



**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment Services**  
**Roads and Footway Maintenance Scrutiny Working Group**  
**31 January 2018**

**Overview – Roads and Footway Maintenance**

<b>Purpose</b>	To provide a briefing to the Working Group relating to Road and footway Maintenance, with particular focus on pot holes.
<b>Content</b>	This report sets out the functions, standards and operational activities of the Highways Maintenance Group but includes details on adoption of the highway carried out by the Traffic and Road Safety Group.
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the report, to give their views and make recommendations to Cabinet Member as necessary
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Councillor Mark Thomas, Cabinet Member for Environment Services
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	Stuart Davies Head of Highways and Transportation
<b>Report Author</b>	Bob Fenwick Group Leader Highways Maintenance

**1. General Description**

- 1.1 The Highways Maintenance Group is part of the Highways and Transportation Service. It covers a wide range of services which are based at Clydach Depots including Planned and Reactive Maintenance (carriageways and footways), Highway Licencing and Enforcement, Winter Maintenance, Street Works co-ordination, Highways Claims Defence, Coastal Defence and Highway Drainage. This report will focus on the maintenance of roads and footways, together with a consideration of the approach to works co-ordination and private streets. The process of highway adoption carried out by the Traffic and Network Management section will also be covered.
- 1.2 The Highways Maintenance section was re-structured in January 2016. Prior to this, highways maintenance was known as Neighbourhood working and including street cleansing within its

functions. The change was made following recommendations from a Directorate Operational Services review.

Scrutiny has reviewed this service in:

- 2010 Winter Maintenance
- 2012 Highway Maintenance
- 2015 Street scene (incorporating Highway Maintenance)

A full description of the Group activities is included within the Highways and Transportation commissioning report. Section 3.4/5.1 of this report is attached in Appendix 1.

### 1.3

#### Adopted Roads

Details of which roads are adopted are available on the Councils online mapping service.

Adoption follows two separate procedures, one for historic previously unadopted roads and one for new developments.

The adoption of Older Un-adopted Roads follows the Private Street Works Code of the Highways Act 1980. It provides a method of adoption for roads that are of adoptable standard under consent of the owners.

New adoptions are only undertaken if developers offer the road for adoption. This is undertaken by agreement under Section 38 of the Highways Act

Adoption of the Highways is covered in more detail in a Parliamentary Note attached as Appendix 2. .

### 1.4

Unadopted highways are not the responsibility of the Council or Highways Authority and hence only significant issues with a high risk are responded to by the Council. A briefing note with options for dealing with unadopted highways is currently being drafted for discussion.

## 2. Why We Do This

### 2.1

There are a number of statutory requirements relating directly to this service. The main ones are:-

**Highways Act 1980** - to assert and protect the rights of the public for the use and enjoyment of any highway.

**New Roads and Street Works Act 1991** and the **Traffic Management Act 2004** – to coordinate and control street works activities by utility companies.

### 2.2

Three of the five corporate priorities are particularly relevant :-

- **Safeguarding** people from harm – The Safety of the Highway
- **Transforming our economy and infrastructure** – Sustainable maintenance of the Highway and works co-ordination.
- **Transformation and future council development-** Sustainable development of the Highway

2.3 The consequences of the Council not fulfilling its statutory duties may lead to:

- Damage to property or injury to people.
- Claims for personal and property injury/loss.
- Negative impact on the quality of life for residents
- Detrimental affect on the reputation and prosperity of Swansea

The functions and activities of the service have an impact on quality of life issues, perceptions of the city centre and the areas people live in. These have both social and economic consequences.

### **3. Management and Support**

3.1 Highways Maintenance (as a group) directly employs 77 members of staff (operational and manual) and receives additional back-office support from the Finance, Purchasing and Stores section.

Routine Maintenance Operations are organised into 2 areas, each area has a designated Area Manager, Supervisors, Inspectors and a team of area based operational staff. This totals approximately 54 FTE, who deal with around 55,000 enquiries a year.

Planned Maintenance is managed by a small team of Engineers using both internal and external contractors to carry out resurfacing schemes and capital maintenance.

The Street Works team deals with works co-ordination. It is a small team (5.5FTE) who deal with approximately 30,000 works on the Highways each year.

Highway Adoptions are managed by the Network Management Team which form part of the Traffic and Network Management group.

### **4. Stakeholders**

4.1 All highway users are stakeholders however the following groups

have a higher level of interest.

- BID and the City Centre Traders.
- Community Councils
- Environment Forum
- Natural Resources Wales
- Emergency services
- Probation Service
- Parks and Cleansing
- Housing
- Corporate Property
- Statutory Undertakers
- Public Transport Companies

## **5. Finance**

- 5.1 The budget for routine maintenance 2017/18 is £2.2m this covers all Highways Routine Works. In terms of capital expenditure the annual capital allocation is currently £1.37m for carriageways and £0.6m for footways. An additional £1m from the insurance fund has been allocated as an invest to save initiative. The availability of this insurance fund contribution in part reflects the successes of the council in defending itself against third party claims.

As set out in the commissioning report, there is a backlog of over £54m of work on roads alone. Current capital funding including the additional £1m is set at an estimated 50% of the budget needed to maintain current condition. With the current and projected future (reduced) level of funding, this gives rise to concerns for the future.

For the avoidance of doubt, the figures set out in the attached commissioning report replicate the statements made at the time of the review as to what would be desirable to maintain steady state. The capital budget for forthcoming years will be imminently considered at Cabinet on 8 February and Council on 22 February and no further formal additions to the capital programme are envisaged beyond what is ultimately included, as affordable, in that report to Cabinet.

## **6. Current Performance and Trends**

- 6.1 The service has a number of performance indicators but is also an active member of the APSE (Association of Public Sector Excellence) performance networks benchmarking group. The Service was a finalist this year in the APSE awards best improver category for Highways, winter Service and Street Lighting. In addition the Service won the APSE Best Highways, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting team award for 2017

The main performance measure relates to road condition. In the Commissioning report the measure was reported as follows.

<b>National Indicator 2014/15</b>		<b>Best in Group</b>	<b>Average of Group</b>	<b>C&amp;CS</b>	<b>Position in Group</b>
THS12	Condition of principal roads	4.5%	11.9%	4.8%	2/22

The 15/16 indicator has been published and remains good at 5.1% although it is understood that the Authorities position has most likely dropped to 4/22. This was expected due to LGBI expenditure in other Authorities being targeted at carriageway resurfacing.

The Service is also actively involved with the CSS (County Surveyors Society) Wales best practice network who use Data Unit Wales to gather and compare performance data.

## **7. Future Challenges & Opportunities**

7.1 The main challenges for the service in relation to this report are:-

- The need to ensure continuity of service against a backdrop of resource pressures
- Increasing demand and expectations from stakeholders
- Growing responsibilities in un-adopted areas as part of an asset management approach to Council assets
- An increase in traffic calming which presents maintenance challenges
- Deteriorating condition of the highway asset

## **8. Risks**

8.1 There are a number of Corporate and Department risks in the risk register those related to the topics of concern are:-

- PL GEN 45: Highways-Failure to adequately maintain structural integrity of Carriageway& Footway Highway Assets leading to not fit for purpose and more costs.

There is significant highways maintenance backlog which will require a sustained level of increased funding from the Welsh Government in order to tackle the issue. An increase in traffic, local HGV movements and prevailing weather conditions are also major contributory factors to the deterioration.

- PL GEN 46: Highways - Failure to fulfil statutory duty with Highway Act Section 41 leaving the Authority open to

neglect of public safety & high insurance claims

Risk of Personal injury claims due to condition of the network.

- PL GEN 47: Transport - Authority could potentially make ill-informed / illegal decisions due to inaccurate records regarding adopted highways

An additional risk has been identified in relation to localised damage to road condition by introducing traffic calming measures, the risk register will be updated in due course.

## **9. Assessment**

9.1 Highways Maintenance is a much reviewed service. It follows good practice and is engaged as a key participant in national projects on asset management and performance.

The Council has committed additional funding to highways maintenance over recent years. However deterioration of the highway network is inevitable with current funding which stands at approximately 50% of that required to maintain a steady state condition. The commissioning report included a detailed report on the shortfall of road maintenance funding, this is included in Appendix 1.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 :

Highways and Transportation Commissioning Report Section 3.4/5.1

Appendix 2

Briefing Note on Highway Adoption.

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