

# **NEATH PORT-TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Street Scene & Engineering Cabinet Board**

30 November 2018

### **Report of the Head of Streetcare**

M. Roberts

#### **Matter for Decision**

**Wards Affected:** All Wards

#### **Highway Maintenance - New code of practice**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of progress in adopting the new code of practice for highway maintenance and adopt interim arrangements pending completion of revised Council policies and procedures.

#### **Background**

2. The Council has a Highway Maintenance Plan in place which sets out the Council's process for planned and reactive highway maintenance. This plan was developed in compliance with "Well-Maintained Highways, the code of practice for highway maintenance management which was published in July 2005."
3. The council relies on the policies derived from these documents when called upon to demonstrate it is meeting its legislative duties as the Highway Authority.
4. A revised Code of Practice for Highways "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" was published in October 2016. The revised code requires authorities to apply a "risk-based approach" to the management of all highway assets and authorities were given two years to implement a response to the new code.
5. The County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) is coordinating the development of a nationally consistent response to the code across all Welsh local authorities. Using CSSW's national Highway

Asset Management Project, guidance is being developed to enable authorities to apply a consistent method of risk assessment.

6. In accordance with the emerging CSSW guidance a review of highway asset management arrangements is being undertaken as follows:-
  - A review of the Network hierarchy used as the basis for inspection and repair regimes
  - A review of the inspection regime
  - A review of the standards applied to the repair of highway defects (investigatory levels and response times)

On completion, these will be incorporated into a revised Highway Maintenance Plan and presented for adoption.

7. In order to protect the authority's position in the interim, it is proposed that the current policies and procedures as set out in the Council's existing Highway Maintenance Plan should remain in effect until such time that the review is completed.
8. Further to the new Code of Practice, local authorities should work closely with their insurance partners to ensure that the best risk management measures have been put in place for their communities. In 2017 this Council provided open access to its insurers to audit the council's processes. There were some minor improvement suggestions (which have been completed) but otherwise the Council was essentially given 'a clean bill of health', which is reflected in the fact that this Council is in the upper quartile for the repudiation of third party insurance claims. Consequently on a 'risk management' basis it would seem reasonable to continue with current procedures and practices, notwithstanding changes in the Code of Practice, pending completion of the ongoing review.

### **Financial Impact**

9. There are no financial impacts associated with this report

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

9. There are no equality impacts associated with this report

### **Workforce Impact**

10. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report

### **Legal Impact**

11. There are no legal impacts associated with this report

### **Risk Management**

12. Given the introduction of the new Code of Practice it is necessary to confirm the Council's interim management arrangements pending update of the Council's Highway Maintenance Plan and associated documents.

### **Consultation**

13. There is no requirement for consultation on this matter

### **Recommendation(s)**

14. It is recommended that the current Highway Maintenance Plan continues to be used until the County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) development of a nationally consistent response to the code across Welsh local authorities is completed and this will be the subject of a further report.

### **Reason for proposed decision(s)**

15. To facilitate the introduction of a consistent "risk based" approach to the management of all highway assets across the Welsh authorities.

### **Implementation of decision**

16. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

### **Appendices**

17. None

## **List of background papers**

18. None

## **Officer Contact**

19. Mr Steve Owen, Highways and Drainage Manager.  
-Tel: 01639 686403 or e mail: [s.owen@npt.gov.uk](mailto:s.owen@npt.gov.uk)