

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Road Safety Inspection Policy and Manual
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/18/003
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Mark Reilly
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Doug Ritchie
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1&3

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the new Road Safety Inspection Policy (Appendix 1) and Roads Safety Inspection Manual (Appendix 2), which will enable Aberdeen City Council to fulfil its statutory obligation under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Road Safety Inspection Policy appended to this report.  
(Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Approve the Roads Safety Inspection Manual appended to this report.  
(Appendix 2)

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Aberdeen City Council, as Roads Authority, has a statutory obligation under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 for the management and maintenance of its road network. Section 1 of the Act states that "...a local roads authority shall manage and maintain all such roads in their area as are for the time being entered in a list (in this Act referred to as their "list of public roads") prepared and kept by them under this section".
- 3.2 There are currently around 913 km of carriageway, as well as over 1200 km of footway, on the List of Public Roads for which the Roads Service is tasked with maintaining in a serviceable and safe condition.

- 3.3 A fundamental aspect of delivering this function is having a detailed Road Safety Inspection Policy and Safety Inspection Manual. The current Safety Inspection Manual has been in place since 2011 and was developed in line with the relevant Code of Practice at the time (Well-maintained Highways – code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management). However, a new Code of Practice - Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure – was published in October 2016.
- 3.4 Road authorities must achieve compliance with the new Code of Practice by the 28th of October 2018.
- 3.5 Insurance companies require that the new Code of Practice is adopted by authorities by that date in order to be able to provide public liability insurance cover. Failure to do so could leave Aberdeen City Council potentially uninsurable against roads related claims and undefended in terms of legal proceedings and insurance claims raised against it.
- 3.6 The new Code of Practice, and hence the proposed new Roads Safety Inspection Policy and Safety Inspection Manual, promotes a more risk-based approach to categorising the road network, carrying out inspections, and assessing and prioritising defects. Whilst Aberdeen City Council already use a risk-based approach, it does not fully fulfil the new criteria set out in the Code and so updates have been required. The new document will be reviewed by the Strategy and Policy Review.
- 3.7 The new Code of Practice makes recommendations that neighbouring authorities collaborate on policy. The proposed new policy aligns closely to the approved policy of Aberdeenshire Council and Dundee City Council.
- 3.8 In response to the new Code of Practice the Service has reviewed and updated its Roads Safety Inspection Manual to ensure that defect prioritisation and categorisation are handled in a risk-based manner as per the direction of the new Code. Factors that are considered when assessing a defect include: The maintenance hierarchy of the road, the speed limit, the physical dimensions of the defect and the location of the defect on the carriageway. By considering these factors when assessing a defect, the Service considers the risk the defect poses, instead of simply the nature of the individual defect.
- 3.9 The policy allows the Service to prioritise its response to any given defect in relation to the risk that it may pose and within an appropriate timescale for the risk.
- 3.10 The new Safety Inspection Manual ensures consistency in the assessment of defects across the network allowing works to be prioritised by risk and a robust and consistent Road Safety Inspection Policy and Safety Inspection Manual are essential for Aberdeen City Council to demonstrate the fulfilment of statutory duties as a local authority.

- 3.11 The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the new policy and that all staff delegated with carrying out inspections are appropriately trained to meet the requirements associated with the change.
- 3.12 One recommendation of the new Code is that Local Authorities review and update Policy and Procedure in line with changes to their network. On April 1st, 2019 Aberdeen City Council will become responsible for 44km of de-trunked carriageway, following the completion of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. This will significantly change the nature and volumes of traffic flows on many roads within the network, as well as significantly increasing the volume of dual carriageway to be maintained. Given this major change to the network, the Roads Service will carry out a further review of the new Policy and Safety Inspection Manual to reflect any changes to our network and ensure we continue full compliance with the new Code of Practice.
- 3.13 The new Code of Practice features a new roads hierarchy for road classification which has been adopted into the new Policy and Safety Inspection Manual. Previously roads were classed as Key Routes, Secondary, Link and Local access. The new hierarchy classes roads into Strategic Route, Main Distributor, Secondary Distributor, Link Road and Local Access Road. This allows for a more accurate classification of the Roads Network with a more clearly defined hierarchy than in the previous documentation.
- 3.14 The new Safety Inspection Manual updates inspection frequencies in line with the adoption of the new hierarchy. Inspection frequencies have been changed in line with the new hierarchy. This will lead to some roads being inspected with greater frequency and others being inspected with lower frequency.
- 3.15 The Council previously fulfilled its statutory obligations by conducting Road Safety and New Roads and Street Works Inspections through its deployment of 6 Road Safety Inspectors and 3 New Roads and Streetworks Inspectors. The city is divided into 6 inspection areas (see appendix 3) and previously each Road Safety Inspector was responsible for safety inspections in 1 area.
- 3.16 A recent reduction in the overall number of Road Inspectors from 9 to 6 (previously 6 Road Safety Inspectors and 3 New Roads and Street Works Inspectors) as part of a service redesign requires Aberdeen City to promote a new approach to how it will inspect its roads assets. The reduced frequency of certain inspections (as outlined in the Safety Inspection Manual), a review of the inspectors' current duties, amalgamation of the two inspection teams, increased use of new technological solutions and methods and review of working practices in line with the new CoP will allow the Council to fulfil its duties in accordance with the new Code of Practice. Where previously Roads Safety Inspectors and New Roads Streetworks Inspectors were two separate roles, the service redesign will see both teams amalgamate with all inspectors to be trained in the duties of both roles.

- 3.17 A full review of the impact the changes will have on our customers is required to ensure they are fully informed on how the Council will manage and prioritise defects when the new code of practice comes into effect. This will involve ensuring that the appropriate information is provided across all methods of contact on the specific aspects of the policy as well as ensuring that any communications with them clearly outlines exactly what will happen and when. Specifically, ensuring that we are clear and concise on exactly how defects are managed will ensure we manage our customer's expectations.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The reduction in the number of Road Safety Inspectors from 6 to 3, combined with the re-alignment and amalgamation of the two inspection teams, has realised annual savings of £77,181. These savings have already been taken through VSER.
- 4.2 Failure to comply with the terms set out in the new Code of Practice, which includes implementing a robust Road Safety Policy and Safety Inspection Manual, may lead to additional Insurance premium charges and a lack of defensibility relating to public liability claims.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Aberdeen City Council has until 28 October 2018 to demonstrate how they propose to meet the requirements of the Code, have a new policy in place to satisfy our insurers that we comply with the current standards of practice.
- 5.2 The transitional period in adopting the code into practice creates a risk that during this period there could be an increase in claims as the new policies may take time to implement and practices will take time to change.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

- 6.1 The potential risks of not implementing the new Safety Policy and Inspection Manual are outlined in the following table:

	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Financial	Lack of Code compliant Policy and Inspection Manual will lead to greater difficulty in defending insurance claims brought in relation to road defects and may lead to increased insurance premium payments and compensation.	Medium	Adoption of the new Policy and Inspection Manual will see a small increase in financial cost to the Council due to the regrading of the current Road safety Inspectors, however, this will allow the Council to implement a more robust, Code Compliant, Inspection policy that will reduce overall costs associated with service delivery.

Legal	<p>The Council is open to public liability claims raised against them in connection with the road defects.</p> <p>Changes in policy take time to be fully adopted and during this period of transition there may be a risk of more claims</p>	Medium	<p>Adoption of the new Policy and Manual, which was developed in response to the new Code, will add weight to the defence of claims raised against the Council in connection with road defects.</p> <p>This can be mitigated by reviewing the impact the new policies and adjusting them or practice during the period of transition and into the future.</p>
Employee	<p>The introduction of the new Policy and Manual will impact on staff time at the introductory phase of the project.</p>	Medium	<p>Appropriate training on the new Policy and Manual will be provided in a timely manner allowing inspectors to become familiar with the amended procedures and areas.</p>
	<p>Staff face the challenges of new and revised duties.</p>	Medium	<p>Staff will be comprehensively trained on the new procedures.</p>
Customer	<p>The lowering of inspection frequencies on some roads may lead to a negative customer service perception.</p>	Medium	<p>By more effectively utilising the joint inspection teams time a better level of service will be provided by each inspector. Roads will be inspected at timescales more appropriate to them than under the existing procedure.</p>
Environment	N/A	N/A	N/A
Technology	<p>Failure to investigate new technologies could result in potential future savings and opportunities to align with the Target Operating Model being missed.</p>	Low	<p>The service will continue to investigate technology to aid the inspection process and associated decision making.</p>
Reputational	<p>The Council may be subject to criticism should a decision be taken not to recommend adopting the new policy which meets with the recommendations within the new Code of Practice and any claims implications that could result.</p>	Medium	<p>Adopting the new Policy and Manual will ensure compliance with the new Code and remove any reputational risk associated with a failure to adopt it.</p>

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	Investment in Infrastructure
<b>Prosperous People</b>	
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	Safe and Resilient Communities
<b>Enabling Technology</b>	

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	Reduction in road related accidents and a reduction in the percentage of Roads Budget allocated to reactive maintenance, improving the overall public perception of Roads Services.
<b>Organisational Design</b>	Road Safety Inspectors within the City (formerly 6 Road Safety Inspectors and 3 New Roads and Street Works Inspectors) have reduced from 9 to 6 Roads Inspectors
<b>Governance</b>	Aberdeen City Council has until 28 October 2018 to demonstrate how they propose to meet the requirements of the Code, have a new policy in place and fulfil our statutory obligation under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.
<b>Workforce</b>	Inspection numbers will be reviewed in line with an expanding Aberdeen and the introduction of new technologies. Current staff resources are sufficient to manage inspections of the current network, however these will be re-evaluated in line with network growth and technological changes.
<b>Process Design</b>	N/A
<b>Technology</b>	New technologies are continually being investigated with a view to providing future efficiencies.
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	Working with Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) to continue with any nationwide policy changes.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	This report has no direct implications in relation to Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment.
Privacy Impact Assessment	N/A
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	N/A

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following papers have been used in the development of this committee report:

- Road Safety Inspection Policy
- Road Safety Inspection Manual
- Well-managed Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice

## 10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

- 1 Road Safety Inspection Policy
- 2 Road Safety Inspection Manual
- 3 Road Safety Inspection Areas Map

## 11. REPORT AUTHORS CONTACT DETAILS

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