



DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CHARTER



Isle of Man
Government
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FORWARD

As part of the 'Our Island Plan', the Council of Ministers committed to publish a Highways Maintenance Charter. This is the first time a Charter of this nature has been made public by the Department and I believe it marks a political turning point where we start to recognise and value the importance of highway maintenance.

The highway network is the single biggest asset in our built environment. It is the foundation of where we live, work and play and its importance to the health and wellbeing of our Island cannot be under estimated. It is the bedrock of our economy and heart of our community.

Going forward, I hope that this Charter will help to explain how our maintenance services are accessed, why we make the decisions that we make and increasingly drive the improvements that we all want to see.

This initial document is intended to act as a focus for discussion with local authorities before being revised later this year.



Minister for the Department of Infrastructure

1. INTRODUCTION

Highway Services provides and maintains a safe and good quality highway network. The Highway maintenance service section is delivered by a team of around 70 dedicated team members, who are focused on maintaining a safe and effective network for the people of the Island to enjoy.

Highway Services maintain over:

- ✓ 1000km of roads;
- ✓ 760km of footways; and
- ✓ 316km of footpaths and green lanes.

The allocation of funding and resources for different maintenance activities is reviewed annually. Naturally, limited resources mean that efforts have to be focused and difficult decisions taken. Highways Officers consider a wide range of factors when determining where resources are focused, including safety, place, traffic, function, environment, professional practice and the general political direction of the Department.

Since 2014, the Island's local authorities have been responsible for street cleaning, drainage gully cleaning, weeding, hedge cutting and verge maintenance in their areas. Highway Services work in partnership with the local authorities, but it is for each local authority to set its own standards of service. On a small number of roads, Highway Services have retained these duties and the standards and performance identified in this charter relate to Highway Services not local authorities. These service routes can be found at <https://www.gov.im/media/1357824/serviced-routes-july-2017.pdf>.

This document refers to maintenance of the existing highway infrastructure. Maintenance is the process of keeping an asset functional during its working life and undertaking day-to-day repairs to cost effectively realise the full life of the asset.

To maximise the use of resources, Highway Services has been adopting a risk and condition based approach to its maintenance activities and this drive is expected to continue over the coming years. Maintenance activity is working towards becoming more planned and less reactive. This is good practice aimed at delivering value for money.

Maintenance does not include the replacement of end of life assets such as traffic light replacement, road reconstruction or bridge replacement. Nor does it include improvements to the existing infrastructure such as the installation of new pedestrian crossings, traffic calming

features, and improved pedestrian access facilities. These may all be desirable and appropriate at different times but they are not maintenance of the existing asset. Clearly, however, there will be occasions where some incidental minor improvements are appropriate as part of maintenance works, for example the installation of drop kerbs when resurfacing on a section of footway.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Highway Services operate a Customer Service Centre, which is a single point of contact into Highway Services. It offers services through a mobile phone app, website, email, and telephone. Contact through this service is logged and the information used to help prioritise future maintenance plans. Contact us:

✓ by smart phone **notifyIM**

iOS



Android



✓ on the web site **reportaproblem.im**

✓ by email highways@gov.im

✓ by phone 850000

Customer Service opening hours are Monday – Friday 07:30 – 17:30

Highway Services also provide an emergency out of hours service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year.

Customer Service provides up to date operational information to the public through its Facebook and Twitter pages.

✓ Twitter - [@iominfra](https://twitter.com/iominfra)

✓ Facebook – (search for **iominfra**) Isle of Man Department of Infrastructure

The Department also publishes road works information.

✓ <https://one.network/>

Performance Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>UK Bench Mark Group Average</i>	<i>IOM Highways Target</i>	<i>IOM Highways Current Performance</i>
<i>Percentage of emergency and find and fix defects made safe within response time (24 hours)</i>	84.84%	96%	90.90%
<i>Percentage of faults rectified on first visit</i>	89.24%	95%	96.53%
<i>Percentage of enquiries/ requests for service closed off with response time</i>	86.71%		92.42%
<i>Total of enquiries recorded per kilometre of carriageway length</i>	8.28		14.79

3. INSPECTIONS

Road and Footway

Due to resource limitation, inspections are limited to minimum safety inspections only.

Inspection schedule:

- ✓ Primary Routes Monthly
- ✓ Secondary Routes Every 3 months
- ✓ Local Access Roads and Rural Routes Every 6 months
- ✓ Access Roads and Estates Every 12 months

A Road Hierarchy map can be found at

<https://manngis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8382a21e92da426885e383f926d66f02>.

Highway Structures

The Highway asset register includes around 2000 structures including bridges, culverts and retaining walls. Highway Services consider the consequences of structural failure high and, as such, structural inspection is given a high priority. Structures are inspected in accordance with the approved code of practice. Highway Services has set itself a target to be in the top quartile of UK performance.

- ✓ General Inspections Every 2 years
- ✓ Principal Inspections Every 6 years (or risk based after assessment)
- ✓ Safety Inspections As determined by asset assessments

Public Rights of Way

Resource limitations mean that there are currently no scheduled inspections of the Public Rights of Way, Green Lanes or other footpaths. Work plans are based on public reports and reports from staff.

Performance Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>UK Bench Mark Group Average</i>	<i>IOM Highways Target</i>	<i>IOM Highways Actual Performance</i>
<i>Percentage of planned kilometre of footway safety inspections completed</i>	100%	95%	100%
<i>Percentage of General Structural Inspections carried out on time</i>	61.9%	95%	100%

<i>Percentage of Principal Structural Inspections carried out on time</i>	84.62%	95%	100%
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4. ROAD SWEEPING

Local Authorities

Road sweeping, amenity cleaning and cleansing of the roads is a service provided by the local authorities of the Isle of Man. It is a matter for each local authority to set its own standards and monitor its own performance. Highway Services do not routinely monitor its performance, but Highways Customer Services will pass on requests from the public to the relevant local authority. It does not monitor these requests once they have been passed on, that is a matter for each local authority.

Highway Services

Highway Services undertake road sweeping on the primary routes, which can be found at <https://www.gov.im/media/1357824/serviced-routes-july-2017.pdf> . It does this to maintain traffic flow and safety on these key traffic routes.

Service routes form part of the highway network, predominantly primary routes, which are not delegated to local authorities.

5. HEDGE CUTTING

Local Authorities

Roadside maintenance of hedges, verges and weeding of footways and roads is the responsibility of local authorities in the Isle of Man. It is a matter for each authority to set its own standards and monitor its own performance. Requests for hedge and verge maintenance should be directed to the local authority. Highway Services do not routinely monitor their performance. Highway Services produce a guidance document for hedge and verge maintenance with the Department of Food and Agriculture and this guidance has been issued to the local authorities. The Department will only intervene on these routes if it believes that road safety is being compromised and the local authority is not responding to requests to address the issue.

Highway Services

Highway Services undertake hedge cutting, verge maintenance and weeding of roads and pavements on the Service Routes to ensure safety and traffic flow on these key routes.

<https://www.gov.im/media/1357824/serviced-routes-july-2017.pdf>

Hedges cannot be cut during the bird-nesting season.

Highway Services undertake the following on the Service Routes.

- ✓ A full winter cut
- ✓ Summer safety cuts where required including a pre-racing safety cut on the TT and Southern 100 courses
- ✓ Verges and visibility splays are cut 4 times per year
- ✓ Weed spraying of the roads and footways are undertaken 2-4 times per year depending on growth. The chemical used requires green leaves to appear before it is effective.

Private Property Owners

Private property owners are expected to maintain their own garden hedges. They must not be allowed to extend beyond the property boundary. Where a local authority or Highway Services feels that a hedge is not being managed appropriately then it reserves the right to cut back the hedge as required and may seek to recover the costs from the property owner.

6. DRAINAGE

Local Authorities

It is the responsibility of local authorities to inspect, keep clear and clean roadside gullies. It is also their responsibility to ensure that they are functioning correctly and report defects to Highways Customer Services. The frequency and monitoring of gully cleaning by the local authority is a matter for each local authority to determine and manage. Requests for gullies to be cleaned or cleared should be made directly to the local authority in the first instance.

Highway Services

Highway Services have retained responsibility for inspecting, clearing and clearing roadside gullies along the Services Routes only. This is to help ensure safety and traffic flow along the key routes. <https://www.gov.im/media/1357824/serviced-routes-july-2017.pdf>

Highway Services undertake the following on the Service Routes.

- ✓ All gully pots are cleaned and tested twice per year
- ✓ Gullies in flood prone areas are cleaned more often to help ensure good levels of year round function

Highway Services undertake maintenance of roadside ditches and drainage channels.

7. LINE PAINTING

Line painting is limited by resource availability. Busy routes and safety related lines are prioritised over routes with less traffic and parking enforcement lines. Line painting is undertaken to the appropriate British Standards. Each summer Highway Services undertake a programme of line painting on a split shift pattern (this has not happened for the past few years due to Covid) in order to maximise the long summer days and the capital equipment required. During other times of the year only safety critical line painting will be undertaken.

Line painting is restricted by temperature and by the need to avoid painting on the TT course and Southern 100 course for 4 weeks prior to any racing. Additionally, lines cannot be painted on roads with salt on them, so in many areas pre cleaning is required. Standard rain lines are to be trialled on most roads, but on the TT and Southern 100 Courses low-profile lines are used to minimise the impact on the racing machines. Unfortunately, this reduces their effectiveness for normal road traffic.

8. FOOTWAYS

Highway Services maintain a rolling 3-month footway maintenance programme. So far as possible, work is prioritised on a combination of condition, footfall, local users groups and place. An audit of footway conditions was undertaken in 2019 for the first time and this is used to help prioritise work, together with defects reported through safety inspections. Highway Services will undertake a new audit of the footways when resources become available, ideally condition would be monitored yearly.

Performance Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>UK Bench Mark Group Average</i>	<i>IOM Highways Target</i>	<i>IOM Highways Actual Performance</i>
<i>Percentage of footway length to be considered for maintenance</i>	15.74%		29.70%
<i>Percentage of footway length treated</i>	0.26%		0.87%

9. ROADS

Patch Repairs

Highway Services maintain a three-month rolling programme for road patch repairs. These repairs are utilised where localised areas (up to around 200 square metres) of the road are in very poor condition. This work does not extend to reconstruction, but rather replacement of the top 40 mm adding structural strength and life to the road.

Surface Treatments

Surface Dressing, which is sometimes known as spray and chip, is used to ensure that the structural and surface life of the road is maximized. It is typically used every 7 years to improve grip levels and ensure that the road remains resistant to water penetration from above. This treatment is temperature dependent, so can only be applied during the summer months, but it must also be applied 6 weeks before any road racing event, so that the chips can bed in fully. Highway Services do not have the resources to deliver this treatment in house and the work is contracted out. Unfortunately, delivery reliability and quality control have been problematic. However, this remains an effective and important maintenance treatment.

Micro Asphalt puts down a thin new surface on the road, improving grip, reducing bumps and hollows and sealing the road surface. Whilst more expensive than surface dressing, it is an important part of Highway Services' approach to maximising the asset life.

Surface Replacement

Plane and Inlay is used to replace the road surface with a new surface. Good practice is for this to take place based on condition after around 10 -16 year on a primary road. This can be an effective treatment when the roads substructure allows its use. It is not appropriate if the road does not have an appropriate construction,

Performance Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>UK Bench Mark Group Average</i>	<i>IOM Highways Target</i>	<i>IOM Highways Actual Performance</i>
<i>Percentage of carriageway length treated</i>	<i>2.78%</i>		<i>1.75%</i>
<i>Condition of Principle Roads (% in poor condition)</i>	<i>3.88%</i>		<i>4.40%</i>
<i>Condition of none principal roads (% in poor condition)</i>	<i>10.61%</i>		<i>8.58%</i>

10. STRUCTURES

A rolling programme of structural maintenance is undertaken on Highway structures, such as bridges, culverts and retaining walls, based on the conditions identified in routine inspections. Safety critical work is prioritised over other works.

Performance Indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>UK Bench Mark Group Average</i>	<i>IOM Highways Target</i>	<i>IOM Highways Actual Performance</i>
<i>Bridge stock condition indicator- average</i>	86.87%	90%	89%
<i>Bridge stock Condition Indicator- critical</i>	73.84%	83%	69%
<i>Percentage of bridges failing European standards</i>	3.22%	0%	0%

11. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Funding for Public Rights of Rights of Way, Green Lanes and other footpaths has been limited for many years. The Department are committed to undertake the following:

- ✓ The Raad ny Follian 3 cuts per year
- ✓ All other footpaths 1 cut per year

As with other hedge cutting activities, work during the growing season is restricted because of the requirement to protect nesting birds. In many cases Highways is restricted to safety cutting only during the growing season.

Efforts are also made to protect known areas of ecological importance and beauty.

12. SEVERE WEATHER CAPABILITY

Through its Eilerslie Control room, Highways takes the operational lead in the Island’s response to severe weather coordinating the operations of its services with the police, Civil Defence, the MUA and DEFA. Highways maintain the ability to deploy a 24 hour per day, 7 days per week in response to severe weather.

Highways maintain the Island’s road salt stock and holds 12,000 tonnes, enough to secure 2/3 weeks of 24 hour per day operations. It retains the following:

- ✓ 5 bulk gritting vehicles
- ✓ 2 demountable gritting vehicles
- ✓ 6 trailer gritters
- ✓ 10 snow blades
- ✓ A demountable tractor snow blower
- ✓ A quad bike with trailer gritter unit and snow blade
- ✓ Jetters (used to help clear blockages in drainage systems during floods)
- ✓ Various temporary flood boards and barriers
- ✓ Submersible pumps of various sizes

Highways fill and deploy sandbags and supply them to the public to help them protect their own property. Highways maintain a reserve of 10,000 - 15,000 filled sandbags ready to deploy at any given time.

Highways retain 20+ people trained in chainsaw operations for deployment removing trees fallen on the highway. A severe storm will bring down 100 - 300 hundred trees on to the highway. We also co-ordinate the deployment of appropriately trained staff from DEFA.

The Highways Maintenance Services maintain close contact with weather forecasters and deploy resources proactively in anticipation of weather events. Winter gritting routes have been developed and these routes are gritted as a priority when the conditions are expected to require them. The routes can be found at

<https://www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/winter-gritting-routes/>

13. ACCESS FOR ALL

Highway Services are committed to improving access to the network for all groups of users and recognises that a great deal of improvement work is required to make the network more accessible to people with visual impairments and those with reduced mobility. Whilst many of Highway Services access improvement activities are outside the scope of highway maintenance, minor improvements can be undertaken incidental to maintenance work. These

opportunities need to be sought out and used, whilst not distracting from the core purpose of maintenance. For example, drop kerbs can be installed if a footway surface is being replaced.

Accessibility can also be reduced whilst maintenance activities are taking place. To mitigate the negative impact of maintenance, team members receive equality training and strive to take reasonable steps to maintain access. On significant schemes, access will be designed into the site construction plans, and on smaller projects, the team leader makes an onsite assessment and adjustments where appropriate. These steps will vary depending on the scale and length of the disruption.

Highway Services is working hard to improve in this area and routinely consults with impacted groups for advice. Advancement is needed, but Highway Services, supported by the Department of Infrastructure is determined to help create an inclusive environment.