

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2005/2006 REPORT NO. **298**

**MEETING TITLE AND DATE:**

Cabinet 8<sup>th</sup> February 2006  
Council 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006

**Report of:**

Director of Environment, Street  
Scene and Parks

**Agenda – Part: 1**

**Item: 13**

**Subject:**

**Highway Maintenance Plan.**

**Wards: All**

**Cabinet Member consulted: Cllr. T. Neville**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report deals with Enfield Council's Highway Maintenance Plan, which is available in the Members' Library.

The Highway Maintenance Plan sets out the background and legal duties for highway maintenance, identifies the main issues relating to network safety, serviceability and sustainability, and proposes an effective and objective mechanism for prioritising planned maintenance requirements in order to address customer service requirements.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the Highway Maintenance Plan.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The highway network is the largest and most visible community asset for which local authorities are responsible. It is used daily by the majority of people and is fundamental to the economic, social and environmental well being of the community. In order to fulfil its potential, it is therefore crucial that the highway network is adequately maintained.
- 3.2 The London Borough of Enfield is the Highway Authority for the borough road network. This comprises of 63.7km of Principal Roads and 506.6km of Non-Principal Roads as well as service/access roads, footway and footpaths and associated highway infrastructure elements such as highway structures, street lighting, street furniture etc.
- 3.3 Every highway authority is required by the Department for Transport to produce a Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP), which sets out what it wants to achieve and how it intends to manage its highway network in the future. London Authorities are required to report on their progress through the Local Implementation Planning process. Enfield Council's Improvement plan for 2005/2008, 'Putting Enfield First', also contains an objective for the borough to produce a Highway Asset Management Plan.
- 3.4 The Highway Maintenance Plan will form part of Enfield's Highway Asset Management Plan. It sets out the background and legal duties for highway maintenance, identifies the main objectives relating to the management and maintenance of highways, and proposes an effective and objective mechanism for prioritising planned maintenance requirements.
- 3.5 The recently revised Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management called 'Well Maintained Highways' identifies the three main categories for consideration within a highway maintenance strategy as follows:
  - i) Network safety, dealing with compliance with statutory obligations and meeting the users' needs.
  - ii) Network serviceability, dealing with availability of the network, achieving integrity, maintaining reliability and enhancing the quality of the network.
  - iii) Network sustainability, which focuses on whole life costing, maximising the value to the community and maximising the contribution to the environment.
- 3.6 Enfield's Highway Maintenance Plan therefore aims to promote an 'asset management approach' to maintaining the highway network, seeking to address safety, serviceability and sustainability issues whilst aiming to meet users' needs.
- 3.7 The Highway Maintenance Plan describes Enfield's safety inspection regime, which has been developed in accordance with the previous

national best practice document for highway maintenance. Safety inspections are undertaken at intervals of either one month or six months, depending on the hierarchy of the road, footway or cycleway and defects are categorised according to the risk that they present to users of the highway. The intervention criteria that Enfield uses to assess whether remedial action should be taken is based on best practice and previous legal cases whilst having regard to affordability. Enfield's intervention levels are typically 25mm for tripping hazards on footways and 40mm deep potholes in carriageways, however the Plan makes it clear that professional judgement has to be used on a risk-based approach.

- 3.8 The Highway Maintenance Plan describes the approach that Enfield has used to prioritise planned highway maintenance schemes for the 2005/6 Borough Capital Programme. This has been based on the results of structural condition surveys which have then been adjusted to take into account a number of other factors relating to the highway hierarchy, safety inspection issues, transport, social, community and commercial considerations. The process provides an auditable and transparent method for developing a works programme based on clearly identified priorities. It is therefore proposed that the prioritisation process be adopted for the development of the programme for planned highway maintenance schemes for 2006/7 and subsequent years.
- 3.9 The prioritisation models for both carriageways and footways have been extracted from the Highway Maintenance Plan and are shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.10 The revised Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management contains comprehensive guidance and a set of recommendations to assist highway authorities to develop their asset management regimes over a period of time. Therefore the principles contained in this Highway Maintenance Plan will be reviewed and compared with the latest edition of the Code as part of the preparation of Enfield's Highway Asset Management Plan.
- 3.11 Officers will use existing highway maintenance working groups to ensure that Enfield's processes comply with industry standards and best value practices with the aim of achieving continuous improvement for the delivery of highway services.

#### **4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The highway Maintenance Plan contains processes for undertaking safety inspections, identifying highway defects, and prioritising and implementing remedial measures which have been proved in courts of law that Enfield is complying with its duty to maintain the highway network in accordance with the Highways Act. These processes will be continually reviewed as part of the HAMP, however adoption of an

alternative regime at the moment may not provide the same level of defence to this authority.

- 4.2 The Highway Maintenance Plan contains a process for prioritising planned highway maintenance schemes that has been piloted for the 2005/06 Borough Capital Programme. Alternative options for selecting schemes for treatment could include:
- i) treating specific areas of the borough in any one particular year;
  - ii) treating the busiest roads and footways first;
  - iii) treating the worst condition first with no regard to other issues;
  - iv) allocating maintenance funding to match highway improvement schemes.

None of the proposals i to iv above meet all the principles set out in the Highway Maintenance Plan.

## **5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Highway Maintenance Plan is considered to provide a robust regime for highway maintenance which is based on best value principles.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

6.1.1 The Plan describes a recommended process for prioritising highway maintenance. It does not of itself commit the Council to a particular level of spend. Allocation of both capital and revenue resources to this service will continue to form part of the Council's ongoing budget planning processes.

### **6.2 Legal Implications**

6.2.1 As Highway Authority, the Council has a statutory duty under Section 41 of Highways Act 1980 to maintain the roads for which it is responsible. In the event of any claim for breach of that duty it is a defence under the Act that the Council took all reasonable care in discharging its duty. The ability to demonstrate that the Council complies with national standards for the repair of highway defects clearly assists in demonstrating that the Council has done so.

## **7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The production of Enfield's Highway Asset Management Plan is an objective contained within the Council's Improvement Plan for 2005/2008

- 'Putting Enfield First'. The production of a Highway Maintenance Plan follows national best practice and will become an integral part of the Highway Asset Management Plan.

- 7.2 The following national and local performance indicators are relevant:  
BVPI 223 - the condition of Principal Roads;  
BVPI 224 – the condition of Non Principal Roads;  
BVPI 187/LPSA 10 – the condition of category 1 and 2 footways;  
ES PI 7 – dangerous damage repaired or made safe within 24 hours.

## **8. PUTTING ENFIELD FIRST**

The maintenance and improvement of the borough's infrastructure contributes to the Council's Corporate strategy 'Putting Enfield First'.

Aim 1 - A Cleaner and Greener Enfield

Objective 1(b) - to upgrade and improve Enfield's roads and pavements

Action 1(b)(i) - to produce a Highway Asset Management Plan.

Seeking to address the transport problems of Enfield is consistent with "Putting Enfield First" aims to promote a fully integrated transport network and new solutions to manage and reduce traffic congestion, and to reduce road accidents especially among children.

### **Background Papers**

'Maintaining A Vital Asset' – a publication produced by a working group led by the Department for Transport to introduce local authority members to highway asset management

Highway Maintenance Plan