

Highway Asset Management



Communications Plan

JAN 2016

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction & Background**
- 2.0 Aims & Objectives**
- 3.0 Customers & Stakeholders**
- 4.0 Communication Methods**
- 5.0 Time Constraints**
- 6.0 Budget**
- 7.0 Key Contacts**
- 8.0 Government Legislation & Bibliography**

1. Introduction & Background

As an open and accountable organisation, Middlesbrough Council is committed to ensuring effective communication takes place throughout its service areas. Effective communication safeguards and improves the reputation of the service and ensures that Councillors and Officers present themselves well to customers and key stakeholders.

By engaging in two-way communication with our customers and stakeholders, we will ensure that the thoughts, ideas, and concerns they generate are given due diligence when planning how our service operates and will influence the decisions that we take.

By adopting a communication strategy, the service area will be able to demonstrate and report to its customers and stakeholders:

- how it sets the Levels of Service;
- reports on performance and value for money; and
- allows interaction on key decisions that affect transport and infrastructure within the borough.

This strategy will run alongside the Council's existing Social Media Policy, Media Protocols, and Safeguarding Policy. The purpose of this Highway Asset Management Communications Plan is to highlight key areas of communication to this particular service area.

We have given particular thought to the HMEP Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance document, specifically Paragraph 3 on National and Local Transport Policy – 3.3 Stakeholder Expectations, and 3.4 Communications; and Paragraph 7 Setting and Measuring Performance. In addition Recommendation 2 "Relevant information associated with asset management should be communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders in setting Levels of Service, making decisions and reporting performance".

2. Aims & Objectives

To promote and undertake consultation with customers and key stakeholders on the following:

- Policies and actions that may affect stakeholders expectations
- Major funding decisions
- Milestones in key projects
- Major and Minor road safety, and environmental improvement schemes
- Public Transport/ and Network improvements and changes
- Incidents or street works that may affect the reliability of journeys and the importance of routes in regards to road hierarchies.

- Any anticipated sustained disruption to the road network or the service.
- Roadworks and highway maintenance programmes, and how perceptions of road and footway surface condition are influenced by user type.
- Undertake satisfaction surveys such as the Councils Voice-Over Panel and National NHT Survey – use the opportunity to gauge public opinion that demonstrates the overall satisfaction with the service area, with the overall aim of improving services. To establish local views by undertaking surveys.
- Use a variety of different ways to communicate with local communities, local businesses, and other key stakeholders e.g. social media, leaflets, advertisements, focus groups, surveys, and general media such as newspapers and television programmes to ensure a wide and broad-base coverage, and effective engagement.
- To ensure that customers and stakeholders are engaged at various stages in our processes to aid their understanding of the service area.
- To minimise the impact of localism, where customers and stakeholders maintenance priorities and preferences can differ from the best asset management approach.
- To ensure that the asset management approach is understood and communicated, explaining the balance between reactive repairs, preventative maintenance and structural repairs.
- To understand the needs and expectations of customers and key stakeholders.
- To understand the levels of satisfaction with the services provided and individual projects carried out.
- To provide clarity and transparency in how we make decisions and how they can be involved in making decisions that affect the network.
- To provide good quality information on what can be expected from the service area.
- To ensure that customers can report service requests, complaints or claims and these are communicated effectively to a resolution that best serves the community and is within what the service area is capable of providing.
- We aim to promote the services that Transport and Infrastructure provide and also to consult with customers and stakeholders to help measure and monitor customer satisfaction

3. Customers & Stakeholders

The following are considered to be Customers and Stakeholders in terms of consultation concerning changes to the standards, aims, and performance levels relating to highway service levels provided for the people of Middlesbrough and its highway users:

Middlesbrough Elected Mayor *

The Executive, the Council's principal decision making body *

Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Management Team *

Local M P's and MEP's

Parish Councils

Residents of Middlesbrough

North East Chamber of Commerce

Tees Valley Unitary Authorities

Tees Valley Unlimited *

Regional TAG Committees

DfT

Highways England

Network Rail

DEFRA

Environment Agency

Local Utility Service providers

Officers Transport Group

Specialist Service Deliverers

*** *Strategic Policy Making Group***

4. Communication Methods

All communications issued by the Council will conform to the Governments Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (made under the Local Government Act 2000). This code covers the content and style of publicity, dissemination, advertising, and promotion.

Examples of communication will include: press notices; TV interviews and programmes; newspaper advertising; community press information; local and national surveys; community and parish councils; business forums and focus groups; social media; officer stands at fairs, festivals, and events; newsletters, leaflets, and brochures; direct written letters and telephone calls; and Council published documents.

Below are our key principles:

- The Councils Press Office will be the main/ first point of contact between the media and the Council
- We will be proactive and encourage promotion of our services through media, and other facilities, where appropriate

- Employees will be encouraged to take part in two-way communication with key stakeholders when forming decisions which affect them
- In-line with the Councils Media Protocol we will not publish materials that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Press releases will be, where appropriate, attributed to the Mayor or relevant Executive Member, to emphasis the elected members' accountability to the electorate and the importance that the Council places on the issue
- Extreme care will be taken during the period of Purdah (particular restriction that applies to publicity issued by the council following the call for elections) to ensure that the restrictions and laws surrounding local government publicity are not breached
- Use of social media could be used where appropriate and in accordance with the Councils Social Media Policy
- We will ensure that the information we supply will be clear to users and the content will be identified as coming from , and for the purposes of the Council
- We will safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults, by ensuring appropriate permission has been obtained prior to using any photographs, video clips, or comments including children, young people, and vulnerable adults – to comply with the Councils safeguarding principles.
- Employees will be made aware that by uploading comments to social media sites; it is likely that they are agreeing to be bound by its terms. This can affect rights to material and make the Council liable to the site.
- Urgent information can also be given out through a network of variable message signs throughout strategic routes.

5. Time Constraints

This document will be progressed, reviewed annually, and updated as required. Future developments may include specific projects and their consultation methods.

6. Budget

The Council has not allocated a specific budget for the communications plan, however, communication activities are expected to continue within current budget levels, and will be incorporated into schemes and processes as we are able.

7. Key Contacts

- Ian M^cConville: – Group Manager, Operations & Delivery Group, Transport & Infrastructure, Economic Development, Middlesbrough Council
- Pauline Briki: – Engineer Operations & Delivery Group, Transport & Infrastructure, Economic Development, Middlesbrough Council
- Angus Hoy: – Senior Press Officer, Organisation and Governance, Executive Office, Middlesbrough Council

8. Legislation, Guidance, and Bibliography

Legislation Related to Communication and Inclusion

There is legislation, not specifically related to highways, street and traffic functions, but dealing with wider community issues that will affect how we communicate, and the services we provide, namely:

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (Section 17)
Disability Discrimination Act 1995
Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
Human Rights Act 1998
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Local Government Act 2000
Civil Contingencies Act 2004
Sex Discrimination Act 1975
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Equality Act 2006
Age Discrimination (pending)
Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance (HMEP)

Legislation Relating to Highways

Much of highway maintenance activity is based upon statutory powers and duties contained in legislation and precedents developed over time as a result of claims and legal proceedings. It is crucially important that all those involved in highway maintenance, including Elected Members, have a clear understanding of their powers and duties, and the implications of these.

Even in the absence of specific duties and powers, authorities have a general duty of care to users and the community to maintain the highway in a condition fit

for its purpose. This principle should be applied when developing policies and strategies.

In addition to a general Duty of Care, there are a number of specific pieces of legislation which provide the basis of powers, duties, and responsibilities relating to Highway Maintenance, regulating the environmental effects of operations, and Health and Safety. To assist in guiding practitioners, the following bibliography has been produced:

Acts of Parliament

The Highways Act 1980

The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

The Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002

The Road Safety Act, 2006

Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984

Traffic Signs and General Directions 2005

Road Traffic Act 1991

Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997

The Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998

The Transport Act 2000

Traffic Management Act 2004

Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

Countryside Act 1968

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Weeds Act 1959

Ragwort Control Act 2003

Control of Pesticides Regulations 1997

Hedgerow regulations 1997

Occupiers Liability Act 1957

Rights of way Act 1990

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

European Water Framework Directive 2000

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

Guidance Documents

Although not legislative, there are several more documents provided to give guidance to practitioners and decision makers alike. These are recommended nationally to be considered for adoption by Local Authorities and service providers when determining and providing their levels of service. These in turn have assisted Middlesbrough Council in producing its own internal policy documents shown below:

UKRLG – UK Road Liaison Group Codes of Practice

- Well Maintained Highways for Highway Maintenance Management 2005 (last updated 18/09/2013 and now under review)
- Well Lit Highways 2004 (last updated 13/08/2013 currently under review)
- Management of Highway Structures 2005 (last updated 13/08/2013 currently under review)

HMEP – Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme

- The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance 2013
- The Potholes Review Report 'Prevention and a Better Cure' 2012

The CIPFA Code for Transport Infrastructure Assets 2013

The Audit Commission Report 'Going the Distance' 2011

DfT (Department for Transport)

- The Transport Resilience Review 2014
- Inclusive Mobility 2005 – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure.

Middlesbrough Council Documents

The Transport Asset Management Plan 2007 (TAMP) (under review)

TAMP Part 1 – An Introduction to Highway Asset Management (draft Dec 2015)

TAMP Part 2 – Planning Highway Maintenance Efficiencies in M'bro (draft Oct '15)

Local Transport Plan 2011-2016 (LTP)

The Highway Network Management Plan 2006 (under review)

The Highway Maintenance Plan 2006 (under review)

The Highway Maintenance Specification (under review)

The Highway Safety Inspection Manual 2007 (reviewed 2009)

The Street Lighting Maintenance Management Plan (including Telematics)

The Structures Maintenance Management Plan

'Middlesbrough 2020 Our Vision' 'the place to live work and visit'

Parking Strategy 2009

Middlesbrough Surface Water Management Plan Mar 2012

Flood Risk Management Strategy

Flooding and Severe Weather Plan May 15

The Winter Maintenance Plan 2015-16

Middlesbrough Council Communication Documents

Middlesbrough Safeguarding Policy

Middlesbrough Media Protocol

Middlesbrough Social Media Policy