



↑ Guidance has been developed to help local authorities improve the maintenance of footways and cycleways TRANSPORT FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

Best foot forward for new asset management advice

Comprehensive guidance has been released by the UKRLG covering footway and cycle routes, explains CIHT policy officer Theo Naidoo.

Active travel has enjoyed a resurgence in the UK in recent years. We have seen the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, the Active Travel Task Force go live in Scotland, the first ever Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy in England and 'Mini Holland' schemes coming to fruition in London.

This makes it the perfect time for the UK Roads Liaison Group to develop guidelines on how best to manage and maintain infrastructure that encourages movement by sustainable means.

Three pieces of work designed to put the asset management of footways and cycleways on a firmer footing have been developed, thanks to the efforts of a group including Stuart Giddings, the chair of UKRLG's Footways & Cycletrack Management Group and Chris Spong and Andy Pickett of consultant Hyperion.



↑ Stuart Giddings



↑ Andy Pickett

Stuart is sure that now is the right time for practitioners to start using the new guidance. "We know that local authorities are in a difficult position, and that in the current climate they have to make hard choices," he says. The guidance will help embed an approach that is "evidence based, risk based and highly targeted", he adds.

"Too often cycling and walking are not given sufficient priority. By embedding good practice within authorities, we can begin to see these pieces of infrastructure as assets rather than liabilities."

Stuart also says that the guidelines recognise and reflect the benefits active travel provides in terms of improved air quality, health and the economy.

Co-author Chris Spong says the overwhelming motive for this work is

to encourage a more evidence based approach to maintenance, that local authorities can then use to justify their decisions and "direct resources to where they have the greatest impact".

This can lead, he adds, to fewer legal claims, avoid unnecessary maintenance of certain areas and ultimately save money while increasing quality of life.

His colleague Andy Pickett says the advice is about recognising that "the benefits of investing in new walking and cycling infrastructure are best realised with asset management to go with it".

At a recent CIHT event one member described how a stretch of road from his house to a local station had become so dangerous for someone of his age that he could only safely walk along a small strip of surface that had been filled in by a cable installation. It is hoped that the new guidance will help to avoid situations such as this.

Three key items produced by the group as part of the guidance follow:

UK ROADS LIAISON GROUP c/o CIHT, 119 Britannia Walk London N1 7JE email: info@ciht.org.uk tel: 0207 336 1555 web: ukroadsliaisongroup.org twitter: @ukrlg		UKRLG Chair: Graham Pendlebury UKRLG Board Chairs: Roads: James Bailey Lighting: Lindsay McGregor	Bridges: Liz Kirkham Network Management: Mark Kemp Asset Management: Garry Sterritt	Senior Policy Officer: Justin Ward email: justin.ward@ciht.org.uk tel: 0207 336 1584
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1: Asset management guidance for footways and cycle routes: Pavement design and maintenance

This sets out a process for the design and maintenance of footway and cycle route pavements, signposts existing legislation, codes of practice and guidance and provides further advice where appropriate.

This first part of the guidance is intended for designers of footways and cycleways, but is broad enough to be useful to assist anyone who is involved in the development, design or delivery of them.

The guidance is specifically focused on footways and cycleways with bound surface construction (similar to Cycle Superhighway 3 in London) and is not particularly aimed at provision that is part of the main carriageway, leisure trails or unsurfaced tracks.

It takes practitioners through the processes of implementing new infrastructure that supports cycling and walking infrastructure.

It allows them to:

- Discover the scope of work and identify the information required to define the problem and develop the solution;
- Define the design case and establish design criteria for the solution;
- Develop a solution that is appropriate for the circumstances including construction, materials and whole life expenditure;
- Deliver the solution and identify what a client should expect to be clearly stated before works begin, including detailed design drawings, a complete specification and concerns during the construction process.

2: Asset management guidance for footways and cycle routes: An approach to risk based maintenance management

This second part of the project provides practical guidance on risk based management of maintenance on footways and cycle routes.

It includes the 'Footway Safety Risk Tool' that can be used by practitioners to identify where and when maintenance is best placed. It quantifies and compares the cost and effectiveness – in terms of numbers of potential accidents mitigated – of different safety inspection and maintenance regimes on footways.

Key steps include:

- Reviewing hierarchies, including with regard to temporary or seasonal changes;
- Identifying safety risk factors (22 identified in the tool), serviceability risk factors (17 identified) and sustainability risk factors (11 identified);
- Analysing risks by assessing their relative importance and weighting, and describes the usage of a 'pairwise comparison' as a robust way of doing so.



↑ New advice will help authorities involved in maintaining cycleways SUSTRANS

When the Footway Safety Risk Tool was presented at the CIHT Asset Management Panel there were multiple comments as to the amount of data the tool requires and that it may be biased towards information that Transport for London has available but may not be available to smaller local authorities.

Chris Spong was keen to point out that despite TfL being the major sponsor, it had focused on producing something "relevant across the country" and maintained that all the data is not needed to use the tool.

It is flexible enough, he explained, to work with data from user consultation, analysis of historic accidents or the judgement and local knowledge of experienced members of staff.

3: Cycle service levels and condition assessment

The third section of the guidance uses results from a user survey in London to define an approach to the assessment and management of cycle infrastructure that is tailored to the specific need of cyclists.

This piece of work looks at whether current methods of assessing and determining levels of service for cycling infrastructure are the most appropriate and reflects aspects of condition and usability that are important to cyclists – and which impact on safety and take up of cycling.

It identified that ironwork related issues, potholes and condition related ride quality were key priorities for most cyclists.

The in depth survey of cyclists provides an understanding of defect importance, defect priorities and the application of asset management to dedicated cycle infrastructure.

Next steps

Stuart Giddings hopes that the information provided will enable engineers to argue for resources to be dedicated to where they will make an impact for residents. Although he acknowledges that the guidelines "won't be the end of the story" as it will require people who are "willing to fight and make the case" internally.

The project was commissioned and managed by Transport for London on behalf of the Footways and Cycletrack Management Group, with funding from the Department for Transport via the UK Roads Liaison Group. It was delivered by consultant CH2M with support from Hyperion Infrastructure Consultancy and Accent Market Research.

All relevant material will be available for download from the FCMG page on the UKRLG website.

See overleaf for further details about the second part of the footways and cycletrack asset management guidelines.



↑ Poorly maintained surfaces can present risks