

Record of Officer Decision No 03/2024

Torbay Highways Inspection Manual 2024

Decision Taker and Date Decision Taken:

Director of Pride in Place on 16 July 2024

Summary of Matter or Issue Requiring Decision:

The Torbay Council Highway Safety Inspection Manual has undergone a full review to ensure that the new operational model with SWISCo, as the commissioned service to manage highway inspections, is fully reflected and to allow Highway Inspectors to move to a fully 'Risk Based' approach with the consideration of highway defects and repairs, in accordance with the National Code of Practice.

Decision Taken:

That the Revised Highway Safety Inspection Manual 2024, attached to this Record of Decision, is fully adopted and implemented from 1 July 2024.

Summary of Reason(s) for Decision Taken:

The Highway Safety Inspection Manual has been reviewed and revised by the SWISCo Highways Team with assistance from Torbay Council's Partner Consultant WSP. The reasons for the revision were:

- The current Highway inspection Manual has been in operation since 2018 and does not reflect the new highways maintenance operating model since the creation of SWISCo.
- The 2018 manual had reference to 'intervention levels' in some cases. The current Code of Practice ('Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice – 2016) enables these to be removed and allow Inspectors more flexibility to instruct repairs on a purely risk-based approach.
- Experience of working with the current manual showed that improved guidance was required for inspectors to ensure consistency with assessing levels of risk.
- The hierarchy of streets was due for revision to take account of recent changes to guidance and requirements for active travel etc.
- The manual needed to have flexibility to encompass new and emerging technologies for inspections, as and when these come forward.
- Torbay Councils' Partner consultant WSP have provided the Highways Team with additional technical input and challenge, based on best practice and experience from other highway authorities nationally to ensure our highway inspection processes are robust and provide an effective service.
- The revised guidance ensures that appropriate timescales are given for repairs, allowing more flexibility to place defects into a planned and programmed approach.

The Revised Manual has been subject to consultation with Councillor Billings, as Cabinet Lead for Pride in Place and Parking and all elected Members were invited to attend a briefing session to present the Manual and provide comment. Councillor Billings has endorsed the revised

manual and supports the proposal to implement.

Summary of Alternatives or Options considered and rejected and Background Papers:

The existing manual could continue to be used; however, it was considered that highway inspections should move to a fully 'risk-based' approach as well as fully reflecting recent changes to the operating model with SWISCo and ensuring an up to date hierarchy of streets.

Torbay Council needs to ensure a robust and compliant inspection regime to provide a defence to third party compensation claims.

Details of any conflict of interest and dispensation granted to the Officer taking the decision or by any Member of the Council in delegating responsibility for any specific express delegation:

None

Implementation:

This decision will be implemented immediately.

A copy of this decision and any supporting documentation considered by the Officer taking this decision may also be available for inspection by the public at the Council's offices or posted upon payment of any copying and postage charges. Any member of the public wishing to take up either of these options is asked to please ring (01803) 207087 or email governance.support@torbay.gov.uk

Signed: Director of Pride in Place

Date: 16 July 2024