

Place & Resources Overview Committee

19 October 2021

Dorset Highways Policies

Code of Practice for the classification of highway safety hazards and defects and Highway inspector's guidance manual

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Place and Resources Overview Committee support the following action, in line with the decision of the highways & transport task and finish group:
Adoption of the revised and amended policies listed in this report.

Reason for Recommendation:

The policies listed were previously adopted by Dorset County Council. The view is that they required further change to ensure that they followed the most up to date national practice and reflected changes to the way the highway is used. The policies also required amending to reflect changes in the council and staffing.

We have taken advice on the process for adopting the policies. As only minor amendments have been made to the policies it is not seen as a key decision, so does not need a report to full council. The leader has delegated to individual members of the cabinet the ability to make executive decision of this type. Any recommendations made by the overview committee will be to the portfolio holder, Cllr Ray Bryan.

1. Executive Summary

The two policies listed below are regularly reviewed to ensure that they follow national best practise and as far as reasonably practicable follow other authorities in the area and of a similar type.

1.1, Code of Practice for the classification of highway safety hazards and defects

This policy set out the risk-based approach to highway safety inspections and how to recognise defects that pose a hazard or safety issue.

It describes the hierarchy and inspection frequencies for the carriageway, footway and cycleway networks. It includes the investigatory levels for a variety of the most commonly experienced defects and response times for repairs.

The changes to this document are as follows.

Cycleways,

With the increase in use of cycles of all types it was recognised that we needed a more robust approach to recognising safety defects that could affect cyclist. Particularly defects that appear in the marked cycleway network across the county.

To this end we have created a cycleway hierarchy, defects and investigatory levels for cycleways. The main affect of this will be earlier and faster repairs to safety defect found in cycleways that are part of the carriageway.

Trees

A formal process has been added to the document to ensure that any potential activities that could affect the health of trees in or near the highway are reported to the arboriculturally team. This should reduce the risk of trees falling due to activities such as clear felling or excavation close to tree roots etc.

Variation from defect category response times

We have given the community highways officers (inspectors) more flexibility to move away from the pre set repair times for safety defects. This will allow them to change the category of the defect when they feel the local condition present either a higher or lower risk than would normally be expected.

Change to response time to maintenance defects

We have historically identified some defects in the carriageway that required repair, not for safety reasons but to ensure the surface remade in a well-maintained condition. These are carriageway pothole type defects of a depth of more than 20mm but less than 40mm and a diameter of more than 300mm. These defects have had a category of 2b giving us 28 days to make a suitable repair. To allow us to carry out these repairs in a more cost effective manner these defects have been changed to a 2c defect which has an undefined repair time but are typically done within 6 months.

This will allow us to plan these repairs, grouping them together geographically and allow us to utilise repair methods that are more permanent and efficient.

It will also help us to deal with any increase in safety related defects that changes to our response to cycleways may produce.

1.2, Highway inspector's guidance manual

This document has been changed to reflect the changes in the Code of Practice.

Both documents have been altered to reflect changes to the council since LGR.

We have taken advice on the process for adopting the policies. As only minor amendments have been made to the policies it is not seen as a key decision, so does not need a report to full council. The leader has delegated to individual members of the cabinet the ability to make executive decision of this type. Any recommendations made by the overview committee will be to the portfolio holder, Cllr Ray Bryan.

2. Financial Implications

No financial implications have been identified.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

No negative well-being or health implications have been identified.

4. Climate implications

No climate implications have been identified.

5. Other Implications

There are no other implications to different areas of the council.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

The changes to the Policies will reduce risk to the council and ensure that the highway is safe for all users.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

8. Appendices

[Link to Appendix 1 - Code of Practice for the classification of highway safety hazards and defects \(not appended to report due to size of document\)](#)

Appendix 2 - Highway inspectors guidance manual

9. Background Papers None

Footnote: Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.