

# HIGHWAYS

## The Economy Directorate

*"KEEPING BIRMINGHAM MOVING FORWARD"*

# Highways Customer Charter

<a href="#">1: Our promise</a>	<a href="#">4: Making a complaint</a>	<a href="#">7: Equality &amp; Diversity</a>
<a href="#">2: Customer service standards</a>	<a href="#">5: How you can help us</a>	<a href="#">8: Highways Maintenance PFI</a>
<a href="#">3: Customer satisfaction</a>	<a href="#">6: Well Maintained Highways</a>	<a href="#">9: Get in touch or visit</a>

## 1: Our promise

Millions of people use Birmingham's highways and road networks every day. Our Highways Service is committed to providing a consistently high level of service and routinely undertakes inspections to make sure the roads, footways, bridges and street lights across the city are safe for all.

Sometimes problems do occur but we always strive to do our best to fix them.

If you report a dangerous pothole or other defect, we promise to:

- make it safe within one hour
- carry out a temporary repair within 24 hours
- fully repair it within 28 days

If other potholes are reported, we will:

- inspect them within 14 days
- arrange an appropriate repair in our programme of works

If you report an urgent faulty traffic light, we'll repair it within two hours.

If you report a faulty or broken street light, we'll repair it within one month unless there has been a mains failure (and usually much faster if it's a straightforward repair).

## 2: Customer service standards

If you visit our website, we will:

- make it easy to use
- give you information on council services and policies
- clearly explain how to access and use the services

All our calls to us are important and we do appreciate customers informing us of any problems but in times of high demand we may not be able to answer calls 100% of the time and we may ask if customers to use our on line service shown at the bottom of this document.

If you contact us by email or in writing, we'll respond to you within ten working days. You'll either receive a full response to your enquiry or be given details of who is dealing With the matter and how long they'll need to respond fully.

If you contact us On Line we provide the option of an automated status update were you can track progress of your report.

If you visit us, we will:

- see you at the appointed time or if there is a delay explain why and keep you informed
- aim to see you within 15 minutes if you have no appointment or offer you an alternative time
- provide a clean, tidy and comfortable waiting area and wherever possible a space for you to see us in private.

## 3: Customer satisfaction

We know that there is more work to do to improve customer satisfaction with the services we deliver and we are dedicated to making these constant improvements. This has been recognised through the achievement of the [Customer Service Excellence](#) standard, both for the Highways service and the Economy Directorate.

We try to listen to all the people who live, work, travel and visit Birmingham, to inform our policies, to improve our service, to contribute to our vibrant economy and to enhance the environment. We very much welcome your [comments](#) and feedback.

As part of the City Council and Amey's continual drive for improvement, Amey, on behalf of Birmingham City Council, carries out customer satisfaction surveys to assess how Birmingham residents feel about the services provided as part of the 25 year Highway Maintenance and Management Services Contract. We monitor the results of these surveys and will produce and publish annual customer satisfaction survey reports and monthly reports on our performance regarding Services on the Street (described above) and review this Customer Charter annually, taking into account your comments and feedback.

If you have recently contacted us to report an issue and you have not received or require further information please complete our service specific enquiry and include any references you may have.

#### **4: Making a complaint**

We hope you won't need to complain about our services but if you think we have fallen short please tell us.

If you make a complaint, we will:

- acknowledge it and provide you with a reference number
- investigate your complaint thoroughly
- send you a full response or an update within 20 days (you can choose how we send this information to you)

The easiest way is to make a complaint is by using our [Your Views](#) service.

#### **5: How you can help us**

- Notifying use of problems/defects - use our online reporting system
- Keeping trees and hedges trimmed to avoid overhanging the Highway.
- Reporting any damage, vandalism or theft.
- Not damaging footways by parking on them.
- Not obstructing footways or using flyposting with commercial displays.
- Notifying us where the problem is (as much detail as possible about the location).
- What kind of issues it is causing to road users / pedestrians.
- If it's a pothole or trip hazard, tell us approximately how deep/high it is.

## **6: Well Maintained Highways**

The highway network is a most highly valued physical asset, both in financial and community terms, for which public authorities are responsible. Effective stewardship and asset management is crucially important, both to users and the community. Authorities are recommended to adopt the principles of the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, to adapt them as necessary based on consideration of local circumstances, and apply them consistently.

## **7: Highways Equality and Diversity**

Highways main objective is to create the conditions to keep Birmingham moving forward with an accessible and well maintained highway network with a main focus to putting people at the heart of the service. See our Highways Equality and Diversity page for more information.

## **8: Highways Maintenance and Management - Private Finance Initiative (PFI)**

The Council maintains almost two and half thousand kilometres of roads within Birmingham. Its responsibilities include upkeep and repair of the roads, but also management of the city's road network. This covers footways, bridges, street lighting and traffic signals as well as the upkeep of street scenery such as safety barriers, seats and trees.

### How this is done.

The City Council began a 25-year partnership with Amey on 7 June 2010 to carry out highway maintenance and management services in Birmingham. A key part of this partnership is the progressive removal of maintenance backlogs and to restore the network in line with national standards.

The aim is to deliver an affordable level of quality in line with national standards for Highways infrastructure. This means that the standards to be delivered must on the one hand be fair and reasonable, but on the other not be over-specified or 'gold-plated'.

The aim is that an 'asset management' approach will be introduced for the city's highway infrastructure. This will ensure that there is timely maintenance and replacement of assets to ensure that they are replaced at the right time.

This approach is funded through a Public Private Partnership or Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This is a funding mechanism that uses private money to fund construction and maintenance projects in the public sector. It is a way of bringing together private sector money and government grants to improve public sector services.

## Investment

The key investment in the highway network will take place between June 2010 and June 2015. Over this five-year period, the aim is that investment is focused on 'tackling the worst, first'.

After the initial investment in the first five years a more limited level of investment will continue. This will be focused on maintaining the higher standards reached by 2015 and will still mean that assets are replaced as they become due for replacement. It will also mean that at least a further 24,000 street lighting columns are replaced by 2032.

## Managing the Infrastructure

As well as the investment works, from June 2010 Amey has been carrying out a range of other infrastructure management services on the Highway network for the Council. These obligations are basically about making sure that the highway infrastructure is:

- Functioning;
- Safe; and
- Available for use.

This includes responding to urgent and safety issues on the network. In such cases, the basic services carried out will be to attend, make the issue safe, make any temporary repair and then ensure that a permanent repair is made promptly.

## [9: Get in touch or visit](#)

**Online:** [www.birmingham.gov.uk/highways](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/highways)

**Telephone:** 0121 303 6644 (9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday)

Out of Hours – 0121 303 4149

**In person:** Please make an appointment before arriving in person.

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