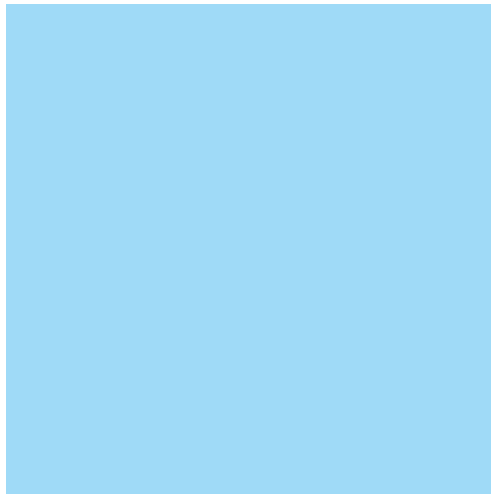




Highways Inspection Policy

Traffic & Highways



August 2022

Highways Inspection Policy

Version	Date	Author	Rationale
1.3	March 2019	Peter Geraghty	New policy, replacing any previous policy in relation to highway inspections
1.4	25/08/2022	Spencer Gray	Reviewed and updated policy, replacing the previous policy in relation to highway inspections

Authorised by			
Name	Date	Item	Ref
Cabinet	12/03/2019	773	Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 12th March, 2019, 2.00 pm (southend.gov.uk)

Next review	Date
1	August 2022
2	August 2023

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1. Introduction

Southend-on-Sea City Council's (the Council) shared ambition to transform the city by 2050 is aligned to five themes, with related desired outcomes: -

- **Pride & joy** - By 2050 Southenders are fiercely proud of, and go out of their way, to champion what our city has to offer;
- **Safe & well** - By 2050 people in Southend-on-Sea feel safe in all aspects of their lives and are well enough to live fulfilling lives;
- **Active & involved** - By 2050 we have a thriving, active, and involved community that feel invested in our city;
- **Opportunity & prosperity** - By 2050 Southend-on-Sea is a successful city and we share our prosperity amongst all of our people;
- **Connected & smart** - By 2050 people can easily get in, out, and around our city and we have world class digital infrastructure.

This highways inspection policy supports the more specific desired outcomes for each theme, including: -

- Our streets and public spaces are valued and support the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors.
- People in all parts of the city feel safe and secure at all times.
- A range of initiatives help increase the capacity for communities to come together to enhance their neighbourhood and environment.
- We are leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean and green.

2. Background

The risk-based national code of practice, 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' (the Code) was introduced in October 2016. The Council's current approach to highways inspection was based on previous guidance which was more prescriptive in nature. With the introduction of the Code, Authorities are expected to develop their own levels of service in accordance with local needs and priorities, and the overarching change is one from reliance on specific guidance to a risk-based approach determined by each local Highway Authority.

This highway inspection policy outlines how we will comply with the Code. It supersedes all previous approaches to highway inspection and repair within Southend-on-Sea and sets out the policy on how damaged or faulty highway assets that may create a danger or serious inconvenience to highway users are managed through a system of inspection, risk assessment and repair.

Defects that meet the identified investigation criteria (outlined in [Appendix A](#)) are to be assessed using a risk assessment matrix. The purpose of this assessment is to determine:-

- the degree of risk they may pose to a highway user; and
- an appropriate and reasonable response to that risk.

This policy has due regard for the following documents:

- Highways Act 1980;
- Well Managed Highway Infrastructure 2016 (WMHI);
- Well Managed Highway Liability Risk 2017.

3. Legislation

The Highways Act 1980 sets out the main duties of highway authorities in England and thus Southend-on-Sea City Council. In particular section 41 of the Act imposes a duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense and the majority of highway related claims against authorities arise from the alleged breach of section 41.

Section 58 of the Act provides for a defence against an alleged failure to maintain on the grounds that the highway authority has taken the care that is reasonably required to ensure that the part of the highway in question was not dangerous for the appropriate type of traffic, including pedestrians.

4. Highway inspections

Highway safety inspections are carried out for the following reasons:-

- to meet the statutory obligation of Southend-on-Sea City Council to maintain the highway in a safe condition; This applies to routine and reactive inspections.
- to identify defects that are likely to create a danger or serious inconvenience to highway users or the wider community;
- to determine the degree and timing of repairs;
- to provide network condition data to asset managers, thereby assisting in the management of the highway network and future maintenance programmes;
- to provide a Section 58 defence against highway claims.

5. Training and qualifications

Training and consistency requirements are outlined in the Highway Safety Inspection Training and Consistency Statement ([Appendix B](#)).

6. Safety inspection regime

As recommended in WMHI the safety inspection regime uses a risk assessment process to determine the degree of risk a defined defect imparts upon highway users. The result of this assessment defines an appropriate response ranging from 'immediate' to 'no further action' and is detailed in Table 1.0 below.

Defect Risk Assessment						
		LIKELYHOOD (of highway user interaction with defect)				
		Rare (1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Likely (4)	Almost Certain (5)
CONSEQUENCE (of highway user interaction with defect)	None (1)	1	2	3	4	5
	Negligible (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	Minor (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	Moderate (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	Serious (5)	5	10	15	20	24
		RA outcome	Action taken			
How risk assessment outcome translates into works order priorities.		1 to 5	No order raised.			
		6 to 10	To be referred to planned maintenance.			
		12 to 16	Raise routine works order.			
		20	Phone defect through and raise an urgent order.			
		24	Phone defect through and raise as an emergency.			

Table 1.0

7. Defect investigatory criteria

The overarching purpose of highway safety inspections is to identify defects within the highway that are likely to create a danger or serious inconvenience to highway users. In order to provide clear guidance, minimum investigatory criteria have been developed using a risk and evidence based approach, benchmarking with other highway authorities and local knowledge. Detailed descriptions of defects and the defined investigatory criteria are provided in [Appendix A](#).

Ad hoc inspections will always be carried out on reported defects but no works will be undertaken where the reported defect does not meet the minimum investigation criteria depending on the risk associated with the location.

8. Safety inspection routes and frequencies

Safety Inspections will be undertaken on the following highway elements:

- Adopted carriageways;
- Adopted footways;
- Urban Public Rights of Way that have a constructed surface.

For the separate elements described above, details of these can be found;

- Adopted carriageways are shown in the Highways Register.
- Adopted footways are shown in the Highways Register.
- Urban Public Rights of Way that have a constructed surface in the Highways Register.

The frequency of safety inspections assigned to each maintenance category at the time of writing is detailed in [Appendix D](#). Safety inspection regimes will undergo a minor review each year and a major review every five years to coincide with the network hierarchy reviews. The reason for any changes made to the inspection regime will be documented.

Rather than adhering to rigid inspection dates, all inspections should be completed within an acceptable drift allowance which is detailed in [Appendix D](#). This is to enable inspections to be planned and completed taking into account inclement weather, planned leave, unplanned sickness and training.

In the case of severe weather events, all planned inspections may be postponed and purely reactive safety inspections undertaken until normal planned inspections can be resumed.

9. Safety inspection delivery

Highway safety inspections should not be carried out during the hours of darkness/dusk or under conditions of poor visibility eg, snow, fog, or heavy rain. Periods of peak traffic flows should also be avoided where possible. Footway and Carriageway inspection are completed independently.

All footway inspections will be walked.

Carriageway inspections can be undertaken either on foot (if this is appropriate for practical reasons such as if the associated footway is being inspected at the same time), or they can be driven.

Driven inspections will be undertaken by two people with the passenger being a competent inspector, supervisor or team leader.

Dual carriageway inspections will be undertaken in each direction of travel.

10. Recording of defects

Defects which are risk assessed and meet the investigation criteria will be recorded on a data capture device. In the event of a catastrophic IT failure defects will be recorded manually at the time of inspection and the system updated when available.

Photographs of defects will be stored with inspection records within the Symology Highways Module.

The photographs will comprise with the following:-

- Photographs should not be focused on the defect only. They should be taken to show the context of the defect and the surrounding environment.
- The image quality must be clear, in focus and not blurred or obscured wherever possible.

When a defect is identified as requiring investigation, the risk assessment process will determine the appropriate action.

Defects associated with a Statutory Undertaker will be recorded on the data capture device and passed to the appropriate section for enforcement action.

11. Investigatory action and repair of defects

Unless otherwise stated, the standards and specification of the defect repair will be as detailed in the contract document in use at the time the defect is found and an order issued (where appropriate).

Defect repairs must be permanent unless otherwise stated in the works instruction.

Temporary repairs are only acceptable where permanent repairs cannot be carried out immediately and risk assessment identifies that a 'make safe' is required.

Where a safety defect is made safe by means of temporary signing or repair, arrangements will be made to ensure the continued integrity of the signing or repair until a permanent repair can be completed. The nature of these arrangements will be defined through risk assessment.

12. Special requirements

At times defects identified within an area of carriageway will require the investigatory criteria of a footway defect to be applied. They are as follows:

- The width of a defined pedestrian crossing point identified by tapered and dropped kerb units, often accompanied by tactile paving
- Light controlled pedestrian crossings
- Zebra crossings
- In preparation to a proposed specific street event

Many highways have been dedicated and adopted with historic features that would not be acceptable in a current highway design. This might include steps, cellar openings or drainage arrangements that present potential trip situations worse than the intervention levels suggested in this document. These should not be recorded as defects, as in law the highway has been adopted with these encumbrances and the public must take appropriate care.

A number of highway assets are not inspected in detail during routine highway safety inspections due to the complexity of the asset. These assets include:

- Streetlights
- Highway Trees
- Highway Structures
- Statutory Undertaker Equipment

Any obvious safety defects identified are highlighted by the safety inspectors and reported to the appropriate asset owner. Further information can be found in [Appendix A](#).

13. Policy Review

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed and updated if/when statute or national standards or best practice requires it. This policy will be reviewed after 12 months of operation and then every 5 years.

Review Summary:

Version Reviewed	When Reviewed	Summary of Changes Made
V1.3	August 2022	<p>The overall policy has been reworked to separate out the guidance aspect and making it just a policy document. This way the operation guidance can be amended as and when required without impacting on the overall policy.</p> <p>2, Renamed from Highway Safety Inspection Policy and Guidance to Highways Inspection Policy</p> <p>3, Throughout: updated from borough council to city council.</p>

Appendices

Appendix A – Defect investigatory criteria

Appendix B – Proposed highways safety inspection policy statements

Appendix C – Well-Maintained Highway Infrastructure recommendations relating to this policy

Appendix D – Safety inspection regime

Appendix E – Highway inspector's training and consistency statement

Appendix A

Defect investigatory criteria

Examples of investigatory levels are listed below.

Carriageway investigatory levels.

Items inspected:

- Central Island
- Central Reservation
- Carriageway
- Lay-by
- Cycleway
- Anti-skid surfacing

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Pothole depths of over 40mm. The pothole must be larger than 300mm in any one direction. At approaches to junctions, pedestrian crossings etc, warning signs must be put out if its suspected that the anti-skid surfacing may have fallen below a safe standard.

Footway and Cycleway investigatory levels

Items inspected:

- Footway
- Kerbs
- Edgings
- Channels
- Verge

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Trip heights in excess of 20mm. For depressions in a footway the 20mm must be a change in profile in a plan dimension less than 600mm.

Covers, Frames and Boxes

Items inspected:

- Manholes
- Gully
- Kerb outlet
- Utilities covers and frames

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Gully and other gratings in carriageways and cycle tracks which have gaps more than 25mm wide parallel to the normal travel direction of pedal and motorcycles.
- Difference in component levels exceeding 20mm on the footway, 40mm on the carriageway.
- Rocking under load exceeding 20mm on the footway, 40mm on the carriageway.
- Missing items
- Significantly cracked or broken items.
- Levels exceeding 20mm on footways and 40mm on carriageways between items and the surrounding pavement.

Highway Drainage

Items inspected:

- Evidence of drainage problems on footway & carriageway
- Gully
- Grip
- Ditches

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Flooding/excessive water 1.5m or more from the carriageway edge 2 hours after cessation of rainfall or where there is a substantial flow of water across the carriageway.

Notes. There are no intervention levels for flooding on the footway.

Road Studs

Items inspected:

- Non-reflective road studs (zebras and pelicans)
- Depressible reflective road studs (cats eyes)
- Non-depressible reflective road studs

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Missing casings
- Displaced items still present on the carriageway should be removed immediately.

Road traffic signs and bollards

Items inspected:

- Signs
- Bollards

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Damaged signs and bollards that project into the carriageway or footway
- Damaged signs not adequately secured to their support that are in danger of falling off.
- Exposed wiring.
- Missing bollard.
- Illegal third-party signs which present a physical obstruction to sight lines or are a clear danger to drivers.

Street lighting

Items inspected:

- Lighting columns

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Damaged street lights that project into the carriageway or footway
- Exposed wiring/access door missing.

Trees, hedges and other vegetation

Items inspected:

- Trees
- Hedges/shrubs

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Tree leaning dangerously
- Sudden loss of clearance over the carriageway or footway
- Vegetation whose growth is obscuring/obstructing road traffic signs, street lights and the public highway.

Safety fences, barriers, boundary walls and fences

Items inspected:

- Pedestrian guard railing
- Safety fencing/barriers
- Boundary walls and fencing

Investigatory level descriptions:

- Damaged items that project into the carriageway or footway
- Structurally unstable items that are considered to be causing a danger to users of the highway.

Bus Stop Infrastructure

Items inspected:

- Shelters
- Light fittings (Refer to Street Lighting Engineer)
- Poster and timetable casings
- Bus Stop Flag & pole

Objects on the Highway

Items inspected:

- Footway
- Carriageway

Investigatory level description:

- Objects likely to cause a hazard to the passage of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.
- Spillages of any material large enough and located so as to cause a skidding hazard.

This list is not exhaustive, and experienced inspectors will use their discretion in identifying features, which would constitute a hazard to users of the public highway.

Appendix B

Proposed highways safety inspection policy statements

Risk Based Approach

Southend City Council will take a risk-based approach to the timing of highway safety inspections and associated defect repairs. The timings of the routine safety inspections are based on a risk assessment of general users of each individual location, while the speed of the defect repairs will be based on the potential consequences of a highway defect (based on its severity and location) combined with the likelihood of that consequence occurring. The final risk-based inspection frequencies are detailed within the operational guidance for officers.

Competency

All officers carrying out highway safety inspections of the adopted footways and carriageways within Southend will have completed accredited training appropriate to their role within 12 months of starting their employment.

In house training on the Highway Inspection Policy will be provided and will be complimented by annual on-site training.

Systems

Inspectors will use a highway asset management system to carry out safety inspections and to keep accurate inspection records. Those carrying out highway repairs will use the same asset management system to manage workload and keep accurate repair records.

Highway Safety Inspection

The Council will aim to complete all inspections within the prescribed timescales. Performance is monitored via monthly key performance indicators.

Safety Inspections will be coordinated centrally with particular emphasis on aiming to meet deadlines with a consistent approach to all officers carrying out safety inspections.

Review of Local Road & Footway Hierarchies and Inspection Regimes

Carriageway and footway hierarchies will be reviewed every five years to ensure that the network is up to date and that categories are still appropriate. Safety inspection regimes will undergo a minor review each year and a major review every five years to coincide with the network hierarchy reviews. The reasons for any change made to the inspection regime will be documented.

Inspection Frequency

The Council will aim to adhere to prescribed safety inspection frequencies within the defined tolerances. All safety inspection completion dates, including nil returns, will be recorded.

Method of Inspection

Highway safety inspections will be carried out in a safe and approved manner to ensure the safety of the inspecting officer and other road users.

Inspector response time

The Council will aim to inspect all reported defects and take appropriate action within the agreed response times.

Appendix C

Well-Maintained Highway Infrastructure recommendations relating to this policy

Recommendation 1: Use of the Code

This Code, in conjunction with the United Kingdom Roads Liaison (UKRLG) Group Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance (HIAMG), should be used as the starting point against which to develop, review and formally approve highway infrastructure maintenance policy and to identify and formally approve the nature and extent of any variations

Recommendation 5: Consistency with other Authorities

To ensure that users' reasonable expectations for consistency are taken into account, the approach of other local and strategic highway and transport authorities, especially those with integrated or adjoining networks, should be considered when developing highway infrastructure maintenance policies.

Recommendation 7: Risk Based Approach

A risk based approach should be adopted for all aspects of highway infrastructure maintenance, including setting levels of service, inspections, responses, resilience, priorities and programmes.

Recommendation 12: Network Hierarchy

A network hierarchy, or a series of related hierarchies, should be defined which include all elements of the highway network, including carriageways, footways, cycle routes, structures, lighting and rights of way. The hierarchy should take into account current and expected use, resilience, and local economic and social factors such as industry, schools, hospitals and similar, as well as the desirability of continuity and of a consistent approach for walking and cycling.

Recommendation 15: Competencies and Training

The appropriate competency required for asset management should be identified, and training should be provided where necessary. (HIAMG Recommendation 10)

Recommendation 16: Inspections

A risk-based inspection regime, including regular safety inspections, should be developed and implemented for all highway assets.

Recommendation 18: Management Systems and Claims

Records should be kept of all activities, particularly safety and other inspections, including the time and nature of any response, and procedures established to ensure efficient management of claims whilst protecting the authority from unjustified or fraudulent claims.

Recommendation 19: Defect Repair

A risk-based defect repair regime should be developed and implemented for all highway assets.

Appendix D

Safety inspection regime in accordance with WMHI

Please refer to Appendix B regarding final inspection frequencies.

Footway Hierarchy

Footway Maintenance Category	Footway Hierarchy Description	Inspection Frequency
1	Prestige	Monthly
2	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes. Major Traffic Generators Major bus route	Monthly
3	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres etc. Medium Traffic Generators Minor Bus Route	Three monthly
4	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways Minor Traffic Generators Infrequent Bus Route	Six monthly
5	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs No Traffic Generator	Annually

Carriageway Hierarchy

Carriageway Maintenance Category	Carriageway Hierarchy Description	Inspection Frequency
1	Classified A Roads	Monthly
2	Major Traffic Generators Major / unclassified urban Bus Route Classified Road (B & C)	Monthly
3	Medium Traffic Generators Minor Bus Route Resilient Network	Three monthly
4	Minor Traffic Generators Infrequent Bus Route	Six monthly
5	No Traffic Generators Residential loop road Cul-de-sacs	Annually

Acceptable inspection drift allowances;

Inspection Frequency	Drift allowance
Monthly	5 days
Three monthly	10 days
Six monthly	15 days
Annually	30 days

While these stated tolerances are all that would be deemed acceptable under “business as usual” there may be instances of severe weather or other emergency situations where the inspection regime would need to be suspended. Under such circumstances the reasons would be documented, and safety inspections would recommence as soon as practicable with all due inspection dates being adjusted as necessary.

Inspection frequency and defect timescales

Inspection Frequency	Category 1 Defects Emergency	Category 1 Defects Urgent	Category 2 Defects
1 Month	Structural collapse of highway, gully/inspection top missing, miscellaneous dangers to public or property. Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding given investigatory levels.	Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding given investigatory levels.	N/A
3 Month	Structural collapse of highway, gully/inspection top missing, miscellaneous dangers to public or property.	Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding given investigatory levels.	Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding given investigatory levels. Risk Assessed accordingly.
6 Month	Structural collapse of highway, gully/inspection top missing, miscellaneous dangers to public or property.	N/A	Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding investigatory levels.
Yearly	Structural collapse of highway, gully/inspection top missing, miscellaneous dangers to public or property.	N/A	Carriageway defects > 40mm, footway defects >20mm, other defects exceeding given investigatory levels.

Category	Response Time
Category 1 Emergency	Within 2 hours
Category 1 Urgent	Within 24 hours
Category 2	28 days

Appendix E

Highway inspector's training and consistency statement

This document is to be read in conjunction with the Southend Highway Inspection Policy

1. Background Requirements

- 1.1. All personnel involved in managing or carrying out safety inspections must be competent and have successfully completed the UK Highway Inspectors training and certification scheme approved by the UK Roads Board in 2010 or any subsequent revision.
- 1.2. It is essential that all personnel carrying out safety inspections should be included on the National Register of Highway Inspectors currently held by the Institute of Highway Engineers.
- 1.3. All personnel undertaking a safety inspection must be familiar with 'Safety at Streetworks and Roadworks: A Code of Practice' and understand the requirements of Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual.
- 1.4. To ensure consistency, in house training on the Highway Inspection Policy and the associated inspection criteria will be provided on an annual basis and will be complemented by on-site training no less than twice annually.
- 1.5. It is essential that all personnel carrying out safety inspections have been trained in risk assessment theory and practice.

2. Annual Training

- 2.1. Before any new version of the Highway Inspection Policy is implemented all highway inspectors will undertake in-house classroom-based training in order to ensure that they fully understand the policy. Particular emphasis will be placed on the following:
 - Purpose and importance of highway inspections
 - Method of inspection
 - Use of software and systems
 - Investigatory levels
 - Risk assessment
 - Emergency response
 - Health and Safety
- 2.2. This training will be repeated on an annual basis.

3. Regular Training

3.1. At least twice each year the highway inspectors and the line appropriate managers will carry out a joint walked inspection on a selected route. The purpose of this is:

- To identify discrepancies and ensure consistency of approach
- To provide refresher training in relation to risk assessments

3.2. If a high level of inconsistency is identified the frequency of on-site training will be increased.

3.3. All staff involved in highway inspections will attend the in-house annual training as detailed in E.2.

4. Inspection Audits

4.1. On a monthly basis the team leader or supervisor will audit a random sample of completed inspections.

4.2. The audit will check that all necessary information has been provided as well as assessing the suitability of the risk assessed response.

4.3. When a new highways inspector has joined the team their inspections will be audited more frequently to ensure consistency.

5. New Starters

5.1. It is essential that all new highway inspectors who have not already done attend the next available UK Highway Inspectors training and certification scheme course.

5.2. In addition to the standard health and safety training for all new starters, highway inspectors must be booked onto the next available in-house risk assessment course

5.3. The whole team will undertake an interim on-site training session during the first month of employment.

5.4. As outlined above, an ad hoc selection of inspections carried out by new starters will be audited on a weekly basis.

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