

# Technical Services

Service Statement  
2017-18

March 2017

# Technical Services

## **Purpose:**

**The primary purpose of Technical Services is to manage, maintain and improve infrastructure, including highways, flood defences and the coast, for the benefit of those who choose to live work, visit and invest in Northumberland.**

Technical Services is responsible for the provision of three key functions across Northumberland. We manage, maintain and improve the highway and transport network, to make sure that everyone can travel safely and without significant delay or disruption on our roads, footways and cycleways throughout the year. We arrange home to school transport and procure supported public transport services. We provide the Lead Local Flood Authority and Coastal Protection Authority roles for the Council and develop, monitor and implement the Shoreline Management Plan and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

## **Primary functions:**

- Highways asset management and roads and bridges inspection
- Maintenance of roads, footways, cycleways, bridges and street lighting, including winter and severe weather response
- Network management, including parking and streetworks
- Design and project management of highway and transport improvement schemes
- Road safety training and casualty reduction schemes
- Highways Laboratory services
- Transport operations for schools and supported bus services
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management

## **Provision and Delivery of**

- Local Transport Plan (LTP)
- Transport Asset Management Plan
- Network Management Plan
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Parking Strategy
- Shoreline Management Plan
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

# Service Parameters

## Key Service Facts and Figures

- We inspect and maintain 5,100 km of roads, 2,000 km of footways and around 4,200 structures including 1174 bridges, 935 culverts, and 1698 retaining walls,
- We keep 48,000 street lights and illuminated signs in working order.
- We are managing investment of over £19m per year in highway maintenance and improvement schemes through the Local Transport Plan as well as £14.6m of Highway Infrastructure Flood Damage Repairs, the 3 year £27m Street Lighting Modernisation Programme, £30m Morpeth Northern Bypass project and £7.5m Masonry Arch Refurbishment Programme.
- Through our Network Management Duty we are responsible for ensuring that the public can travel on our roads without significant delays or disruption from road works or general congestion. We coordinate approx 19,000 notifications per year for works by utility companies, developers and our own highway maintenance works.
- During the winter months we make sure that 1,100 miles of 'primary' roads are gritted and kept clear of snow and ice and keep 1,800 grit bins and 900 grit heaps well stocked.
- We manage 127 Car Parks with almost 8200 parking spaces and 2450 on street permitted parking places. As well as enforcing car parks and on street single and double yellow lines, school keep clears, zig-zags and dropped kerbs, our 18 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) also carry out enforcement of dog fouling and littering in our community.
- We are key partners and chair the Northumberland Road Safety Group (NRSG) which co-ordinates and delivers a multi-agency approach to road casualty reduction in Northumberland.
- We delivered cycle training to over 2,000 children annually across the County giving them the opportunity to travel safely and lead a healthier lifestyle. Over 4,000 children received Road Safety information/ advice/ training within a school environment and a further 1,250 year 1 and 2 children received practical on the road side Road Safety training.
- We provide home to school transport for over 7300 students every day and have over 740 home to school transport contracts and 54 contracts for provision of supported public transport services.
- As Lead Local Flood Authority for Northumberland, we have specific responsibility for addressing flood risk from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. We are also the Coast Protection Authority. There are approximately 13,500km of ordinary watercourse in the County and the coastline is 132km in length. We have a 6-year medium term plan to protect approximately 380 properties from coastal erosion and to reduce flood risk to 170 properties.

### Summary of Service Resources at 1 April 2017

	Number of FTE posts	Staffing Expenditure	Non Staffing Expenditure	Income	Capital Investment
Infrastructure	84.89	2,657,430	17,190,370	-9,154,480	27,233,860
Design and Labs	35.00	1,592,480	507,540	-1,957,340	3,233,000
Highways Delivery	203.00	8,075,890	19,257,340	-12,164,840	10,732,830
Total for Service	322.89	12,325,800	36,955,250	-23,276,660	41,199,690

# External Validation

## Inspections

The service holds the following external accreditations:-

Highways Laboratory	UKAS Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025:2005
Traffic Management	Sector Scheme 12A/B,12C,12D
Surface Dressing	Sector Scheme 13A
Sign Shop	Factory Product Control, Sector Scheme 9A

## Customer perception

We take part in the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey. In the most recent survey of 2016, Northumberland residents identified the 3 most important highways and transport issues to be conditions of roads, condition of pavements and footways and road safety. Results of the survey also show that overall satisfaction in Northumberland is good at 55% and in context, this is in line with the national average. Condition of roads and condition of pavement and footways were also identified as the issues in most need of improvement, which supports the findings of the MORI resident's survey in 2015.

## Benchmarking

Benchmarking activities are now embedded through Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) performance networks, where we submit an annual return for Highways Maintenance, Street Lighting and Winter Services. The published results are then used to compare, understand and, where appropriate, identify areas for performance improvement. Staff also attend regional annual APSE Highways maintenance networking and performance improvement events. Further benchmarking activity for the service is being undertaken through membership of the NHT CQC (Customer, Quality, Cost) Efficiency Network, which measures efficiency, evaluates the likely impact of changes to practice and process, and provides a stimulus to realising efficiency savings.

As part of our commitment to improving, understanding and achieving transformational change in highways services, during 2015, the service underwent a Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) Strategic Peer Review. This important review has helped us to prepare for the changes in highways funding streams and to identify and deliver significant improvements across the service.

# Priorities for 2017 – 18

Priority Area	Key Milestones
1. Maintain the Council's highway network and associated infrastructure in a sustainable manner.	Deliver Local Transport Plan (LTP) highway maintenance programme of road, footway and bridge schemes
	Deliver £14.6m Highway Infrastructure Flood Damage repair programme
	Implement the Street Lighting Modernisation Programme
2. Manage the use of the Council's highways, including winter and severe weather response.	Minimise congestion and disruption on the highway network through effective network management and winter and severe weather response
	Provide advice and support for the travel and traffic management aspects of key events
	Promote positive behaviour in relation to car parking in the County, through a combination of information provision and enforcement
3. Improve the highway network and other infrastructure to help improve safety, accessibility, connectivity and sustainable travel	Support more sustainable travel choices through the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure for cycling, walking and electric vehicle charging points
	Complete construction of Morpeth Northern Bypass
	Implement car parking improvement schemes for Berwick, Ashington, Hexham, Morpeth, Seahouses and Ponteland.
	Improve the safety of the transport network:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvements for vulnerable road users</li> <li>• develop the cycling and walking strategy</li> <li>• review and strengthening of the Northumberland Road Safety Strategy</li> </ul>
	Introduce 20mph speed limits outside schools.
	Utilise parking enforcement vehicle to improve road safety at schools
	Support development of proposals for the re-introduction of passenger services to the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line
	Complete improvements to Cowpen Road, Blyth
	Assist in development of major projects to support economic growth and housing and work with partners to develop highway infrastructure proposals at key developments

4. Delivering home to school transport and supported public bus services to support local communities	Undertake and implement reviews of the home to school transport network in the north of the County and embark upon review of the school transport network in the Ponteland & South East areas of the County
	Implement the final parts of the Special Educational Needs school transport route review
	Complete the implementation of the review of supported bus services in the north of the County
5. Managing the risk to our communities from local flooding and coastal erosion	Actively manage flood and coastal erosion risk, provide advice to prevent inappropriate development and implement schemes to reduce flood risk and coastal erosion including surface water flood risk schemes in Morpeth, Haltwhistle and Ovingham.
	Encourage communities to become more resilient to flooding by increasing public awareness and understanding their concerns and promoting property level resilience schemes
6. Enable enhanced business development and delivery and maximise commercial income generation.	Undertake procurement of external partner to provide additional design and construction capacity
	Expand the Highways Laboratory customer base
	Expand our sign manufacturing business
	Successfully deliver A69 North Pennine Link Group contract from Newcastle to Carlisle
	Increase income from design and delivery activities
7. Ensure our working practices are safe, sustainable, appropriate, efficient and effective.	Improve systems for inspection, asset management, LTP programme delivery and information communication, maximising the benefits of Mayrise, Bridgestation and Google systems
	Reduce costs through improved productivity and procurement savings
	Actively engage with new apprenticeship programme to engage new entrants and develop existing staff
	Review and improve health and safety systems and reduce accident incidence rates, improve sickness management and actively promote health and well-being of the workforce
	Develop existing workforce through appraisal, workforce planning, training needs assessment and delivery of training programmes, including critical health and safety training requirements

# Performance Framework

Measure	Outturn			Target
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
NI168 Principal roads where maintenance should be considered	4%	4%	3%	4%
NI169 Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered	10%	8%	7%	8%
Percentage of hazardous carriageway potholes repaired within 24 hours	90.22%	96.75%	98.26%	96%
Average time taken to repair street lighting faults (working days)	N/A	5.58	4.79	5.00
Percentage of street lighting faults attended to within 4 working days	95.19%	84.4%	94.94%	92%
Percentage reduction of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	0.43%	2.82%	-11.13%	4%
Percentage reduction of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	9.70%	7.07%	0%	4%
Workforce Accident Incidence Rate	11.15	7.96	11.14	10.00