

Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4 July 2017

REPORT TITLE:	ROAD CONDITION UPDATE
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC COMMISSIONER FOR ENVIRONMENT

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an explanation into the current condition of Wirral's roads, how the information is captured, and how it is reported to the Department for Transport (DfT).

The maintenance of highways is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

Maintenance and improvement of highways contributes to the Wirral Plan pledge to provide transport and technology infrastructure fit for the future, and is key to delivery of the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Members note the contents of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To ensure members of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee have an understanding of the condition of Wirral's roads and how the information is captured, used and reported to the Department for Transport (DfT).

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Other options are not relevant to this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The total length of Wirral's road network is approximately 1138km and can be broken down as follows:

- 'A' Classified Roads Principal 130km
- 'B' Classified Roads Non-Principal 62km
- 'C' Classified Roads Non-Principal 54km
- 'U' Unclassified Roads 892km.

In accordance with national best practice the Council undertakes surveys of the highway network in order to determine the condition of the carriageways. Information gathered during these surveys is used to develop the Structural Maintenance Programme and helps to prioritise highway schemes. Wirral's road network is surveyed annually by external suppliers procured through a contract framework with all of the Liverpool City Region Authorities as well as Cheshire West and Chester Council. The current survey supplier for classified roads is WDM Ltd and for unclassified roads is Yotta Ltd.

Classified road network

For the assessment of the classified road network WDM Ltd undertake a scanner survey from a vehicle. Road Assessment Vehicles (RAVs) carry out high speed data acquisition and recording of road surface conditions, including automatic recognition of surface cracking. This provides performance indicator data to enable maintenance work to be prioritised and National Indicators (NIs) to be calculated. These vehicles have been the primary provider of SCANNER survey data throughout the United Kingdom and are designed to survey at speeds up to 100 km/hr. whilst measuring and recording road geometry, texture profile and cracking.

Unclassified Road Network

Coarse Visual Inspection (CVI) is intended to be a rapid survey. CVI is the standard survey used to produce the Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI) on the condition of local authorities' roads as required by DfT, and which allows comparisons to be made between authorities on the basis of the overall condition of their carriageways. A CVI survey is normally undertaken from a slow moving vehicle, using the "simple" cross-section position method, where the carriageway is assessed as a whole.

Both types of surveys are undertaken after completion of the structural maintenance works programme for that year, to allow for the survey results to reflect the investment the Council has committed to the carriageway network. From the surveys undertaken, the existing condition of the highway network is reported through a small number of NIs.

4.0 ROAD CONDITION RESULTS

- 4.1 The performance of Wirral's road network is shown on Table 1, which details the last six years. All the recorded measurements indicate the percentage of the network that requires immediate maintenance for each classification of road. The condition of the Principal and Non-Principal Classified roads are Wirral Plan indicators in the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy.
- 4.2 Local Authorities are required to provide the DfT with the performance figures relating to data collection, as per the Local Government Act 1974, annually in October. The most recent surveys in Wirral were completed in Summer 2016. Therefore the reported data for 2015/16 relates to the road condition at that time. Condition for 2016/17 will be assessed following surveys undertaken later this year.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Principal Classified Roads National Indicator (NI)	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Non –Principal Classified Roads NI	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%
Unclassified Roads Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI)	6%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%

Table 1 Condition Data - (percentage of network that requires immediate maintenance. Figures have been rounded up or down to nearest whole numbers)

2015/16 percentage figures equate to the following length of network, requiring immediate maintenance:

Principal 'A' Classified roads - 1% equates to 2.696km

Non-Principal 'B' classified roads - 1% equates to 1.577km

Non-Principal 'C' classified roads - 1% equates to 0.990km

Unclassified roads 'U' roads - 6% equates to 53.971km

In 2016, DfT published a document titled: Road Conditions in England. This indicates that, nationally, the percentage of Principal roads requiring immediate maintenance is 3% (1% in Wirral) and, for Non-Principal roads, is 6% (1% in Wirral). Therefore, the current condition of Wirral's roads compares very favourably to the national picture.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Details of the financial implications and budget requirements arising from this data were reported to Cabinet on 27 February 2017 with the proposed Structural Maintenance Programme for 2017/18.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 imposes a duty on the Council, as Highway Authority, to maintain highways at the public expense.

The Local Government Act 1974, imposes a duty on the Council to provide performance figures relating to road condition data .

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are no additional specific ICT, staffing or assets implications relating to this report.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

There are no specific relevant risks relating to this report.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

There are no specific engagement or consultation matters relating to this report.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No, because there is no relevance to equality.

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APPENDICES

None.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Highway Structural Maintenance Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20 Cabinet Report 27 February 2017

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date