Committee and Date	Item/Paper
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MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SKIDDING RESISTANCE

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SUMMARY

The Council has a policy for the management of skidding resistance on a defined network of major roads. A recent review has identified an opportunity to improve upon the policy by means of two minor amendments.

This report explains the reasons for the amendments and their benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended Cabinet recommend to Council that the following minor amendments are included in the Council's Policy for the management of skidding resistance:

A. A new site classification, Category X, be introduced in order to manage skidding risk on recently resurfaced roads.

B. At Category X site, an engineer can decide upon tolerable skidding risk using local knowledge but only when supported by a site-specific risk assessment, which is then reviewed annually.

C. Sites with a low risk of skidding accidents but which are still above nationally accepted thresholds will not be assessed or treated.

D. Any further amendments to this policy can be agreed by the Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member.

REPORT

Background

1. In February 2009, the Council adopted a new policy for the management of skidding resistance in Shropshire.

2. This policy was reviewed at a recent meeting of the Head of Highways and Highway Managers. The aims of the review were to challenge the policy and to see where improvements could be made.

3. The current policy was considered by the review group to be fit-for-purpose. However, the group identified two areas for improvement: more transparent recording of decisions and increasing efficiency.

Key Points

4. More transparent recording of decisions are required to manage a difference between the skidding survey results and local observations in a more formal manner.

5. Recently laid road surfaces normally provide adequate skidding resistance. At some sites, where recent resurfacing work has been undertaken, a high skidding risk has been highlighted by the skidding resistance survey even though the surface is otherwise in good condition and there is evidence that the accident risk is very low.

6. To manage this phenomenon at a local level, a new site classification, Category X, has been introduced. At these sites, the engineer can decide upon the tolerable skidding risk using local knowledge but ONLY when supported by a site-specific risk assessment. This risk assessment is stored with the records of the site classification and reviewed annually.

7. While the policy already dealt with these events, the amendment will make records of these decisions more transparent. This will further encourage the use of local engineering knowledge to allocate funding more appropriately.

8. Efficiency will be increased by removing an activity that provides no actual value to the highway user.

9. Sites with a relatively low risk of skidding accidents (*locally termed one star sites*) and with no accident record are seldom treated; however, the current policy requires these sites to be assessed for treatment each year. These amendments remove the requirement on highway managers to carry out these

assessments which will allow the highways maintenance service to prioritise its resources to parts of the network where work may be carried out. The proposed amendments do not preclude the investigation of low risk sites where specific concerns arise.

10. Members have been consulted about these changes. We responded to a concern about the potential downgrading of the policy. This response confirmed that the proposed amendments will produce a more robust policy under which the Council is better able demonstrate it is effectively managing risk.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) Policy for the Management of Skidding Resistance - Report to Council, 27 February 2009
Human Rights Act Appraisal The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.
Environmental Appraisal The new policy will enable control of the proliferation of slippery road warning signs across Shropshire.
Risk Management Appraisal A Risk Management approach has been used in developing the Skidding Resistance policy. This approach will enable funding to be targeted in areas of most need and will also protect the Council against litigation.
Community / Consultations Appraisal Members have been consulted on the policy amendments set out in this report.
Cabinet Member Councillor Martin Taylor-Smith
Local Member All Members
Appendices None.