

Report to Cabinet member for Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 7 March 2017

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. T04.17

Title: Highway Safety Inspection Policy 2017

Date: 20th Dec 2016

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Local members affected: Countywide

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

There are confidential appendices to this report, which are exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to an individual

Summary

This report relates to the outcome of formal consultation carried out by Transport for Buckinghamshire with a revised Highway Safety Inspection Policy. This is to bring the existing Policy in line with the latest national guidance issued by the UK Roads Liaison Group and contained within the document 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure - Code of Practice', published Oct 2016. This document promotes a risk based approach to highway maintenance, encourages the consideration of risk posed by defects due to severity, impact, location and the likelihood of the defect being encountered by road users. It moves away from the more prescriptive approach used within the existing Highway Safety Inspection Policy.

The fundamental changes include:

- Promoting a culture of identifying defects according to the probability, severity and risk a defect may cause.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- Alignment of inspections with new network hierarchy, based upon usage of routes rather than simple classification.
- Introduction of 5 day response time for appropriate non-priority defects.
- Promote a more robust approach to immediate/emergency defects.
- Enabling a more efficient method of recording and managing the repair of defects of a lesser priority. Also, to avoid overpopulating the asset management system with minor defects which are unlikely to receive repairs within finite annual budgets.

Recommendation

AGREE: To formally adopt the revised Policy in the recording of highway defects and the subsequent response for full repair. This is to come into effect as of 1st April 2017.

A. Feedback from consultation, Statutory and Local Member views

- There were no direct objections received to the proposal as part of the consultation process. Refer also to point 5 in section C for further information.
- Queries received as part of the consultation will be addressed with individual stakeholders. No comments or queries received prompt a fundamental change to the Policy.
- All responses to the formal consultation are contained within Appendix 5

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

- Not applicable.

C. Resource implications

- To bring the Highway Maintenance Inspection Policy in line with the Well-maintained Highways code of practice. This will maintain a strong defence on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) against third party claims. It is anticipated that implementation of the new Policy will also result in savings of approximately £90K per annum due to increased efficiency of both inspection and repair.
- New Confirm defect codes are to set up to enable accurate coding on site by inspectors within tablet PC's. This is to allow an Inspector to allocate an appropriate response once a defect has been recorded. The work associated with this is included within existing overheads.
- Inspectors require to be trained in the implementation of the revised Policy requirements, including interpretation of defects according to the revised guidance notes that accompany and compliment the revised Policy. The work associated with this is included within existing overheads.
- A revised network hierarchy has been adopted to reflect more accurately the relative importance of roads within Buckinghamshire. The timescales for inspection of carriageway, footways and cycleways have been aligned with this revision. Work associated with revision of these frequencies is included within existing overheads.
- A new set of guidance notes for each of the carriageway, footway and cycleway defects has been drawn up and will accompany the Policy. This to give instruction on how use the severity/probability/risk matrix when determining the appropriate response to an identified defect. The notes address those comments made at consultation with regards to inspections rather than the Policy. The work associated with this is included within existing overheads.

D. Legal implications

- HQ Assurance, the insurers who represent Buckinghamshire County Council have responded from a legal perspective. Their comments are included in appendix 2 and responses to them are included within appendix 5.

E. Property implications

- None

F. Other implications/issues

- Inspectors are to be given extended training on how to interpret and implement the revised Policy, the revised methodology and guidance documents. This training will take place over the three month period January 2017 to March 2017 prior to the Policy coming into effect. There will be no adverse effect on existing inspection requirements.

G. Communication issues

- Those who responded to the consultation will be informed of the final decision and an update will be added to the web page.

H. Progress Monitoring

- Monitoring processes will be improved by the use of dedicated Confirm codes for defect recording.

I. Review

- The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains compliant with national standards of good practice and with the requirements of Buckinghamshire County Council

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Revised Policy

Appendix 2 - Consultation responses (confidential)

Appendix 3 - Existing Policy

Appendix 4 - Consultation letter

Appendix 5 - TfB Responses to consultation (confidential)

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on 6 March 2017. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 387969), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk