

TITLE OF REPORT: Highway Asset Management Plan (Updates)

REPORT OF: Peter Udall, Acting Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides the annual update of the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2018-30 which was approved at Cabinet in 2018. It provides the latest performance information and recommends several changes to the Council's Highway Safety Inspection policy.

Background

2. Gateshead's road network provides a fundamental resource, essential both to the economy of the area and for the quality of life for residents and visitors. Its effective management and maintenance has an impact on activity of all kinds, from day to day journeys to work, school, shopping or for leisure, through to the needs of the emergency services and the road freight industry. The HAMP provides the strategic framework for the management of this resource.
3. Minor updating of the HAMP document is proposed to reflect the outcome of the most recent monitoring. The key points are that there remain significant concerns at the underlying condition of the network, and the resources available to deal with this. Defects detected in 2018 were at a particularly high level and, though this was in part due to adverse weather conditions, longer term trends suggest a level of deterioration in the underlying condition of the network.
4. The adequacy of available funding for both the capital and revenue elements of road maintenance remain the most pressing matter for the HAMP. While current funding gaps are being covered to some extent through the Council's own capital programme, much of this funding is dependent upon borrowing and therefore cannot continue indefinitely.
5. Notwithstanding the above progress has been made in some areas. A revised table of HAMP progress and actions is contained in Appendix 3, with the full document available on-line at <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/4502/Highways-Asset-Management-Plan>
6. The Highway Safety Inspection Policy forms part of the HAMP and sets out a system for the regular inspection of the highway network and the identification and rectification of defects. The policy has been carefully developed with

colleagues from the legal and insurance industry and with officers from both policy and frontline teams. As the detail within the policy on any particular claim can be challenged in court it is important that it is accurate and is operationally correct.

7. A review of this Policy following its first year of operation has identified the need for several changes. These are detailed in Appendix 2. Previously low risk defects which are unlikely to cause any danger were initially considered by the authority for a 12-month repair. It is recommended that this approach is changed such that once identified low risk defects continue to be monitored in case they deteriorate, but that no immediate works order for their repair is raised. This proposed amendment, together with other, more minor amendments, are shown in appendix 2.

The full Highways Safety Inspection Policy document is available on-line at

https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/11370/Appendix-1-Highway-Safety-Inspection-Policy/pdf/Appendix_1_-_Highway_Safety_Inspection_Policy.pdf?m=636834101196170000

8. **Recommendation-**

It is recommended that Cabinet approves:

- (i) the updates to the Highway Asset Management plan 2018 to 30 as set out above: and
- (ii) the changes to the Highway Safety Inspection policy

For the following reasons:

- (i) To maximise investment in the local transport network. To provide the basis for improved management and maintenance of Gateshead's highway network and ensure the effective use of resources.
- (ii) In order to maximise external funding streams awarded to authorities who carry out effective highway management

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Policy Context

1. The proposals support the pledges within Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, specifically to the economy of the area and for the quality of life for residents and visitors. They also support the aims and objectives of the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 3 and the Gateshead Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP).

Background

2. Gateshead's road network provides a fundamental resource, essential both to the economy of the area and for the quality of life for residents and visitors. Its effective management and maintenance has an impact on activity of all kinds, from day to day journeys to work, school, shopping or for leisure, through to the needs of the emergency services and the road freight industry. The HAMP provides the strategic framework for the planning and management of this resource.
3. The Council's first HAMP was approved in 2014 and subsequently updated in 2016. In 2018 a new three-part strategy for highway asset management plan was adopted by the council for the period 2018 to 2030 comprised of The Highway Asset Management Framework (HAMF), the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) and the Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP). All three documents are published upon the Council's website. In order to meet the Department for Transport's (DfT) performance rating guidelines the HAMP is required to be updated regularly. Failure to carry out the update could affect the Council's rating with consequent impacts on funding allocations.
4. Minor updating of the HAMP document is proposed to reflect the outcome of the most recent monitoring. The key points are that there remain significant concerns at the underlying condition of the network, and the resources available to deal with this. Defects detected in 2018 were at a particularly high level and, though this was in part due to adverse weather conditions, longer term trends suggest a level of deterioration in the underlying condition of the network.
5. The adequacy of available funding for both the capital and revenue elements of road maintenance remain the most pressing matter for the HAMP. While current funding gaps are being covered to some extent through the Council's own capital programme, much of this funding is dependent upon borrowing and therefore cannot continue indefinitely.
6. Notwithstanding the above progress has been made in some areas. A revised table of HAMP progress and actions is contained in Appendix 3.

The full document is available on-line at <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/4502/Highways-Asset-Management-Plan>

7. Within the Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP) is the Highway Safety Inspection Policy. Highway authorities must have in place a reasonable system of routine scheduled safety inspections in order to defend the authority from third party claims under section 58 of the highways act 1980.
8. The policy has been carefully developed with colleagues from the legal and insurance industry and with officers from both policy and frontline teams. As the detail within the policy on any particular claim can be challenged in court it is important that it is accurate and is operationally correct.
9. As part of the risk-based approach to policy for inspections which the authority adopted in 2018 the categories for repairs and responses times for defects were revised in line with best practice and our partner authorities in Tyne and Wear. Defects are categorised as either high, medium or low risk with appropriate responses or repair times.
10. Low risk defects were initially recorded for repair within 12-months. Following discussions with our insurers and other Tyne and Wear authorities it is suggested that such defects are not scheduled for repair immediately, but instead continue to be monitored for further deterioration. Existing low risk defects already inspected will also continue to be monitored.
11. This proposed amendment to the Highway Safety Inspection Policy, together with other more minor changes, is shown in appendix 2.

The full Highway Safety Inspection document is available on-line at

https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/11370/Appendix-1-Highway-Safety-Inspection-Policy/pdf/Appendix_1_-_Highway_Safety_Inspection_Policy.pdf?m=636834101196170000

Consultation

12. In preparing this report the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport has been consulted and agrees with its contents. The Leader and Deputy Leader have also been consulted.
13. The Council's asset management policies are available to the public on the Council's website.

Alternative Options

14. The alternative option would be to leave the existing Highway Safety Inspection Policy unchanged. This would mean scheduling for repair some defects which set out above are those considered to be deliverable and which best meet the objectives of each fund.

Implications of Recommended Options

15. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The HAMP is a key document in both allocating resources available for road maintenance and assessing how these can be used to best effect. The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no financial implications arising directly from this report
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications.
 - c) **Property Implications** – No property implications have been identified.
16. **Risk Management Implications** – the proposed changes are as a result of a review of the risk-based inspection system.
17. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – Maintaining and improving the highway network through the schemes identified above will assist in reducing social exclusion by improving access for the young, elderly, unemployed/low waged and people with disabilities.
18. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – Not applicable.
18. **Health Implications** – Transport and highway improvements are vital in achieving an 'Active and Healthy Gateshead'
20. **Sustainability Implications** – Maintenance of highways, forms part of a sustainable transport system capable of supporting the borough's environmental, social and economic objectives sustainably.
21. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no human rights implications
22. **Area/Ward Implications** – Policy affects all Wards.

Changes to Highway Safety Inspections policy

- 1 The table below is to replace the existing table 5 on page 7 of the Highway Inspection Policy.

Priority	Repair
R0	2 hours: make safe or temporary repair or permanent repair
R1	24 hours: make safe or temporary repair or permanent repair
R2	14 days: temporary repair or permanent repair
R3	Low risk defect to review after 12 months

Table 5 Response times

- 2 The new table 3 below is provided as a replacement for table 3 on page 6 of the Highway Safety Inspection Policy in order to correctly reflect operational practice.

Frequency	Category	Method
12 per year	Carriageway CW2, CW3a, CW3b	Driven
12 per year	Footway FW1a, FW1 Cycleway CP2	Walked
4 per year	Carriageway CW4a	Driven
4 per year	Footway FW2 Cycleway CP2	Walked
2 per year	Footway FW3 Carriageway CW2, CW3a, CW3b Cycleway CP1, CP2	Walked
1 per year	Footway FW4 Carriageway CW4b Cycleway CP1, CP2, CP3	Walked

Table 3 Inspection Methods and Frequency

HAMP targets and progress (2019)

	Action 2016	Priority	Progress 2019	Status
	<i>Strategic/general</i>			
1	The development of life cycle plans for different asset types within Gateshead	High	Carriageway, structures and street lighting plans developed, footpath work underway.	
2	Assessment of the impacts of climate change for future maintenance regimes	Medium	Low carbon lighting piloted also experimenting with lower carbon resurfacing.	
3	Review inspection and repair policy in light of new code of practice	High	New highway inspection policy in place and under review. Approved at cabinet November 2018	
	<i>Maintenance programmes</i>			
4	Address the increasing incidence of potholes in carriageways	High	Extra funding from central government provided. New techniques (jet patch under trial	
5	Replace obsolete traffic signals equipment	High	Funding provided, and work carried out	
6	Develop programme for improving footway condition	Medium	Life cycle and survey work commissioned on footway network.	
7	Assess and where necessary act to remedy geotechnical problems	High	Priority areas addressed (Embankments)	
8	Tackle problems relating to Vehicle Restraint Systems	High	Full survey carried out and repairs addressed on large proportion of A184	
9	Develop programme for replacement of older lighting columns	High	Work underway	
10	Address declining condition of unclassified roads	Medium	Micro asphalt trial underway.	
	Action	Priority	Progress 2019	status
11	Review regime for structural	High	Work underway	

	testing of smaller lighting columns			
12	Tackle deteriorating condition of signs and lines	Medium	New programme of maintenance to follow service inspections	
13	Tackle backlog of reactive repairs	High	Review of repairs underway with benchmarking and developing new policies for intervention	
	<i>Information/analysis</i>			
14	Improve links to actual cost information for schemes	High	Some work complete	
15	Link footway inventory data to asset database	Medium	Complete	
16	Identify future approach towards updating inventory information	Medium	New asset information strategy	
	<i>Funding</i>			
17	Review capital and revenue allocations in face of changing budget pressures and emerging priorities	High	Situation continues with extreme pressure on revenue budgets	
18	Assess options for meeting funding shortfalls	Medium	Continue successful capital bidding	
19	Improve benchmarking of costs for maintenance and improvement works	Medium	Work underway with Tyne and Wear partners in this area	
20	Develop business cases for funding repairs to specific asset types	High	Street lighting and Traffic signals have had successful bids	
21	Investigating possible sources of funding to meet longer term maintenance and renewal needs	High	Continue successful capital bids	