

Halton Borough Council
Highway Safety Inspection Policy and Guidance
June 2021

Contents

Contents		Page
1	Introduction	3
2	Overview	3
3	Sope	3
4	Hierarchy and Frequency of Safety Inspections	4
5	Highway Safety Inspection Methodology	5
6	Defect Investigatory Levels	6
7	Defect Risk Assessment	7
8	Repair Response Times	8
9	Minor Defects	9
10	Training and Competency	9
	Appendix 1 – Inspection Frequency Risk Assessment	10
	Appendix 2 - Inspector Guidance Additional	11

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy is written with due cognisance of Liverpool City Region Highway Safety Inspection(LCRHSI) Framework and Well Managed Highway Infrastructure(WMHI) Code of Practice 2016 in order to provide a special defence by virtue of Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 in an action against the Council for an alleged breach of Section 41.
- 1.2 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on all Highway Authorities (HA) to maintain the highway network under their control. For there to be a breach of section 41 there must have been a failure to maintain or a failure to repair.
- 1.3 Highway Authorities (HA) need to prove that they have taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway was not hazardous or potentially hazardous. This is usually proved by the Council having a reasonable system of routine scheduled highway safety inspections in place having regard to various factors set out within section 58 of the Highways Act 1980
- 1.4 The HA in common with other highway authorities has limited resources with which to maintain the network and must balance the resource available with the risk to the safety of road users and therefore has adopted a risk based approach to the inspection and repair of its highway network.

2.0 Overview

- 2.1 This Policy has been developed with the primary aim of providing direction to those officers involved in undertaking highways safety inspections that they may carry out their duties with consistency and to clear recognised and understood criteria.
- 2.2 The information contained within this Policy sets out the practices in terms of network hierarchy, investigatory levels, frequency of inspection and response times to repair for defects identified on a Risk Based Approach.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1.1 The scope of this document is limited to Safety Inspections of the adopted highway maintainable at public expense.
- 3.1.2 Safety Inspections are designed to identify all defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. The risk of danger is assessed on site, and the defect identified and assigned an appropriate priority and response period
- 3.2 This policy deals specifically with highway safety inspections and repairs.

- 3.3 The methodology is to undertake safety inspections as one process to enable inspectors to focus specifically on defects which if not repaired, are or may become a potential danger to road users and pedestrians
- 3.4 Highway safety Inspections are derived from two main sources:
- Planned cyclic safety inspections to identify potential dangers; and
 - Ad-hoc Reactive safety inspections following enquiries in respect of the condition of the highway
- 3.5 Records of cyclic safety inspections and safety inspections following enquiries are maintained on the authorities Highway Management Information System.

4.0 Highway Hierarchy and Frequency of Safety Inspections

- 4.1 The adopted highway has been classified by type of carriageway, footway and cycleway within the hierarchy in accordance with WMHI and LCRHSI Framework.
- 4.2 However, the Council's frequency of inspections is based on the appropriate, functionality or usage of the highway to reflect a greater focus on the assessment of risk, which takes cognisance of network hierarchy, network condition, claims history in reviewing frequency of inspection and the subsequent frequency assigned as in Appendix 1.

4.3 Amendments and Temporary Changes to Inspection Frequency

- 4.3.1 Review of appropriate inspection frequencies will be undertaken on a regular basis with a recommendation of 3 year intervals or when the need is specifically identified during an inspection.
- 4.3.2 Additional inspections may be necessary in response to user or community concern, as a result of incidents, extreme weather conditions or monitoring information. The occurrence of any additional inspection and its outcome is recorded in the same format as a programmed Safety Inspection but is recorded as being an additional inspection.
- 4.3.3 A reduction in inspections or the reprioritisation may additionally be necessary when circumstances dictate. In exceptional circumstances, inspections may not be able to be carried out, e.g. during periods of extreme weather. In these circumstances, the Safety Inspection policy may be suspended and/or temporary measures put in place. The decision and action taken is to be documented.
- 4.3.4 It is recognised that some locations due to their condition and other circumstances may require more frequent safety inspections than set in this document. In these circumstances the inspection frequency can be increased following an assessment and will be documented. Once the additional risk has been reduced and reassessed an additional variation in the inspection frequency can be documented to change the inspection frequency back to its original or appropriate frequency.

5.0 Highway Safety Inspection Methodology

5.1 Highway safety inspections are carried out to specified frequencies and a risk based approach is taken to identify and categorise defects and the outcome recorded and processed for repair or otherwise via the Highways Management Information System.

5.2 Walked Highway Safety Inspections

5.3.1 When footways have a walked inspection the carriageway will also be inspected during these walked inspections.

5.2.1 Before commencing the walked safety inspection the inspector shall note the; following information:

- The street name
- Inspection frequency
- Current date
- Weather conditions (Ground conditions)

5.2.2 The inspector shall position themselves in a safe location on the footway, in such a position that it enables him/her to view the full width of the area to be inspected.

5.2.3 When the inspector encounters parked motor vehicles they shall take reasonable steps where appropriate so as to view the area obstructed by the vehicle.

5.2.4 The inspector shall proceed along the footway identifying defects that meet the investigatory levels set out in Table 1. All defects at or above investigatory level will be risk assessed and have the appropriate repair period applied to it.

5.2.5 All defects meeting the investigatory level shall be recorded on a handheld device, or by any other means operated by the highway authority. On completing the inspection of one side of the street the inspector shall apply the same process to the opposite side of the street.

5.3 Driven Carriageway Safety Inspection

5.3.1 Due to safety reasons it may be necessary or appropriate for carriageways and footways to be inspected by means of a driven inspection for example inspections on high speed roads or inspections of roads with no footway from which to undertake the inspection.

5.3.2 Before commencing the Driven Safety Inspection the inspector shall note the; following information:

- The street name
- Inspection frequency
- Current date
- Weather conditions (Ground conditions)

5.3.3 Driven carriageway inspections shall be carried out utilising a driver (albeit more often than not they will be a trained highway inspector) and a highway inspector. The driver shall be responsible for driving and the highway inspector will be responsible for carrying out the safety inspection.

5.3.4 The Inspector and vehicle driver shall have due regard to their personal safety and in particular from moving traffic either on the main highway or at junctions and crossings. On no account must he/she put himself/herself in any hazardous situation.

5.3.5 The inspection vehicle used for the driven highway safety inspections will be an appropriate vehicle for the task and comply with chapter 8.

6.0 Defect Investigatory Levels

6.1 The investigatory level is the level at which a risk assessment takes place to determine the action or non-action to be taken.

6.2 The action or non-action will be recorded and processed within the Highways Management Information System

6.3 The Investigatory levels for footways and carriageways adopted are detailed in table 4 below;

Table 1 Investigatory Levels

Footway investigatory level	25mm
Carriageway Investigatory level	40mm
Carriageway investigatory level at pedestrian crossing points	25mm
<i>Kerb defects</i>	50mm horizontal Displacement

7.0 Defect Risk Assessment

7.1 The principles of a system of defect risk assessment for application to safety inspections are set out below. Any item that meets the investigatory level is to be assessed using the risk assessment matrix in table 2.

7.2 Risk Factor

7.2.1 The risk factor for a particular risk is

Risk Factor = Likelihood score x Consequence score.

- **Likelihood of Event Occurring** is the inspector's assessment of likelihood of the defect affecting the safe passage of vehicles along the highway, or affecting the structural integrity of the highway. It follows an assessment of the road Hierarchy and the location of the defect within the road.
- **Consequence of Event Occurring** – The impact/severity is quantified by assessing the extent of damage likely to be caused should the risk be realised. The main consideration of impact/severity is the magnitude or dimension of the defect. However, other variables such as road speed may also affect the likely impact

7.2.2 It is this Risk Factor that identifies the overall risk rating and consequently the appropriateness of the speed of response to remedy the defect.

7.2.3 Having identified a particular risk, assessed its likely impact and probability and calculated the risk factor, the priority and the timescale to rectify the defect is allocated to it.

7.2.3 The risk assessment matrix detailed below will be the prime document used by the Highway Inspectors during the course of their inspections. The matrix will be used to assess the risk associated with the defect and the appropriate response.

Table 2 – Risk Matrix

		Consequence			
		Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	V High (4)
Likelihood	Low (1)	1	2	3	4
	Medium (2)	2	4	6	8
	High (3)	3	6	9	12
	V High (4)	4	8	12	16

8. Repair Response Times

8.1 During safety inspections, all observed defects that meet the investigatory level (provide a potential risk to users) are recorded and the level of response determined on the basis of an onsite risk assessment.

8.2 This Policy defines defects by priority:

- Priority 1 those that require prompt attention because they represent an immediate or imminent hazard;
- Priority 2 to 5 - all other defects.

8.3 Priority 1

8.3.1 These defects should 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 procedures to ensure appropriate resources are mobilised to make the defect safe.

8.4 Priority 2 to 5

8.4.1 These defects are those which are deemed not to represent an immediate or imminent hazard and which can be repaired within longer timescales. Priority 2 to 5 defects are categorised according to priority with response times defined within Table 3.

Table 3 Priority Responses

Priority	Response Period	Scores
P1	Within 2 hours	16
P2	Within 24 Hours	8-15
P3	5 Working Days	5-7
P4	14 Working Days	2-4
P5	28 Days	1

8.5 Inspector Discretion

8.5.1 Inspectors may use discretion in arranging and prioritising repairs where the defects identified combined with additional factors represent either an existing or potential future hazard.

8.5.2 The inspector in his final assessment of the risk takes account of other on site local factors. Local factors may include the close proximity of a school, hospital

or other establishment which attracts increased activity. The location of the defect relative to other features such as junctions and bends, proximity to other defects are to be taken in to account. The final on site risk assessment by the inspector allows the appropriate response to be applied.

9.0 Minor Defects

9.1 It is recognised that on any highway network, a multitude of minor defects will exist which do not pose any risk to either the safety or the integrity of the highway and do not meet the Investigatory Level and may result in no action being taken.

10.0 Training and Competency

10.1 All staff that are employed to undertake Safety Inspections are trained to Highway Safety Inspection Qualification City and Guilds 6033 – Units 301 and 311 or equivalent. This qualification lasts 5-years and refresher training must be undertaken.

10.2 The appropriate line manager / supervisor also undertakes regular follow-up standardisation checks in the way of on-site staff appraisals with each inspector which is then recorded and signed by both the supervisor and inspector as a true record.

10.3 Each team member is provided with this policy and guidance.

10.4 Regular documented Team Meetings and Tool Box Talks will be undertaken to discuss issues in relation to the inspection process therefore allowing it to be continually reviewed.

10.5 Competence is the ability to undertake responsibilities and perform activities to a recognised standard on a regular basis. It combines practical and thinking skills, knowledge and experience and will be enhanced by the following elements:

- Manager Introduction & Briefing
- Work shadowing;
- Highway related training modules contained within the City & Guilds training scheme; Units 301 and 311 or equivalent.
- On-site staff appraisals/work monitoring (line supervisor);
- Regular team meetings;
- Staff Development Reviews (Annually)
- Any other external courses of relevance to post
- Documents relating to relevant CoP

Appendix 1 – Inspection Areas and Frequency
SPREADSHEET

Appendix 2 - Inspector Guidance Additional

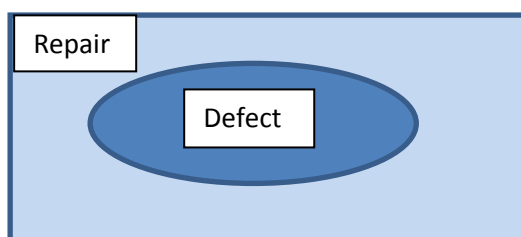
Defects to be considered include:

- All potholes in footway in excess of 25mm deep
- All potholes in carriageway in excess of 40mm deep
- Any gap between flags/kerbs over 20mm wide and 15mm deep
- Flags/drainage channel exhibiting any movement over 25mm (Rocking / Tilting etc)
- Difference in level between flags greater than 25mm
- Depressions in flexible footways greater than 60mm, measured over a distance of 1m
- Verges/soft strips adjacent the adopted highway 100mm
- Channel blocks, setts that are sunken greater than 40mm
- Projections above the surrounding surface greater than 25mm footway 40mm carriageway (gullies/manholes)
- Kerbs over 50mm out of alignment/sunken or broken spalling due to frost damage
- At crossing points footway investigatory level to be observed 25mm
- Estates with shared surface investigatory levels should be the same as footway 25mm.
- Runcorn and Widnes Town Centre investigatory level will be 25mm.
- Speed tables/thumps Asphalt/plastic defects greater than 40mm
- Missing or damaged lighting equipment, particularly column doors or expose wires
Faded/loose signs lit or unlit
The above will be forwarded to HBC lighting section.
- Damaged crash barriers or pedestrian guard rails due to age or RTC.
- Overhanging vegetation impeding pedestrian / vehicular passage
- Dangerous or poorly signed / guarded Utility excavations
Missing / damaged Utility apparatus covers ie: polished/cracked
Utility issues identified will be sent via email or phone to inform them that a problem has been picked up during the inspection.
- Damaged street nameplates.
- Blocked gullies of combined drainage kerb systems flooding
- Indications of extensive flooding that may be due to slow running or inadequate drainage
- Damaged street furniture ie: litter bins/bollards
- Cracking-fatting up-deformation, loss of stone/stripping
- Verge deterioration
- Obstruction/unauthorised signs ie: A boards (Enforcement)
- Abandoned cars/fly tipping (Cleansing)
- Illegal / damaged vehicular access crossings
- Cellar openings (Enforcement)
- Unsafe walls / buildings (Building Control)
- Builders working on the highway (Enforcement)
- Skips on the highway (Enforcement)
- Build-up of detritus in channel line (Cleansing)
- Mud on the highway ie: New sites/farmers (Enforcement/planning)
- Defects found adjacent to the adopted highway (Enforcement)

This list is for guidance only and is not exhaustive. The inspector is expected to note any defect within the highway that could potentially result in a danger to the highway user or a claim against the Authority.

MARKING OUT DEFECTS FOR ATTENTION

All defects meeting or exceeding investigatory levels are to be marked on site using White paint or wax crayon. Markings should identify the entire area that needs repairing, with the actual repair removing the marks and leaving no marks on site. When marking up, consideration should be given to the required size of the repair, and should allow for squaring off and cut back.



CONSISTENCY CHECKS

Every 4 months, the Principal Officer (Reactive Routine) will undertake an Inspection review with all inspectors.

The inspection will consist of a minimum of 3 streets. Each Inspector will walk the street individually and record any defects found, in accordance with this guidance note. The Principal Officer and the inspector will then review the defects picked up. If the inspector's records differ from the Principal Officer's notes then a discussion will take place to confirm the correct action to be taken and why.

These reviews are carried out in order to achieve a consistent approach by the inspectors when recording defects during a Safety Inspection.