

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
STREETSCENE AND ENGINEERING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th March 2022

**Joint Report of Head of Engineering & Transport, D.W.Griffiths and
Head of Streetcare, M.Roberts**

Matter for Information

Wards affected: Various

**Maintenance of Safe Routes to Schools, including footbridges
and subways**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information regarding the maintenance of safe routes to schools, including footbridges and subways, as requested by members of the Scrutiny Committee as part of the Forward Work Programme.

Executive Summary

2. This report outlines arrangements in relation to the maintenance of safe routes to school, including associated footbridges and subways.

Background

3. The Council's Learner Travel Officer, based in the Road Safety Section, is responsible for assessing the travel needs of learners further to the requirements of the Learner Travel Wales Statutory Provisions and Operational Guidance as issued by Welsh Government in June 2014. As part of their work, the officer has identified a significant number of routes for pupils to utilise for their journey to and from school if they are not eligible for free school transport.
4. The identified routes are assessed against an adopted risk assessment matrix which addresses traffic levels, speed, any

traffic collision history, visibility, availability of footways, footpaths and step-off opportunities, suitable width and surface, availability of crossing points, the effects and timescales of any future planning development and also social hazards, before designating a route as 'available for use'. These routes, once adopted, are promoted within local schools via their own media channels and through the classroom based pupil 'hwb' network with support from the road safety team to ensure pupils familiarise themselves with the routes.

5. As with pedestrian paths generally, these routes require ongoing routine maintenance, for example, to ensure any overgrowth does not significantly restrict the width of the route, to address any significant surface issues that develop, to keep street lighting in good working order, and to ensure any structures on the route such as subways and footbridges remain safe to use.
6. Designated routes are shown on the NPT Safe Routes to School Overview Map provided as Appendix A.

Maintenance Arrangements

7. Surface of routes – all routes on the adopted highway are subject to walked inspections by means of the Highway Network Inspection Regime. Highway inspectors record identifiable safety defects and issue any repairs for completion within the target time of up to 35 working days. The same routes are also subject to condition surveys that collect data across a footway network of around 950km. The available survey information is evaluated each year to produce a prioritised list of capital schemes that contributes to the annual surfacing programmes.
8. Overgrowth management – Zone Supervisors maintain the routes by undertaking the necessary cutting back of vegetation, which generally occurs during the later summer period every year prior to the commencement of the new school year. Areas are subsequently monitored to ensure that any required maintenance is undertaken when necessary.
9. Sweeping – The sweeping of the routes is again looked after by Zone Supervisors, which is monitored as part of visual inspections, and undertaken in conjunction with allocated

sweeping routes. In addition, extra sweeping may be undertaken in some locations due to seasonal changes that may occur.

10. Street lighting – Any faults with lighting installed on a safe route are remotely reported back automatically via the Central Management System, and are then attended to and rectified by NPT staff. Faults can also be reported by members of the public which again are addressed by in-house staff. Lighting on safe routes is also included in the electrical testing & inspection programme for street lighting generally within the county borough.
11. Bridges & Subways – Where these exist on safe routes they are inspected every 2 years for structural defects, as part of the Authority's General & Principal Bridge Inspection Programme. Any routine maintenance works that are identified is then carried out as required.
12. Drainage – There are a number of surface & foul water pumps located in low spots along the network, including some subways. The management of these installations is contracted to a specialist company who maintain them on the Council's behalf. All pumping stations have telemetry installed so that any flooding that occurs is immediately flagged to the contractor. Each structure is on a weekly or fortnightly inspection rota and routine maintenance is carried out as and when required. Furthermore, a number of Critical Flood Risk Intakes and Trash Screens are located along some safe routes. These structures are inspected in detail every two years as part of the council's flood risk inspection programme, and any repairs are then programmed accordingly. Each asset is visually inspected and cleaned on a weekly or fortnightly basis dependant on the location and cleared prior to forecasted storm events. A number of these assets are also equipped with camera monitoring systems so officers can visually inspect sites remotely, which assists with providing an effective response during periods of heavy rainfall.

Financial Impact

13. Annual costs are all contained within the annual revenue budgets for Neighbourhood Services, Highway Maintenance, Street Lighting and Bridge maintenance.

Integrated Impact Assessment

14. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix A, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. Maintenance of pedestrian routes provides benefit to communities generally.

Valleys Community Impacts

15. There are no implications associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

16. There are no implications associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

17. There are no implications associated with this report.

Risk Management Impacts

18. There are no implications associated with this report.

Consultation

19. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Appendices

- 20 Appendix A - NPT Safe Routes to School Overview Map
Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment Screening

Background Papers

None.

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