



Northumberland
County Council

Highways & Technical Services

Service Statement 2018 - 2021

Service Director: Paul Jones

Head of Service: David Laux

Lead Member: Councillor Glen Sanderson

March 2018

Highways & Technical Services

Service purpose and functions

Purpose:

The primary purpose of Highways & 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.

Highways & 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 also provide the Lead Local Flood Authority and Coastal Protection Authority roles.

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
- Managing the Definitive Map and Adopted Highway records

Provision and Delivery of:

- Local Transport Plan (LTP) Annual Capital Programme
- 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 £20m per year in highway maintenance and improvement schemes through the Local Transport Plan capital programme, the 3 year £27m Street Lighting Modernisation Programme and a £6.5m Rural Road Maintenance Challenge Fund project .
- 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 Co-ordination Group (NRSCG) which co-ordinates and delivers a multi-agency approach to road casualty reduction in Northumberland.
- We deliver 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 receive Road Safety information/ advice/ training within a school environment and a further 1,250 year 1 and 2 children receive 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.

Service parameters

Summary of service resources at 1 April 2018:

Function	Number of FTE posts	Staffing expenditure	Non-staffing expenditure	Income	Capital investment
Highways	216.19	8,166,540	12,795,280	-12,353,900	5,472,120
Highways Design/ Labs	40.00	1,712,500	323,210	-2,092,860	392,886
Infrastructure	83.89	2,671,600	18,415,480	-10,331,950	32,065,099
Business Improvement Team	4.89	164,290	93,720	0	0
Totals for Service	344.97	12,714,930	31,627,690	-24,778,710	37,930,105

Contribution to the Corporate Plan

Highways & Technical Services will make significant contributions to the Corporate Plan themes of “Living - We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for”, “Enjoying - We want you to love where you live”, “Connecting - We want you to have access to the things you need” and “Thriving - We want to attract more and better jobs.”

In relation to the “Living” theme, Highways & Technical Services will support initiatives and infrastructure development to encourage walking and cycling within and between towns and villages to allow people to make healthy choices for travel. We will also work through education, engineering and enforcement together with other partners to improve road safety and reduce accident casualty rates.

For the “Enjoying” theme, we will work with local communities to ensure that people live in towns and villages which they value and feel proud of. In particular we will work to raise the standards of the services we provide to keep our roads and highway infrastructure in good condition. We will develop and improve our highway and transport infrastructure through the Local Transport Plan, working closely with local Town and Parish Councils on locally agreed solutions.

The work of Highways & Technical Services will be key to the delivery of the “Connecting” theme, in ensuring residents and visitors can easily get to work, learning and to the facilities they want to use. We will work with Highways England to ensure continued improvement of the A1, A69 and A19. We will work to reduce congestion, improve road safety, enhance parking, ensure the highway asset is well maintained and co-ordinate necessary works on the network to minimise disruption as far as possible. We will work with colleagues across the wider Place Group to maximise additional funding from Central Government and to deliver major projects including assisting with the re-opening of the Newcastle - Northumberland rail line to passenger services. We will work together with other colleagues to seek to maintain and enhance bus services provided by private sector operators on a commercial basis and ensure value for money supported bus services are provided. We will arrange and procure home to school transport for all eligible students across the County, including implementation of the new proposals for free Post 16 transport.

For the “Thriving” theme, Highways & Technical Services will work to ensure that the highway and network provides the right conditions to allow businesses to grow and expand. We will work with colleagues across the Place Group to provide any necessary transport improvements to support inward investment and development, and will continue to work with the timber, agriculture and tourism industries to help their on-going success.

In all of our work across all these activities, Highways & Technical Services will also contribute to the theme “We want to be efficient, open and work for everyone”. We will ensure we are customer focused, innovative and embracing change, involve staff and communities in decisions, support communities to feel safe, create a healthy and positive working environment and we will work to ensure our services are efficient and carried out to the highest quality.

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

The Highways Laboratory UKAS accreditation was assessed and re-approved in February 2018. The Quality Management systems under ISO 9001:2008 and the sector scheme accreditations for Traffic Management, Surface dressing and the Sign Shop were re-certified in March 2018 and work is on-going to accredit these under the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

Customer perception

We take part in the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey. In the most recent survey of 2017, 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 50% and in context, this is only 1% lower than 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 Direct Management Group (DMG) and also 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 2018 - 2021

Priority Area	Key Milestones
<p>1. Maintain the Council's highway network and associated infrastructure in a sustainable manner.</p>	Deliver Local Transport Plan (LTP) highway maintenance programme of road, footway and bridge schemes
	Deliver improved proactive maintenance through Dft Pothole Fund
	Complete the Highway Infrastructure Flood Damage repair programme
	Complete the Street Lighting Modernisation Programme
	Successfully implement the Rural Road Maintenance Challenge Fund project
	Work with Scottish Borders and other partners to successfully deliver the Union Chain Bridge refurbishment project.
<p>2. Manage the use of the Council's highways, including winter and severe weather response, and improve the systems for public reporting and feedback on issues raised</p>	Minimise congestion and disruption on the highway network through effective network management and winter and severe weather response
	Review and improve web based systems to allow improved reporting of issues by the public and efficient and effective means to allow front line staff, customer services and the customer to receive information on the status of the service request.
	Improve communication with the public on the work that we do in particular focusing on more effective use of website and social media.
	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	
<p>3. Improve the highway network and other infrastructure to help improve safety, accessibility, connectivity and sustainable travel</p>	Support more sustainable travel choices through the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure for cycling, walking and electric vehicle charging points
	Agree and implement short, medium and long term proposals for car parking in Berwick, Hexham, Alnwick and Morpeth resulting from their car parking studies.
	Implement car parking improvement schemes for Seahouses, Ponteland, Corbridge, Amble and other communities.
	<p>Improve the safety of the transport network:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improvements for vulnerable road users ● develop the cycling and walking strategy ● Implementing actions in relation to the

	<p>Northumberland Road Safety Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve network safety through delivery of annual high risk safety schemes, rural road improvements and other countywide safety schemes. • Implement route action strategies
	Complete Introduction of 20mph speed limits outside schools.
	Utilise parking enforcement vehicle to improve road safety at schools and bus stop accessibility.
	Support development of proposals for the re-introduction of passenger services to the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line
	Work with colleagues across Place Group including Planning, Highways Development Control and Economic Development to determine transport infrastructure needs and priorities for each of the County's main towns.
	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 central and west areas of the County, taking into account school re-organisations for the Ponteland, Hexham & Haydon Bridge Partnerships.
	Implement the new free Post 16 Transport arrangements for September 2018 and review their effects and any further improvements to systems needed
	Undertake and implement outcomes of the wider transport review including Home to School Transport and other council and health transport operations.
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 and Seahouses pier coastal scheme.
	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.	Consider future procurement needs and enter into any necessary frameworks and contracts to ensure sufficient design and construction capacity to undertake both base workload, third party works and one off bid opportunities / emergency infrastructure repairs.
	Expand the commercial and income generating aspects of the service to maximise from design and delivery activities including work for developers, other local authorities, Highways Laboratory, sign manufacture and A69 North

	Pennine Link Group contract.
	Assess needs for increased resources and commercial awareness and skills training for staff to allow successful bid production and commercial contract delivery for third parties.
7. Ensure our working practices are safe, sustainable, appropriate, efficient and effective.	Improve systems for inspection and asset management and develop systems to ensure compliance with the new Well Managed Highways Code Of Practice and any developments in the Highway Maintenance Incentive Fund criteria.
	Continue to develop and embed the new Roles and Accountabilities systems for delivery of the LTP and other capital programmes.
	Build on the work of the Digital Systems and Data Review to improve effective use of highway data and systems used..
	Further develop agile working arrangements and also reduce costs through improved productivity and procurement.
	Actively promote the new apprenticeship programme to engage new entrants, develop existing staff and improve succession planning.
	Assess workforce age and skills profiles and workforce planning needs including identification and resolution of areas where business continuity may be impacted.
	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 and mandatory training requirements

Performance framework

Measure	Outturn		Target		
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
NI168 Principal roads where maintenance should be considered	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
NI169 Non-principal classified roads where maintenance should be considered	7%	7%	8%	8%	8%
Percentage of hazardous carriageway potholes repaired within timescale for 24 hour repair category	98.24%	75.11%	96%	97%	97%
Average time taken to repair street lighting faults (working days)	4.79	3.74	5.00	5.00	5.00
Percentage of street lighting faults attended to within 4 working days	94.94%	93.5%	92%	92%	93%
Percentage reduction of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	-11.13%	-2.21%	3%	3%	3%
Percentage reduction of child injuries in road traffic accidents	7.49%	12.9%	3%	3%	3%
Workforce Accident Incidence Rate	11.14%	5.92%	10%	10%	10%