

# Roads Maintenance Policy

There is a raft of legislation covering all aspects of road construction, management and maintenance. Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 the Council has an obligation to maintain all roads within its boundary to an acceptable standard to permit the safe passage of vehicles and/or pedestrians.

There is an Approved Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance which was updated in July 2005 – “Well Maintained Highways”. This provides guidance for inspecting and maintaining roads and footways and defines suitable standards.

It encourages all authorities to develop, adopt and regularly review Road Maintenance Policies that are consistent with the wider principles of integrated transport, sustainability and Best Value.

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the methodology to be used to inspect and maintain our roads to an acceptable standard. Engineering staff will use their best endeavours to maintain the road network to as high a standard as possible in accordance with this policy document and within the confines of the available budget. The aim is to achieve a sustainable road network, leading to increasing standards over time. In situations where budgetary constraints conflict with the requirements for sustainability then the safety of the network will take precedence over all other considerations.

The Code recognises that road class in itself is not a suitable indicator of a roads importance and recommends that each road section should be allocated a hierarchy based upon its importance to the network and the community.

All road sections in Shetland will be allocated a hierarchy score based on a range of factors such as traffic flow, road function, road class, bus usage, winter maintenance priority and a number of local factors of importance e.g. access to schools, access to emergency and medical facilities, access for Commerce or Industrial installations, access to ferry terminals and airports etc. The hierarchy score will determine the maintenance band (M1 to M5) appropriate for the location. This may affect the frequency of inspections on that part of the Network.

The Code states that the establishment of an effective regime of inspection, assessment and recording is the most critical component of road maintenance. The characteristics of the regime, including frequency of inspection, items to be recorded and nature of response should be defined following an assessment of the relative risks.

The inspection regime has to be designed to meet the principles and objectives of the Roads Maintenance Strategy and in particular to:

- Comply with legal obligations to maintain the network in a safe condition,

- Enable funds to be allocated effectively and priorities set,
- Establish the extent of outstanding work and funding requirements,
- Monitor trends in the network, both locally and against national criteria, including Performance Indicators.

There is a growing trend towards machine collected survey information to determine the condition of the road network. These have the advantage of being more repeatable than visual inspections with built in consistency. These are designed however to measure specific criteria and will not replace the inspector's ability to observe the road from a users perspective.

In Scotland, all Local Authorities agreed through SCOTS (Society of Chief Officers of Transport) to an annual Scottish Road Maintenance Condition Survey (SRMCS) in which a proportion of the road network is surveyed annually by machine. This measures the surface texture of the road, it also measures any ruts in the road and other deformities in the road surface. Discussion between Audit Scotland and SCOTS led to the results of this survey becoming an annual Key Performance Indicator (KPI), which is an indicator of the condition of each authority's road Network.

These condition surveys are one of the tools we use to determine our priorities for surface dressing and surfacing overlay programmes. Schemes are determined following further visual assessments of the road and the proposed programmes are notified to the Member / Officer working group and community councils.

In addition to these inspections and surveys there are processes in place to deal with reports or concerns raised by members of the Shetland Community.

The effectiveness of the policy will be subject to ongoing reviews and updated as appropriate.

This document will form part of the Authority's Road Asset Management Plan.