ANNEX 1

Bracknell Forest Council

Place, Planning and Regeneration Directorate

HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PLAN

December 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The highway network is a key community asset, supporting both the local and national economy, contributing to the character and environment of the borough. A well maintained network supports community mobility and accessibility essential to the wider aspirations of sustaining an inclusive society. The singular importance of management and maintenance of the highway network, for all categories of users, places an increasing demand on management systems to support service delivery.

The Council has a statutory duty, under the Highways Act 1980, to maintain its highway network and this function is exercised by the Highways and Transport Division. The Council maintains a network of approximately 430 kilometres of road, 700 kilometres of footpaths and cycle ways, 15,000 street lights, over 22,000 roadside/footway gulleys and thousands of road signs. It also maintains nearly 200 highway structures including our bridges, underpasses, and other highway structures. All of these must be maintained in a safe condition regardless of the increasing financial pressure faced by local authorities and the need to support and respond to economic growth which increases the demand on our highway network.

The Highway Maintenance and Management Plan (HMMP) describes the policies, strategies and processes which shape the way the Council will develop and deliver its highway network maintenance service. It is also linked to the council's Local Transport Plan 3. It aims to deliver a safer highway network with improved travelling conditions for all users and to take greater care of the environment.

In order to ensure a responsible approach to asset maintenance, including the need to demonstrate value for money, the council's decisions and actions should be evidence led. All data collected and used in the day to day delivery of this plan shall be collected and managed in accordance with statutory requirements and industry accepted practice. The data collected will be appropriate to the asset type and will be stored on Asset Management Systems that are sustainable and accessible to support decision making.

The HMMP seeks to reflect our need to manage all our highway assets over the life-cycle of the individual components; balancing our budgets and priorities based on the most economically advantageous approach, taking into account, so far as possible, future developments in the network and the technology we use to support it.

Our four core objectives for highway maintenance are:

- Safety
- Customer Service
- Serviceability
- Sustainability

The aims of this HMMP may be summarised as:

- Maintaining safety for all users of the network.
- Maintaining the integrity of the network asset.
- Ensuring consistent and appropriate maintenance standards throughout the network with regard to strategic importance and usage.
- Maintaining, so far as possible, safe and efficient traffic movement throughout the Borough by coordinating works in the highway.
- Ensuring optimum use of available funds.
- Facilitating technical and financial monitoring to establish network condition trends and assessing performance against expenditure.

- Ensuring that all highway maintenance is carried out with due regard for the community served and the local environment.
- Implementing the recommendations and principles outlined in the Codes of Practice and continuing development of our current systems and practices.
- Promotion of the constant review of policies and standards to ensure continual development of network maintenance strategies.
- To provide a systematic approach to decision-making within a consistent framework of policies, standards and procedures.

Our highway management and maintenance activities are shaped in the first instance by the legal framework which places statutory duties on all highway authorities. The following Acts and Regulations place mandatory requirements on the Council (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Highways Act 1980
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991
- Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997
- Road Traffic Reduction (National Targets) Act 1998
- Control of Pollution Act 1974
- Land Drainage Act 1991
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016
- Environment Act 1995
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Noxious Weeds Act 1959
- Road Traffic Act 2000
- The Transport Act 2000
- Rights of Way Act 1990
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2015
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003
- Traffic Management act 2004
- Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998
- Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Other guidance and on management and implementation of highway maintenance includes:

- Pesticides Regulations
- Noise Directives
- Department for Transport Design and Advice Notes
- Well-managed Highway Infrastructure 2016
- Highway Risk and Liability Claims second edition July 2009
- Management of Electronic Traffic Equipment 2011

The HMMP will be reviewed should changes in legislation, guidance and local policy require the Council to do so. Network hierarchy reviews will be conducted to ensure that the route hierarchy continues to meet the changing needs of the borough and incorporates additional routes created through the opening of new road schemes, improvement schemes and adoption of third-party developments.

HIGHWAY NETWORK INVENTORY AND HIERARCHY

Inventories

The Highways Act 1980 requires highway authorities to maintain a register of roads maintainable at public expense. There is a further requirement under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 to maintain information for the purpose of:

- Identifying streets, described as 'traffic sensitive', where works should be avoided at certain times of day;
- Identifying structures under or over the street which need special consideration when work is planned;
- Identifying reinstatement categories used by Statutory Undertakers in their reinstatement of roads and footpaths.

All this information is maintained and updated on a regular basis to take into account new developments, changes or amendments to the network and is managed within the framework of the National Street Gazetteer (NSG) in a format that the Statutory Undertakers can access electronically.

Detailed inventories of the highway network and the individual components that contribute to the whole are maintained in electronic formats within the Highway Management Systems. These systems also record all past and current maintenance actions and enable us to plan future works programmes.

Network Hierarchies

The network hierarchy is the foundation of the maintenance strategy. The hierarchy adopted by the council reflects the needs, priorities, strategic importance and actual use of each road in the network. The dynamic nature of the network is taken into account as the hierarchy is regularly reviewed to reflect changes in street characteristics and use and the risk associated with the probability of incidents.

The Code of Practice 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' defines hierarchies for roads, paths and cycle ways as shown in **Table 1, 2 & 3** below:

Table 1 - Carriageway Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Category	Type of Road General Description	Detailed Description
1	Motorway	Limited access motorway regulations apply	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic. Fully grade separated and restrictions on use.
2	Strategic Route	Trunk and some Principal "A" roads between Primary Destinations	Routes for fast moving long distance traffic with little frontage access or pedestrian traffic. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.

3a	Main Distributor	Major Urban Network and Inter–Primary Links. Short–medium distance traffic	Routes between Strategic Routes and linking urban centres to the strategic network with limited frontage access. In urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less, parking is restricted at peak times and there are positive measures for pedestrian safety.
3b	Secondary Distributor	Classified Road (B and C class) and unclassified urban bus routes carrying local traffic with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the larger villages and HGV generators to the Strategic and Main Distributor Network. In built-up areas these roads have 30 mph speed limits and very high levels of pedestrian activity with some crossing facilities including zebra crossings. On-street parking is generally unrestricted except for safety reasons.
4a	Link Road	Roads linking between the Main and Secondary Distributor Network with frontage access and frequent junctions	In rural areas these roads link the smaller villages to the distributor roads. They are of varying width and not always capable of carrying two-way traffic. In urban areas they are residential or industrial inter–connecting roads with 30 mph speed limits, random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking.
4b	Local Access Road	Roads serving limited numbers of properties carrying only access traffic	In rural areas these roads serve small settlements and provide access to individual properties and land. They are often only single lane width and unsuitable for HGVs. In urban areas they are often residential loop roads or cul-de-sac.
5	Minor road	Little used roads serving very limited numbers of properties	Locally defined roads

Table 2 - Footway Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Category	Brief Description
1a	Prestige Walking Zone	Very busy areas of towns and cities with high public space and streetscene contribution.
1	Primary Walking Route	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes.

2	Secondary Walking Route	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres, large schools, industrial centres etc.
3	Link Footway	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways.
4	Local Access Footway	Footways associated with low usage, short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sac.
5	Minor Footways	Little used rural footways serving very limited numbers of properties

Table 3 - Cycleway Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Description
A	Cycle lane forming part of the carriageway, commonly a strip adjacent to the nearside kerb. Cycle gaps at road closure point (no entry to traffic but allowing cycle access)
B	Cycle track, a highway route for cyclists not contiguous with the public footway or carriageway. Shared cycle/pedestrian paths, either segregated by a white line or other physical segregation, or un-segregated
C	Cycle provision on carriageway, other than a marked cycle lane or marked cycle provision, where cycle flows are significant
D	Cycle trails, leisure routes through open spaces. These are not necessarily the responsibility of the highway authority but may be maintained by an authority under other powers or duties.

The road maintenance designations are not directly matched to the national classifications such as A, B, or C class roads and the required designations as stipulated by the New Roads and Street Works Act. It was never intended that these hierarchies be the same as they cover different aspects of network traffic and purpose. A reasonable correlation has been established, however, and this is shown below.

Table 4 - Network Designation Categories and Road Lengths

	Strategic Route	Main Distributor	Secondary Distributor	Local Roads/ Inter-connecting	Local Access Road
Principal (A)	20	32	15		
Classified (B)			40	5	
Classified (C)			19	17	3
Unclassified			18	39	222

HIGHWAY INSPECTIONS

A system of highway inspections is necessary to identify defects, the need for routine/planned maintenance work and unlawful obstruction/interference with the public highway. To ensure a consistent borough-wide approach, a formalised system that details the frequency of inspections, the method of assessment, recording and repair of highway defects has been adopted.

The Council will carry out a range of technical surveys and safety inspections on the highway network to support a cost-effective maintenance regime. In parallel, the council will carry out safety inspections on the highway network to ensure, so far as practicable, the safety of the public in their lawful use of the highways.

Appropriate managers will ensure all our highway inspectors are fully trained, qualified and nationally registered.

The minimum frequency of scheduled inspections is described in **Table 5** below. To allow for inclement weather and staff resources all inspections will be carried out within the tolerances shown below of the due date based on the last recorded inspection.

The number of inspections per year is an absolute minimum. The Reactive Maintenance Manager may decide it necessary, based on risk-assessment, to increase the number of inspections per year.

Table 5 - Scheduled Safety Inspection Frequencies

Hierarchy	Category	Frequency	Tolerance
	Roads		
2	Strategic Routes (Driven)	1 month	1 week
3a	Main Distributor (Driven)	3 month	1 week
3b	Secondary Distributor (Driven)	6 months	2 weeks
4b	Local Access Roads		
	Rural (Driven)	15 months	4 weeks
	Urban (Walked)	15 months	4 weeks
	Footways		
1a	Prestige Walking Route	weekly	5 days
1	Primary Walking Route	1 month	1 week
2	Secondary Walking Route	4 months	2 weeks
3	Link Footway	6 months	2 weeks
4	Local Access Footway	15 months	4 weeks
	Cycle tracks		
A	Part of Carriageway	As for Roads	
B	Remote from Carriageway – Surfaced	1 year	4 weeks

All defects identified from scheduled and specific highway inspections shall be categorised into treatment types according to the severity of the defect as shown in **Table 6A** below. This prioritisation shall also determine the timescale for remedial works:

Table 6A - Defect Response Times

Category 1A	Emergency situation for which an immediate response is required to make the defect safe within 1 hour of notification
Category 1B	Work to be completed within 24 hours of the date of inspection
Category 2	Work to be completed within 28 days of the date of inspection
Category 2B	Work to be completed within a bespoke work programme

Other minor defects not prioritised and which do not require any remedial works action will be monitored for deterioration or included in planned maintenance programmes as appropriate.

Risk Assessment

Assessment of risk of each observed defect is a standard component of all highway safety inspections; categorisation will depend upon:

- The extent of the defect (depth, area);
- The potential risk and likely significance to network users;
- The location of the defect relative to highway features such as bends, junctions etc;
- The location of the defect relative to use of the highway (particularly by vulnerable users) such as wheel tracks, cycle lanes, sight lines, cross fall of footways
- The relationship to other nearby defects, if any;
- The expected weather conditions and seasons.

Table 6B - Risk Matrix

	Likelihood of Incident			
Severity of Incident	Very low	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	1	2	3	4
Minor	2	4	6	8
Significant	3	6	9	12
Severe	4	8	12	16

Response Category	Cat 2	Cat 2	Cat 1B	Cat 1A

Carriageway and Pavement Safety Investigation / Response Levels

The tables below categorise defect response times (table 6A) based on road hierarchy and the individual risk assessment of each defect. Defects are identified using the investigation triggers as a starting point to the investigation and supplemented further by risk assessment.

Table 7A - Carriageway

Hierarchy	**Defect**	**Investigation Level**	**(Subject to risk assessment) Action up to 0.25m²**	**(Subject to risk assessment) Action above 0.25m²**
2, 3 and 4	Pothole Edge failure Ironwork	>100mm depth	Cat 1A	Cat 1A

2 and 3	Pothole Edge failure Ironwork	40-100mm depth	Cat 1B	Cat 1A
4	Pothole Edge failure Ironwork	40-100mm depth	Cat 2	Cat 1B

Table 7B - Pavements (Footways and Cycleways)

Hierarchy	**Defect**	**Investigation Level**	**(Subject to risk assessment) All sizes**
1, 2, 3 , 4 And A & B	Pot-hole Trip Tree root	>50mm	Cat 1A
1, 2, 3 ,4 And A & B	Pot-hole Trip Rocking slab Tree root Ironwork	Between 20-50mm	Cat 1B
1, 2, 3 ,4 And A & B	Pot-hole Trip Rocking slab Tree root Ironwork	Between 15-20mm (following risk assessment)	Cat 2

The Council's carriageway and pavement investigation and response levels have been set with due regard to legal proceedings and either meet these levels or are higher. It must however be stressed that the "final intervention will be a matter of judgement", based on the risk assessment of the highway inspector at the time of inspection.

All highway furniture such as traffic signs, bollards, posts, fences, barriers and seating will be subject to their own risk assessment and addressed using the above risk matrix (**Table 6B**).

HIGHWAY CONDITION SURVEYS

These will be carried out as annual programmes to monitor the condition of the network, to prioritise larger programmes of work and to contribute towards local and national performance measures (National Indicators). The survey results are used to plan maintenance activities across all asset groups based on the level of funding available, the asset condition and the risks associated with the condition. This enables the monitoring of performance and development of the most economically advantageous approach.

Details of the survey type and annual network coverage are listed below:

- Scanner – a single direction run on 100% of the classified (A, B and C) roads
- Coarse Visual Inspection (CVI) - 50% of the unclassified roads.
- SCRIM (Skid resistance) - 100% coverage of the classified (A, B and C) roads
- Footway Network Survey - 50% coverage of the entire footway network

All survey data is collected and presented in our asset management visualisation software (Horizons). This software allows us to maximise the data's potential by producing information such as asset deterioration modelling, asset sweating, treatments types and works programmes in line with our annual budget allocations.

SKID RESISTANCE

The aggregate in the surface of the carriageway contributes to the skid resistance between vehicle tyres and the surface. When a new surfacing is laid, the aggregate properties are specified in accordance with national guidance with a view to providing an appropriate level of skid resistance throughout the life of the surface.

However, many factors can affect the rate and extent to which an aggregate will wear and/or polish under any particular circumstances. Accordingly, to ensure potential risks are managed effectively, there is a need to monitor skid resistance in service, particularly on the more heavily trafficked parts of the network.

The council's approach follows recommendations for methods of working set down the relevant Code of Practice and Highways England standards.

Skid resistance testing is carried out routinely on the network and also on a site-specific basis where the surfacing is suspect or where there is a history of wet skid accidents. Any site identified as being "deficient", will be added to the forward treatment plan.

Use of Warning Signs

The sheer number of sites identified at investigation level may lead to an overuse of warning signs. The Council will only use signs in exceptional circumstances as authorised by the Highway Engineering Manager.

HIGHWAY DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Drainage systems for the sole purpose of accepting surface water run-off from the highway are the responsibility of the Highway Authority unless they have been specifically adopted by the statutory undertaker (Thames Water Utilities).

Highway drainage systems are installed to capture surface water run-off to reduce flooding and protect the fabric of the road. The council's focus is to provide safe and efficiently maintained highway drainage structures and to identify, through a system of regular inspections, highway drainage systems requiring maintenance.

Where required, cyclical maintenance (cleaning) will be carried out annually, with interim action identified through inspection.

Many open ditch drainage systems are historic and are the responsibility of the adjoining landowner for maintenance. The council has powers to cleanse and restore the profile of these ditches as appropriate and in appropriate cases recover the costs form the ditch owner. Refer to **Appendix 1**, Ancient Highway & Riparian Rights, for examples of boundaries and responsibilities.

A programme of CCTV surveys is produced for closed drainage systems in order to identify unresolved issues with drainage assets. These surveys can identify reactive repairs or help provide information relating to longer-term drainage improvement schemes.

ROAD MARKINGS

The primary function of road markings is to define carriageway lanes and edges, provide warning, indicate parking and waiting restrictions and to convey 'Give Way' and other instructions to road users in a manner clearly visible both by day and night.

The Council will identify road markings requiring maintenance using a system of regular highway inspections. Consideration for renewal will be subject to individual risk assessment for all categories of road.

NON-ILLUMINATED TRAFFIC SIGNS

The Council will clean all signs on a routine basis. Type 2, 2B, 3 and Rural Unclassified roads will be part of an annual cleaning programme, with all signs on the remaining classification roads included on a bi-annual cleaning programme or as required.

Signs that require additional cleaning will also be identified using the system of regular highway inspections.

Reflective Studs

The council will identify reflective studs requiring maintenance using a system of regular highway inspections. The council will consider replacement of reflective studs, subject to individual risk assessment.

FENCING (Including Pedestrian Safety Barriers)

In general, the decision to fence land rests with the owner and occupier of the land fronting onto the highway, although in most locations the owner will be liable in negligence if damage is caused by animals straying onto the highway.

The Council has no general obligation to fence off its highways, although there are specific powers to do so. Any council owned fencing will be is inspected periodically and remedial works identified and prioritised for repair.

Where remedial works have been identified to any fencing not owned by the highway authority, these will be referred to the owner.

The Council does not clean or paint steel fences/railings/protection barriers.

STREET LIGHTING

The Council has systems in place to maintain lighting equipment in a safe condition, including the detection of dangerous equipment. Street signs are often required to be illuminated where street lighting exists and these are included within this asset category.

Planned inspections act in a preventative manner to reduce in-service faults. Inspections will take place on a cyclical basis on all electrical assets to test for satisfactory operation and verify inventory details. Bulk lamp changes and cleaning at scheduled intervals will coincide with internal inspections and cleaning.

A ‘Telensa’ Computer Monitoring System (CMS) enables the Council to monitor street lights and their performance. It is possible to adapt lighting levels in response, and as a consequence of, increasing financial, safety, legal and environmental requirements and pressures.

The CMS system allows for faults to be automatically registered and used to provide detailed information on the fault location and identify required repairs and replacement.

Structural testing of lamp columns over 25 years old will be undertaken on a regular basis to identify ageing columns which will require remedial work or complete replacement.

Reactive repair procedures ensure prompt responses to identified defects within risk-assessed timescales appropriate to the circumstances.

Routine highway inspections identify any conflicts between existing lighting and tree branches.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND ITS EQUIPMENT

The Council provides a 24 hour maintenance arrangement for traffic signal faults through a dedicated specialist contractor. Wider ITS assets are also subject to specialist technical support. The majority of faults are self-reported through automated fault monitoring systems which identify necessary works directly to the contractor.

Faults are classified as urgent or non-urgent and, depending on the location and nature of the fault, response time will differ.

Periodic inspections of traffic signal installations are programmed and each site is subject to a 5 year full electrical test to ensure electrical safety is maintained.

A number of traffic signal installations are identified as 'critical sites' in the event of total failure (i.e. lights out) and these are subject to special arrangements including the deployment temporary traffic management to ensure basic highway safety.

HIGHWAY TREES

The Council's primary provision for tree management is through the Cyclical Tree Inspection Programme (CTIP) managed by the Tree Service. This provides for a borough-wide inspection and maintenance process of all council owned trees and also for those that may fall under the council's remit (see definition of 'highway' tree).

There are two CTIP programmes:

- highway driven routes
- environment, open spaces and highway walked cyclical inspections

The highway driven route inspections are organised and prioritised by road classification as described in 'Table 1 – Carriageway Hierarchy' earlier in this document.

Cyclical inspections are provided by the Tree Service and are conducted by qualified arboriculturists (Tree Inspectors). This walked inspection covers one fifth of the borough on an annual basis, over a five-year cycle.

The Highway Reactive Maintenance service will typically identify evident dead trees that require removal, but will also identify tree foliage that compromises the statutory height clearance standards over footpaths, bridleways & carriageways and/or vegetation that obscures highway signage or that is impeding the effective operation of streetlighting. Only those trees where the foliage cannot be maintained from ground level using pole-saws or those that display significant defects such that the tree may be considered a hazard to the Highway, are referred to the Tree Service for further investigation and maintenance.

The CTIP will provide a more detailed level of inspection. The primary focus for these inspections is to identify either health & safety hazards or issues of legal liability, such as dead or defective trees and those causing legal nuisance.

For the purposes of maintaining a safe highway this HMMP recognises that a 'highway' tree can be any tree (even one growing on private land) that may overhang or have the potential to fall onto or otherwise adversely affect the highway. The primary reference for the extent of highway land are the Council's adoption records and any records that denote 'ancient highway'.

Where a third-party 'highway' tree is identified with defects, or is deemed to require further investigation, the Highways and Transport division will initiate communication with the tree owner to progress the matter. A Section 154 notice, of the Highways Act 1980, may be served to the land-owner to action the identified defect or nuisance or to carry-out a detailed investigation of the tree.

Tree-work Response Priorities

Any tree-work identified by the council will be categorised as one of the following: -

- Priority 1 – Tree attended to within 24 hours. Defined as an 'Emergency'.
- Priority 2 – Tree attended to within 15 days. Defined as 'Urgent'.
- Priority 3 – Tree attended to within 6 months. Defined as 'Planned Maintenance'

Standards

Statutory Clearance standards over the Highway are as follows: -

- Footpath = 2.5 metres
- Bridleway = 3.5 metres
- Highway (i.e. carriageway) = 5.2 metres

Any vegetation that obstructs the safe passage of the public, horses & vehicles should be removed.

HIGHWAY STRUCTURES

The Council will complete a range of technical surveys and safety inspections on the highway structures to support a cost-effective maintenance regime.

The purpose of carrying out inspections is to ensure the safety and long-term serviceability of the structure and ensure that any maintenance works are targeted to address the highest priorities. All bridges and ancillary structures are programmed for inspection at least once every two years and undertaken in accordance with the 'Inspection Manual for Highway Structures'.

Safety inspections aim to identify and report obvious defects which, if ignored, might lead to collapse, accidents or high maintenance and repair costs. More detailed 'principal' inspections will be carried out by a specialist engineer who is suitably qualified and experienced. This inspection is a detailed where necessary measurements affecting the serviceability and performance of the structure or individual elements will be taken.

Special inspections are sometimes necessary in addition to planned inspections. For example, following flooding where the integrity of a structure is considered to be at risk, or following accident damage or other incidents.

Structural reviews to BD 101/11 to ascertain the adequacy of bridges to support traffic should be carried out every 12 years. Where required, ad-hoc structural reviews will also be carried out, e.g. where an abnormal load is planned to be using the bridge, where regulations

change governing the configurations and weight limits of roads or where significant damage has been caused to the bridge.

Generally, bridges and ancillary structures will be subject to inspection on a six-year cyclic basis, the sequence being as follows:

- Year 2 - General inspection
- Year 4 - General inspection
- Year 6 - Principal inspection

HIGHWAY VERGES

The highway verge comprises of the generally unsurfaced areas of the highway within the limits of the defined highway. Highway verges are generally un-trafficked although they may be used by pedestrians and equestrians for passage.

The Council's primary maintenance obligation is to ensure the safety of the highway user by ensuring that visibility is not restricted, verges are free from obstructions and without defects which would be detrimental to the user.

Highway verges will be maintained to prevent the encroachment of verge soil and growth onto the carriageway and footway. Where siding out has been identified this will be carried out under cyclic or reactive maintenance and identified through routine inspection. Highway verge slopes will be maintained to preserve their stability and prevent damage by erosion.

The control of weed growth on the highway network will be managed according to the local environment. Protection and enhancement of biodiversity - it is also recognised that verges are important sites for rare flora and fauna and some areas are identified as special interest areas and receive special treatments.

From time to time, accident damage and vehicular overrun may cause rutting and erosion to the highway verge. Where verge damage has been identified and is considered an unacceptable safety risk, having due regard to the location, this may result in remedial works being carried out.

Grass cutting of all verges adjacent to the edges of urban carriageways and footways will be organised for the purpose of maintaining safety, preventing obstructions of sight lines, inhibiting the growth of injurious weeds, maintaining a tidy appearance and maximising biodiversity where appropriate. All verges adjacent to the edges of rural carriageways and footways will have a 1-metre swathe cut twice per annum.

At all junctions in rural roads where the verge widths dictate, an additional area will be grass-cut on either side of the junction twice per annum to ensure that minor road drivers have adequate sight lines in each direction to see oncoming major road traffic. Sight lines may require additional cuts during June or July.

HIGHWAY ENCROACHMENTS AND OBSTRUCTIONS

The Council has a responsibility to keep public highways open and remove certain obstructions and encroachments which may affect the use and safety of the highway.

When deemed necessary the council will serve notice under the appropriate section of the Highways Act to deal with the removal of the obstruction.

The Council has powers to serve notice under Section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 on the owners of overhanging hedges and trees requiring the vegetation be cut back to provide the necessary clearance and abate any nuisance (see 'Highway Trees' section).

The Council has no powers to authorise any signs placed on the highway other than for highway purposes and shall, in appropriate circumstances, invoke its powers under section 132, 137 and 143 of the Highways Act 1980 to remove unauthorised signs.

Roadside Memorials

The Council recognises and respects the wish of the bereaved to mark road deaths in this way but has a duty to keep the public highways safe. The distraction of motorists and the safety of those placing or maintaining memorials are the overriding safety issues in the consideration of roadside memorials.

The Highways Act 1980, however, has no express provision to licence or permit memorials on the highway.

Low key memorials such as the discrete placing of a small floral tribute at certain times of the year and for limited durations may be acceptable provided there is no significant risk of driver distraction or undue risk to the individual visiting the location.

Any items should be placed clear of any locations where highway maintenance is likely to be undertaken, e.g. grass cutting. They should also be placed away from locations that are hazardous to access, such as carriageway central reservations and busy roundabout central islands. Permanent monuments are prohibited on the highway and will be removed on safety grounds.

HIGHWAY CLAIMS

Third Party claims against the council can be for either personal injury accidents or damage to personal property such as cars, clothing or premises, caused by alleged defects in the publicly maintainable highway.

The council has adopted a systematic process of highway safety inspections, investigation and repair to satisfy its statutory obligation under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980. Records of its inspections on the highway, together with any defect reports received from third parties, are retained.

The Council's insurers will determine liability using evidence to ascertain whether it has been negligent or in breach of its statutory duty. Such decisions will be based on legal principles.

The Council will defend claims where liability is disputed. If liability is established claims will be settled promptly and the council will act on a report of a highway defect in the interest of safety, without prejudice to any claim that might be associated with it.

WINTER SERVICE

It is the Council's objective to attempt to maintain safe road surfaces at all times, in so far as it is reasonably practical and as resources permit.

At times of predicted low temperatures, the council aims to provide a winter maintenance service to facilitate the safe movement of traffic on all A and B class roads and other well trafficked roads throughout the Borough (Primary routes).

The Council operates a standby and basic response facility for a period of twenty-one weeks each year. This period commences on the third or fourth week in November and finishes in the second week of April. (Dates kept under review to reflect on the weather outlook)

Pre-salting and snow clearance of the Primary routes will be carried out based on information received from the weather forecasting service. The Council relies upon weather stations outside of the borough boundary but a successful LEP* bid was secured in 2022 to add in borough temperature sensors to improve the accuracy of the forecast. These sensors will be in place for the 2023/24 winter season and trialled for 3 years initially.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to apply salt after the formation of icy patches due to unforeseen circumstances such as burst water mains for example.

When snow falls and accumulates on highway surfaces, ploughs and other appropriate plant will be used to remove snow and salt will be spread to help melt the snow and to prevent ice forming on the highway network throughout the borough.

In determining the spread rates and triggers for gritting and snow clearance the guidance published by the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) will be followed as circumstances permit.

Given the scale of financial and other resources involved in delivering the Winter Maintenance Service and obvious difficulties in maintaining high levels of plant utilisation for specialist equipment, it is not practically possible either to:

• Provide the service on all parts of the network;

• Ensure running surfaces are kept free of ice and/or snow at all times, even on the treated parts of the network.

Roads will, therefore, be cleared of snow in descending order of priority until such time as all the Primary pre-salting routes are cleared. Then, if other roads are physically blocked or particularly hazardous and there is a need for access, further action will be taken. Further details are contained within the <Winter Service> page on our website.

* Need to clarify credit terminology

APPENDIX 1 – RIPARIAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council does not own any land drainage ditches, unless they are adjacent or abut Council land.

Where a private landowner has an estate located immediately adjacent to or abutting a drainage ditch, river or any other inland body of water in legal terms they are the Riparian Owners. Making them responsible for certain common law rights & responsibilities.

Even when Title Deeds for property show the boundary to stop at a fence or other physical feature. The landowner will still have riparian rights and responsibilities to the centre of the watercourse if the ditch is located between two properties. However, if the ditch joins a highway then the landowner responsible for maintaining the whole ditch.

***Figure 1**: A ditch located between two riparian owners*

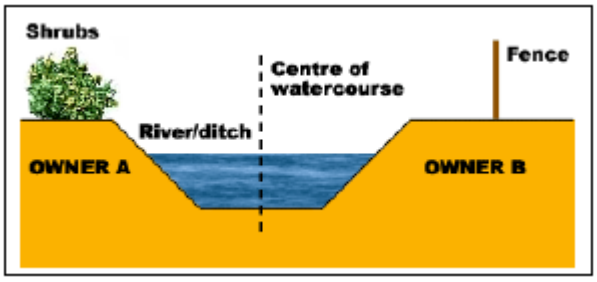

Figure 1 shows an example of a ditch with two riparian owners (A&B) who each must maintain their side if the ditch up to the centre of the water course. As the ditch is located behind Owners Bs' fence line, they may not realise that they are still a Riparian Owner under the Land Drainage Act 1991, and need to maintain the ditch.

***Figure 2**: A ditch running alongside the public highway which is the responsibility of the private land owner.*

Figure 2 shows a ditch running between the public highway and a field. The Riparian Owner of this ditch is the owner of the field. They are required to maintain the whole ditch and ensure they meet their riparian responsibilities.

***Figure 3**: A ditch with a blocked culvert running alongside a public highway is the responsibility of the private land owner.*

Figure 3 shows a ditch running between the public highway and a private estate which passes under an access way. The Riparian Owner of this ditch and culvert (a culvert is a length of ditch which has been piped) is the owner of the property next to the ditch. If the driveway gives access to more than one property, the Riparian Owner may wish to approach them to assist with the maintenance of the culvert.