



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Highways and Infrastructure Service Standards

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1. Introduction

This document provides key delivery standards for St Helens Highway and Infrastructure Services. The document will be reviewed regularly and updated as the service changes.

The Highway and Infrastructure Services are committed to maintaining and improving the borough's road networks, not only to provide safe and resilient links for people to travel around our borough and support growth but also to provide a suitable environment in which people can safely live, work and visit.

The Highways Act 1980 places a duty on us, as the local Highway Authority, to maintain the public highway network in a condition that is safe for users.

The public highway network includes all adopted roads, footpaths and verges. It does not include unadopted or privately owned roads.

In order to keep the highway in a safe condition we regularly inspect our network in accordance with the current [Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance](#).

2. St Helens Borough Council Customer Experience Commitment

2.1. What you can expect from us

Treating you fairly – We will:

- be helpful and respectful to everyone
- be understanding of your situation
- act openly and honestly
- keep our promises

Keeping you informed – We will:

- give you clear information about the right people to help you
- talk to you in plain language, without jargon
- keep all the information on our website up to date
- update you with progress on requests and complaints

Getting it right – We will:

- keep your personal information safe
- say sorry if we make a mistake and act to put it right
- make it easy for you to tell us if we get something wrong
- use your feedback to improve our services

Managing Access Easier – We will:

- develop services with your help that meet your needs
- make our website accessible to everyone
- increase our online services for you to use at a time that suits you
- be clear about the different ways you can contact us

2.2. What ask of you

- Report all dangerous defects affecting the safety of highway users immediately by calling 01744 676789 as soon as possible.
- When reporting or a problem or making an enquiry please: -
 - Use our [report it](#) or [general enquiries form](#) on our website or call our contact centre on 01744 676789,
 - Give as much detail about the issue and the location as possible,
 - Provide your name and contact details so we can keep you up to date.
- Be courteous and treat our officers with respect. The Council will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour or language towards council officers and will terminate phone calls or interviews where this is displayed.

2.3. Keeping you informed

Highway services are in high demand and it is not possible to respond to enquiries individually, particular reports of problems and faults e.g. potholes.

To keep customers informed we now publish pothole repairs, carriageway resurfacing schemes and gritting updates on our website and share via the Council's social media channels.

For more information, please visit www.sthelens.gov.uk/roadsandtransport

3. Highway and Infrastructure Services

The service primary functions are to maintain and improve the highway infrastructure of the Authority, to provide a wide range of traffic related facilities and to keep all road users moving safely around the highway network.

Our vision is to be a leading highway authority, efficiently managing, maintaining, and improving St Helens highways to ensure safe, reliable journeys and supporting economic growth.

3.1. Highway Maintenance

The team inspects, assesses, and maintains the highway network of roads, footways, and public rights of way in St Helens, ensuring that it is safe for all road users. This section also currently operates as the contracting arm of the service area and carry out works on the highway. Functions include: -

- Implementing a programme of works to:
 - Inspect and maintain the highway network to ensure that it meets prescribed standards for the safety of all highway users.
 - Deliver preventative and planned works through an evidence-based approach to maintain the highway network (including carriageways, footways, and highway drainage) in a safe condition and to arrest deterioration.
 - Maintain, monitor, and promote the public rights of way network in the Authority.
- Enforcing the requirements of the Highways Act 1980 and other associated legislation.
- Dealing with highway insurance claims made against the Authority.

- Investigating/responding/undertaking works resulting from emergency call outs, complaints, inspections, requests for works including vehicular crossings.
- Winter maintenance including gritting, snow clearance and manage grit bins.

We are not responsible for: -

- Maintenance and repair of private roads and footpaths (you can check if your road is adopted at [Find My Street](#))

3.2. Highway Management

The team enables the Council to fulfil its obligations under the Traffic Management Act 2004, and to manage the flow of traffic through the transport network. It manages and coordinates traffic, highway works and other activities that take place on our network (including parking, parking enforcement and street works), to mitigate disruptions and minimise delays as far as possible. It ensures the highway network can be used safely and efficiently by all road users. This section also inspects and maintains street lighting within St Helens to ensure that the installations are safe and fit for purpose. Functions include:

- Implementing a programme of works to:
 - Deliver the traffic related infrastructure projects in accordance with the strategies identified in the Local Transport Plan.
 - Deliver a road accident reduction programme to achieve targets to reduce the number of road accident casualties.
 - Maintain and operate street lighting, traffic signs, Vehicle Activated Signs (VASs), road markings and studs.
 - Maintain, monitor and improve the traffic signal installations, pedestrian crossing facilities, Variable Message Signs (VMSs), CCTV cameras, WiFi communication system and other UTC equipment.
 - Road safety education, training and publicity for all road users, including cyclists, novice drivers, motorcyclists and older road users.
- Carry out duties required under the Traffic Management Act 2004 including managing the Permit Scheme for controlling works on the highway.
- Ensuring compliance with Parking Regulations for both on and off-street parking through the Council's parking services contract with a unified system of parking enforcement, including the processing of Fixed Penalty Notices for parking offences.
- Providing traffic management advice and guidance including the implementation of both TTRO's and TRO's to assist with the flow of traffic, improve road safety and prevent damage to the highway.

We are not responsible for: -

- Streetlights and street furniture on private roads (you can check if your road is adopted at [Find My Street](#))
- Private car parks

The following are the responsibility of Merseyside Police: -

- A vehicle blocking a road which could cause a danger to others
- A vehicle blocking a pavement or blocking access to a property, for example parked on a dropped kerb
- Speeding or careless driving

You can report any of these issues via their website www.merseyside.police.uk or by calling 101.

3.3. Highway Infrastructure & Improvements

The section manages and improves highway infrastructure through completion of inspections, investigations, feasibility studies, design, and construction. This includes network improvement schemes, junction improvements, road safety improvements, access improvements for all modes of travel, highway structures and highway adoption. Functions include.

- Implementing a programme of works to: -
 - Deliver highway and structures related infrastructure projects identified in the Local Transport Plan.
 - Undertake preventative and planned repairs to bridges, to maintain them in a safe condition and to arrest deterioration.
 - Manage Section 38 and Section 278 agreements for developments including liaison, technical approval, and supervision.
- Project managing the delivery of schemes including acting as client and consultant, and undertaking feasibility, budgetary control, design, construction, and supervision.
- Managing Abnormal Load Notifications.
- Ensuring the Council complies with the requirements of the Reservoirs Act (1975) by appointing a Supervising Engineer and an Inspecting Engineer; monitor the dams, arrange for the annual inspections and remedial work arising.

4. Statutory Responsibilities

- The Council are a Highway Authority and have a statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the adopted highway. Highway assets include carriageways, footways, bridges & structures, street lighting, traffic control equipment and drainage systems.
- The Council are a Highway Authority and have a Statutory Duty under the Highway Act 1980 to keep highways clear of ice and snow.
- The Council have a statutory duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain safe flows on its highway network and co-ordinate works on the highway to minimise disruption.
- Parking Services manage the operation of St. Helens Council's on and off-street parking facilities across the Borough and have responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement, which is a statutory function carried out under the Traffic Management Act 2004.

The statutory duties are governed by the following legislation:

- Highways Act 1980
- Traffic Management Act 2004
- New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- Reservoirs Act 1972
- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Road Traffic Act 1984, 1988, 1991, 1998
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

- Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations.

5. Service Response Times

Please see appendices for response time for key services

Appendix 1 – Highway Maintenance

Appendix 2 – Streetlighting

Appendix 3 – Traffic Signals

Appendix 4 – Road Adoptions

Appendix 5 – Residents Parking Scheme

Appendix 6 – Access Protection Markings

Appendix 7 – Vehicle Crossings

Appendix 8 – Advisory Disabled Bays

Appendix 1 – Highway Maintenance Standards

The Council conducts regular safety inspections of the highway network, addressing potholes and other defects through both routine and emergency assessments.

During each safety inspection, highway inspectors carry out a comprehensive risk assessment. This combines visual observation with defined investigation criteria to identify defects and determine the appropriate response category.

Please Note:

- The response time refers to how quickly work will commence, not how soon a response will be given to the customer.
- In cases where the defect involves missing or damaged ironwork, responsibility may rest with a utility company. Where this is the case, the Council's Street Works Coordinator will follow up with the utility provider if no action is taken after being notified by the safety inspector (via phone or email).

Defect Types and Categories

Once the defect is identified and response time determined the defect is recorded and given one of the following categories:

1. **Emergency Action (P1)** - defects that are so dangerous as to require emergency action shall be made safe within 2 hours. Cones and signs may be used ahead of repair work. The primary objective shall be to carry out a repair which will last at least until the time of the next inspection. Sometimes a combination may be requested e.g., temporary repair or make safe action followed by an order for permanent works.
2. **24 Hour Response (P2)** - defects that are an immediate hazard requiring prompt attention and repairs to make safe shall be made within 24 hours.
3. **14-Day Response (P3)** - Defects that are considered actionable and are of a size and location requiring a repair within 14 calendar days. Generally, these defects will be located in the busier pedestrian only areas.
4. **28-Day Response (P4)** - Defects that are considered actionable and are of a size and location requiring a repair within 28 days. These are the standard repairs and should be ordered when high pedestrian flows are not present.
5. **As Programmed (P5)** – Works that are deemed non-actionable but due to the structural condition require programmed maintenance to be undertaken.

The allotted time to make safe a dangerous hazard starts from when the hazard is either identified by the inspector or by a trained member of staff. Response times set out in this Code of Practice must be adhered to. The normal response is 2 hours for an immediate danger such as missing manhole covers, collapsed sewers causing sinkage's etc. but longer timescales may be applicable dependent upon the level of risk associated with the defect. Records of inspections and consequential actions must be kept for at least 6 years. It should be noted that not all dangerous defects require make safe action and may be repaired within the agreed timeframes for repair.

It is the Risk Factor that identifies the overall risk rating and consequently the appropriateness of the speed of response to remedy the defect.

Having identified a particular risk, assessed its likely impact and probability, and calculated the degree of risk, the priority and the timescale to rectify the defect is to be allocated.

Inspectors may use discretion in arranging and prioritising repairs where the defects identified combined with additional factors represent either an existing or potential future hazard.

The inspector in his final assessment of the risk takes account of other on-site local factors. Although not exhaustive these may include:

- The proximity of a school, hospital or other establishment which attracts increased activity.
- The location of the defect relative to other features such as junctions and bends
- The proximity to other defects.

The final on site risk assessment by the inspector allows the appropriate response to be applied.

It is recognised that on any highway network, a multitude of minor defects will exist which do not pose any risk and do not meet the Investigatory Level and may result in no action being taken.

Appendix 2 – Street Lighting Maintenance Standards

The 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' document issued by the UK Roads Liaison Group provides a framework of recommendations by which road lighting maintenance policies can be developed in support of the provisions of the 'Highways Act 1984'.

The 'Guidance Document for Road Safety Inspections and Defect Categorisation', issued in response to this defines the local maximum response times when lighting defects are reported to the Council.

Please note that:

- response time refers to the how quickly work will commence not when we will respond to the customer,
- units with no electricity supply will be subject to repair by the appropriate Network Operator for example, Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN). Those repair times are out of the control of the Council.

Defect Types and Categories

Category 1 defect

Example of type of defect:

- doors off
- exposed cable
- hanging lantern and/or shade
- section of four, or more, consecutive lights
- insecure, leaning column
- damaged lighting column in danger of collapse

Timescale for response - 4 hours. If it is not possible to correct the defect at the time of inspection, the unit(s) will be made safe and warning signs erected with coning as required, to provide public safety.

Category 2 defect

Example of type of defect:

- up to three consecutive dark lights
- cable fault repairs requiring ground excavation affecting four units, or more
- faulty or missing lantern/shade replacement
- intermittent/flashing fault

Timescale for response - 7 days.

If it is not possible to repair the unit at first visit a further seven-day response extension will apply.

Please note: Units with no electricity supply will be subject to repair by the appropriate Network Operator for example, Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN). Those repair times are out of the control of the Council.

SPEN is the major Network Operator in the North West of England. They will provide programming updates on request to those affected by any supply faults to street lighting that they have been

notified of by St Helens Borough Council. Members of the public can be provided with a reference number by the council for any Scottish Power fault.

Category 3 defect

Example of type of defect:

- single unit column replacement (damaged, irreparable, cut down)
- secure but leaning column
- cable fault requiring ground excavation affecting three units, or less
- removal of old column after disconnection from electricity supply

Timescale for response - 28 days.

Category 3 defects will be inspected within seven working days for assessment and inclusion in the next available works programme within thirty working days.

Category 4 defect

Example of type of defect:

- lighting obscured by vegetation not causing high traffic risk
- unauthorised signage removal not causing obstruction

Timescale for response - within next available works programme subject to statutory notices.

Appendix 3 – Traffic Signals Maintenance Standards

The Council are responsible for the provision and maintenance of all permanent traffic signals on the roads which we maintain. This includes all traffic signal junction and all controlled pedestrian crossings incorporating Pelicans, Puffin and Toucan crossings.

The maintenance of electronic traffic signal equipment is governed by a series of national documents and guidance including:

- [Well Maintained Highways A Code of Practice 2016](#)
- [Management of Electronic Traffic Equipment A Code of Practice](#)
- [DMRB – Volume 8 Traffic Signs and Lighting Section 1 Traffic Signals and Control Equipment Part 2 TD 24/97](#)
- [Traffic Management Act](#)

Traffic signal junctions are inspected regularly by our traffic signal maintenance contractor to ensure safety and compliance with the Road traffic signal systems' BS EN 50556 standards.

Please note response times refers to the how quickly work will commence not when we will respond to the customer

Defect Types and Categories

Level 1 - Emergency

Examples: -

- Signals stuck
- omitting a phase or all signals out
- damaged or dangerous equipment

Timescale for response – 2 hours

Level 2 – Urgent

Examples: -

- failure of red lamp/LED
- failure of a red man lamp/LED at a pedestrian crossing
- issues causing significant disruption or conflicting information
- pushbutton fails at a pedestrian crossing
- signal heads out of alignment

Timescale for response – 4 hours

Level 3 - Minor Hazard

Examples: -

- failure of amber/green lamp/LED
- minor vehicle detection issues

Timescale for response – 8 hours

Level 4 - Non-urgent

Examples: -

- Graffiti and any other minor or cosmetic issue

Timescale for response – no timeframe

Appendix 5 – Residents Parking Scheme

A resident parking scheme is defined as:

“an urban area where long-term, on-street parking by non-residents prevents residents from parking near their property for most of the working day. The working day is defined as 8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday, though these times can vary by scheme”

- being of a sufficient size to minimise the possible effects of displacement into surrounding streets
- a large proportion of the properties within the area do not have off-street parking, or the ability to install off-street parking
- provision can be made for visitors to the area

St Helens Borough Council is responsible for administering a number of resident parking zones around the Borough by the issuing of various virtual permits to residents via an online application process.

Scheme Criteria

- Observations taken throughout the day report that more than 80% of available parking spaces must be occupied, with 60% or greater occupied by non-residents.
- Not more than 50% of the car-owning residents have or could have parking available within the curtilage of their property or have off-street parking available nearby.
- The normal daily demand for resident spaces can be met.
- The introduction of the scheme will not cause unacceptable problems in adjacent roads.
- The scheme is acceptable both to the Police and the operations of the emergency services.
- The Council should be satisfied that a reasonable level of enforcement can be maintained.
- The proposals are acceptable to the majority of the residents.
- In areas where parking space is severely limited, the introduction of reserved parking does not seriously affect the commercial viability of the area.
- There are no new schemes introduced for individual streets. Approval will only be granted for a resident parking zone.

Scheme Application Process

Once an application has been submitted, it will be formally acknowledged and reviewed by the Assessment Panel, which includes officers from both the Traffic and Parking Services teams.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome following the panel’s review. If the application is successful, the next steps will involve site observations, as well as community and statutory consultation.

Should the application progress successfully through this second stage, it will then be submitted for final approval by the Traffic Manager and a new Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be created.

Stage	Timescale
Application	Acknowledged with 5 working days
Stage 1	Up to 12 weeks
Stage 2	Up to 16 weeks
Approval/Implementation	6-9 months

Permit renewals and queries

Residents can easily apply for permits, update their contact information, and change vehicle details using the convenient online self-service permit system. For additional support, a dedicated team is available to assist with applications and resolve any issues or queries, reachable by phone or email.

Enquiry type	Timescale
New permit applications or renewals*	Approved within 5 working days
Replacement visitor permits	Sent out within 5 working days
General enquiries	Responded to within 10 working days

*Provided all applicable documentation has been supplied

Appendix 6 – Access Protection Markings

Access protection markings, often called H bars or H markings, are advisory road markings, typically elongated white H shapes, placed across dropped kerbs to remind drivers not to park there. While not legally enforceable on their own, they indicate a private access point and can be used to deter obstruction of driveways and other accesses. Access protection markings highlight an access point. They do not indicate a reserved parking space

If a vehicle is parked across the access, even without a marking, the police or local council's parking enforcement can take action.

Criteria

- You must have a driveway or garage
- You must already have a dropped kerb accessing a driveway
- Access must be close to a school or civic amenities (e.g. leisure centre, playing fields, doctors etc)

Application Process

Once an application has been submitted, it will be formally acknowledged and reviewed by a traffic engineer. Applicants will be notified of the outcome following a review and if the application is success the resident will need to pay an installation fee prior to the marking being installed.

Stage	Timescale
Application	Acknowledged within 5 working days
Review	Up to 20 working days
Installation	Will be programmed in with the contractor at next available date for the area.

Appendix 7 – Vehicle Crossings

A vehicle crossing, or dropped kerb, is when a kerb is lowered and the footpath strengthened, to let vehicles move between roads and properties.

Once we have received your completed application(s), we will arrange for an inspector to visit the proposed site. The inspector will carry out all the necessary checks against the criteria, and a decision will be made to either grant preliminary consent for the vehicle crossing, or to decline the application.

Criteria

- The parking space (within the boundaries of the property) for a vehicle must have a depth of 5 metres (at approximately right angles to the road) by a width of 2.5 metre
- If the location is on a classified road (A, B or Class III Road) planning permission is required.

Application Process

- Upon receipt of a completed application, a formal acknowledgment will be issued to the applicant.
- A site inspection will then be arranged and carried out by a qualified engineer to assess whether the proposed location meets the relevant criteria.
- If the location is deemed suitable, a formal quotation for the required works will be issued to the applicant.
- If planning permission is required it is at this point that a planning application must be made.
- Once the quotation has been accepted and returned to the Highways Maintenance Team, the works will be scheduled for delivery.
- Once a date for construction works has been programmed contact will be made with the applicant to arrange process of payment.

Please note: All construction works are subject to the availability of internal resources. While every effort will be made to complete works in a timely manner, scheduling may be affected by operational demands and resource constraints.

Stage	Timescale
Application	Acknowledged within 10 working days
Site assessment	8-12 weeks
Installation	Will be programmed in with the team when resources are available.

Appendix 8 – Advisory Disabled Bays

Advisory disabled parking bays are:

- Available for use by any Blue Badge holder and are located outside or near to the applicant's address.
- Identified by the 'disabled' carriageway only. There will be no sign within the adjacent footway.

There is no legal process involved in providing these bays therefore they can be provided quickly. A vehicle parked in such a bay and not displaying a Blue Badge will not be parked in contravention.

The success of these bays is reliant on the respect of other road users.

Please note All timescales provided are for guidance only. Actual application and response times may vary depending on when the applicant submits the required documentation, as well as on team resources and current priorities.

Criteria

In order for the application to be assessed, the Council uses the following criteria to decide if the location is suitable for the installation of an Advisory Disabled Person's Parking Bay. A bay may be installed if: -

- a) The resident possess a Blue Badge that has been awarded for life or an indefinite period.
- b) The have been awarded the Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance both at the Higher Rate or the Enhanced Rate of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- c) The main vehicle in which the resident's blue badge is used is kept at the application address.
- d) It is difficult to park on the road near to, not necessarily outside, the resident's property.
- e) There is no off-street parking facility at on the resident's land, and it is not reasonably possible to provide one.
- f) There are no waiting restrictions or bus stops fronting the property and they do not reside in a residents parking area.
- g) A disabled parking bay doesn't already exist at the property. Only one bay per property will be permitted.
- h) Vehicle access, in particular emergency vehicles, and visibility would not be impaired by the provision of an Advisory Disabled Parking Persons Parking Bay.
- i) There are no road humps or other traffic calming features directly outside the property.

- j) The requested location of the parking bay is not listed in the Highway Code as a place where vehicles should not be parked.
 - k) The road has a speed limit of 30 mph or less.
 - l) The current number of Advisory Disabled Person's Parking Bays installed is lower than 10% of the total number of residential properties within a clearly defined block of houses within a road, ie, 20 houses = maximum of 2 disabled bays at that location.
- If one or more of the above criteria is not met, the application may be rejected

Application Process

Once an application has been submitted, it will be formally acknowledged and reviewed by a traffic engineer. Applicants will be notified of the outcome following a review and if the application is success the resident will need to pay an installation fee prior to the marking being installed.

Stage	Timescale
Application	Acknowledged within 5 working days
Review	Up to 6 weeks
If successful	6-8 weeks for the road markings to be put in place.