

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 7 February 2019

Report of the Head of Service - Asset Management

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Vehicle Restraint Systems Code of Practice

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

Paul Binks, Tel: (01772) 532210, Highway Asset Manager,
paul.binks@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

The Vehicle Restraint Systems Code of Practice at Appendix 'A' outlines the guidance to be followed in respect of the installation and maintenance of vehicle restraint systems on the adopted vehicular highway in Lancashire.

In accordance with the UK Roads Liaison Group's national guidance publication 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice' the Vehicle Restraint Systems Code of Practice also outlines the methodology to be used to risk assess and prioritise the inspection of vehicle restraint installations.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the Vehicle Restraint Systems Code of Practice set out at Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

Vehicle restraint systems are intended to reduce the number and severity of injuries in the event that a vehicle leaves the carriageway and would otherwise encounter a hazardous feature (e.g. on-coming vehicles, an embankment, a lighting column, trees, etc). They do not stop accidents from occurring and they should only be used when other measures are considered inappropriate or ineffective.

Lancashire County Council currently maintains approximately 130 km of vehicle restraint systems comprising of high containment concrete barriers, steel/wire fences, tensioned/un-tensioned safety fences or bridge/structure parapets which are distributed across a wide range of locations on the vehicular road network with varying road speeds and traffic flows.

This code of practice promotes the use of a risk based approach, in line with the UK Roads Liaison Group's national guidance publication, 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice' for the installation of new vehicle restraint systems, as well as the management and maintenance of existing installations to ensure a consistent and optimum performance across Lancashire. The implementation of this code of practice will ensure that:

- New vehicle restraint systems are only installed after all other measures have been considered.
- New vehicle restraint systems are installed to the appropriate standard.
- Vehicle restraint systems are recorded on the Highway Asset Management System.
- Maintenance of vehicle restraint systems will be prioritised following a risk based approach.
- Where a departure is proposed from national standards or guidance this decision be fully risk assessed and signed off by appropriate personnel.

As national guidance on vehicle restraint systems is not collated in one place and is complex, this document is intended to be a reference document to support design and highway maintenance engineers when considering vehicle restraint systems and to set the risk based method by which the council prioritises detailed inspection and minor maintenance; in order to optimise the funds whilst reducing the risk.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk Management

The Vehicle Restraint System Code of Practice outlines a methodology to be used to risk assess existing vehicle restraint systems so that these can be inspected on a priority basis. Without this code of practice there will be no mechanism for prioritising inspection programmes which could prejudice the county council should there be a legal challenge; for instance following a complaint or claim.

Financial

The new Risk-Based Inspection and Minor Maintenance Programme proposed by this code of practice will be funded from the Capital Programme as set each year after full consideration of all priority works and the level of all funding available in terms of grants available. Initial prioritisation will be given using the Department of Transport Incentive Fund and then the wider programme of funding. If this code of practice is not approved there will be no mechanism for providing a prioritised programme.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A