

16 July 2015		ITEM: 8
Standards and Audit Committee		
Bridge Maintenance Inspections		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Cllr Oliver Gerrish, Portfolio Holder, Planning Transportation and Regeneration		
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Service, Planning and Transportation		
Accountable Director: David Bull, Director of Planning & Transportation		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report aims to respond to the issues sets out in the Standards and Audit Committee February 2015 report which highlighted the findings from an Audit of the Bridge Maintenance Inspections undertaken as part of the approved internal audit periodic plan. The report identified deficiencies in the inspection and maintenance regime in place to ensure the safety, integrity and adequacy of structures within the highway for use by the public. In order to remediate the said deficiencies Highways & Transportation team is implementing the action plan which details the recommended control measures and improved risk management which is now put in place for the Council to meet its statutory duties.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note the content of the report

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Thurrock Council as the highway authority has statutory duties to maintain the public highway and associated structures in a state that is safe and fit for use. These duties are mainly contained in the Highways Act 1980. For bridges the national code of practice is the Management of Highway Structures and the Department for Transport's BD 63/ 07 supplemented by Interim Advice Note (IAN) 171/12 which sets out risk based inspection intervals.

2.2 There are 115 bridges and other structures in Thurrock. Each structure undergoes General Inspection every two years. In addition, a detailed Principal Inspection should normally be carried out every six years (subject to

a risk assessment) to identify any major defects and to provide data for reparation of major bridge maintenance programmes. Also, the bridge assessments should normally be undertaken every twelve years (or in conjunction with Principal Inspections) to determine the live load capacity of structures which informs the need to strengthen or place weight restrictions on bridges. However, the (six to twelve year) Principal Inspections/Assessments have not been undertaken due to insufficient funding for bridges.

- 2.3 The remediation programme is currently implemented by adhering to the recommended by the Standards and Audit Committee action plan and combining Principal Inspections with Bridges Assessments.
- 2.4 An additional £150,000 has been found from existing budgets for Principal Inspections. Inspection funding in future years will depend on available budgets allocated on a risk and network priority basis.
- 2.5 To date, the bridges and structures which were inspected and assessment are:
 - *Structure No. 00192 Causeway, Ship Lane, Aveley*
 - *Structure No. 00194 London Road, Stanford -le-Hope*
 - *Structure No. 00266 Mardyke A1306 Arterial Road, Purfleet*
 - *Structure No. 00428 Dunstable Road, Stanford-le-Hope*
- 2.6 In addition, a Strategic Review of Thurrock Highways using a team from the Local Government Association was carried out by the Department for Transport (DfT) funded Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP).
- 2.7 The review and recommendations of the Strategic Review were presented to the December 17 2014 Cabinet meeting. These recommendations will improve bridge management as they include improved processes across highways including asset management.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The action points are being addressed now as a part of the overall Highways Service HMEP strategic review actions and the service acts on the recommendations of the Audit report.
- 3.2 The service has put in place funding of £150,000 in 2015/16 to implement some Principal Inspections/Assessments as part of a recovery programme.
- 3.3 The costs of the Action plan are found from prioritisation of existing budgets or from the resources provided for the implementation of the HMEP programme which is subject to separate consideration.
- 3.4 The Council has a statutory duty under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain adopted highways to ensure that they are in a safe condition in

accordance with agreed standards. Any failure to discharge this duty leaves the Council liable to third party claims for compensation, although there is a defence under section 58 if the Council has a reasonable system of inspection and maintenance.

- 3.5 The implementation of the recovery programme ensures that there is adequate inspection and maintenance regime in place which ensures the safety, integrity and adequacy of structures within the highway for use by the public.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report is for information only there are no recommendations attached

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 This report is consistent with corporate priorities especially “protecting and promoting our clean and green environment”.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Senior Financial Accountant

The financial implications are included in the text body of this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart**
Principal Solicitor

The legal implications are included in the text body of this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

The diversity implications are included in the text body of the report.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Cabinet December 2014 Item 18 Highways Efficiency Maintenance Programme, Strategic Review and Recommendations for Improvement
- Management of Highway Structures – Roads Liaison Group
- BD 63/07 & IAN 171/12 _Department for Transport

9. **Appendices to the report**

- *None*

Report Author:

Les Burns

Chief Highways Engineer

Planning & Transportation