# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Response to the report and recommendations from the Unadopted Roads Taskforce** |
| **DATE** | **21 October 2020** |
| **BY** | **Ken Skates MS, Minister for Economy and Transport and North Wales** |

Last year, I commissioned an expert Taskforce to identify the extent of the issues regarding unadopted roads in Wales and see what could be done to improve the situation.

Chaired by Huw Morgan of the WLGA and former Director of Sustainable Communities for Ceredigion Council, the Taskforce had a flexible membership of skilled practitioners and professionals. These included representatives from the Home Builders Federations and Federation of Master Builders, highway engineers, members of the County Surveyors Society (CSS) and planners from Planning Officers Society Wales (POSW). It investigated issues associated with all types of unadopted roads and the difficulties arising as a result of no clear ownership or accountability for maintenance

The initial report of the Taskforce recommended the following actions, all of which were accepted:

* The establishment of a database to provide a comprehensive record of all unadopted roads in Wales. This was used to determine that there are approximately 25,000 kilometers of unadopted roads in Wales, with around 2,600 kilometers serving five or more properties, as would typically be the case for an unadopted housing estate roads.
* A Good Practice Guide was published, which to date 17 of the 22 local highway authorities along with the housebuilding federations have signed up to. I am sure all local authorities will sign up in due course, but appreciate that many have been stretched and unable to respond due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
* The setting up of a specialist subgroup to develop a set of common highway design standards, for use across Wales by local authorities and housing developers. The subgroup took into consideration recent Government initiatives, such as the design guidance for Active Travel.

The Good Practice Guide and Common Standards will serve to significantly reduce the chances of any further ‘unadopted roads’ being created, other than those where communities, or developers prefer their roads not to be public.

Please read the [Initial Unadopted Roads Taskforce Report](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/unadopted-roads-report.pdf).

Building on this, the Task Force undertook some follow up work, making further recommendations, all of which I have accepted and intend to progress further as follows:

* All local highway authorities to be contacted and asked to identify the priority unadopted road issues and asked to provide cost estimates for improvements; any proposals would need to be justified in terms of need based on national and local priorities.
* Consideration of financial assistance on a pilot basis to address local unadopted road priorities, with the development of a process for distributing a potential future Unadopted Roads fund fairly and equitably across Wales, subject to the findings of the pilot.
* Monitoring and evaluation of the Good Practice Guide with local highway authorities.
* Publication of a suite of Common Standards for use by Local Highway Authorities and annual funding to enable these to be reviewed and updated regularly by CSS Wales.

I would like to thank the Taskforce for the work they have done, to establish the long term approaches needed to find a solution to the issues associated with unadopted roads in Wales.

Read the final [Unadopted Roads Taskforce Report](https://gov.wales/unadopted-roads-wales-final-report).