



NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL

HIGHWAY INSPECTION POLICY



Introduction

As Highway Authority North Tyneside Council maintain 826km of adopted carriageway, approximately 1700km of adopted footpath and around 144km of public rights of way.

In order to maintain these assets the Council undertakes a number of highway inspections. This Policy seeks to formalise the procedures, intervention levels and response times to which the Council works.

This Policy directly relates to the Highway Asset Management Plan 2012 – 2017 and is supported by the following IT systems;

- Insight by Symology
- ARC GIS
- Trimble hand held data collection units

Statutory Duties.

Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a duty of care on the Highway Authority to maintain the highway network in a condition that is safe for highway users. (Highway definition – any road, footway, verge, or street furniture, which the highway authorities have accepted as being maintained at public expense is known as being part of the adopted highway network).

Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 requires that the authority take reasonable care to ensure that the highways are not defective. Taking into account the character of the highway and the traffic, that could reasonably be expected to use it.

This can be summarised that North Tyneside Council as the designated Highway Authority (the council) has a duty placed on them to maintain the adopted highway to a "reasonable" standard and have a system of Highway Safety Inspections which not only record but identified areas which require action for repair.

The standards for Highway Safety Inspections and actions from inspections in North Tyneside are outlined in "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance - Code of Practice for Maintenance Management 2005"

Highway Safety Inspections

Highway Safety Inspections are split into two types of inspections Routine Inspections and Reactive Inspections; these inspections are undertaken by competent and trained officers.

Routine Inspections

Routine inspections are visual inspections undertaken on the adopted highway to identify defects that require action for repair as well as identifying any other highway issues which could cause a nuisance to highway users. Inspection frequencies vary from monthly to six-monthly depending on the status of the highway which has been pre-determined in the North Tyneside's Road Hierarchy. Any defects noted at these inspections are programmed for repair and given a response time. (Appendix 1)

Highways Safety Inspections are generally undertaken on foot but are also driven if it is only the road that requires inspection.

Reactive Inspections

Reactive Inspections are ad hoc safety inspections of the highway and are carried out when the council has received an enquiry. These can be generated from a number of different sources. As with routine inspections these inspections are visual inspections undertaken on the adopted highway to identify defects that require action for repair as well as identifying any other highway issues which could cause a nuisance to highway users but are undertaken on a specific location and not a whole street inspection.



Statutory Defence

The Highways Act 1980 recognises that it is not reasonable to expect that minor defects, which do not represent a significant hazard, be repaired. Nor is it reasonable to expect that the council be aware of all actionable defects unless it has been notified or found them during a routine safety inspection. If a defect occurs on a Highway in-between inspections and the council could not reasonably have been expected to have been aware of it then it would have a defence against any Public Liability Claim. The Council must also prove that they have a standard routine inspection along with a reactive inspection process in operation to have full defence of claims for compensation brought against them.

Network Highway Hierarchy

The Highway network is organised into a hierarchy and split into two sections, roads and footpaths. The Footpaths include verges and cycle ways as well, in which each road and footway is categorised according to its level of use and importance. The Highway Hierarchy is determine by the council using local knowledge and expertise of officers to decide what level within the hierarchy each highway sits. (Appendix 2)



Appendix 1

Defects and Actions

Routine highway maintenance covers minor repairs to footways, minor carriageway repairs, any other repairs as well as recording and reporting back to other departments for action required from there service areas.

For example the some of the things noted on an inspection could be:

- minor footway repairs;
- minor carriageway repairs;
- gully defects;
- flooding;
- over grown vegetation from private land/home owners
- treatment of weeds;
- tree cutting;
- repairs to traffic signs;
- utility defects;
- street name plate defects;
- Broken ironwork (e.g. manhole covers or gullies).
- Any other action which has been identified as causing a nuisance to highway users by informing the relevant department's of any cleaning, minor repairs to street furniture, cutting of vegetation and public utility apparatus.

Highway Response Times

The standards for response times are set out in the "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance - Code of Practice for Maintenance Management 2005" form those North Tyneside will try to work to following: Although the code does not give dimension it does advise on response times,

Degree of Deficiency

The degree of deficiency and the level of risk to users of the network also define the category into which the defect is placed which in turn indicates the level of response required.

Response 1 Defect

Those defects or deficiencies that require prompt attention because they represent a danger to life or limb.

Where reasonably practicable, be corrected or made safe at the time of the inspection. This may include displaying warning signs / notices, coning / fencing off the defect or carrying out a temporary repair to protect the public from the hazard.

Where defects are made safe, using temporary signing or repair, appropriate interim inspections will be carried out to ensure the integrity of the temporary repair is maintained until a permanent repair can be carried out.

Response 2 Defect

All other defects

It is essential that all defects, observed during a safety inspection (reactive or routine), which require attention because they pose a risk to highway users, are recorded and actioned. These defects should be prioritised and completed within 14 days of action date.

Defect Description and nominated response.

<p>Response 1:</p>	<p>Make safe with erecting such signs, barriers, cones and as are required. (SLG) or repair within 4 hours to allow for mobilisation of out of hours call out team</p>	<p>Emergency Works Order (R1) Defects which could be described as “could cause danger to life and limb”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depressions/collapses in the highway (road, footpath, verge ect) • Flooding – directly in respects of highways • Fallen trees in the highway. • Obstructions of the highway which could be hit by either vehicles or pedestrians. • Road accidents - clean up- make safe damaged signs/other items • Missing/broken ironwork which has collapsed or is likely to do so • Damaged street furniture (e.g. leaning/fallen signs, damaged pedestrian safety barriers, knocked out bollards, seats, lamp columns etc). <p>Action to be taken will consist of carrying out permanent works where possible or make safe by carrying out appropriate works or erecting such signs, barriers, cones and as are required. (SLG)</p>
<p>Response 2:</p>	<p>Make safe or repair within 14 days</p>	<p>Defects and Situations Warranting Response 2 (R2) Are judged not to require urgent attention but are defects that could lead to a significant risk, injury or damage to highway users but need attention before the next highway inspection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pot hole repair to an Irregular Road surface of 40mm and above generally causing an abrupt edge but could be undulating of the running surface. • Damage to concrete road which causes a abrupt edge above 40mm and above • Tripping/Broken slabs in paved area. Trips of 20mm and above. • Repair to an Irregular footpath surface of 20mm.(generally tree root or vehicular damage) <p>Action to be taken will consist of a permanent re-instatement to the damaged area.</p>
<p>Response 3-5: Or better known as planned works</p>	<p>No time limit</p>	<p>Planned works Anything identified as showing levels of deterioration but does not require action at the time of inspection will recorded and passed to the a Highways Officer for consideration for possible planned works. These works are decided on many factors and are prioritised on these factors. The area in question may not be actioned but will be continued to be monitored during routine inspections and action taken during these inspection if required.</p>



Appendix 2

Inspection frequencies

The standards are set out in the “Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance - Code of Practice for Maintenance Management 2005” for inspection frequencies are;

- Category within the network hierarchy
- Traffic use, characteristics and trends
- Characteristics of adjoining network elements
- Local knowledge / expertise

Road Hierarchy

Category	Hierarchy Description	General Description	Frequency
2	Strategic Routes	Non Motorway Trunk and some principal “A” roads between primary destinations.	1 Month
3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter-Primary Links. Short – medium distance traffic.	1 Month
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B & C class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions.	1 Month
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions.	3 Months
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited number of properties carrying only access traffic. (Cul-de-sacs)	1 Year
	Cycle Routes	Cycle routes to be inspected under the regime designated for the road.	As above

Footpath Hierarchy

Category	Hierarchy Description	General Description	Frequency
1a	Prestige Walking Zone	Prestige Areas in towns and cities with exceptionally high usage, such as Prince’s Street, Edinburgh.	2 Weekly
1	Primary Walking Route	Busy urban shopping and business areas, and main pedestrian routes linking interchanges between different modes of transport, such as railways and bus stops etc.	1 Month
2	Secondary Walking Route	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding primary routes, local shopping centres, large schools and industrial centres etc.	3 Months
3	Link Footway	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways. To Include flagged Local Access Footways.	6 Months
4	Local Access Footway	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and <i>cul-de-sacs</i> .	1 Year
5	Public Rights of Way	Generally paths across open areas not made up and normally constructed of chippings	2 year

The Council has adopted an inspection regime to suite their staffing and time management needs. It has been agreed that no adopted highway (footpath or road) will be inspected less than twice a year. This has led to an

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increase inspection of some of our highways. The Council does have an accurate up to date road hierarchy recorded on a map based system which is available for viewing if required. The above safety inspection regimes are designed to interlink and safety inspections are generally undertaken on foot and include the footpath as well as the road. This process has seen an increased safety inspection regime for our Highways, also adds extra credibility to our defence of Public liability Claims and also help identify defects at an early stage to assist with the repair and prevention of further deterioration of the highway. The Council has been praised by the courts for the robust system in operation and this is highlighted in our repudiation rate of claims.

All Information Taken from

“Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance-Code of Good Practice for Maintenance Management 2005”