

## **Highway Safety Inspection and Repairs Policy Statement 2024**

### **1. Vision of the Council**

- 1.1. A well-maintained highway network suitable for all users.

### **2. Introduction to the Policy**

- 2.1. This policy statement lays out the way in which the Council inspects the highway maintainable at public expense.
- 2.2. The aim of the Policy is to establish an effective regime of inspection, assessment and recording to support highway maintenance. The safety inspection regime provides the basic information for addressing the first core objective of highway maintenance, network safety.
- 2.3. In line with the principles of 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: Code of Practice October 2016' (WMHI), guidance for safety inspections has been modified in the light of particular local circumstances, and the relative risks and consequences associated with these. This is therefore part of the adoption of the WMHI into Council Policy.
- 2.4. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspection has also been used as a guide in the development of the Councils process for safety inspection ensuring a cohesive approach across the ten authorities is developed.

### **3. Link to other Documents**

- 3.1. This policy statement supports the delivery of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 and Well- Managed Highway Infrastructure – Code of Practice. It also recognises the effect of the 2018 review of the network hierarchy in line with the WMHI and any subsequent versions of this.
- 3.2. The statement should be used in conjunction with the inspection plans:
- Highway Safety Inspection and Repairs Plan 2024
  - Public Rights of Way Inspection and Repairs Plan 2024
- 3.3. Implementation will also take in to account previous case law, involving highway authorities and others, where defectiveness of the highway is seen as a contributory factor in the judgement.

### **4. Legal Requirement for Safety Inspection**

- 4.1. The Council has a duty to maintain its highways as outlined within Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980
- 4.2. Further, when compliance with the Safety Inspection process permits, Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 may be used in defence of claims against the Highway Authority. By virtue of the Highways Act 1980 the Council are able to repudiate a claim relating to alleged injury, loss or damage if it can prove that:
  - It had in place adequate policies and procedures to maintain the highway.
  - The policies and procedures were being implemented effectively.

## **5. Purpose of safety inspections**

- 5.1. Safety Inspections are designed to identify defects, before they result in injury or loss, likely to cause danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. Such defects include those that require urgent attention as well as those where the locations and sizes are such that longer periods of response are appropriate. Defects may be within an area being dealt with as part of planned maintenance or a more extensive repair may be considered a more appropriate response.
- 5.2. The Safety Inspection regime forms a key aspect of the Council's strategy for managing liability and risk.
- 5.3. The Council uses its Safety Inspection process, data monitoring and a regime of proactive maintenance to reduce risk and provide the public with a safer highway network. This process is designed to reflect the risk-based approach required in the WMHI.

## **6. Background**

- 6.1. There are two main types of Safety inspections:
  - a. Planned cyclic safety inspections to identify potential dangers
  - b. Reactive safety inspections following reports about the condition of the highway.
- 6.2. Budgets exist to respond to findings on both aspects of safety inspection:
  - 1 – Small scale repairs (reactive maintenance)
  - 2 – Major refurbishment (planned maintenance)
- 6.3. The inspections are carried out by appropriately trained Highway Inspectors.

6.4. Safety Inspections are carried out to specified frequencies that relate to the status and characteristics of each highway. During the inspection, defects which are identified as being in need of repair, as outlined within the Highway Safety Inspection and Repairs Plan or Public Rights of Way Inspection and Repair Plan are identified and processed for repair.

6.5. Records for inspections are maintained as stated in the relevant plan.

## **7. Objectives**

7.1. Our regime is set out within a practical and reasonable framework of risk assessment and inspection frequency, which takes account of all road users, including those who are most vulnerable. Our main objectives are:

- To ensure that the adopted highway network is as safe as possible for highway users by locating and identifying defects on the highway, and where appropriate, adjacent to the highway.
- To manage the adopted highway network in a way that will minimise personal injury and third-party claims against the Council by ensuring that management procedures are effective at minimising the risk of claims succeeding due to procedural error.
- That the adopted highway will be inspected in accordance with best practice as identified in the WMHI ensuring that appropriate measures are put in place to manage the risk.
- That defects are responded to in line with best practice taking into consideration location and severity by assessing the potential risks of damage and/or injury to highway users that may result from these defects as advised in WMHI.

7.2. These objectives will be delivered by:

- Ensuring inspectors are well trained and capable of delivering accurate and consistent inspections safely.
- Coordinating reactive and planned maintenance and adopting a systematic risk management approach to minimise risk.
- Ensuring all highway defects that exceed the minimum investigation levels are accurately recorded in the Confirm system and designated the correct level of priority for repair/monitoring.
- Ensuring planned inspections are undertaken at a regular frequency as defined by the road hierarchy.
- Ensuring public complaints are dealt with in a consistent and timely manner.
- Ensuring that the inspections are undertaken using the correct methodology.<sup>1</sup>
- Ensuring that inspectors record and follow up on Statutory Utility repair needs.

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<sup>1</sup> For details of methodology see relevant Safety Inspection and Repairs Plan

- Ensuring that inspectors record and follow up non-adopted highway defects, where they have been observed, in a clearly defined way to ensure that the public are protected from dangers. Understanding it is not the Councils remit to undertake repairs on private land.

## 8. Targets

- All routes to be inspected in line with the timescales outlined in the inspection frequencies.<sup>2</sup> The categories within this relating to those assigned in the most recently adopted version of the Councils Network Hierarchy.
- All repairs are aimed to be carried out within the response time for their priority designation<sup>3</sup>. Where this is not possible, an interim temporary “make safe” action will be undertaken.

## 9. Frequencies of inspection

Feature	Category	Frequency of Monitoring	Reference	Method of Inspection (as appropriate)
<b>Carriageway</b>	Strategic Route	Monthly	2	Walked/ Driven / Ridden
	Main Distributor	Monthly	3a	Walked/ Driven / Ridden
	Secondary Distributor	Monthly	3b	Walked/ Driven / Ridden
	Link Roads	3 monthly	4a	Walked
	Local Access Roads	Yearly	4b	Walked
	Minor Roads	Yearly	4b	Walked
<b>Pedestrian</b>	Prestige	Monthly	1a	Walked
	High Usage/ primary	Monthly	1	Walked / Driven / Ridden
	Medium Usage/ secondary	3 monthly	2	Walked / Driven / Ridden
	Low usage/link	6 monthly	3	Walked
	Local Access/minor	Yearly	4	Walked
	Surfaced paths or hardstanding areas within Parks, other Greenspace sites and Cemeteries	Yearly	N/A	Walked/ Driven/ Ridden

<sup>2</sup> See Table 1

<sup>3</sup> See table 3 of the Highway Safety Inspection and Repair Plan.

<b>Cyclist (Both on and off-road routes including shared paths and roads with high usage but limited or no specialist facilities)</b>	Cycle Strategic Route	Monthly	2	Walked/ Driven/Ridden
	Cycle Main Distributor	Monthly	3a	Walked/ Driven/Ridden
	Cycle Secondary Distributor	3 monthly	3b	Walked/ Driven/Ridden
	Cycle Link Route	6 monthly	4a	Walked/Ridden
	Cycle Local Access route	Yearly	4b	Walked/Ridden
	Minor Cycle Link	Yearly	4b	Walked/Ridden
<b>Definitive PROW / Concessionary paths</b>	National Route	3 Monthly	2	Walked /Ridden
	Regional Route	6 monthly	3	Walked/Ridden
	Borough Route	Yearly	4	Walked/Ridden
	Local Route - High Use	Yearly	4	Walked/Ridden
	Local Route - Low Use	Yearly	4	Walked/Ridden

Table1

9.1. Table 1 above outlines the route hierarchy and frequency of safety inspections on the adopted highway network and on surfaced routes within parks, other greenspace sites and cemeteries. The categories being as identified in the network hierarchy or as mapped in GIS which shows all Council maintained surfaced paths and hardstanding areas in Parks, other Greenspace and Cemeteries.

9.2. **Priority Designations**

9.3. In line with the Greater Manchester Highway Inspection Framework defects that are identified as requiring action will be defined in to 2 basic categories, which are:

- Category 1 - those that require prompt attention because they represent an immediate hazard; and
- Category 2 - all other defects.

9.4. **Category 1**

9.5. These defects will be corrected or made safe at the time of the inspection, if reasonably practicable. In this context, making safe may constitute displaying warning notices, coning-off or fencing-off to protect the public from the defect or other suitable action. If the inspection team cannot make safe the defect at the time of inspection, then they will instigate the relevant emergency call procedures to ensure appropriate resources are mobilised to make the defect safe. Precise measures will be identified by the inspector in attendance. These procedures aim to ensure initial attendance to the defect within 2 hours of the defect being identified.

9.6. **Category 2**

- 9.7. These defects are those which are deemed not to represent an immediate hazard, and which can be repaired within longer timescales.

**10. Monitoring**

- 10.1. Satisfaction with the processes will be monitored through the National Highways and Transport Network Survey or similar future arrangements. Key performance indicator data will also be collected to inform future decisions and policy enabling continuous improvement.

**11. Review procedure**

- 11.1. This policy statement will be reviewed in 2029 unless major changes mean that it is required earlier.
- 11.2. The related plan will be reviewed with consideration being given to risk management and changes agreed annually, unless major changes mean that it is required earlier, by the relevant service director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.