

Report to Councillor Joy Dennis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

September 2023

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy

Report by Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning)

Electoral division(s): All Divisions

Summary

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy communicates West Sussex County Council's approach to highways infrastructure asset management.

This report sets out the updated Policy and Strategy documents that form part of the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management framework and seeks approval to these documents. The full documents are available in Appendices 1 and 2.

Recommendations

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to -

- (1) approve the revised West Sussex Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (Appendix 1), and Strategy (Appendix 2) to take immediate effect; and
- (2) delegate authority to the Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning) to approve individual asset group lifecycle plans referred to in paragraph 2.4 of this report.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The highway infrastructure in West Sussex provides an important and vital contribution in creating a county of growth and opportunity whilst maintaining and improving the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit West Sussex. Good roads are a vital part of West Sussex's infrastructure and are essential for the County's economic progress and future prosperity.
- 1.2 Asset management is widely accepted as a means to effectively deliver efficiencies when managing highway infrastructure assets through longer term planning and ensuring that levels of service are defined and achievable for

available budgets. A coherent asset management approach helps to more accurately identify the level of investment required to maintain highway assets to a standard commensurate with council priorities and public demand.

- 1.3 The approach supports the case for investment and funding, and better communication with stakeholders. It facilitates a greater understanding of the contribution the highway infrastructure makes to economic growth and social well-being of local communities.
- 1.4 The cornerstone of an effective asset management approach is strong leadership and an asset management culture that runs throughout the authority. This has been recognised within key national guidance and codes of practice documents published by the UK Roads Liaison Group:

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance
Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Assets – Code of Practice

- 1.5 As part of the Department for Transport's Local Highway Maintenance Block Funding, Local Authorities have been incentivised to demonstrate good practices and an asset management approach. The approved and published Asset Management Policy and Strategy documents have been a mandatory requirement to enable an authority to maximise the value of the Local Highway Maintenance Block Funding received.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy describes West Sussex County Council's commitment to highway infrastructure asset management. It demonstrates to senior decision makers, stakeholders and the public, how the highway service supports and delivers the authority's corporate vision, within the Highways Service.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out how the long-term objectives for managing the highway infrastructure are met. It describes how the implementation of the strategic asset management framework is achieved, setting out a clear direction for the implementation of asset management. It provides the basis to adopt asset management principles supporting greater efficiency and value for money.
- 2.3 The Highways, Transport and Planning Directorate has set up an organisational structure that reflects the importance asset management plays in the delivery of highway and transport services. This structure enables the continual development, review and promotion of asset management best practice through asset leads, each with specialist knowledge and understanding of the highway infrastructure they manage. Lifecycle planning is an important aspect of asset management and involves drawing up long-term plans for managing an asset grouping with the aim of providing the required levels of service at the lowest whole life cost.
- 2.4 Lifecycle Planning recognises that there are key stages in the life of each asset type and that investment options need to be considered at each of these stages to ensure that each part of the asset achieves its full expected life, at minimum cost.
- 2.5 Delegation to the Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning) is proposed to enable the implementation and regular review of these plans to

support the delivery of the Strategy, developing West Sussex's approach across all highway infrastructure asset groups.

- 2.6 The service is also committed to a full review of its asset management policy and strategy. This work has already begun and will continue through to summer 2024. The service is committed to work with key stakeholders in developing any future approach.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 A Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy has been a mandatory requirement for the Incentive Fund element of the Local Highway Maintenance Block Funding from central government.
- 3.2 The approach to highway infrastructure maintenance service needs to be linked to the County Council priorities and vision.
- 3.3 Not reviewing and updating the Policy and Strategy could restrict the level of future Local Highway Maintenance Block Funding.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The draft Policy and Strategy have been circulated, reviewed and endorsed during their development by:
- the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
 - the Highways, Transport and Planning Senior Management Team
 - Senior Highway Asset Group Managers and lead officers
- 4.2 The approved Policy and Strategy will be published on the West Sussex County Council website.

5 Finance

- 5.1 The development of the Policy and delivery of the Strategy has been implemented through existing resource and funding stream investments. No additional funding is requested to deliver this proposal.
- 5.2 Resource to enable delivery of highway infrastructure management across the individual asset groups is drawn from in-house teams within "business as usual" activities. Specialist additional supply chain support will be utilised as appropriate.
- 5.3 The management of individual highway infrastructure asset groups is led by the Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning). Individual service teams with specialist capabilities within their asset area, alongside appropriate IT systems are funded from existing revenue budgets.
- 5.4 The effect of the proposal:

(a) How the cost represents good value

Asset management is widely accepted as a means to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to the management of highway infrastructure assets.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

The Strategy supports and identifies the case for future investment, better communications with stakeholders, and facilitates better understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth and social well-being of local communities.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

The Highways, Transport and Planning organisational design is aligned to deliver the Highway Infrastructure Policy and Strategy.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Corporate Risks	Local highway authorities are required to manage a variety of risks at strategic, tactical and operational levels. The likelihood and consequences of these risks can be used to inform their approach to asset management and support key decisions regarding performance, investment and implementation of works programmes.
Financial and Service Delivery	The individual asset group Lifecycle Plans evaluate and list strategic and tactical risks (including threats and opportunities) alongside their likelihood and impact on the levels of service defined for the highway service. These risks have been analysed with senior decision-makers input.
Financial and Service Delivery	The risk management framework operated within the authority, and the Highways, Transport and Planning services align with the Levels of Service risk categories for Planning, Management, Delivery and specific asset group dependencies.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The Highway Infrastructure Policy and Strategy supports the aims and objectives of Our Council Plan (the Corporate Plan 2021-2025) which sets out the priorities for the council over the next four years and the ambitious outcomes for people who live and work in West Sussex. The proposal supports the sustainable and prosperous economy priority in Our Council Plan.
- 7.2 Equality and Human Rights Assessment - The Highway Infrastructure Policy and Strategy has no direct impact. However, all delivery aligned to the Highways Infrastructure Policy and Strategy will be considered and assessed throughout the design and implementation phases of each scheme at the appropriate time.
- 7.3 Climate Change, Social Value and Sustainability Assessment - Highway Infrastructure Policy and Strategy recognises the significant role management and maintenance of highways infrastructure has on the council's climate change, Social Value and Sustainability commitments, that contributes to enabling the service to:
 - Deliver the ambitions of Our Council Plan

- Achieve efficiency savings by reducing operating costs, and reducing the amount of natural resources consumed and purchased
- Increase the resilience of highway infrastructure assets, ensuring they are fit to deliver the expected level of service into the future
- Improve the sustainability of the supply chain, thereby reducing risk and cost
- Make the County Council's highway services as good as they can be

7.4 Crime and Disorder Reduction Assessment - Crime and Disorder implications will be assessed for individual schemes at the design and implementation phases.

Matt Davey

Assistant Director (Highways, Transport and Planning)

Contact Officer:

Gary Rustell, Programme Manager

gary.rustell@westsussex.gov.uk 033 022 26397

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy 2023

Appendix 2 - Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy 2023

Background papers

None