

Footway Network Hierarchy and Inspections

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy applies to footways and footpaths adopted by The Highland Council as Roads Authority. The policy specifically excludes footways/paths which may be owned or maintained by other Services such as Housing and Property.
- 1.2. Footways and paths associated with Trunk Roads are the responsibility of the current Trunk Road management and maintenance contractors and are not covered by this policy.

2. Network hierarchy

- 2.1. The footway/path network is classified as follows:

Category	Category name	Description
F1	Prestige Walking Zone	Prestige areas in main settlements with high public space and streetscene contribution.
F2	Primary Walking Route	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes including links to significant public transport locations.
F3	Secondary Walking Route	Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres, etc.
F4	Link and Local Access Footways/paths	Access footways/paths through urban areas, rural footways and footways associated with low usage, e.g. short estate roads to the main routes and cul-de-sacs.

- 2.2. The records maintained by Roads and Community Works are the definitive records of the category which a particular footway/path is included in, and take precedence over the above text descriptions.
- 2.3. Placing of footways/paths into the defined categories is subject to constant review and will be authorised by the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee.

3. Inspections

3.1. There are various categories of inspections, taken from Well-maintained Highways Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, as set out below.

Category	Description	Council Policy
Safety Inspection	To identify defects which are dangerous or will cause serious inconvenience to network users or the wider community.	Undertaken for all network categories as specified in the frequency table below.
Service Inspection	Detailed inspection of a particular element to meet serviceability requirements.	Undertake NRSWA inspections and others as necessary with available resources.
Condition Survey	To identify the condition of the network.	Implement a condition survey through the road asset management plan process.

3.2. Safety inspections are not the only means of identifying serious defects. Inspectors and other members of staff may also identify safety defects in the course of undertaking their general duties. These should be reported for repairs action as appropriate.

3.3. Other network users may also report defects to the Council and these will be processed for action as appropriate.

4. Frequency

4.1. The frequency of inspections adopted will be based on the table below.

Category	Network category	Frequency
Safety inspection	F1	1 month
	F2	1 month
	F3	3 months
	F4	1 year
Service inspection	All relevant	As necessary with resources available
Condition survey	F1 & F2	1 year
	F3	2 years
	F4	3 years

4.2. Where possible, footway/path inspections will be co-ordinated with carriageway or other inspections to enable a more efficient use of resources.

4.3. The frequencies of inspections will be maintained wherever possible but particular situations such as weather related responses may require

resources to be used elsewhere. Where delay occurs, the original programmed regime will be resumed as soon as possible.

4.4. Where circumstances do not permit adherence to the determined safety inspection frequencies, flexibility should be contained within the following.

Frequency	Flexibility
1 month	± 14 days
3 months	± 21 days
1 year	± 28 days

4.5. Due to local circumstances, for example schools and hospitals, it may be necessary to increase the inspection frequency without changing the category of a footway. This will be left to the discretion of the local Area office. Reducing the frequency of inspections from the minimum specified in the table above will require authorisation from the Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Transport, Environmental and Community Services Committee.

5. Defects

5.1. Defects found during safety inspections will be split into the following categories with appropriate responses:

Category	Description	Response
1	Immediate / imminent hazard or risk of short term structural deterioration.	Immediate action to protect public if necessary. At least temporary repair within 24 hours ⁽¹⁾ .
2H	High level of hazard or risk.	7 days
2M	Medium level of hazard or risk.	21 days
2L	Low level of hazard or risk.	42 days
3	Negligible impact.	Annual planned work as resources permit.

Note (1): 24 hours will be interpreted as the end of the following day.

5.2. The above response times are intended for temporary repairs to make the defect safe. Where possible, permanent repairs will be undertaken within the response times. Alternatively, permanent repairs will be included in annual maintenance programmes. In the case of category 1 defects, the severity of the defect will dictate the time taken to undertake a permanent repair.

5.3. Information gathered during inspections will be utilised along with other relevant information to produce structural maintenance programmes.