



**Technical, Economic and Environmental  
Services  
Scrutiny Panel**

**Follow-Up Review on the Council's Highways  
Maintenance Policies**

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# TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

## Follow-Up Review on the Council's Highways Maintenance Policies

### 1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

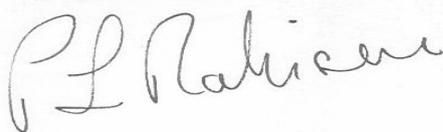
It gives me great pleasure to present the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel's Follow-Up Review on the Council's Highways Maintenance Policies.

As Tameside Council's highways are considered to be one of its most valuable assets, when the Scrutiny Panel's original report was published in 2002, a number of recommendations were made to ensure an adequate level of investment was maintained and that the highway network continued to improve.

This Follow-Up Review confirms the Council's commitment to improving the highway infrastructure and its crucial role in the local community, whether it is for the local economy and the transportation of goods and services, or for the everyday lives of the borough's residents. During the course of this Follow-Up Review however, it has become apparent that there is a significant resource shortfall for the borough's highways, and although I am delighted to be able to report that considerable progress has been made in achieving a number of the recommendations contained in the initial report, the Panel has made a number of new recommendations which attempt to address this issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services for accepting the recommendations in the original report, the representatives of the Utility Organisations who shared valuable information on highway reinstatement works and the Engineering Operations Manager for the comprehensive evidence which he presented to the Panel.

Thank you.



Councillor P J Robinson  
Chair



## **2. SUMMARY**

In 2002, the Scrutiny Panel published a report of its review into the Council's Highway's Maintenance Policies and made over 30 recommendations. It is the essence of good scrutiny practice to undertake a follow up scrutiny review to ascertain the progress in implementing the recommendations contained in the original report.

The Scrutiny Panel discussed the recommendations with the Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services together with the Engineering Operations Manager and also met representatives from Utility Companies to discuss their operations regarding excavations in the highway and reinstatements.

The Panel was pleased to see that the majority of its original recommendations had been implemented and that the Council's highway network is regarded as its greatest single asset and that the adoption of a whole life costing approach to highway maintenance had been agreed. Concerns were expressed however, regarding the lack of resources to maintain and further improve the highway network in the Borough and a number of issues have been highlighted in the Panel's Follow-Up Report. Despite this, Members were particularly pleased to note the success of the apprentice scheme that had been recommended by this Scrutiny Panel with the individual achievements by the apprentices themselves who are a credit to Tameside.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Councillor P Robinson (Chair), Councillor R Welsh (Deputy Chair)**  
**Councillors Carter, Downs, A Holland, Meredith, Roberts, S Smith and K Welsh**

**Mr A Moss – Citizens' Panel**

## **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference and Objectives for the Review are as follows:-

### **Terms of Reference**

“To ascertain whether the recommendations in the Scrutiny Panel's Report on the Scrutiny of the Council's Highway Maintenance Policies, published in May 2002, have been implemented and to examine the outcomes.”

## Objective

“To establish what actions have been taken by Engineering Services in relation to the Scrutiny Panel’s recommendations”.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 This Scrutiny Review was undertaken by Members of the Technical, Economic and Environmental Services Scrutiny Panel, together with a representative from the Citizens’ Panel.
- 5.2 The Panel initially interviewed Councillor A Whitehead, the Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services and Mr Paul Jennings, the Engineering Operations Manager who reported on the implementation of the recommendations from the initial report, together with any specific reasons for any recommendations which had not been implemented.
- 5.3 The Chair and Deputy Chair held an informal meeting with the following representatives of Utility Organisations, to ascertain their organisation's practices and co-ordination with the Council's engineers regarding the reinstatement of road surfaces following maintenance work:-
- Mr Frank Percival – Operations Manager – United Utilities PLC
  - Ms Michele Bower – Project Engineer for this area– United Utilities PLC
  - Mr Keith Richards – United Utilities PLC
  - Mr Liam Thompson – Virgin Media
- 5.4 During the course of the Follow-Up Review, the Panel Members identified a number of highway maintenance sites in the borough and undertook site visits to the following locations:-
- Hickenfield Road, Hyde; Bradley Green Road, Hyde; Stamford Drive, Stalybridge; Harrison Street, Stalybridge; Park Close, Stalybridge; Lindsay Street jct Stocks Lane, Stalybridge; Ardenfield Road, Denton; Rivermead Road, Denton; Pendle Road, Denton; Masefield Road, Droylsden; Shelley Grove, Droylsden; Lancaster Road, Droylsden.

## 6. BACKGROUND

### 6.1 Roads in England

- 6.1.1 “Roads are vital to our communities. They allow goods to be transported around the country and ensure people can get to work, school, the shops as well as visit friends and family. They are essential to the economic prosperity of the country and to the everyday lives of the millions of people who use them. Ensuring the road network functions efficiently and safely is therefore a priority for the Government”.<sup>1</sup>
- 6.1.2 The Highways Agency is responsible for managing, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 6.1.3 Its network includes various types of road ranging from motorways carrying up to 200,000 vehicles per day to single carriageway trunk roads (the major A roads) carrying fewer than 10,000 vehicles per day which provide the main inter-urban and inter-regional routes for through traffic.
- 6.1.4 Other roads in England are managed by local authorities.

### 6.2. Background to Council Duties and Obligations relating to Highway Maintenance

- 6.2.1 The Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on a Highway Authority (the authority responsible for the road) to maintain the highways in its area at the public expense.<sup>2</sup> In particular, Section 41 imposes a duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense.
- 6.2.2 There is no definition in the Act as to the level of maintenance required although a publication “Well Maintained Highways, a Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance Management”<sup>3</sup> which is supported and endorsed by numerous organisations including the Department of Transport has been produced and offers comprehensive guidance on all matters relating to this subject.

Moreover, Tameside MBC has developed a “Highway Maintenance Local Code of Practice – A Guide to Highway Policies and Procedures”, which details operational activities and standards for risk management of the highway infrastructure.

Finally, the Council has also adopted standards relating to the inspection and maintenance of footways in accordance with the Code of Practice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Department for Transport

<sup>2</sup> Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/pdfs/p03\\_well\\_maintained\\_highways.pdf](http://www.ukroadsliasongroup.org/pdfs/p03_well_maintained_highways.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/tmbc2/walking.htm>

6.2.3 The term "highway" means a way over which every member of the general public has a right of passage. It includes not just roads and streets but cycle tracks, footways, public paths and bridleways.

*It must be noted that private or unadopted streets are not maintained at public expense. This means that the council as a highway authority, is under no obligation to carry out repairs to the street, even though it might be a highway which the public has a right to use.<sup>5</sup>*

6.2.4 In the event of a claim for compensation against the Council as Highway Authority as a result of injury or damage caused by an accident on the highway, arising from its alleged failure to maintain a highway maintainable at the public expense, it is a defence to prove that the Council took such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to ensure that the part of the highway to which the claim relates was not dangerous for traffic.

6.2.5 For the purposes of a defence above a court shall take into account the following:

- (a) the character of the highway, and the traffic which was reasonably expected to use it;
- (b) the standard of maintenance appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic;
- (c) the state of repair in which a reasonable person would have expected to find the highway;
- (d) whether the Council could reasonably have been expected to know that the highway was likely to be dangerous to users;
- (e) where the Council could not reasonably have been expected to repair the highway before an accident occurred, what warning notices of its condition had been displayed.

6.2.6 Not only does the Highways Act cover the maintenance of the infrastructure of the highway network, but it also provides power to cut or fell trees etc. that overhang a highway so as to endanger or obstruct the passage of vehicles or pedestrians. For example, where a hedge, tree or shrub is obstructing a highway, the Highways Act empowers a local authority to serve a notice on the owner or occupier of the land to remove the cause of danger, obstruction or interference within 14 days, in default of which the Council may carry out the work and recover the cost of the work from the owner.

### **6.3 Tameside Council Priorities**

6.3.1 In 2002, the Council asked the people living in the borough about their priorities. The document that was produced as a result of this consultation was the Community Strategy.

6.3.2 The key priorities highlighted by the residents of Tameside were:-

- Supportive Communities

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<sup>5</sup> Private Street Works Code contained in Sections 205 to 218 of the Highways Act 1980

- A Safe Environment
- A Prosperous Society
- A Learning Community
- A Healthy Population
- An Attractive Borough

6.3.3 In order to support the six themes outlined in the Community Strategy, the Council introduced four priorities. These “people” priorities were:-

- Children and Young People;
- Public safety and combating crime;
- Stimulating the economy to produce more and better jobs;
- The appearance of the Borough.

6.3.4 Highways Maintenance issues fall under the remit of the Council priority headings “A Safe Environment” and “An Attractive Borough”.

## **6.4 Highway Maintenance in Tameside**

### **Best Value Performance Indicators**

6.4.1 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are a statutory set of 90 indicators developed by Government Departments to measure the performance of local authorities, that is, all local authorities must measure themselves against BVPIs. The data is collected and audited annually by the Audit Commission. Best Value Performance Indicators exist because of the duty of best value, which requires local authorities (and other best value authorities) to seek to achieve continuous improvement by having regard to the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of their service delivery.<sup>6</sup>

6.4.2 The figures for the following Performance Indicators as detailed in the following tables were obtained from the Council’s Policy Unit on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007. The figures detail a three year rolling programme which is updated every year, and therefore the figures change annually.

6.4.3 Three BVPIs measure the percentage of roads in the Borough that require further consideration/examination for possible repairs. All three performance indicators fared better than the previous year and each 2006/07 target was met. The performance indicators are as follows:-

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Communities and Local Government <http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/faq.asp>

Performance Indicator Number	Performance Indicator Title	Performance 2006/07	What are our targets for future years?		
			Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
BVPI 223	Condition of Principal Roads * - % where structural maintenance should be considered.	11.35%	11.30%	11.30%	11.30%
BVPI 224a	<b>Condition of Non-Principal Roads* - % where structural maintenance should be considered.</b>	13.84%	13.80%	13.80%	13.80%
BVPI 224b	<b>Condition of Unclassified Roads (25% - visual inspection) - % where structural maintenance should be considered.</b>	17.29%	17.00%	17.00%	17.00%

\* The surface condition of the roads is measured by a scanner machine. The future targets have been set to improve on the initial scores and therefore decrease the percentage of roads in the Borough in need of consideration for repair.

6.4.4 BVPI 187 measures the percentage of pavements where structural maintenance should be considered.

Performance Indicator Number	Performance Indicator Title	Performance 2006/07	What are our targets for future years?		
			Target 2007/08	Target 2008/09	Target 2009/10
BVPI 187	Condition of Surface	18.00%	17.5%	17.00%	17.00%

## Road and Footpath Maintenance Service Charter

6.4.5 In undertaking its statutory obligations Tameside MBC has published a “Service Charter”<sup>7</sup> which is widely available on the Council’s website:-

6.4.6 The Council promises to:-

- Inspect each street, as per the frequency in the table below, to identify any problems;
- Repair any dangerous defects found within 24 hours;
- Send a 'Find and Fix' team into all adopted streets, on a planned route, to repair minor defects found.
- Assess all defect reports and repair serious defects within 14 days;
- Any reports where repairs are not undertaken within 14 days will be added to on-going maintenance programmes and re-assessed in the annual cycle;
- Clear out roadside grids at least once a year;
- Start "gritting" major roads when snow fall or heavy frost is forecast;
- Weed spray twice per year with safe chemicals;
- Keep the grass short.

The table below shows the frequency with which highways within the borough are inspected:-

National Classification	(Local)	(Local)	2	3	4	1a	1	B
Footways	Strategic Roads	Main Distributor	Secondary Walking	Link Footway	Local Access Footway	Prestige Walking Town Centre	Primary Walking	Cycle Tracks / Trails
Frequency of Inspection:	3 Months	4 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months	Monthly	Monthly	6 Months
National Classification	2	3a	3b	4a	4b	(Local)		A
Carriageways	Strategic Roads	Main Distributor	Secondary Distributor	Link Roads	Local Access Road	Town Centre		Cycle Tracks / Trails
Frequency of Inspection:	3 Months	4 Months	6 Months	9 Months	12 Months	1 Month		6 Months

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/servicecharter/roadfootpath>

## Funding Highway Maintenance<sup>8</sup>

6.4.7 Funding for highways maintenance is very complicated but is basically provided from two sources:-

### Revenue Funding

This is used for the day to day routine highway maintenance remedial works and is paid by funds from the local government financial settlement.

### Capital Funding

This is used for structural works and is funded from various sources including:-

- Local Transport Plan (capital funding which is allocated for the following schemes: Major Scheme Allocations – individual transport schemes costing more than £5m eg. major new local roads, bus route improvements; Integrated Transport block allocations – used by local authorities to fund all non-maintenance transport schemes costing less than £5 million, eg. small road projects, road safety schemes, bus priority schemes, walking and cycling schemes, transport information schemes etc; Maintenance Allocations - provided for structural local road maintenance - major resurfacing, maintenance or replacement of bridges, tunnels etc, and occasionally reinstatement of roads following natural events or disasters.
- South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study (SEMMMS) - a ten year transport plan monitoring strategy on infrastructure and services.

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<sup>8</sup> Department for Transport <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/ltp/theltpprocess>

## **7. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE INITIAL REPORT**

### **7.1 Original Recommendation 1**

**That the importance of the highway network, as a vital council asset, be recognised.**

#### **Executive Response Update:**

A Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), is currently in draft format, and is planned for issue to Council in October 2007. This sets out the strategy and policies to deal with improving our network including strategic development.

#### **Panel Findings:**

The draft Transport Asset Management Plan is identified on the Forward Plan for approval in November 2007.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 1. The importance of the Transport Asset Management Plan is acknowledged by the Panel as this document confirms the Council's commitment to improving its highway network by determining the strategy and policies for the highways' future long term development.**

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the Scrutiny Panel receives a presentation on the Transport Asset Management Plan before it is approved.**

### **7.2 Original Recommendation 2**

**That the Engineers Service conducts an exercise to evaluate the highway network showing its current and future value, taking into account the existing and future levels of investment, adjusted against depreciation.**

#### **Executive Response Update:**

The TAMP document (as above) identifies the value of the Network. Early calculations indicate that the Carriageway is worth approximately £500m and Footways £110m with a required investment to get to a desired maintenance

state of approximately £42m and £38m respectively. The investment plan will be projected for a 10 year period, and is currently being developed in line with accounting principles.

### **Panel Findings:**

When approved, the Transport Asset Management Plan will identify the value of the Council's highways network, and will specify the investment plan for borough's carriageways and footways for a ten year period.

The Panel notes that a more refined computer model for valuing the Council's highways network is now available and current estimates value the Carriageway at £600m and the Footways at £213m. Consequently, required investment to reach a desired maintenance state is approximately £42m and £21m respectively.

The Panel however, is concerned about the current level of financial investment in the borough's highways and believes that improvements can only be made with a clear commitment by the Council to allocate a significant increase in funding in this area.

The Panel Members also feel that they have insufficient knowledge on the intricate details of the highways maintenance budget, and would welcome further guidance on this matter.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

2. That the current level of funding investment in the borough's highways is insufficient for the number of improvements required.

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That consideration be given to increasing the budget allocation to the borough's highways and that any "slippage" be allocated to District Assemblies and/or Engineering Services to assist in highways maintenance schemes, in accordance with the most need as detailed in the Transport Asset Management Plan document, to be approved by the Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services in November 2007.
3. That additional, more detailed highways maintenance budget information be made available to elected members.

### **7.3 Original Recommendation 3**

The Council considers the overall benefits of "Whole Life Costings", rather than short term costings, when considering highway maintenance.

**Although temporary remedial/maintenance works may be cheaper in the short term, they are usually more expensive in the long term.**

**Executive Response Update:**

Whole life costings are considered for maintenance works. However, there is still a need to embed this policy fully when capital schemes are developed, to ensure that an element of capital funding is identified for future maintenance needs.

**Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes that particular efforts are being made to introduce schemes which in the long term will be far more cost effective to the Council. Particular reference has been made to the recyclable plastic kerbs to replace concrete kerbs, which should have a longer life span, and will consequently offer better value for money.

**7.4 Original Recommendation 4**

**That a proportion of the Highways Maintenance Budget should be identified for whole life maintenance of highways, with this being gradually increased each year.**

**Executive Response Update:**

The percentage of planned v. reactive schemes for Tameside, is in the order of 80/20 and is in line with the Code of Guiding Principles for Highway Maintenance.

**Panel Findings:**

The concentration on planned maintenance schemes indicates a more systematic approach to maintaining the Council's most valuable asset. This should be continued with the implementation of the TAMP.

**7.5 Original Recommendation 5**

**That the Council introduces a strategy for on-street parking, including the decriminalisation of parking. This will also address parking partially on pavements where appropriate, together with consequential pavement strengthening methods.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

Decriminalised Parking has now been introduced for the Borough (May 2007) and will help address the damage and obstructions currently being caused on many of our footpaths.

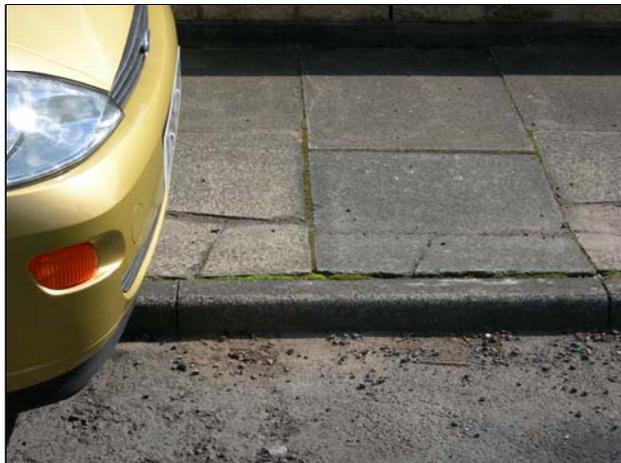
Trial 'red-line' schemes have been introduced to help delineate footpath parking where this is practical.

The current development of the TAMP does not however, currently cover for wholesale investment to increase the structural strength of our footpaths to take vehicular traffic. There is however, footpath strengthening at strategic locations/junctions throughout the Borough. Costs of Dropped crossings provided by the Council compare favourably with our neighbouring Authorities.

## **Panel Findings:**

Following the decriminalisation of parking, the Council now has the power to issue fixed penalty notices to all vehicles that are parked on double yellow lines and are also encroaching on the footways.

The Panel notes however, that these powers extend only to areas of the carriageway that are identified with double yellow lines, provided that the appropriate traffic sign has been placed on an adjacent post and a current Traffic Regulation Order is in force.



If a vehicle is parked on a footway such as to obstruct the free passage along the highway, but the adjoining carriageway is not marked with double yellow lines, any enforcement issues remain a matter for the police, who may prosecute for obstructing a public footway. (Highway markings painted in white are enforceable by the police).

Bearing in mind the high costs associated with damaged footpaths as a consequence of vehicles parking on them, the Council is looking to adopt a new repair regime, whereby broken flags included in the Pavement Repair Programme will be replaced with Bitmac.

The Panel does not believe however that the Council is sufficiently enforcing parking restrictions via its new powers and the Panel Members also consider that Bitmac reinstatements next to paving flags does not sufficiently reinstate the excavated area.

The Panel Members have also highlighted concerns regarding redundant traffic regulation schemes which they believe aggravate the pavement parking problems.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSIONS**

3. **Parking issues remain problematic in the borough, particularly with regard to pavement parking which not only poses a danger to pedestrians who then have to walk on the road, but also with regard to maintenance issues which are costly and time consuming.**
4. **A number of traffic regulation orders in the borough which are now redundant, aggravate parking pressures, however to revoke these traffic regulation orders would cost the District Assembly approximately £500.00 per order.**

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS**

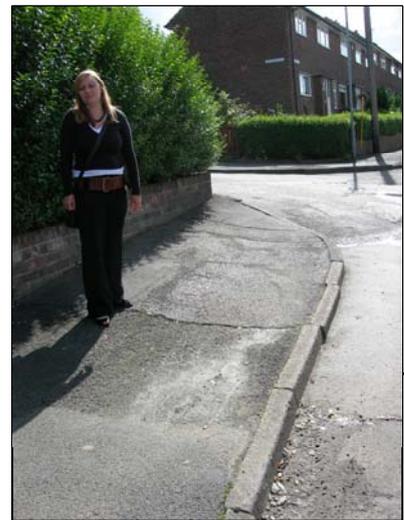
4. **That following the introduction of the decriminalisation of parking scheme, the Council and the Police be encouraged to issue fixed penalty notices when appropriate, to drivers of vehicles who cause obstruction or damage pavements by parking their vehicles. In particular, action should be taken in respect of commercial vehicles that are parked on pavements or in restricted areas.**
5. **That Engineering Services monitors the issuing of fixed penalty notices and reports on a quarterly basis to District Assemblies.**
6. **That once any backlog of the implementation of approved Traffic Regulation Orders has been cleared, measures be taken where possible to revoke redundant Orders throughout the borough, subject to available/identified funding.**

## **7.6 Original Recommendation 6**

**That consideration be given to the introduction of a more gradual gradient for new dropped crossings.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

Footway crossings at traffic controlled points have been improved by ensuring that there is no more



than a 3 mm lip at the meeting of the carriageway and the footway.

The angle of the approach slopes is in many cases limited by physical restrictions, but crossings are in line with DfT guidelines.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is pleased to note that consultation does take place with groups representing disabled people, on gradual gradients for new dropped crossings. It must be noted however, that guidelines issued by the Department for Transport must be adhered to in this matter. It is important that effective communication is maintained with groups representing disabled people as the Panel considered that the condition of many footways in the borough to be inadequate and dangerous for wheelchair users and disabled people due to their poor surfaces.

During their site visits, the Panel Members did visit an example of a good highway repair which was located in Newton, Hyde. Please refer to photograph opposite.



## **7.7 Original Recommendation 7**

**That Members of each District Assembly undertake an annual inspection visit looking at the road network within their wards.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

The District Assembly is now presented with maps indicating those roads requiring urgent further engineering assessment ('Reds'). Confirmation 'on the ground' can be easily arranged as required with District Assemblies being informed of how the TAMP will affect roads in their areas.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes the circulation of maps at District Assemblies which indicates the roads in the borough that require further engineering assessment. The Panel suggests however that the maps require more clarity as the scale for certain areas is too small, and the Members would welcome an annual site visit with the Engineers in their respective wards.



## **7.8 Original Recommendation 8**

**Consideration is given on the ways the allocation of the highways budget is distributed between the District Assemblies, in accordance with the requirements of the individual towns in the Borough.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

The TAMP document will identify a more strategic approach to highway maintenance, and will be based on 'needs', utilising the objective data returned from independent surveys, (e.g. Scanner and Detailed/Coarse Visual Inspections). This will be run through our integrated United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS) Symology computer system during 2007/08, to help determine best value work treatments and programmes.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel agrees that highway maintenance in the borough requires a strategic approach based on the needs of its community, and welcomes the introduction of the Transport Asset Management Plan, that should be presented to District Assemblies in relation to their areas.

## **7.9 Original Recommendation 9**

**That the Council continues to explore the introduction of risk removal strategies, which will result in an enhanced amount of funding which can be used to maintain highways.**

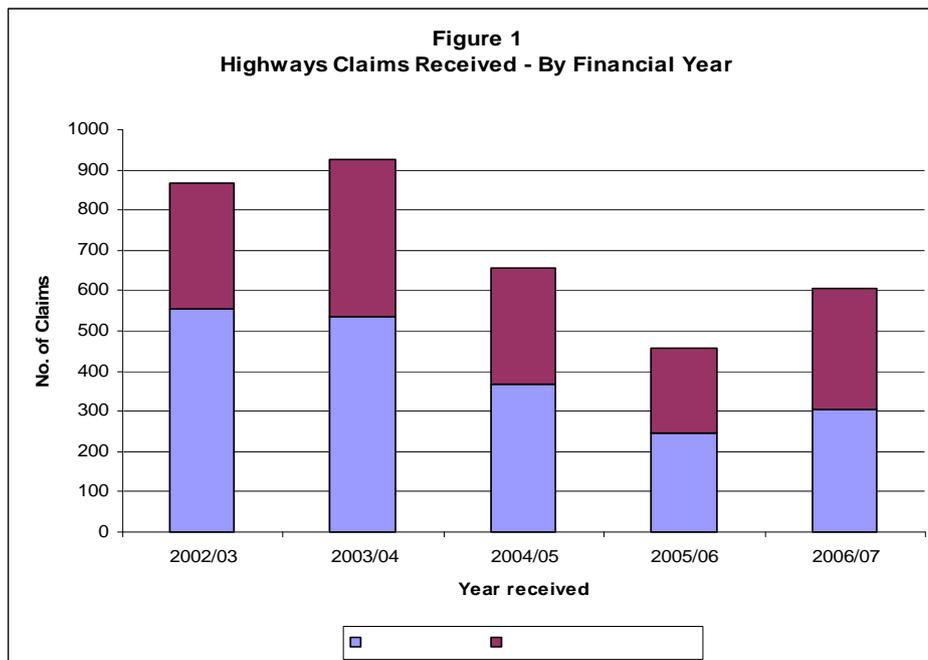
### **Executive Response Update:**

Risk Management of the Highway has seen a massive improvement, contributing to the Council reducing the Highway Maintenance Third Party Accident Insurance Budget for 2007/2008 by £312,000. Note: Following a budget pressure bid in 2006/7, Highway Risk Management funding was increased by £60k for 2007/8.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel congratulates Engineering Services on introducing successful risk reduction strategies which have reduced the 2007/2008 Highway Maintenance Third Party Accident Insurance by £312,000.

does note however, that claim settlements remain a significant cost burden to the Council.

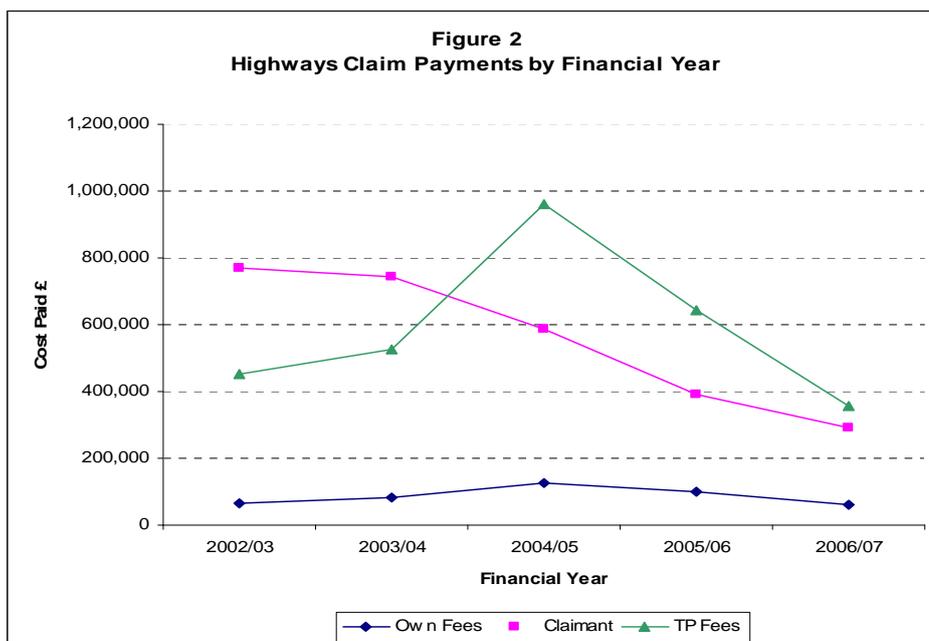


The Council insurers are Zurich Municipal. The excess payable per claim exceeds £150,000. Consequently, in order to be financially economic, the Council employs Zurich Municipal to be its “claims handler” in its capacity as independent insurance expert. As a result, the Council “self insures” ie. settles claims from its own budget, to avoid paying the large excess.

Each potential claim is referred to Zurich Municipal to administer to the point of settlement payment of which is made from an imprest account funded and managed by the Council.

The Panel’s initial report indicated that in the year 2000-2001 approximately 610 claims had been received. Since that date the figures are estimated as follows (See Figure 1 above):-

2002/2003	-	870 claims
2003/2004	-	920 claims
2004/2005	-	660 claims
2005/2006	-	460 claims
2006/2007	-	600 claims



Just over half of all the claims are referred to the Council's insurer Zurich Municipal, and the remainder are rejected by the Council. Nevertheless, officer time is required to examine each claim which adds a cost burden to the local authority.

Figure 2, demonstrates the annual cost payable by the Council for claims successfully brought against Tameside from 2002/2003 to 2006/2007 (TP fees refers to Third Party fees)

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

5. That significant savings have been made by the adoption of prudent risk reduction strategies.

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

7. That all savings made from the implementation of insurance risk removal strategies be reinvested into the borough's highways maintenance.

### **7.10 Original Recommendation 10**

That alternative brick sized paving blocks be used instead of E70 (50cm x 50cm) paving blocks.

**Executive Response Update:**

**A Highway Works Palette of materials and associated standard details for installation are developed to only use such E70 flags where necessary and/or appropriate to match existing design.**

### **Panel Findings:**

Although modular brick paving is far more successful than the traditional E70 paving blocks, the Panel notes that Engineering Services is looking at alternative, more innovative road surfacing methods for town centres such as red Bitmac.

## **7.11 Original Recommendation 11**

**That alternative methods of use be found to reuse reclaimed materials.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

Where possible existing site materials will be reused when undertaking maintenance. (98% of excavated inert waste is currently sent for recycling). The Engineering Service is now trialling the use of recycled plastic kerbs which also complies with H & S guidelines to minimise manual lifting/handling of weights. The use of non-illuminated bollards (using recycled plastics, and solar powered bollards), are also on trial at a number of sites in the Borough and this initiative is being increased where budgets allow, in order to reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel welcomes the use of reclaimed materials by Engineering Services and encourages continued use of such materials both in-house and by its contractors.

When completing reinstatement works Utility Organisations are required to replace any damaged surfacing and sub-structure with an identical replacement.

The Utilities Organisations report that many flags are very hard to source and some highways cannot always be reinstated with an identical replacement. Moreover, it is impossible to replace tarmac and concrete with



the original shade. Other local authorities have sustained a store of replacement identical flags etc which can be used in an emergency by the Council and its contractors when identical replacement supplies are unavailable.

During their site visits the Members of the Panel highlighted a number of areas within their wards where reinstatement works were having a detrimental effect on the existing road network. The Members wished to highlight that the sites visited represented only a small proportion of the similar problems experienced in the borough. In particular, one poorly reinstated site had weeds growing between the crevices.

Particular concerns were noted in areas of high residential traffic volume where highway sub-structures had not been designed for this capacity.

An example here is shown where the highway has been “rutted” by the weight of vehicles.



## **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 6. The Panel concludes that mis-matched replacement flag stones and tarmac/concrete can look unsightly when used for reinstatement repairs.**
- 7. Reinstatement works which are not undertaken correctly can have a detrimental effect on the original road network.**

## **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

- 8. That consideration be given to the provision of a store of replacement resurfacing materials which can be used by the Utility organisations when identical replacements cannot be sourced.**
- 9. That the quality of the reinstatement work carried out by the Utility Companies' be ensured by the resurfacing of greater lengths of highway where there is a cluster of excavations.**

## **7.12 Original Recommendation 12**

That the regular Co-ordination Meetings between the Council and utility organisations continue, in order to improve the existing excellent relations.

### **Executive Response Update:**

These meetings take place on a regular quarterly basis. Performance indicators are reported to the Council's Enforcement Panel, which indicates that the quality of works by utilities are improving. It should however be noted that there is also a financial income target set by the Borough Treasurer for Utility defaults, which cannot be met if improvements on site, are made.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel welcomes confirmation from Engineering Services that their priority is to ensure that road excavations undertaken by Utility Companies are completed and reinstated as soon as possible rather than maximising default payments. The Panel however does note with concern the current arrangement of financial income targets which are unrealistic, undesirable and should cease.

The Utility Organisations report that the Co-ordination Meetings are extremely useful and that sound working relationships have been built with the Council Officers. They confirm that all reinstatement works are subject to a quality control regime, in which the finished job is thoroughly examined. Furthermore, all works are completed in accordance with the specifications detailed in the New Road and Street Works Act 1991.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 8. The Panel concludes that consultation between the Council and Utility Organisations regarding major strategic highways works should be planned for the following five year period.**

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

- 10. That a programme of planned maintenance for major strategic works should be available to the Council and Utility Organisations for a three to five year period.**

## **7.13 Original Recommendation 13**

**That regular liaison meetings regarding Programmes of Work, be held in order to discuss any forthcoming maintenance schemes, between the Council and utility organisations.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

There are legislative requirements which set out time scales (minimum 12 months) for co-ordinating/non-disruption of works by both Utility companies and the Council's own planned work programmes. These are discussed at the co-ordination meetings however, funding opportunities/streams can often dictate priorities which makes longer term planning more problematic.

## **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is pleased to note that the liaison meetings between the Council and the Utility Organisations continue to be held on a regular quarterly basis and do aid the successful management of Programmes of Work.

The Utility Organisations report that whenever any maintenance works are being planned they do liaise with the Council in order that whenever possible co-ordination can take place. This is not feasible however, when reactive works are undertaken which account for a significant proportion of the work as the very nature of these works and the statutory timescales in which they must be completed, often prevents thorough liaison with the local authority.

### **7.14 Original Recommendation 14**

That the Annual Inspection of the Borough's bridges be fully undertaken to meet the legislative requirements.

## **Executive Response Update:**

These are undertaken and recorded within Engineering Services' data base systems. The TAMP will identify the value and condition of both our own and other owned bridges (eg. Network Rail) on our network.

## **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is pleased to note that the condition of the Borough's bridges, including those owned by the Council and bridges owned by other organisations, will be detailed in the Transport Asset Management Plan.

### **7.15 Original Recommendation 15**

**That the Highway Maintenance Unit be involved in the planning of new housing and industrial estates and that the detrimental effects upon feeder roads be taken into consideration.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

There is an increasing involvement with Planners by the Engineering Service to help determine the effects on the network from new developments. By example, the proposed works on new housing (and associated infrastructure), at Hattersley, has commenced with the full commitment by all parties to ensure that the built environment is able to cope with predicted demands from both a practical day to day operation (eg. refuse collection service) and a maintenance perspective.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Engineering and Planning Services have worked jointly to co-ordinate and determine the effects of new developments on the road network. For example, the new build of Tameside General Hospital will affect the surrounding road network near to Stamford Park and will require the implementation of traffic calming measures in the area.

The Utility Organisations report that the smooth organisation of many works depends on actions of a third party. For example, a housing developer should be aware that he needs to arrange for the water pipes to his development to be laid first, but may instead arrange for the electricity cables to be laid first. Inevitably, this means that the electricity cables must be taken up at a later date and re-laid after the water pipes have been fitted. Other similar problems occur when the customer has not paid for one of the services required, for example, the developer may have only paid for the electricity cables and not the water pipes.

In order to avoid unnecessary remedial works which arise from these actions, the Utility Organisations do attempt to co-ordinate with the developer as much as possible. Unfortunately however, very often the developer will purchase only enough cabling or piping to feed the show homes and the cabling and piping for the other properties is only purchased when these properties have been sold. The Utility Organisations accept that this must appear very disjointed to the public, but stress that this matter is out of their control.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 9. That inadequate planning for the installation of services at new developments can cause major disruptions to the site and surrounding areas.**

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11. That consideration be given to the introduction of measures to enable the smooth coordination of services provided by all Utility Organisations and the Council, prior to the commencement of a development and that appropriate conditions be included in the planning consent to coordinate the provision of utility services connections and ensure minimum disruption to the highways.**

- 12. That Ward Members be consulted regarding the adoption of highways prior to the “snagging” requirements meeting with the developers to enable them to raise any additional issues that need to be addressed.**

### **7.16 Original Recommendation 16**

**That consideration be given to current and anticipated future road use and maintenance when determining the level of road reconstruction.**

#### **Executive Response Update:**

The network is divided into maintenance classifications to help identify budget allocations, based on Strategic, main and secondary distribution roads and link/local access roads. These are in line with the Highways Code of Practice.



#### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes that consideration of current and anticipated future road use and maintenance is already part of Engineering Services’ process particularly as it relates to the classified network, which takes the brunt of Heavy Goods Vehicle usage. There may also be highway maintenance implications from new build developments.

During the site visits the Members of the Panel visited a new development in Stalybridge and noted that although the developer had resurfaced the immediate roadway outside the development, existing residents now experienced rainwater drainage problems as existing drainage facilities were subsequently inadequate. Also, the Panel noted that although the new development was very small the road leading to the new development was suffering as a consequence of increased vehicular use.

### **7.17 Original Recommendation 17**

**That clear lines of communication and co-ordination be established between all units of the Engineering Service, and especially the Traffic and Highway Maintenance Section, together with any external contractor/organisations, in order to ensure thorough dialogue and liaison is engaged, when traffic calming measures and safety measures are planned and implemented.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

Regular (fortnightly) formal meetings of Principal Engineers from all functional units within the Engineering Service has now been established. This enables opportunity to discuss cross cutting issues. Maintenance officers and District Assembly officers also now meet on a formal basis to discuss relevant issues.

## **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is satisfied that regular liaison does take place between Engineering Services, other internal services and external organisations regarding programmes of work.

### **7.18 Original Recommendation 18**

**That the Council examines the possible use of specialist companies, who deal specifically with new methods of patching, which will adequately repair roads, which are damaged.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

Officers are encouraged to attend relevant seminars and trial any innovative methods of dealing with highway maintenance problems. These have included the use of micro-asphalt surfacings/Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) surfacing and the use of 'Canadar' materials for pot hole repairs. Our Find and Fix teams and 'Foam Fix' techniques used on E70 flags are examples of innovative actions to keep risks to a minimum. There has also been a recently increased use of retread treatments across the Borough, which are cost effective and use existing 'in-situ' materials.



## **Panel Findings:**

As part of the Risk Management process, Engineering Services continue to look for new and innovative highway maintenance techniques. The Panel referred to highways in the borough where existing road surfaces were crumbling and were unsatisfactory.

The Utility Organisations report that all materials used for reinstatement works are approved by the local authority. If identical materials are unavailable to complete the reinstatement works, then the Utility Organisation must ensure that the alternative materials to be used are approved by the local authority. The Council's Highway Officers regularly examine the highways and report any problematic areas.

Hot rolled asphalt which is used on a very regular basis by the Utility Organisations is only available on particular days, therefore, due to cost

efficiencies the reinstatement teams complete as many jobs as possible that require this resurfacing method, on the same day.

## **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 10. Despite assurances from Engineering Services and the Utility Organisations, that all reinstatement works are completed to an agreed standard, the Panel concludes that many repairs are insufficiently completed.**

## **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 13. That a systematic approach be taken to the inspection of reinstatement works to include quality control measures thus ensuring that the work is completed to a satisfactory standard.**
- 14. That the traditional environmental role of the Quality Audit Inspectors, ensuring the quality control of highway reinstatements, be confirmed.**

### **7.19 Original Recommendation 19**

**That further possible recycling initiatives be considered and investigated, and the cost benefits of recycling, be analysed, with a view to developing partnerships.**

#### **Executive Response Update:**

Collaborative working arrangements are in operation with Stockport MBC via the 'Eco Centre' at Adswood, Stockport. This enables Tameside to recycle excavated inert highway materials and buy-back such materials as 'MoT' stone sub-base and Foam Cold Lay Bitumen used as a base course for both footway and carriageway.

#### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel is confident that Engineering Services is fully engaged with the Council's commitment to recycle, reduce and reuse, and applies this principal whenever possible.

## **7.20 Original Recommendation 20**

**That employees receive co-ordinated and adequate training on any new systems which may be introduced and that the same priority classification for reported highway remedial action be used for each District Assembly.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

A recent example of improved working is in respect of the IMTAC course, (Inspectors Module Training And Assessment Certificate) provided and run by Tameside Engineering Services. This enables a consistent and co-ordinated approach to inspection of maintenance and 'tripping' problems by both Engineers and District Assembly officers, is also now used across all AGMA Authorities and has become nationally recognised, helping all Authority's defend Third Party claims in court.

### **Panel Findings:**

Training in new processes and techniques takes place as part of the highways maintenance risk management strategy.

## **7.21 Original Recommendation 21**

**That a "Monitoring Policy" be established which is primarily used to monitor repetitive maintenance works, with a view to undertaking more effective alternative methods of improvements.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

All works on the Highway are recorded on a computer management data base (Symology) for Highway management and maintenance purposes. The information is now mapped as a GIS layer showing red /amber / green spend levels to facilitate further interrogation and prioritisation of work programmes. Repeat visits can also be similarly identified with remedial actions determined.

### **Panel Findings:**

Highway management and maintenance throughout the borough can be interrogated through the Symology system and risk management road costs are therefore highlighted at an early stage.

## **7.22 Original Recommendation 22**

**That consideration be given to the establishment of a boroughwide "Footways Policy" which highlights priority footways and the works required to maintain the most heavily used footways.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

Footways are now classified under the Code of Practice Network Hierarchy into Prestige Walking Zones/Primary Walking Routes/Secondary Walking Routes/Link Footways and Local Access Footways.

BVPI 187 measures the condition of Primary and secondary walking routes on an annual basis. The 2006/7 figure is that 18% of this network requires further engineering assessment being a small improvement on the previous year.

## **Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes that although funding via the Local Transport Plan is available for particular works, conditions attached to this funding do cause limitations.

During their site visits, the Panel Members highlighted a number of particularly poor footways in their wards. The Members were of the opinion that those seen represented only a small proportion of the total number throughout the borough.

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

- 15. That further consideration be given to the conditions (funding allocations) contained within the Local Transport Plan in order to exploit any avenues of funding for footway improvements.**

## **7.23 Original Recommendation 23**

**Consideration should be given to the establishment of partnerships with other local authorities, with a view to sharing specialist large or expensive equipment.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

This has to date proven problematic, however, further work is developing through an AGMA vehicle group to potentially create a central management unit to facilitate the procurement of vehicles/plant and the co-ordination of spare/pool items. Tameside have been an integral part of these developments.



## **Panel Findings:**

Further consideration is being given to this matter such as the introduction of local arrangements between neighbouring authorities, as it is acknowledged that significant savings could be made by sharing the cost of expensive vehicles.

The Panel notes that practical issues would have to be clarified prior to the introduction of any agreements, but potentially it might enable authorities to collectively operate vehicles and equipment that they could not afford to utilise on their own.

#### **7.24 Original Recommendation 24**

**That the same work gangs be used for each District Assembly area, in order to ensure that continuity of standards of work, are maintained.**

##### **Executive Response Update:**

Where possible this method of work allocation is undertaken. It should be noted however, that funding from District Assemblies is insufficient to maintain a single gang dedicated entirely for each area on a regular annual basis.

##### **Panel Findings:**

It is acknowledged that restricted funding within the District Assemblies does prevent the introduction of a dedicated gang for each area.

#### **7.25 Original Recommendation 25**

**That whenever possible, works which are identified objectively as a priority, be completed first.**

##### **Executive Response Update:**

Systems are in place where each works order is given a priority rating and measures are established to monitor response times. Major works are discussed at management team meetings (fortnightly) and at work programme meetings to ensure that they meet other objectives deadlines as appropriate and can be delivered by the various contractors engaged in service delivery.

##### **Panel Findings:**

Political input is a key factor in the priority ratings of highways maintenance works.

#### **7.26 Original Recommendation 26**

**That the provision of security barriers surrounding holes in the roads/footways be monitored more carefully.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

On site working has improved significantly over the years to help prevent accidents/incidents with both on site personnel and the general public. Sites should always comply with 'Chapter 8' DfT guidelines for Guarding and Signing roadworks and these are monitored by both inspectors (NRSWA – New Roads and Street Works Act 1991) and supervisors/DA officers.

## **Panel Findings:**

Engineering Services ensures that when highway maintenance work is being undertaken by the Council, footway barriers around excavation areas meet legal requirements.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

- 11. The Panel concludes that many safety barriers are removed by youths, and believe that the responsibility for ensuring safety barriers around excavation sites meet legal requirements should not only lie with the Local Authority, but also with the Utility Organisation.**

## **7.27 Original Recommendation 27**

**That District Assemblies are provided with information on how the Highways Maintenance Priorities list is established, together with the reasons for suggesting the priority of each scheme.**

## **Executive Response Update:**

All DA officers, responsible for environmental and highway works, are contacted as part of the programme selection and recommendation process. These officers also liaise with Members to help determine final scheme selections.

## **Panel Findings:**

The Scrutiny Panel notes this course of action.

## **7.28 Original Recommendation 28**

**That the Tree Policy be better co-ordinated with greater involvement of the Arboricultural Unit in Highway design and improvement.**

## **Executive Response:**

Recommendation agreed. However, this function is delivered by the District Assemblies and is quite often patchy with questionable levels of funding availability, i.e. once co-ordination/prioritisation has happened, we need to look at the sustainability issues.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel believes it is imperative that all trees owned privately and by the Council are adequately maintained and do not cause a health and safety hazard, obscure street lighting or conceal signage.

The District Assemblies are responsible for the enforcement of the management of trees in private ownership. Consequently, the District Assemblies can take action against owners who do not maintain their trees following a notice, and then recharge them for any work undertaken.

### **FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

12. The Panel concludes that some overgrown trees may not only cause health and safety issues, but can be costly in terms of damaging paving flags, gullies etc.

### **FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

16. That action for the enforcement of the management of trees along the highway in private ownership be endorsed.

## **7.29 Original Recommendation 29**

**That the UKPMS system be used to measure the effectiveness of the District Assemblies Highway Maintenance Programme.**

### **Executive Response Update:**

The UKPMS system helps determine and provide measures for BVPI 224b (Condition of Unclassified roads) within District Assembly budgetary control. The BVPI for 2006/07 was 17.29% representing a small improvement on last year.

### **Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes that this system is in place and is working well.

## **7.30 Original Recommendation 30**

**That the Engineering Service engage in negotiations with Registered Social Landlords with a view to the development of a programme of domestic dropped crossings to overcome the current damage and obstruction to footways. These negotiations to include funding arrangements.**

**Executive Response Update:**

Works have recently been identified by NCHT at Knowle Avenue, Ashton-Under-Lyne for 2006/7/8, to continue the successful schemes previously undertaken. We always contact the social landlord, together with private residents when undertaking major area improvements to offer the dropped crossing service at marginal additional costs. (This is a much reduced cost compared with an individual private request quote).

**Panel Findings:**

The Panel believes that joint working initiatives with New Charter Housing Trust and other social registered landlords in the borough could still be improved, particularly in relation to the maintenance and repair of the roads and grass verges on former Council owned estates.

**7.31 Original Recommendation 31**

**That the completion of Priority 1 and 2 work be monitored to ensure that the perceived improvement is continued.**

**Executive Response Update:**

Monitoring is ongoing – results are:-

Priority 1 jobs 99% within 24 hours

Priority 2 jobs 87% within 14 days.

**Panel Findings:**

The Panel notes the above statistics.

**7.32 Original Recommendation 32**

**That the provision of Highway Maintenance Apprenticeships be reviewed and if financially viable recommenced.**

**Executive Response Update:**

This is an area of particular success. The Service has won the Apprentice of the year award for the last two years and in 2006/7 we were runners up to the National APSE award.

**Panel Findings:**

The Panel welcomes the apprentice scheme and encourages further initiatives.

**FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSION**

13. The Scrutiny Panel concludes that the Apprentice Scheme is an integral part of the future development of Engineering Services, and that the apprentices are a sound asset to the Council.

**FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATION**

17. That the Highway Maintenance Apprenticeships be retained and additional training initiatives introduced whenever possible.

**7.33 Original Recommendation 33**

That the Best Value Inspectors' report on the Highways Maintenance Best Value Review, together with the Improvement Plan, be considered by this Panel when it is published, in relation to this report.

**Executive Response Update:**

The key findings of the Best Value Report have been incorporated within the Scrutiny Panel findings and recommendations.

**Panel Findings:**

The Scrutiny Panel notes the Executive Response Update.

## **8. SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP CONCLUSIONS**

- 1. The importance of the Transport Asset Management Plan is acknowledged by the Panel as this document confirms the Council's commitment to improving its highway network by determining the strategy and policies for the highways' future long term development.**
- 2. That the current level of funding investment in the borough's highways is insufficient for the number of improvements required.**
- 3. Parking issues remain problematic in the borough, particularly with regard to pavement parking which not only poses a danger to pedestrians who then have to walk on the road, but also with regard to maintenance issues which are costly and time consuming.**
- 4. A number of traffic regulation orders in the borough which are now redundant, aggravate parking pressures, however to revoke these traffic regulation orders would cost the District Assembly £500.00 per order.**
- 5. That significant savings have been made by the adoption of prudent risk removal strategies.**
- 6. The Panel concludes that mis-matched replacement flag stones and tarmac/concrete can look unsightly when used for reinstatement repairs.**
- 7. Reinstatement works which are not undertaken correctly can have a detrimental effect on the original road network.**
- 8. The Panel concludes that consultation between the Council and Utility Organisations regarding major strategic highways works should be planned for the following five year period.**
- 9. That inadequate planning for the installation of services at new developments can cause major disruptions to the site and surrounding areas.**
- 10. Despite assurances from Engineering Services and the Utility Organisations, that all reinstatement works are completed to an agreed standard, the Panel concludes that many repairs are insufficiently completed.**
- 11. The Panel concludes that many safety barriers are removed by youths, and believe that the responsibility for ensuring safety barriers around excavation sites meet legal requirements should not only lie with the Local Authority, but also with the Utility Organisation.**
- 12. The Panel concludes that some overgrown trees may not only cause health and safety issues, but can be costly in terms of damaging paving flags, gullies etc.**
- 13. The Scrutiny Panel concludes that the Apprentice Scheme is an integral part of the future development of Engineering Services, and that the apprentices are a sound asset to the Council.**

## **9. SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. That the Scrutiny Panel receives a presentation on the Transport Asset Management Plan before it is approved.**
- 2. That consideration be given to increasing the budget allocation to the borough's highways and that any "slippage" be allocated to District Assemblies to assist in highways maintenance schemes, in accordance with the most need as detailed in the Transport Asset Management Plan document, to be approved by the Cabinet Deputy for Technical Services in November 2007.**
- 3. That additional, more detailed highways maintenance budget information be made available to elected members.**
- 4. That following the introduction of the decriminalisation of parking scheme, the Council and the Police be encouraged to issue fixed penalty notices when appropriate, to drivers of vehicles who cause obstruction or damage pavements by parking their vehicles. In particular, action should be taken in respect of commercial vehicles that are parked on pavements or in restricted areas.**
- 5. That Engineering Services monitors the issuing of fixed penalty notices and reports on a quarterly basis to District Assemblies.**
- 6. That once any backlog of the implementation of approved Traffic Regulation Orders has been cleared, measures be taken where possible to revoke redundant Orders throughout the borough, subject to available/identified funding.**
- 7. That all savings made from the implementation of insurance risk removal strategies be reinvested into the borough's highways maintenance.**
- 8. That consideration be given to the provision of a store of replacement resurfacing materials which can be used by the Utility organisations when identical replacements cannot be sourced.**
- 9. That the quality of the reinstatement work carried out by the Utility Companies' be ensured by the resurfacing of greater lengths of highway where there is a cluster of excavations.**
- 10. That a programme of planned maintenance for major strategic works should be available to the Council and Utility Organisations for a three to five year period.**
- 11. That consideration be given to the introduction of measures to enable the smooth coordination of services provided by all Utility Organisations and the Council, prior to the commencement of a development and that**

appropriate conditions be included in the planning consent to coordinate the provision of utility services connections and ensure minimum disruption to the highways.

12. That Ward Members be consulted regarding the adoption of highways prior to the “snagging” meeting with the developers to enable them to raise any additional issues that need to be addressed.
13. That a systematic approach be taken to the inspection of reinstatement works to include quality control measures thus ensuring that the work is completed to a satisfactory standard.
14. That the traditional environmental role of the Quality Audit Inspectors, ensuring the quality control of highway reinstatements, be confirmed.
15. That further consideration be given to the conditions contained within the Local Transport Plan in order to exploit any avenues of funding for footway improvements.
16. That action for the enforcement of the management of trees along the highway in private ownership be endorsed.
17. That the Highway Maintenance Apprenticeships be retained and additional training initiatives introduced whenever possible.

## **10. COMMENTS BY THE ENGINEERING OPERATIONS MANAGER**

This is a positive report which will help the Engineering Service to further improve the services it delivers. I am particularly pleased to be able to report to my own staff, the recognition by Panel Members, of the improvements achieved so far, and also the support for additional funding to help achieve our objectives.

The development of the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), will be a catalyst for improving the Highway, and I am extremely optimistic that this, together with the additional recommendations contained within this report, will help us meet both the Panel's and our customer's expectations.

## **11. COMMENTS BY THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

The efficient maintenance of the highway network throughout the borough is crucial in ensuring that the Council, as Highway Authority, fulfils its statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 and in reducing the risk of exposure to successful claims by third parties, as a result of damage and injury sustained on the public highway.

## **12. COMMENTS BY THE BOROUGH TREASURER**

The Tameside Asset Management Plan will provide information on the condition of the Borough's carriageways and footways etc, which will enable the funding shortfall to bring the Highways up to an acceptable standard to be determined.

All potentials for meeting the funding gap need to be explored including consideration of any innovative methods employed by other Councils, prudential borrowing (if appropriate), as well as bids to the Council for additional capital / revenue resources - though these will compete with other Council priorities.

Consideration will be given to recycling savings (due to the introduction of risk removal strategies) on Third party Highway insurance premiums to the maintenance budget.

Net surplus in excess of budget on Decriminalisation of car parking would be available for Engineering Services to reinvest in Highways related services, as would any budgeted surplus if On Street Pay and Display was introduced.

Further consideration needs to be given as to how "slippage" could be used by District Assemblies to assist in Highways maintenance schemes.