

Highways Operational Standards 2022/23

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 08 March 2022

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director for Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Outcome: To Approve the updates to the County Council's Highway Operational Standards document.

Recommendation: What is the Committee being asked to agree?

a) To approve updates to 3 sections of the Highway Operational Standards.

b) Agree that the Director – Highways & Transport, in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, may approve any future updates to operational process and procedure contained within the HOS

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1. Background

- 1.1 The County Council has a suite of highway asset management documents. Comprising : The Highways Asset Management Policy, Highways Asset Management Strategy and the Highway Operational Standards (HOS).
- 1.2 The Policy, Strategy and HOS were all approved by this committee, at its meeting held on 9th March 2021.
- 1.3 This report seeks the committee's approval to a number of updates to the Highways Operational Standards. There are no substantive changes to the other documents.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The suite of highways asset management documents sets out the Authority's approach to managing and maintaining the highways and public rights of way in Cambridgeshire. The suite of documents supports officers in operational decision making to help ensure a long-term approach to highways maintenance and optimum use of the funds available to the Authority
- 2.2 The Authority's approach to highways asset management is aligned with national guidance, codes of practice and Central Government policy. Central Government's commitment to highway asset management has been demonstrated via the incentive funding mechanism. The amount of funding that the Council has received in recent years from the Department for Transport (DfT) has depended upon the extent that the Council can evidence it has implemented and maintained highway asset management strategies and policies. It is anticipated that this funding mechanism will continue for year 2022-23. The Council receives £2,082,000 as part of the highways incentive funding which requires us to adopt a culture of continuous improvement in our highways asset management approach to secure funding in the future, and this amount is already built into the Business Plan.
- 2.3 Authorities are assessed for Incentive Funding based upon their responses to a broad range of questions regarding highways asset management. DfT assesses these responses and places authorities within one of three bands. To achieve maximum funding, an authority must be placed within Band 3. The Council has previously achieved Band 3 status. It is therefore important that the Authority continues with its implementation of the asset management approach and that the key documents are updated to reflect best practice.
- 2.4 A number of updates have been made to the HOS. Statistics and Financial figures have also been updated to reflect the ever-growing nature of the highways network and assets and the outcomes of the 2022/23 business planning processes.

Updates;

- 2.5 Update 1. Section 3.11 – Cycle Routes are inspected on a regular basis by the Council to identify defects that are or could soon be a hazard to those that use them. Users generally fall into two categories, commuting or recreational cycling. Defects are recorded and repairs carried out. The current frequency of inspection is based on the class of carriageway the route is on or adjacent to. This means cycle routes are currently inspected without consideration to the importance or volume of use by cyclists themselves as a road user type.

By amending our practice to take into account the volume of use by cyclists we will be able to better manage risk to cyclists using the network. We will inspect routes used by more cyclists more often. Inspection based on use supports a more risk-based approach by directing resources to the higher used cycle routes where the likelihood of risk to users is higher, due to the volume of people using the routes. Less used routes will be inspected less frequently at a frequency commensurate to their use. The new frequencies will not be less than current on any route so there will be no resultant reduction in level of service. The effect of this change will be to make the level of use by cyclists the primary driver for inspection frequencies of cycle routes. This represents a best practice approach to the management of risk and the defence of third-party claims. Appendix One – HOS Section 3.11

- 2.6 Update 2. Appendix O of the HOS – Introduction of a risk assessments for new lighting columns. A revised policy whereby risk assessments are undertaken to establish if there is a need for passively safe lighting columns and posts for illuminated signs for all new installations. Passively safe columns and posts are designed to minimise the risk of death or injury in the event of collision. Risk assessments will be undertaken for all new lighting installations or changes to existing installations. Appendix one - HOS Appendix O
- 2.7 Update 3. Appendix S of the HOS - The County Council is responsible for maintaining the legal record of all highways maintainable at public expense. This is held in a document called the List of Streets. The List of Streets only contains basic information and does not include such detail as widths and the precise extent of the highway. However, the Council is often required to investigate the extent of the highway to respond to requests from stakeholders, developers and members of the public. Investigations into highway extents and boundaries can be complex and time consuming. It is therefore proposed to introduce a Statement of Prioritisation to ensure that enquiries that could have significant implications are prioritised, and to enable customer expectations to be managed appropriately. The proposed Statement of Prioritisation for such requests is included as Appendix S to the HOS. Appendix One HOS appendix S.
- 2.8 If approved, the changes outlined in paragraphs 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 will be implemented from 1st April 2022.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

Our Highways are the conduits supporting and connecting communities and businesses across Cambridgeshire and beyond. Well managed and maintained highway infrastructure supports the local and national economy providing a safe environment for public travel and the movement of goods.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The Highways Operational Standards set out the Authority's operational policies to support the provision of a safe and serviceable highway network for all users, thus helping ensure that safe facilities are available for walking, cycling and other non-

motorised forms of transport. The proposed changes regarding the inspection of cycle routes will help provide a safer network for cyclists and facilitate the pursuit of healthy, sustainable modes of transport.

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

Well managed and maintained Highways and Public Rights of Way support and promote sustainable travel choice by contributing to a safe and inviting public realm for travel by sustainable modes. Maintaining the highway infrastructure in a good condition reduces traffic disruption and helps minimise the carbon cost of asset ownership. The changes to the inspections of cycle routes will help encourage the use of non-motorised transport.

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

There are no significant implications for this priority.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.3 regarding the Incentive Fund and its relationship to the adoption and implementation of highway asset management principles.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The standards contained within the HOS regarding highway inspections, will be key considerations in the Authority's statutory defence to third party claims, under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980. The changes regarding inspection frequencies for cycle routes are relevant in this respect.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category. Due regard has been given to the equality impact of the updates proposed in paragraphs 2.5-2.7 and no foreseeable negative impact is expected.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category

4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas (See further guidance in Appendix 2):

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status:

Explanation: The proposed changes to the HOS will help provide a safe network for cyclists, thus helping to encourage modal shift to low carbon transport.

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive/**neutral**/negative Status:

The minimum number of lights will be installed to comply with legislation and not disturb biodiversity or wildlife.

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/**neutral**/negative:

There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/**neutral**/negative:

There are no significant implications within this category

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative

Explanation: The HOS seeks to provide a safe and serviceable network for all modes of transport, including facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The proposed changes to the HOS will help provide a safe network for cyclists, helping drive modal shift and reducing air pollution.

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure, and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/**neutral**/negative

There are no significant implications within this category

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Clair Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes

Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Jon Munslow

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Iain Green

5. Source documents

None