

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 28 MAY 2019

ROAD INSPECTION STRATEGY

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

This report sets out a new Road Inspection Strategy for approval. This Strategy represents a replacement to the council's current policy on road safety inspections to comply with the 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure - A Code of Practice' (October 2016). The Strategy for approval refers to the suite of guidance documents provided by The Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland for the management and implementation of road safety inspections. These have been revised to accommodate the local context for Angus Council.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approve the Road Inspection Strategy, which revises routine road safety inspection and defect categorisation policy for the list of public roads in Angus in light of the "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice (October 2016)".

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy
- A skilled and adaptable workforce
- Attractive employment opportunities

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities
- A reduced carbon footprint
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 states that a local roads authority shall manage and maintain all such roads in their area that are included in the list of public roads held by the authority. These are commonly referred to as "adopted roads" (including adopted footways).

3.2 Trunk Roads (such as the A90 in Angus) are the responsibility of the Scottish Ministers.

3.3 Report No. 861/10 approved by Infrastructure Committee on 23 November 2010 detailed the inspection policy adopted by the council in compliance with the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice' (July 2005).

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for the maintenance of over 1800km of carriageways and over 1318 km of footways/footpaths. It has finite resources for managing and maintaining the network.
- 4.2 In 2016, a major revision was made to the 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'. This included a recommendation that roads authorities should adopt a Risk-Based Approach to **all** aspects of road maintenance, including conducting road safety inspections. A Risk Based Approach is also recommended by the Institute of Highway Engineers in their guidance on managing risk and liability, 'Well Managed Highway Liability Risk'.
- 4.3 The Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) has produced a suite of guidance documents for road authorities to use in setting Strategy and Policies that accord with the above Code of Practice.
- 4.4 Officers have been working collaboratively with colleagues in Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils on aligning approaches to management of our road networks and in particular the adoption of road inspections that accord with the 2016 Code of Practice.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The Road Inspection Strategy shown in **Appendix 1** has been developed to deliver a risk-based approach based on the SCOTS guidance and approaches adopted at Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils. The implementation of this strategy will increase best value by improving the longevity/durability/service life of pothole repairs and other road safety defect repairs. This will principally be through changes to the roads hierarchy, safety inspections, and defect categorisation and repair response times.
- 5.2 Safety inspections are designed to identify and repair defects to minimise the exposure of danger or serious inconvenience to users of the road network or the wider community. Such defects include those that require immediate attention and those where the locations and sizes are such that longer periods of response are possible. Having a robust process for prioritising responses to identified defects is therefore crucial.
- 5.3 A risk based approach moves away from the prescriptive descriptions of defects (such as pothole depth of greater than 40mm used in previous codes) and the tendency for 'worst case scenario' thinking used in assigning categories of response.
- 5.4 The Road Inspection Strategy includes a risk assessment process whereby a defect is analysed with regard to the context in which it exists. Using a risk matrix tool to evaluate the hazard in terms of likelihood and most probable consequence, the risk posed is objectively categorised and the corresponding required level of response determined. The safety inspection regime forms a key aspect of the council's strategy for managing liability and risk, mitigates the council's exposure to claims and enables a robust defence against claims for loss.
- 5.5 The council has finite resources for managing and maintaining the road network. As well as its critical safeguarding purpose, the implementation of this risk-based approach will improve efficiency and provide greater value for money through more appropriate categorisation of defects and responses based on risk to road users. This is anticipated to lead to a reduction in the number of temporary repairs carried out as a matter of urgency and an increase in permanent repairs as part of a programme of work. As well as being more cost effective, this approach is anticipated to have a positive impact on network road condition in the longer term, subject to current levels of investment being retained. The new approach focusses on the higher risk areas. Reported defects will be treated in accordance with the principles of this strategy.

- 5.6 The strategy establishes the commitment that all Road Asset Safety Inspectors are competent in carrying out safety defect inspections. The approach adopts the SCOTS risk based approach to safety defect inspections training and assessment provision for this purpose which we will look to roll out through SCOTS and with colleagues in Perth and Kinross and Dundee City Council.
- 5.7 An effective inspection regime requires having an appropriate hierarchy to which the local network assets are categorised. Inspection frequencies are then set for each level of the hierarchy and, as a result, a programme of inspections is developed for the stated asset types. Inspection frequencies are based on the importance and level of use a road receives, ranging from one month to annually.
- 5.8 Some defects are notified to the council that are the responsibility of other organisations such as utility companies. The council have a duty of care to the public to ensure the network is safe and will often make these defects safe. This strategy does, however, set out a process of how to treat recurring defects on assets owned by others. This will both protect the council liability and enable the council to recoup costs associated with the defect.
- 5.9 Through changing the defect repair target times, benefits include:
- Harmonisation of standards with neighbouring authorities; and
 - Allows roads maintenance officers more flexibility to plan works on the road network and achieve permanent repairs, which are more cost effective.
- 5.10 The following defect repair targets are proposed in the Strategy:

Priority 1:

Safety defect type: Immediate and critical hazard to road users.

Make safe / repair target time: **within 24 hours** and dependant on risk make safe immediately and/or repair within four hours (previously 2 hours), which is common goal for Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils.

Priority 2

Safety defect type: Medium level of hazard or risk of rapid deterioration into a Priority 1 defect.

Make safe / repair target time: Make safe or repair **within 5 working days** (no change or variation with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils).

Priority 3

Safety defect type: Low risk of structural deterioration and meets safety defect intervention level criteria.

Make safe / repair target time: Repair **within 60 working days** with common goal with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils of repairs within 30 working days.

Priority 4

Safety defect type: Not classed as a safety defect as very low / no risk, often inspected following 3rd party reporting.

Make safe / repair target time: Record for insurance purposes and include in future maintenance project as resources permit (no change or variation with Dundee City and Perth & Kinross Councils).

- 5.11 Subject to Committee approval of the Road Inspection Strategy, it is proposed this policy be implemented from 1 June 2019.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications as a result of this report in that the changes proposed in Road Inspection Strategy are cost neutral and can be contained within current budgetary provision.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

Report No 861/10 – Roads Maintenance - Routine Road Maintenance Regime, Infrastructure Services on 23 November 2010

REPORT AUTHOR: Walter Scott, Service Leader – Roads & Transportation

EMAIL DETAILS: Communities@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1: Road Inspection Strategy