At identified carriageway pedestrian crossing points, the carriageway surface will have the same intervention level as the adjoining footway.

The Inspection Frequencies and repair timescales above are supplemented by the use of a Find and Fix team (see Section 7.0). In addition, other Tameside MBC staff e.g. Neighbourhood Services *Clean & Safe Officers* will notify the Risk Management section of any reports via customer complaints / requests for service so that a reactive inspection be undertaken.

Walked Risk Management (Safety) Inspections are optimised to ensure that both footways and carriageways are inspected at the same time.

Within Tameside, there are two inspections that are not walked. These are sections of Park Parade, Ashton-under-Lyne and the whole of Matley Lane, Stalybridge. These inspections are driven in the interest of the safety of the Risk Inspector due to the nature and layout of these roads.

Driven inspections are undertaken by two people. For Park Parade, all lanes on the dual carriageway and the roundabouts are inspected from a moving car. The speed of the car will be between 10-15 mph. These are undertaken early on a Sunday morning.

3.4 Risk Management

Under the Council's Risk Management procedures relating to the highway it has been determined reasonable not to undertake repair of certain defects, which might fall within the criteria set out in this code.

Kerbs around tree pits are to be classed as street furniture and not a defect.

Damaged kerbs are not normally classed as a defect when they are on a straight section of road unless the damage is assessed as severe. They will be recorded for repair at pedestrian crossing points, if the defect is more than 75mm in width.

Carriageway deterioration at the kerb edge will be only picked up if it is wider than 100mm.

Where the pavement has sunk at the edge adjacent to the kerb on a straight stretch of road this is not classed as a defect.

4.0 Car Parks

4.1 Introduction

The Council has 28 (January 2014) Pay & Display car parks in the Borough.

The council has a responsibility under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 to ensure that the premises / land are reasonably safe for people to use.

4.2 Safety Inspection

Planned Risk Management Inspections are carried out monthly. During the inspection, defects which exceed the minimum intervention levels outlined in this document, are identified and processed for repair.

The car parks are inspected early in the morning before the surface becomes obscured by parked vehicles.

The Risk Management Inspectors also identify defects which are passed to other bodies, for example:

- Defective Utility Apparatus (e.g. water stop tap boxes)
- Overhanging Vegetation
- Damaged Litter Bins
- Damaged Signs
- Trees obscuring Street Signs and Lights

4.2.1 Criteria & Frequency for Car Parks

Surface	Carriageway	Footway	Steps	Unmade
Frequency	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
Intervention level (Surfaced Areas)	25mm	25mm	25mm	No Set Criteria See Note Below
Response Time (working days)	20	20	20	No Set Criteria See Note Below

Note; On unmade car parks the Inspector makes an assessment of the risk to members of the public taking into consideration the surface material, its condition, the condition of the adjoining area, level of use etc.

5.0 Market Grounds

5.1 Introduction

The council has two Market Grounds; Ashton-under-Lyne and Hyde. These locations are considered to be Prestige Walking areas.

The council has a responsibility under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 to ensure that the premises / land are reasonably safe for people to use.

5.2 Safety Inspection

Planned Risk Management Inspections are carried out monthly. During the inspection, defects which exceed the minimum intervention levels outlined in this document, are identified and processed for repair.

The Risk Management Inspectors also identify defects which are passed to other bodies, for example:

- Defective Utility Apparatus (e.g. water stop tap boxes)
- Overhanging Vegetation
- Damaged Litter Bins
- Damaged Signs
- Trees obscuring Street Signs and Lights

5.2.1 Criteria & Frequency for Market Grounds

Surface	Carriageway	Footway
Frequency	Monthly	Monthly
Intervention level	20mm	20mm
Response Time (working days)	10	10

6.0 Public Footpaths & Gulliksen Footways

6.1 Introduction

Local Authorities are required to maintain the definitive map of all public rights of way in their area and this can be inspected at the Council Offices in Ashton-under-Lyne.

The council has a responsibility under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Highways Act 1980, National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Rights of Way Act 1990.

6.2 Urban Public Rights Of Way

Metalled Public Rights of Way in the urban environment are inspected in line with the frequency and intervention level stated for Local Access Footways in tables 3.3.1 & 3.3.2 on page 10.

6.3 Rural Public Footpaths

Within the Tameside MBC area there are 201km of rural definitive public rights of way and 114km of 'Promoted Routes'.

6.4 Inspection Prioritisation

6.4.1 Routine Inspections

The following 'Promoted Routes' are inspected once a year to assess overall condition, signing and safety;

- Pennine Bridleway
- Trans Pennine Trail
- Tame Valley Way
- Tameside Trail
- Etherow Goyt Valley Way

All other rural public rights of way will be inspected biennially to assess overall condition, signing and safety.

6.4.2 Reactive Inspections

Reports of defects to the network are prioritised depending on nature of the defect reported and the usage of the route. In normal circumstances the maximum timescale within which a problem will be inspected are listed in the priority categories below;

Category A

- National and Tameside MBC promoted routes
 - Routes made up specifically for disabled access
- within two weeks

Category B

- Links to visitor attractions and other paths known to be well used
- within one month

Category C

- All other paths
- within three months

6.5 “Gulliksen” Footways

Footways which satisfy the Gulliksen principles are inspected in line with the frequency and intervention level stated for Local Access Footways in tables 3.3.1 & 3.3.2 on page 10.

The Court of Appeal, in the case of Gulliksen -v- Pembrokeshire County Council, found that a particular footpath on a local authority housing estate was a highway maintainable at public expense pursuant to the provisions of section 38(c) of the Highways Act 1959, which provided that a highway constructed by a borough or urban district council under Part V of the Housing Act 1957 would be a highway maintainable at public expense.

7.0 Find & Fix Team

The objective of the Find & Fix Team is to provide a rapid response to reports of urgent highway defects. The team is trained and equipped, to repair most types of defects which occur on the highway.

After completing a repair, one of the team records the details of the work onto a hand held data capture device (DCD). The hand held device is then downloaded into the Insight Enterprise system at the end of the working day.

8.0 Out Of Hours

The objective of the Emergency Call Out is to deal with urgent out of hours reports. Tameside MBC has a call centre which operates 24 hours a day. There is a rota of Officers available who are contacted by the call centre and will attend urgent reports. Officers dealing with reports will either resolve the issue or arrange for the area to be cordoned off by means of sign, barriers, cones etc.

There are many types of such reports such as;

Footway or carriageway collapses – these are made safe by barriers and coned off and the relevant Officer informed the following working day.

Potholes- these are repaired by using cold lay bitumen material.

Lamp Columns that are knocked down- a dedicated team can be called out to deal with these (street lighting operatives).

Street Lamp Column - Access Doors / Panels Open – these are re-banded and secured.

Utility Trenches – these are made safe by barriers and cones and the Utilities are notified.

Dangerous Skips – cones are placed around the skip and if possible the company is notified immediately. If the company cannot be notified they are contacted the following day.

9.0 Recommended Treatments

Where possible the following repair treatments shall apply; -

9.1 Flagged Footways

In areas where there is tree root damage the flags should be removed and replaced with bitmac.

In areas where there is continual damage (these can be areas where vehicles regularly park on the footpath), the flags should be removed and replaced with bitmac.

In all other areas, flags would be replaced with like materials.

In town centres, where possible, repairs will be undertaken in materials that match existing materials. In circumstances where materials have to be ordered to match non-standard components, the area will have a temporary repair carried out and matching material will be installed as soon as they become available.

9.2 Carriageways

Carriageway potholes will be repaired using cold lay bitumen material where possible.

Chipped Kerbs (as identified above) should be repaired using rapid hardening materials where possible.

9.3 Grass Verges

Grass verges should be made safe initially by filling the defect with grit or sand and then referring it to the relevant Neighbourhood Services Department for further treatments / repair.

10.0 Conclusion

This Code is an important element of the council's policy in identifying and minimising / eliminating risk on the public highways within the borough and thereby enabling the council to fulfil its duty under The Highways Act 1980.

Implementation of the code will reduce the risk of injury to users of the highway and the council's exposure to claims in respect of such injuries.

It is therefore essential that the procedures outlined within the Code are strictly complied with.

Appendix

Maps