

Highway Maintenance Plan

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

Registration of Amendments

Amend No	Page No	Date of incorporation of amendments	Detail of amendment
1	General	October 2009	General review focusing upon new practice and legislation e.g. Traffic Management Act 2004 and maintenance requirements
2	31	January 2011	Minor corrections to reflect working practice

Last Reviewed January 2011

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PLAN

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HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PLAN

1.0 Background

This document sets out the Council's policy in relation to all activities carried out on the public highway. The document embraces the principles, of "Well Maintained Highways", the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance and is renewed periodically.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Neath Port Talbot has a network of 813 kilometres of highway that is maintained at public expense. The highway network is vital to the people of Neath Port Talbot and visitors as it is used in everyday life both by individuals and local business. The importance of the network is highlighted by the disruption to daily life caused when, for example, extremes of weather affect its smooth operation.

1.1.2 To ensure that the network functions efficiently throughout the year, maintenance is undertaken on the various components of the highway which includes carriageways, footways, verges, drainage systems, structures, lighting, signs and road markings. Managing the highway is an increasingly demanding task given the need to mitigate the effects of damage caused by increased traffic flows, heavier and larger vehicles, and expanded operations by utilities, whilst revenue budgets remain limited.

1.2 Code of Practice for Maintenance Management

1.2.1 In July 2005 the Roads Liaison Group published "Well Maintained Highways" the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. This Code emphasises the need to establish a logical management system in order to deliver value for money in highway maintenance. The Code recognises the need for local flexibility implied by the new focus on the needs of users and the community. It encourages Authorities to respond enthusiastically and creatively to the challenges posed by Best Value, The Wales Programme for Improvement and sustainability.

1.2.2 The objectives of the Code of Practice are:

- To encourage the adoption of asset management planning as a means of demonstrating value for money in the delivery of highway maintenance, consistent with the wide principles of integrated transport, sustainability and Best Value

- To encourage the development, adoption and regular review of policies on highway maintenance, consistent with the wider principles of integrated transport, sustainability and best value.
- To encourage a focus on the needs of users and the community, and their active involvement in the development and review of policies, priorities and programmes.
- To encourage harmonisation of highway maintenance practice and standards where this is consistent with users' expectations, whilst retaining reasonable diversity consistent with local choice.
- To encourage the adoption of an efficient and consistent approach in the collection, processing and recording of highway inventory, highway condition and status information for the purpose of both local and national needs assessment, management and performance monitoring.
- To encourage the adoption and regular review of a risk management regime in the determination of local technical and operational standards, rectification of defects arising from safety inspections, and investment priorities.
- To encourage continuing innovation in the procurement of highway maintenance contracts, whilst complying with high standards of corporate governance.

1.2.3 The Code of Practice advocates that individual Highway Authorities publish a Highway Maintenance Plan that sets out its policies and standards of management to be adopted. Neath Port Talbot has adopted this concept as the basis on which to plan and develop highway maintenance.

1.3 Aims of the Maintenance Plan

1.3.1 The aims of this Maintenance Plan are to:

- Maintain safe passage for highway users.
- Protect the asset value of the highway.
- Ensure consistent standards of maintenance across the County Borough relative to road usage.
- Ensure expeditious movement of traffic by complying with the Traffic Management Act.
- Establish a "Needs Based" programme for the maintenance of the network.
- Target resources and maximise the benefit from available funds.

- Facilitate technical and financial monitoring in order to establish trends in highway condition and to assess achievement against expenditure.
- Provide a framework for reviewing policies and standards and for developing strategies.
- Implement the principles outlined in the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management.
- Ensure that all highway maintenance is undertaken with due regard for environmental considerations.

1.4 Scope of the Maintenance Plan

1.4.1 The scope of the Highway Maintenance Plan for Neath Port Talbot is confined to roads for which the County Borough Council is Highway Authority. Motorways and Trunk Roads are the responsibility of the Highways Directorate of the Welsh Assembly Government and are managed by the Council as agent to the Assembly.

2.0 MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

2.1 Maintenance Framework

2.1.1 In developing an overall strategy, several factors have influenced the level and type of maintenance proposed to be undertaken. The major influence is current legislation that governs the manner in which the County Borough Council conducts its activities. Secondly, maintenance practice must accommodate Council policy and the reasonable expectations of the public.

2.2 British Legislation and Documentation

2.2.1 The main Acts of Parliament which place mandatory maintenance requirements upon the Highway Authority are:

The Highways Act 1980: This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to maintain highways, adopted as maintainable at public expense, and to keep them safe for public use; and,

New Roads and Street Works Act 1991: This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to co-ordinate all works in the highway for the purposes of ensuring safety, minimising inconvenience to highway users, and protecting the highway and apparatus in it.

The Traffic Management Act 2004: This places a duty on Highway Authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities. The Act gives authorities additional tools to better manage parking policies, moving traffic enforcement and the coordination of street works (see Appendix 13 for further detail).

2.2.2 Guidance on the management and implementation of maintenance works is given in:

- (a) Department for Transport Specification for Highways Works.
- (b) Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual (Traffic Safety Measures and Signs for Road works and Temporary Situations).
- (c) Code of Practice for Maintenance Management.
- (d) Technical Advice Notes and Memoranda issued by Government.
- (e) British Standards.
- (f) Audit Commission performance indicators.

2.3 European Influence

- 2.3.1 Membership of the European Union (EU) and the advent of the 'single market' has had an impact on highway maintenance. For supply contracts valued at more than £139,893 advertisements inviting tenders must be placed in the Official Journal of the European Union. Also, specifications for contracts must quote Eurocodes, as well as British Standard, for the supply of materials and equipment.
- 2.3.2 In 1999 as a result of European Legislation, the '40 tonne' vehicle, with axle loading of up to 11.5 tonnes, was introduced onto British roads. The previous limit was 38 tonnes for vehicles and 10 tonnes for axles. This additional axle loading has implications in the longer term for the life-span of carriageways and, potentially, a more immediate effect is upon the 'bridge stock'. In view of the latter, detailed assessments of all bridges are being completed.

2.4 Changes in Traffic Patterns

- 2.4.1 The most recent figures for Traffic Growth in Neath Port Talbot indicate that traffic has increased considerably in recent years. This has consequences for highway maintenance as the deterioration of carriageways is directly related to the volume of heavy goods vehicles. The Authority aims to minimise traffic growth in a variety of ways in order to alleviate as far as possible to maintenance requirements, although this may prove difficult in the short term.

2.5 New Development

- 2.5.1 From time to time the road network is added to by new highway schemes or by new developments. New developments are carefully controlled and to ensure that the need for future maintenance is minimised and can be easily undertaken the Council as Highway Authority specifies highway requirements.
- 2.5.2 Highway works arising from new developments are usually governed by agreements between the County Borough Council and Developers, normally under Section 38 or Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980. Some works on existing highways are also undertaken using an Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Act. Exceptionally, where a significant increase in the volume of heavy construction vehicles is generated, an agreement will be entered into under Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980. This latter agreement allows the County Borough Council to claim "extraordinary expenses" from the developer in respect of increased maintenance costs resulting from the additional heavy traffic.

2.5.3 To ensure consistency of standards in new highways associated with developments the Council has issued a Design Guide and Specification which developers must adhere to.

2.6 Public Expectation

2.6.1 As the length of the highway network grows and the volume of traffic using it increases, so does the public expectation of the level of service to be delivered. The Citizen's Charter was the first document to formalise this expectation by identifying particular areas of activity against which Highway Authorities must publish target standards of service, and the degree of success achieved in meeting these standards. These have subsequently been developed and subsumed in Audit Commission standards. These performance standards have served to heighten public expectation and increase awareness of the responsibilities of Highway Authorities.

2.6.2 Neath Port Talbot aims to be responsive to public concern and undertake initiatives to improve services, and to provide information on action being taken.

2.7 Telephone Enquiries

2.7.1 Telephone enquiries regarding service information during normal working hours are taken by the Council's Contact Centre on 01639 686868. Outside normal working hours an emergency response service only is provided on 01639 764555.

2.7.2 The database is used to calculate key performance indicators.

2.7.3 On a monthly basis the complaints received are analysed in order to identify trends in public concern and the speed of response to public complaints. These trends provide data that contributes to identifying areas of priority for allocation of funds.

2.8 '24 Hour' Emergency Cover

2.8.1 Outside office hours, the Council operates an emergency service via a Duty Officer System. This service provides where necessary an immediate and coordinated response to maintain highway safety at all times. Hazards dealt with include problems such as flooding, unsafe works, abandoned vehicles, traffic signal failure, electrical danger at street lighting installations, and clearing of the highway following an accident. Incidents are reported to the Duty Officer by the emergency services or members of the public and emergency response provided if required.

2.8.2 A log is produced by the Duty Officer for every out of hours period and this is used on the next working day to initiate any further action required in respect of particular incidents, when action can be safely deferred.

2.9 Roadworks Reports

2.9.1 Public frustration often stems from delays caused by roadworks. In order to provide the public with information on where disruption to journeys can be expected, a weekly roadworks report is circulated to the major motoring organisations and local radio stations and corporate web site:

www.npt.gov.uk

2.9.2 The weekly roadworks report gives brief details of work being undertaken on all classified routes and the method of traffic management being employed. Additional publicity is provided where severe traffic delays are anticipated.

2.10 Highway Safety

2.10.1 The County Borough Council has a duty to repair defects that are hazardous to safety. To ensure that the occurrence of safety hazards is minimised great emphasis is placed upon a schedule of regular safety inspections, and upon prompt action to remedy defects detected during these inspections. The regime of safety inspections in Neath Port Talbot will be undertaken in accordance with recommendations of the Code, as amended to meet local conditions and the frequency of these inspections is shown at Appendix 1.

2.10.2 In recent years there has been an increased willingness for members of the public to claim against the Council for damage suffered as a result of defects in the highway. Consequently, the systematic recording of findings from regular safety inspections is essential and pursued by this Authority.

3.0 NEATH PORT TALBOT'S HIGHWAY ASSET

3.1 Network Hierarchy

3.1.1 The highway network in Neath Port Talbot, excluding Trunk Roads, consists of 813 kilometres of roads maintainable at public expense. In order to address the maintenance needs of each classification of road, the principle provided in Section 58 of the Highways Act is applied. This states that standards of maintenance should be "appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic".

3.1.2 In practice this is achieved through the identification of the Neath Port Talbot Local Strategic Highway Network, which identifies Priority Routes as shown in the Council's Local Transport Plan. The Local Strategic Highway Network contributes to the Authority's Corporate and Community Plan aims, of ensuring economic prosperity, better health and well being, and improving environment and transport by maintaining accessibility to services and employment. Furthermore, for planning purposes, all road classifications are sub-divided into urban and rural

3.1.3 Footways are considered separately from carriageways and footway maintenance is prioritised separately. Priorities are updated as required via routine highway inspections and Member Liaison.

3.2 Highway Inventory

3.2.1 In order to manage the highway network cost effectively it is essential to have details of those assets that constitute or affect the highway. Once this data has been captured an efficient method of updating and interrogation must be adopted to maintain, monitor and predict future trends and working patterns. At present this information is held both electronically in a database and in hard copy in files and plans. It is evident that the quantities of data involved require an electronic method of manipulation and so a systematic approach to digitisation of hard copy records is necessary.

3.2.2 It is now accepted that a Geographical Information System (GIS) is the most convenient and readily understood method of displaying highway inventory information based on Ordnance Survey plans. Corporately the Authority has elected to use ArcGIS as the preferred platform, and digital highway information is being added to this system as it becomes available via the Council's Network Management Unit.

3.2.3 In Wales all 22 local authorities have agreed to harmonise the process of

managing their highway assets in producing Highway Asset Management Plans, and in Neath Port Talbot this process was completed in April 2006

3.2.4 It is intended that the highway inventory information held in the GIS will enable not only maintenance personnel, other council employees, but eventually also the general public to access both current and future maintenance regimes. This will broaden the management of the authorities highway assets to include, where appropriate, the user.

3.3 Network Condition

3.3.1 The condition of the more heavily trafficked parts of the network is assessed on a regular basis through a systematic regime of technical surveys. A variety of different techniques are used, and the particular type of survey employed depends upon the classification of the road. SCRIM (to determine wet skidding resistance) and SCANNER (to determine surface/structural condition) surveys are carried out on the Local Strategic Network. A generic visual condition assessment is carried out for all unclassified carriageways.

3.3.2 Footway condition is determined by a generic visual assessment, and the County Borough Council is committed to maintaining footways to a satisfactory standard as set out in Appendix 1 and 2.

4.0 MAINTENANCE POLICIES AND STANDARDS

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Council's Policy statements are available on the web:-

www.npt.gov.uk

Current maintenance practice in Neath Port Talbot is based on that recommended in the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management amended by local factors and requirements. Appendix 1 gives a summary of inspection and assessment practice. Appendix 2 presents criteria affecting carriageway and footway maintenance.

4.1.2 As recommended in the Code, maintenance activities are grouped into three categories as follows:

(i) Routine Maintenance (including Cyclic Maintenance, Street Lighting and Aids to Movement).

(ii) Structural Maintenance.

(iii) Winter Maintenance.

4.1.3 The activities that are considered to fall into each of the above categories are listed in Appendix 4, which also includes definitions of each activity and its purpose.

4.2 Control of Work by Third Parties on the Highway

4.2.1 The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 places a duty upon Highway Authorities to co-ordinate all works in the highway for the purpose of ensuring safety, minimising inconvenience to highway users, and protecting the highway and apparatus in it. In practice, this is achieved through regular liaison between the County Borough Council and the Statutory Undertakers.

4.2.2 Co-ordination Meetings are convened on a quarterly basis where operational staff from the County Borough Council meet with representatives from all the Undertakers and South Wales Police to consider proposals for major works during the ensuing six months. A programme for the implementation of these works is then established with due regard to minimising their impact upon highway users.

4.2.3 The South West Wales Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (SWWHAUC) meet on a 3 monthly basis. At these meetings senior representatives of the County Borough Council, Statutory Undertakers and

Police review local issues relevant to the implementation of the Act. Matters that cannot be resolved at this forum are referred to Welsh HAUC at which the County Borough Council is represented.

4.2.4 In accordance with the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 local agreement has been reached regarding roads to be categorised as “Traffic Sensitive” and on the type of reinstatement to be provided in each road. A schedule of Traffic Sensitive Streets is produced at Appendix 3 and now forms part of the NPTCBC Local Strategic Highway Network.

4.2.5 Although the New Roads and Street works Act 1991 allows for only 30% of openings in the highway to be inspected at the expense of the Utilities, the County Borough Council, currently inspects a much larger number. A policy of investigatory work is pursued where non-compliance with the reinstatement specification is suspected. This in future will include the testing of cores extracted from the reinstated opening. Costs incurred are recovered from the Statutory Undertaker whenever possible. It is also the Council’s policy to prosecute persistent offenders.

4.3 Skips and Scaffolding

4.3.1 Applications to place skips or erect scaffolding in the highway are processed by the Council and proposed sites are assessed before a permit or licence can be issued. Permits for skips are issued in accordance with the requirements of Sections 139 and 140 of the Highways Act 1980, whilst licences for scaffolding are issued in accordance with Section 169. Appropriate conditions are added to permits or licences to reflect local circumstances. The applicant is now liable to a charge by the Authority for this service.

4.4 Unauthorised Signs and Obstructions

4.4.1 Where unauthorised signs are erected in the highway, notice is served upon the owner to remove them within seven days. If the owner does not remove the signs then the County Borough Council removes them and wherever possible, recharges the costs incurred. The signs are retained for 30 days and, if not reclaimed, are destroyed.

4.4.2 Unauthorised obstructions in the highway may be considered as either dangerous or a nuisance. The County Borough Council removes dangerous obstructions immediately, with the costs being reclaimed where a responsible party can be identified. Where the obstruction constitutes a nuisance, notice for its removal is served upon the responsible party. If the notice is not complied with, then the matter is referred to a Magistrates Court.

4.4.3 Temporary Signs

4.5.1. The Council has a policy for Temporary Signing for Planned Events, details of which can be found on the Council's web page.

5.0 THE MAINTENANCE SERVICE

5.1 Organisational Structure

5.1.1 In Neath Port Talbot the planned maintenance programme of the highway is coordinated by the Lighting and Highway Network Manager, of the Environment Directorate. The Head of Streetcare Services is responsible for the majority of highway matters including expenditure of reactive maintenance budgets and management of contracts.

5.2 Visual Surveys of the Network

5.2.1 The Council undertakes detailed 'safety' inspections. The frequency of inspections takes account of the recommendations in the Code of Practice for each road and footway category, details of which are provided in Appendix 1.

5.2.2 Detailed inspections are intended to serve two purposes. Firstly, they identify those defects that constitute a serious hazard or serious inconvenience to the public and, therefore, require urgent attention. Secondly, they are designed to establish a programme of routine maintenance that does not require urgent implementation. The frequency at which these inspections are conducted is given in Appendix 1. Where information from basic inspections, other condition surveys, or public complaints indicates that additional visits are required then these are carried out in addition to the routine safety inspections.

5.2.3 Generic Visual Assessments are carried out on footway and unclassified carriageways. The assessments are carried out 'in house' for the practical purpose of establishing general condition to aid works programme planning. The assessments also have the advantage of establishing condition trends and valuation data for Asset Management uses.

5.4 Machine Based Surveys

5.4.1 Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads (SCANNER) measures cracking, longitudinal profile, wheel track rutting, texture depth and road alignment simultaneously. The vehicle travels at up to 80kph and provides a fast and cost effective means of surveying the network. Currently SCANNER is used on the Local Strategic Highway Network. Areas identified by the SCANNER as showing signs of deterioration are targeted for site-specific assessments. This allows overall costs to be reduced and developing problems to be more quickly identified.

5.4.2 Sideways Force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM): SCRIM is a high-speed survey used to measure the skidding resistance of wet road surfaces. The Code of Practice cites investigatory levels for skidding resistance at various locations including potentially hazardous sites such as steep gradients, approaches to roundabouts and pedestrian crossings. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council has adopted these investigatory levels and survey results are compared with these standards.

5.4.3 Deflectograph surveys are considered against projected Heavy Goods vehicle flows, and details of the carriageway construction, to predict the residual life of the carriageway. This resultant data provides further information to be used in programming future maintenance. This type of survey is relatively expensive and is therefore restricted to the Local Strategic Highway Network.

5.5 Identification of Trends in Highway Condition

5.5.1 The various condition surveys provide a useful indication of the existing condition of the network. In Neath Port Talbot, the surveys are repeated on a regular cycle that increases their value since information on the trend in condition is obtained. This identifies whether the network, or particular parts of it, are improving or deteriorating over a given time scale, and allows comparison of the effectiveness of different treatments.

5.5.2 The Council has adopted a Pavement Management System (PMS), which is a computer-based application used to manage the combination of data obtained from Deflectograph, SCRIM and SCANNER surveys. These results from the PMS are analysed using GIS and matched against visual inspection data to determine maintenance priorities.

5.5.3 'Whole life' costing is a concept central to the developing Highway Asset Management Plan and uses the logic that early and timely maintenance using appropriate materials reduces the overall cost that would be incurred if a carriageway or footway were allowed to fail. Savings can be obtained not only in the difference in costs between maintenance treatments but also from reductions in delays to road users and in vehicle operating costs. It is anticipated that 'Whole life' costs could be reduced by ensuring all maintenance work is undertaken in accordance with the intervention levels recommended in the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management. However, the extent of work undertaken in any given year needs to take account of finances available.

6.0 ALLOCATION OF BUDGETS

6.1 Priority Commitments

6.1.1 As stated previously, maintenance activities are grouped together into three categories, i.e. 'Routine', 'Structural' and 'Winter' (see Appendix 3). Within these groups, certain tasks are essential to the operation of the network as a whole and cannot be attributed to individual routes, or packaged for comparison on a relative basis with other competing schemes. Consequently, the estimated expenditure for these essential items is allocated on the bases of "top slicing" the available revenue budget.

6.1.2 The work for which budget is currently 'top sliced' is:

- (i) Winter Maintenance.
- (ii) Maintenance of Structures.
- (iii) Traffic Signal Maintenance.
- (iv) Technical Surveys.
- (v) Surface Treatments (e.g. High Friction Surfacing).
- (vi) Emergency Works (unplanned maintenance).

6.1.3 Surface Treatment is included in this category as it is generally a low cost pro-active treatment used to maintain the appropriate skid resistance (and hence safety) of the highway and extend the life of significant lengths of the network. An annual programme of surface treatments, which may also take the form of resurfacing is formulated on a borough wide basis.

Winter Service (October/November to March/April)

6.1.4 Winter Service operations are undertaken to mitigate the hazards that arise to highway users in wintry weather and flooding conditions. In Neath Port Talbot, 42% of the highway network is routinely treated by pre-salting when adverse weather conditions are forecast. Full details of Winter Service standards are provided in the Council's "Winter Service Plan" document available on the web site.

6.1.5 Decisions on pre-salting action are taken each day during the winter months. These decisions are based upon weather forecasts provided daily during the months October to April around mid-day, by the Council's Meteorological Contractor. The forecasts provide an indication of the likelihood and duration of freezing conditions and the altitude above which freezing will occur. From this information, an Accountable Manager or delegated representative decides upon which of the established salting routes should be treated and the times at which salting should begin. In addition the Standby Officer out of hours can contact the meteorological contractor for updates. The decision to carry out any pre-salting is based

on this information.

- 6.1.6 Expenditure on Winter Service is especially difficult to forecast and significant expenditure can be incurred in relatively short periods at the very end of the financial year. In order to prevent the disruption to approved programmes that would arise from the potentially large variations in winter service costs, separate funding arrangements have been established in accordance with recommendations of the Code of Practice. A reserve fund is set aside and this is replenished where possible each year to keep it at an appropriate level.
- 6.1.7 Whilst extensive Winter Service activities are conducted in Neath Port Talbot it must be remembered that all highway users have a duty of care both to themselves and other road users. In particular, motorists should drive in a manner appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions.
- 6.1.8 The Winter Service Plan is reviewed periodically, and reflects changes imposed on Highway Authorities by the revision of The Highways Act 1980 under Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003. The first part of Section 41 now reads:

“in particular, a highway authority are under a duty to ensure as far as is reasonably, practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice or snow”.

Maintenance of Structures (Bridges, Culverts and Highway Retaining Walls)

- 6.1.9 Bridges and structures on or affecting the adopted highway will be maintained and constructed in a way that enables the safe passage of vehicles, livestock and pedestrians within the limits prescribed. Structures include retaining walls, parapets, piped culverts, embankments and cuttings that are the responsibility of the Council.
- 6.1.10 General Bridge inspections are carried out on all NPT Highway Structures on a biennial basis (cyclic inspections – see Appendix 5) with the results being stored in the record system. The visual inspection looks for signs of distress and local damage to the structure as well as the condition of the bearing, drainage, expansion joints parapets and surfacing of the carriageway and footway or verges. The data is then compared with the previous inspection reports and appropriate remedial action can be identified. In most instances, all critical elements can be inspected, but where elements are not safely accessible to the inspector, additional access equipment or diving/confined spaces specialist contractors may be used. These will normally be used to undertake “specialised” or “Principal” inspections.

6.1.11 Whilst maintenance of structures is top sliced from the revenue budget, major renewal projects would normally be funded from capital expenditure. As structural repairs are identified they are prioritised and additional funding sought as necessary. Pending the allocation of resources, interim management for individual structures may be put in place as appropriate.

Traffic Signal Maintenance, Technical Surveys, Surface Treatments and Unplanned Maintenance

6.1.12 The Council has a service level agreement to provide Traffic Signal maintenance. The cost of these contracts is directly top-sliced from the budget. The funding set aside for surface treatment is based on an analysis of skid resistance testing, wet/dry accidents statistics, and the need to extend carriageway life.

Emergency Reactive Maintenance

6.1.13 The Streetcare Division of the Environment Directorate carry out emergency works.

6.2 Routine 'Cyclic' planned Maintenance

General

6.2.1 The budget is divided between routine and structural maintenance. Funding for routine maintenance is subdivided between planned 'cyclical' and needs based schemes. All cyclical maintenance activities are undertaken by the Council's Neighbourhood Service with the exception of gully cleansing and ditching which is undertaken by the Drainage Unit. Furthermore, as the maintenance of road markings, road studs and traffic signs are in general essential to ensure user safety then these items are considered an essential part of cyclic maintenance. This can be justified in the context of accident reduction.

6.2.2 All cyclical maintenance activities include gully emptying, ditching, siding, weed control, grass cutting and cleansing. These activities are generally aimed at protecting the carriageway and maintaining safety. Failure to conduct cyclic maintenance to appropriate standards can result in rapid and serious structural damage and highway users being endangered by flooding, water ponding, potholes and overgrown verges. The frequencies at which Cyclic Maintenance activities are conducted are shown at Appendix 6 with further drainage information given in Appendix 10.

Aids to Movement

6.2.3 Aids to movement, which includes traffic signal, traffic signs and road

markings, are designed both to maintain the efficiency of the network and to ensure that the highway is safe. As stated above, the maintenance of traffic signals is considered a 'priority consideration'. A summary of inspection frequencies is outlined in Appendix 7.

Street Lighting and Illuminated Signs

- 6.2.4 The primary purpose of street lighting is to improve safety for all highway users. In addition, lighting provides improved amenity and increased public confidence in residential and urban areas. Neath Port Talbot has an extensive street lighting system that comprises of 18,185 units. The integrity of this system is maintained under an in house contract. A unique number identifies each lighting unit and details of the entire system are held on the Mayrise computer system. This database is regularly updated to include details of highway adoptions and improvement schemes.
- 6.2.5 The need for maintenance to street lighting is identified by 10 day cycle scouting patrols and by reports from the public. Details of response times are provided in Appendix 8. Major renovations in the form of column replacement or cable renewal are currently funded from the Council's capital programme. The Authority is currently in the process of acquiring a 25 year Public /Private Partnership for renewal and maintenance of street lighting.
- 6.2.6 The County Borough Council's performance standard for street lighting is that not more than 0.8% of all lights should be defective at any given time.
- 6.2.7 Energy costs for street lighting and illuminated signs are calculated in accordance with tariffs negotiated between a consortium of local authorities and the current electrical supply company.

Miscellaneous Assets

- 6.2.8 The highways revenue budget also provides for the cyclic maintenance of a number of miscellaneous assets as follows:-bus shelters, street nameplates, and seating, and the specification for bus shelter cleansing is attached in Appendix 11.

6.3 Routine 'needs based' planned maintenance

- 6.3.1 Remaining revenue budget after funds for 'Priority Commitments' and 'Cyclic' Maintenance is allocated to 'Needs Based' maintenance (which includes minor structural maintenance as stated previously).
- 6.3.3 The Code of Practice emphasises the importance of planned maintenance. The current allocation to 'needs based' schemes is approximately 9.5% of

the revenue budget excluding non-variable items such as payment for rates.

6.3.4 Each year prioritised proposals for 'needs based' schemes are generated by the Network Management Unit and Works Programme Manager. The list of schemes to be implemented is agreed between appropriate Head of Service and the Cabinet Member, and, where necessary, additional appropriate Member approval. The remaining schemes are set aside for consideration in the following financial year along with any new proposals. The 'needs based' budget is carefully monitored and actions are taken as necessary to achieve the planned expenditure (see Appendix 9 for notes on planned expenditure).

6.4 Structural Maintenance (Carriageways and Footways)

6.4.1 Deflectograph surveys are used to determine structural condition of the Local Strategic Highway Network. Where significant lengths of reconstruction are identified internal Capital and external funding sources are pursued. Any safety issues are however considered as part of the normal 'needs based' maintenance programme.

6.5 Value for Money

6.5.1 In order to maximise the benefits of funds available it is essential that value for money in service delivery is obtained. This is achieved by observing the requirements of Local Government legislation, in particular, that relating to the statutory duty to deliver Best Value. Subjecting elements of maintenance to competitive tender is one tool in achieving value for money and to date formal contracts currently exist for the following activities:

- Reinstatement of road markings;
- Weather forecasting.
- Resurfacing

Additionally, tenders are invited, as required, for the following works:

Surface dressings and specialist surfacing

6.5.2 A Schedule of Rates Contract covering the majority of maintenance work not included in the above categories covers an exhaustive list of work including road and footway construction, resurfacing, patching works, kerbing etc. This has made the issuing of work quicker and easier and provide proven value for money by virtue of the tendering process.

6.5.3 Winter Service on adopted roads is undertaken by Streetcare Services, in accordance with the authority's Winter Service Plan.

7.0 DEVELOPMENT OF MAINTENANCE POLICIES

7.1 Data Collection and Analysis

7.1.1 The Council undertakes extensive data gathering including inspections of the network, condition surveys and traffic counts. This data is collected in a pre-arranged and systematic manner and analysed collectively in order to present an accurate reflection of the changing condition and usage of the network. The targeting of condition surveys and traffic counting is particularly important, as the process of data collection must provide a useful management tool rather than being simply an end in itself.

7.2 Information Systems

7.2.1 Considerable investment has taken place in the identification and development of information systems, with the object of providing those managing the maintenance service with ready access to the data needed to assist in decision making. Proprietary maintenance management and GIS systems have been purchased and ongoing development and training is pursued.

7.3 Performance Monitoring

Cost Efficiency

7.3.1 Where levels of service have been established it is necessary to determine whether they are being sustained at an economic cost. Inventory information is now available concerning the number of gullies and number of streetlights maintained and therefore unit costs for the maintenance of these items can be derived. This provides one means of benchmarking with similar authorities in order to establish whether funds are being spent efficiently.

7.3.2 Significant portions of maintenance work are subjected to competitive tender. It is important that actual out-turn is compared with the original tender price and that the reason for any variation can be justified. Comparisons of this nature identify recurrent causes of over expenditure. These can vary from particular difficulties with individual contractors, to difficult site conditions, poor initial design, poor specification or inconsistent supervision. Where shortcomings are identified swift and effective action is initiated.

Customer Satisfaction

- 7.3.3 Customer satisfaction for each NPT operational service unit is recorded in the various Annual Operational Business Plans.
- 7.3.4 Analysis of public complaints is one means used to identify where service delivery could be improved, and to reflect of remedial action. The Council's complaints system therefore has an important role in assessing the effectiveness of practices and specifications.

Technical Audits

- 7.3.5 Traditionally the need for monitoring routine maintenance has been to compare actual spend with the initial budget allocation. However, this is neither a guarantee that the planned work has been carried out in accordance with the specification nor that the volume of work anticipated has been achieved.

Performance Indicators

- 7.3.6 The Audit Commission has now confirmed the indicators for highway services against which individual Highway Authorities are required to publish achieved performance. Whilst the indicators do not provide a comprehensive guide to the extensive service provided, they will allow the public to compare Neath Port Talbot with neighbouring authorities and require consideration when reviewing maintenance standards.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is committed to establishing and refining consistent and coherent policies for highway maintenance. In so doing it aims to achieve Best Value in service delivery.

This maintenance plan is a position statement of current practice and will be used as the basis for appraisal and enhancement of policy. It will be reviewed periodically in order to ensure that stated policies are being observed and to identify where changes in need have arisen.

Appendix 1 - Network Inspection Regime – Frequency Of Inspections

Classification		Safety Inspection	Technical Surveys
Carriageways			
Class I	Strategic Route Main distributor Secondary Distributor	Safety Inspection regime currently under review.	Annual SCRIM (both directions) & Scanner (one direction)
Class II Class III	Link Roads / Local Access Roads		Annual SCRIM & Scanner (B&C Roads only)
Unclassified	Local Access Roads		Generic (1-5) condition assessment
Footways			
	Prestige and Primary Routes	Safety Inspection regime currently under review.	Generic Visual Survey
	Secondary Walking Routes		As Above
	Link Footway & Local Access Footway		As Above
	Industrial Estates & Other Footways		As Above
Cycleway			
	Adopted as part of Carriageway / Footway	Safety Inspection regime currently under review.	
	Remote from Carriageway / Footway		
	Cycle Trails		

Definitions

Where the expression “moving vehicle” is used to describe the method used by Neath Port Talbot County Borough, it means a vehicle driven slowly by one inspector whilst another carries out the inspection. This operation will be carried out in accordance with the safe working procedures, which have already been set out.

All footway inspections are carried out by walking the footway.

Variations

The Code of Practice envisages inspections to be normally carried out by a slow moving vehicle. The Council does not consider this to be appropriate in the Neath Port Talbot area other than for carriageway inspections on main routes (not including any footpaths) and for little used lanes without footways.

The Code recommends that local access roads and footways be inspected annually. It is considered that the minimum frequency in Neath Port Talbot should be six monthly.

Appendix 2 – Criteria for consideration of Maintenance

Planned Maintenance - Carriageways

Survey Criteria	Further Investigation options	Action options (*)
<p>SCRIM Area below investigatory level (as defined in skid policy based upon DMRB HD28/04)</p>	<p>visual site assessment / pendulum / sand patch test</p>	<p>resurface / monitor / survey following year / erect warning signs</p>
<p>Deflectograph Area of low residual life (less than 15 years)</p>	<p>visual site assessment / core / trial pit</p>	<p>resurface / reconstruct / monitor</p>
<p>SCANNER Analysis of individual parameters in accordance with PMS guidelines</p>	<p>visual site assessment / core / trial pit</p>	<p>resurface / prevention treatment</p>
<p>Generic Visual Inspections Analysis of 1-5 ratings to create scheme assessment lengths</p>	<p>visual site assessment</p>	<p>resurface / prevention treatment</p>

* Treatment allocated to sites based upon risk assessment

Planned Maintenance - Footways

Category	Defects	% Area	Treatment
Main Shopping Areas	Coarse cracking Coarse crazing Depressions > 20mm Trips > 20mm	20	Restore Surface
Busy Urban (flexible)	As for (i) above	30	Restore Surface
Busy Urban Areas (Rigid)	Depressions > 20mm Trips > 20mm Cracks or gaps > 20mm	30	Restore Surface
Other Urban Areas/Rural Footways	Rocking Flags As for (ii) or (iii) above	40	Restore Surface

(prioritisation is subsequently undertaken on the basis of trip hazard)

Planned Maintenance - Kerbing

Category	Defect	% Length	Treatment
All Footways	Severe deterioration	20	Restore upstand
Busy Urban Areas	Upstand 75mm or less	100	Restore upstand
	Kerb deterioration	10	
Other Urban Areas/Rural Footways	Upstand 30mm or less	100	Replace kerb
	Kerb deterioration	20	Restore upstand Replace kerb

(prioritisation is subsequently undertaken on the basis of hazard)

Reactive Response Standards

Defect	Response Time
Road pothole > 40mm or footway trip hazard > 20mm	1 – 35 Days(*) (normally 2hr, 24hr, or 35 days)
Depressions which exceeds the NRSWA intervention requirements for surface depression	As above (*)
Hazardous debris or obstruction in the carriageway	2 Hours
Flooding or surcharging highway drainage system	2 Hours
(v) 'Knocked Out' Kerb	As above (*)

(*) Response time prescribed, including any intermediate timescales, at Inspectors discretion based on risk

Appendix 3 - Traffic Sensitive Streets Schedule

Route No.	Length Designated	Duration
B4434	B4434 Bridge over River Nedd	
B4434	B4434 Riverside Drive	
B4434	B4434 Prince of Wales Drive	
B4434	B4434 Gnoll Park Road to Victoria Gardens	
B4434	B4434 Gnoll Park Road	
B4434	B4434 Llantwit Road	
B4434	B4434 Neath Road	
B4434	B4434 Henfaes Road	
B4434	B4434 St Anne's Terrace	
A4109	B4434 Park Road	
A4241	A4109 Afan Valley Road	
B4290	A4241 PDR	
B4286	B4290 Jersey Marine	
	B4286 Cwmavon	

Appendix 4 - Maintenance Activities

Activity	Definition	Purpose
Routine (Cyclic)		
Gulley Emptying	Removal of accumulated debris and detritus from gulleys and catch pits.	To maintain effective highway drainage. To prevent blockage of gulleys and catch pits. To prevent blockages of pipework and ditches.
Ditch and Pipe Clearing	Removal of accumulated debris, detritus and obstructive vegetation.	To maintain effective highway drainage. To prevent blockages of pipework and ditches.
Siding	Removal of verge overgrowth.	To maintain carriageway and footway width. To preserve visibility and provide pedestrian refuge.
Verge Maintenance	Grass cutting and trimming of hedges.	To preserve safety for road users and enhance the aesthetics' of the surrounding area.
Debris/Highway Safety	Removal of debris from the highway.	To maintain highway safety.
Weed Control	Removal or prevention of weed growth.	To avoid the presence of weeds in the highway.
Maintenance of street lighting	Repair and cleaning of lighting units and associated equipment.	To maintain effective illumination of carriageways,

Aids of Movement		footways and sign faces.
(i) Maintenance of traffic signs	Repair, replacement or cleaning of traffic signs.	To preserve safety for road users. To enable the enforcement of Road Traffic Orders. To maintain the provision of advice and information to road users.
(ii) Maintenance of road markings	Renewal or refurbishment of road markings	As for (I) above.

Activity	Definition	Purpose
Structural		
Reconstruction	Replacement of carriageway or footway at depths greater than 100 mm.	To restore the structural strength.
Overlay	Additional flexible material laid onto existing carriageway or footway.	To increase the structural strength. To arrest deterioration. To improve riding quality. To provide surface integrity. To correct adverse cambers. To increase resistance to skidding.
Resurfacing	Replacement of flexible pavement at depths of up to 100 mm.	To restore structural strength. To arrest deterioration. To improve riding quality. To provide surface

Surface Dressing	Surface treatment using a non-structural layer.	<p>integrity. To increase resistance to skidding.</p> <p>To arrest disintegration of the surface. To seal the surface against water penetration. To improve surface texture and resistance to skidding.</p>
Patching	Non continuous resurfacing or reconstruction of limited areas.	<p>To remove hazards to road users. As for overlay or resurfacing but on a limited basis.</p>
Haunching	Construction or reconstruction of carriageway edges.	<p>To provide or restore lateral support to the carriageway. To arrest deterioration of the carriageway.</p>
Drainage Repairs	Restoration of ineffective drainage systems.	<p>To restore effective highway drainage.</p>
Winter		
Pre-Salting	Spreading of de-icing salt on selected routes where icy conditions are forecast.	<p>To prevent the formation of ice on selected routes. To preserve highway safety.</p>
Snow clearance	Removal of accumulated snow from the highway in accordance with stated priorities.	<p>To remove obstruction to the highway by snow.</p>

Appendix 5 - Inspection Regime For Structures

Bridges and Culverts up to 2m span

Inspection Category	Frequency
General	2 - 3 Years
Principal	Included with G.I.
Special	As Required*

(*) Special Inspections can be conducted following a collision or flooding or where an abnormal load is to pass.

Other Highway Structures, Culverts, Retaining walls etc

Inspection Category	Frequency
General	2 Years or receipt of report/complaint

When for particular circumstances more frequent inspections are required on individual structures these are identified in the 'Structures Database'.

Appendix 6 - Cyclic Maintenance Frequencies

Activity	Frequency
<p>Gully Cleansing</p> <p>General 'critical' sites</p>	<p>Bi-annually Additional clean between Apr-Jul</p>
<p>*Grass Cutting</p> <p>Adopted R'bouts & Islands Grassed Verges Highway Flail Cutting Sites Safety Cutting</p>	<p>As per detailed schedule but typically, Minimum 4 cuts per year Minimum 4 cuts per year 1 cut per year Additional cuts where unusual growth has created a hazard</p>
<p>Verge Maintenance</p> <p>Weed Spraying (footways) Application of Retarders Noxious Weed Removal</p>	<p>Programme of spraying twice per year in Summer Not Used Ragwort – As and when required (pulled up) Japanese Knotweed – Selected areas per year (sprayed)</p>
<p>Siding</p> <p>General</p>	<p>Where vegetation encroaches by 300 mm as identified by Inspectors</p>
<p>Cleansing</p> <p>General Trunk Road</p>	<p>Fortnightly litter pick, monthly sweep Monthly litter pick, monthly sweep 6 times per year litter pick</p>

- * Grass cutting with respect to highways ground maintenance generally comprises a one metre swathe immediately adjacent to the carriageway or footway. Where rare flowers exist in the verge, cutting is delayed until after the seeds have set. Normally considered to be after 21st June. Grass cutting procedures take into account the Council's verge maintenance strategy prepared by the Countryside Section.

Grass cutting activities are accelerated where necessary to accommodate variations in seasonal growth.

Appendix 7 - Maintenance Of 'Aids To Movement'

Activity	Frequency
<p>Traffic Signal Maintenance*</p> <p>Fault Attendance Repair/Inspection</p>	<p>Urgent fault - 2 hours Non - urgent - 24 hours - 24 hours “ “ - 72 hours</p>
<p>Sign Cleaning</p> <p>Class I Roads Class II and Class III Unclassified Roads</p>	<p>As required to preserve safety</p>
<p>Road Marking Reinstatement**</p> <p>Class I, Class II and Class III Roads Unclassified</p>	<p>As required to preserve safety</p>
<p>Reflective Stud Replacement</p> <p>All Classes</p>	<p>As required to preserve safety</p>

* Bulk changes may only be undertaken on Sunday morning at specified locations.

** All road markings affected by maintenance works or surface dressing are reinstated within 14 days of the works being completed.

Appendix 8 - Maintenance Of Street Lighting And Illuminated Signs

(i) Repair of Faults

Category of Fault	Minimum Attendance and Assessment Time*
Outages	
Illuminated 'Aids to Movement'	5 calendar days
Lighting unit	5 calendar days
Section of Lighting	Same day
Emergency	
To make safe potential electric danger	2 hours
Repair of traffic bollards, No Entry -signs and Belisha Beacons	“ “

* Working days includes weekends

(ii) Cleaning and Servicing

Installation	Frequency
Signs and Bollards	Every site visit
Lighting Units	On lamp repair

Fault Detection

A 10 day cycle of night-time scouting patrols operates throughout the year.

Appendix 9 - Maintenance Responsibilities By Maintenance Hierarchy (Kms)

Given current budget constraints highways maintenance is currently divided into two maintenance pools for prioritisation, those roads which are covered by technical surveys and those which are not, ie:

Maintenance Pool 1: Local Strategic Highway Network, Class I, II, some III roads and a few Unclassified Roads.

Maintenance Pool 2: Non-strategic network.

Appendix 10 - Specification And Schedule For Land Drainage Maintenance

1. Document Coverage

The document covers the following:-

- day to day requirements of Streams and Culverts Maintenance
- equipment to be made available
- standard required for the general cleansing of streams and culverts entrances
- requirements for a Culvert Cleansing Team (CCT) to be incorporated into the Neath Port Talbot Flood Prevention Plan.

2. General

- 2.1 The Council provides for a Culvert Cleansing Team (CCT) during normal operations consisting of two operatives who are fully conversant with this Maintenance Schedule. 'Normal operations' are defined as those circumstances other than during storm or heavy rainfall, or when The Environment Agency issues a flood alert.
- 2.2 Each operative involved in the maintenance of the streams and culverts is required to be passed medically fit for all duties required under the maintenance schedule. They are also required to have received all relevant inoculations for work in or around sewers in accordance with Health and Safety requirements.
- 2.3 The CCT are required to visit those culvert entrances as set out in the Council's 'Record of Culvert Entrances' and associated plans. On inspection, operatives are required to record all relevant details required to maintain those records, and subsequently return such information to the Council's Operations Manager by the end of each inspection cycle.
- 2.4 The schedule of maintenance is divided into winter and summer periods, based on a four-week cycle. Winter maintenance applies to the period September to March, and summer maintenance to the period April to September. .
- 2.5 The frequency of the visits to each culvert entrance is determined by its priority number as shown on the Council's Record of Culvert Entrances as follows:
- Priority 1 Weekly during the winter period
 Biweekly during the summer per

Priority 2 Biweekly during the winter period
Four weekly during the summer period

Priority 3 Four weekly during the winter period
Eight weekly during the summer period

3.0 Standards for Cleansing Streams and Culvert Entrances

- 3.1 The culvert entrance and grille (if fitted) must be kept free of debris likely to cause a future blockage. Any such debris must be removed from site, unless in the opinion of the cleansing team its removal requires the use of mechanical plant in which case the Operations Manager must be informed within 5 working days.
- 3.2 Where possible, a visual inspection downstream of the entrance must be made to ensure that debris has not built up inside the culvert that is likely to cause a future blockage. If such circumstances are found then the Operations Manager must be informed in order that appropriate arrangements can be made for the debris to be removed. Given that the inside of a culvert is a 'confined space' **under no circumstances shall any member of the cleansing team attempt to remove any debris trapped within it.**
- 3.3 On each visit a visual inspection of the stream banks and bed must be made for a distance of 15m upstream and any perceived problem likely to cause a future problem at the entrance must be recorded on the Culvert Entrance Report Sheet. All vegetation for a distance of 5m upstream of the entrance must be cut back and immediately removed to tip.
- 3.4 Where reasonable to do so, shale, rubble and silt must be removed from the culvert entrance unless in the opinion of the cleansing team its removal requires the use of mechanical plant. As in other cases the Operations Manager must then be informed within 5 working days.

4. Flood Prevention

- 4.1 There are specific areas within the County Borough that, during excessive storm conditions, require a level of maintenance above that of the routine maintenance schedule. The following details the required working patterns, locations and standards for localised flood prevention during such times.
- 4.2 Streetcare Services will provide, on the designation of 'flood' conditions by the Operations Manager or designated representative provide extra operatives in addition to the Culvert Cleansing Team.

4.3 Culverts designated as 'flooding sensitive' are:

4.4 Any debris removed from the above culverts during a flooding storm event must be stored safely, as far from the culvert entrance as is practical, and then removed as soon as the 'Stand Down' instruction is given.

Appendix 11 - Specification For The Cleansing Of Bus Shelters

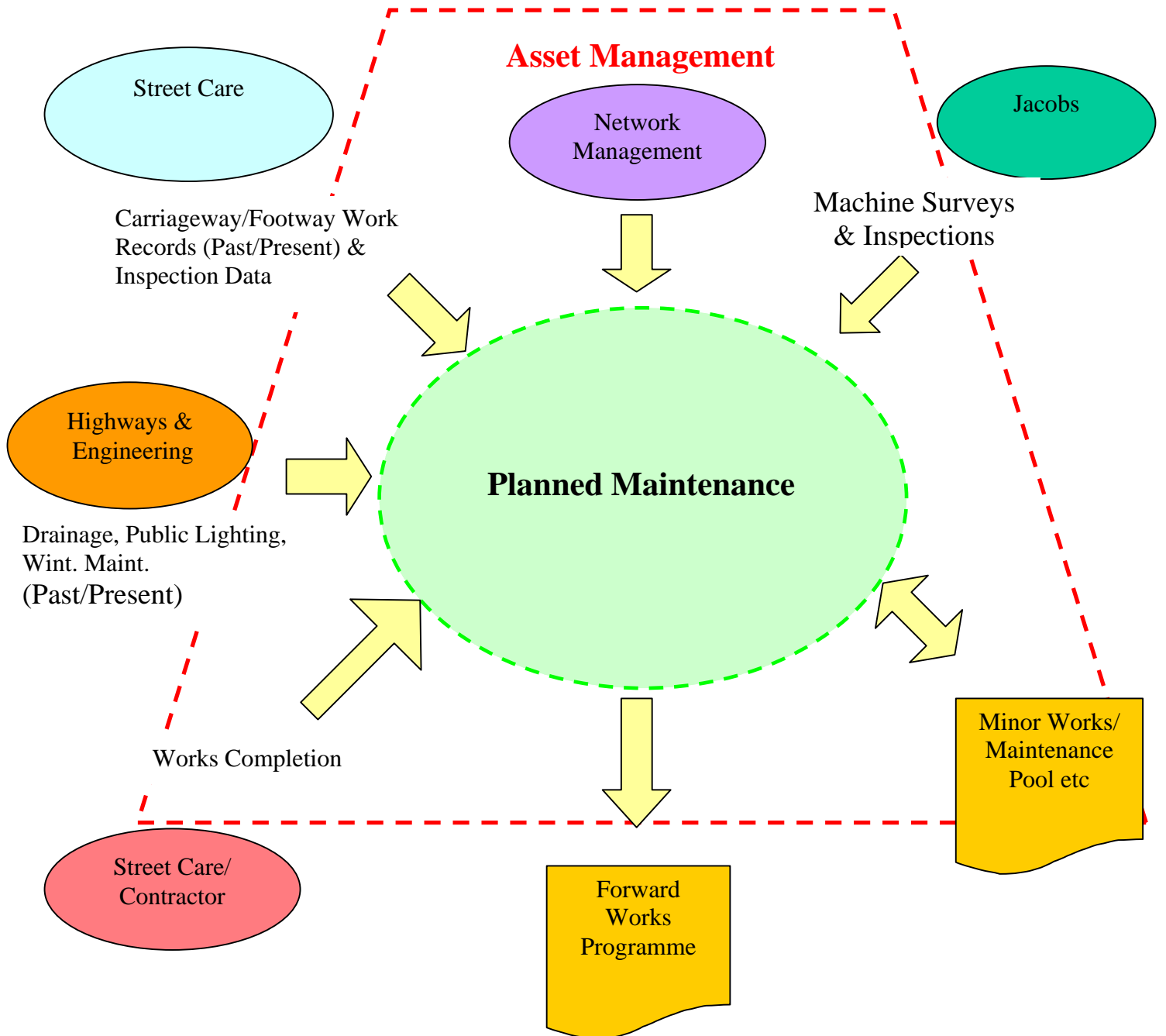
1. Each bus shelter will be cleansed a minimum of twice per year.
2. Bus shelters close to schools or shopping precincts will be cleansed a minimum of once per month
3. Cleansing shall comprise of:
 - a. Brush out and remove all litter and debris
 - b. Remove any graffiti using suitable products for sensitive plastic/polycarbonate.
 - c. Disinfect with a suitable product and power wash interior, including floor.
 - d. Record attendance date together with any defects or works required.

Neath Port Talbot C.B.C. Bus Shelter Inventory

Type				Total
Blockwork				
Brick				
Cantilever S				
Cantilever FR				
Cantilever VR				
Enclosed FR				
Enclosed VR				
Stops (No shelter)				
Totals				

Appendix 12 – Asset Management overview of Planned Maintenance.

Asset Management System



Appendix 13 - Traffic Management Act 2004 – Duty of the Local Traffic Authority

In accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 ('TMA'), The New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 ('NRSWA'), including relevant Regulations and Codes of Practice, Local Traffic Authorities have a statutory obligation to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving.

Part 2 - Section 16(1) of the Traffic Management Act 2004 states:-

“It is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives;

- (a) Securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and,
- (b) Facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.”

Furthermore, it is the Authority's duty, as part of the co-ordination function, to implement a system to register and notify 'works for road' purposes.

The introduction of the TMA and a new Code of Practice under NRSWA has increased the powers to co-ordinate statutory undertakers. As part of the Network Management duty it is also important that the Authority demonstrates parity with 3rd parties in control of its own works.

It is important to stress that the Network Management Duty also gives the Welsh Assembly Government strong powers of intervention should an Authority fail to manage its network effectively using the powers vested in it by the TMA.