

	<h2>Environment Committee</h2> <h3>8th March 2022</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<h2>Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) 2022</h2>
<p>Report of</p>	<p>Chairman of Environment Committee</p>
<p>Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p>Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1 – Safety Defect Intervention Criteria/non-intervention examples</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual(HISIM) 2022</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Operational Network Hierarchy (ONH) 2022</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>This report seeks the Committee’s approval (on behalf of LBB as the Highway Authority) for the 2022 reviewed and updated LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM). This document supersedes the previous 2013 LBB Highway Inspection Manual. Intervention levels have not changed but best practice now requires a risk assured and financial affordability policy to be added to the manual.</p> <p>The HISIM is a key quality and risk assurance element of the LBB Strategic Asset Management Plan (Highways) and follows the “2016 Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice” national guidance. The HISIM incorporates the LBB Operational Network Hierarchy (ONH), which is reviewed regularly as the network changes, and safety inspection operational plans. The HISIM defines the LBB standards for safety defect intervention action thresholds for carriageway and footway trips and potholes, which are not changing.</p>

An annual budget of £1,415,000 in 2021/22 is assigned to achieve the policy standards. This budget is complemented by other revenue and capital funds, including the Network Recovery Plan, to maintain Barnet's highway infrastructure.

Officer's Recommendations

- 1. That the Committee approves the 2022 LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) as part of the Authority's overall Highway Infrastructure Asset Management system.**
- 2. That the Committee delegate authority to the Executive Director for Environment to review the Operational Network Hierarchy as required, in consultation with the Chairman of the Environment Committee, to ensure a risk-based approach to highway safety inspection is maintained.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report is needed to evidence that LBB as Highway Authority has in place a fit for purpose risk management system to ensure the safety of highway infrastructure users is achieved within the financial resource. The system is documented in the LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual 2022 (HISIM) and is based on current best practice guidance in the 2016 "Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice". The system is based on defined criteria and measurable thresholds for highway infrastructure safety defects to be repaired linked to the appropriate timescales to make safe the Highway for users.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Barnet's highway network is our largest, most valuable and most visible community asset and is probably the most used of all our services, by nearly all residents daily. It is vital to the economic, social and environmental well-being of our community.
- 2.2 The Highways Act 1980 ("**HA 1980**") sets out the main duties of highway authorities in England and Wales. Highway maintenance policy is set within a legal framework. Section 41 of the HA 1980 imposes a duty to maintain highways which are maintainable at public expense. The HA 1980 sits within a much broader legislative framework specifying powers, duties and standards for highway maintenance.
- 2.3 The Council has a duty to ensure that the statutory functions and responsibilities in relation to those highways for which the local authority is responsible are discharged. The Council also has a duty to ensure a safe passage for the highway user through the effective implementation of the legislation available to it, principally the HA 1980 and, in particular, Section 41 of the HA 1980 (noted above).

- 2.4 The Highway network is constantly aging and subject to deterioration and damage. Deterioration results in potholes in carriageways and potholes and trips in footways which cause safety concerns for users. Potholes and trips will range in severity and the particular risk they pose due to their location. All Highway Authorities need to make available a budget to make repairs.
- 2.5 The current intervention levels are 25mm for footways and 40mm for carriageways. Examples of intervention levels and the type of defects recorded but not repaired are in Appendix 1.
- 2.6 An effective regime of inspection, assessment and recording is the most crucial component of highway 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 associated with potential circumstances of network condition. These are set in the context of the authority's overall policy and maintenance strategy. Highway Inspectors will measure and record the size of potholes and/or trips and based on the measurement and position on the network assign a risk-based repair response time category ranging from a very urgent 'make safe' emergency through various timed responses. The present policy is based on a 25mm intervention threshold in footways and 40mm in carriageway. In footways situations where the paving slab 'trip' or tarmac pothole is less than 25mm deep no repair action will be taken and the location will be monitored during subsequent scheduled inspections. Carriageway potholes and other defects less than 40mm will not meet the safety defect intervention criteria and will not be actioned for repair but will be monitored by scheduled inspections. Appendix 1 contains an extracted table 6.5 from the HISIM covering safety defect guidance for a variety of assets and situations.
- 2.7 This inspection, assessment and recording regime provides the basic information for addressing the core objectives of highway maintenance namely safety, serviceability and sustainability.
- 2.8 All Authorities are therefore strongly advised to undertake safety inspections in accordance with the principles of the current guidance document (Well Managed Highways Infrastructure: A Code of Practice 2016) so that, where necessary, they are able to support a defence under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980. This requires that a court shall have regard to:-

'whether the highway authority knew or could reasonably be expected to know, that the condition of the part of the highway to which the action relates was likely to cause danger to users of the highway'.

- 2.9 Section 58 also states that the court shall, in particular, have regard for:
- The character of the highway and the traffic which was reasonably to be expected to use it.

- The standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and use by such traffic.
- That state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway.
- Whether the Authority knew or could reasonably have been expected to know that the condition of the highway was likely to cause danger to users
- Whether warning notices were displayed when immediate repair could not reasonably be expected

2.10 The Section 58 standards adopted for safety defect intervention criteria need to achieve a reasonable approach and be aligned with general standards used by similar authorities and take due regard for budget affordability to meet the standards. It is difficult to benchmark precisely between authorities. The LBB current annual expenditure of circa £1.4m on reactive maintenance combined with £6.7m network recovery capital planned maintenance compared to the latest Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey indicates a close proximity to average London budgets (£8.5m).

2.11 This recommendation supports our robust inspection regime. It facilitates a good service for road users and provides the system to collect evidence to show that the highway authority has acted reasonably. The Council categorises the importance of this categorisation and documents all roads and footways for inspection together with the frequency of inspection and the intervention criteria for repairing defects.

2.12 The LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) helps to ensure that LBB statutory Highway duties are met and that a robust safety inspection system is fully documented and operationally performance managed. The HISIM conforms with the latest legislative framework and Code of Practice guidance regarding highway infrastructure maintenance inspections. It covers the core elements of asset classification, network classification/hierarchy, process for inspections, decision making and record keeping, resource needs, performance management, training health and safety and training requirements, which will be covered as relevant in each section.

2.13 The LBB Operational Network Hierarchy (ONH) is an integral part of the safety inspection system and the HISIM. The ONH maintains a risk category for all parts of the network from which scheduled safety inspections are planned and undertaken to appropriate frequencies. ONH is regularly reviewed by officers to ensure compliance with national guidelines and updated accordingly to maintain a risk-based approach to highway inspections.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 An effective safety inspection system is a mandatory and necessary requirement to comply with Section 41 of the Highways Act and to provide LBB

as Highway Authority with a legal defence to personal injury and damage claims under Section 58 of the Highways Act. No alternatives have been identified.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Once the Committee approves the recommendations, the authority's managing agents (Re) will commence review of the resources required to implement the new inspection regime and mobilise for delivery from 1 April 2022. Barnet's highways management system (Confirm) will also be reconfigured to take into account the revised requirements.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Highway network is the Council's most valuable asset and is vital to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the Borough as well as the general image perception. It is a key element in the LBB Strategic Asset Management Plan. The Highways provide access for business and communities, as well as contribute to the area's local character and the resident's quality of life. Highways really do matter to people and often public opinion surveys continually highlight dissatisfaction with the condition of local roads and the way they are managed. Public pressure can often result in the need for reactive and emergency repairs such as potholes, for example, to ensure the infrastructure is safe for users.

- 5.1.2 The Council's Corporate Plan – The Barnet Plan 2021-25 contains the strategic priority "Clean, Safe and Well Run". There is a commitment to invest in planned maintenance through the Network Recovery Programme to ensure roads and pavements can be used for safe, reliable travel in the long term. The Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) ensures that in parallel to that programme that necessary reactive and emergency safety defects are identified and remedied applying risk management criteria and coordinating with the planned maintenance carriageway and footway Network Recovery Programme.

- 5.1.3 The Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual does also contribute to the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy by making Barnet a safe and great place to live and enable the residents to keep well and independent.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The proposed revised maintenance regime will ensure the effective financial management of the highways network through the implementation of a clear policy framework, optimising resources deployed.
- 5.2.2 No additional revenue budget will be required to implement the new inspection policy.

5.2.3 There are no additional staffing ICT or property implications. Existing organisational and system arrangements will continue

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. This report does not relate to procurement of services contracts.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 The Council's Constitution Article 7 – Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships (Responsibility for Functions, 7.5) gives the Environment Committee responsibility for all borough-wide or cross-constituency matters related to the street scene.

5.4.2 Highway Maintenance is a statutory duty under the Highways and Traffic Management Acts.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 Effective management of risk is an integral part of asset management and the Council's Risk Management Framework has established strategic and departmental risk registers.

5.5.2 The Code of Practice 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' (2016) advocates the adoption of a risk-based approach to the management of highway infrastructure assets. The LBB Highway Infrastructure Safety Inspection Manual (HISIM) 2022 (Appendix 2) and the accompanying LBB Operational Network Hierarchy (ONH) V6 December 2022 (Appendix 3) have been developed in accordance with this.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 Good roads and pavements have benefits to all sectors of the community in removing barriers and assisting quick, efficient and safe movement to schools, work and leisure. This is particularly important for older people, people caring for children and pushing buggies, those with mobility difficulties and sight impairments. The state of roads and pavements are amongst the top resident concerns and the Council is listening and responding to those concerns by the proposed planned highways maintenance programme.

5.6.2 The physical appearance and the condition of the roads and pavements have a significant impact on people's quality of life. A poor-quality street environment will give a negative impression of an area, impact on people's perceptions and attitudes as well as increasing feelings of insecurity. The Council's policy is

focused on improving the overall street scene across the borough to a higher level and is consistent with creating an outcome where all communities are thriving and harmonious places where people are happy to live.

5.6.3 There are on-going assessments carried out on the conditions of the roads and pavements in the borough, which incorporates roads on which there were requests by letter, email, and phone-calls from users, Members and issues raised at meetings such as Area Forums. The improvements and repairs aim to ensure that all users have equal and safe access across the borough regardless of the method of travel. Surface defects considered dangerous are remedied to benefit general health and safety issues for all.

5.6.4 The Equality Act 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day to day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design policies and the delivery of services. There is an on-going process of regularisation and de-cluttering of street furniture and an updating of highway features to meet the latest statutory and technical expectations.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 This section of the report does not apply to this report.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 No public consultation was undertaken as this is a statutory duty and the proposed changes do not have a significant impact on public expectations.

5.8.2 Council's Organisational Resilience, Assurance Group has been engaged in reviewing of the highway inspection manual and the risk assessment process.

5.9 Environmental Impact

5.9.1 There are no direct environmental implications from this recommendation to approve the 2022 HISIM.

5.10 Insight

5.10.1 This section of the report does not apply to this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.2 LBB Highway Inspection Manual (2014)

6.3 LBB Strategic Asset Management Plan- September 2014. Highways (para 5.1, p20).

6.4 LBB Highways Asset Management Plan – November 2012