

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

HIAMP 2017

Introduction

The Council recognises the important role the highway network plays in keeping places and people connected and, to achieve this, has been applying the principles of a formalised approach to highway asset management for a number of years. The first Highway Asset Management Strategy documents were presented to Cabinet in March 2012 and this was followed by the Street Lighting Strategy in October 2014.

In addition, the 'Wirral Council Plan: A 2020 Vision' (2015 – 2020) demonstrates the Council's commitment to develop the borough, working with all its partners including its partnership with residents:

'The next five years will see significant change. We will continue to look to the future and ensure that we never fall behind. We will become an innovative, outward looking organisation that is responsive – to new technologies, to cultural or societal change, and to the evolving needs of our most important customers – Wirral residents.'

The Council accepts that there are a number of significant challenges ahead not least spending reductions due to budget deficit reduction requirements imposed by central government. To support these priorities the Council will need to take hard decisions about transforming existing services. We will need to reduce and replace some services and some services will need to be more targeted. We will also need to explore new ways of commissioning services to improve value and quality. Decisions about these difficult adjustments for the highway will be better informed by the development of a formalised asset management approach.

The Wirral Council Plan sets out 20 pledges and is based around three key themes:

- Protecting the most vulnerable;
- Driving economic growth; and,
- Improving the local environment

The Wirral Growth Plan (January 2016) is one of the underpinning strategies to the Wirral Council Plan; it acknowledges that the provision of efficient, well maintained and accessible transport networks is a critical factor in encouraging inward investment, facilitating economic growth, providing a socially inclusive and integrated highway network, attracting more visitors and to transforming Wirral's economy.

Our Pledge for Transport is to 'Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work'. The Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy recognises that our transport network and transport services are fundamental to supporting the delivery of every theme of the Wirral Plan. Management of our transport infrastructure is key to keeping our traffic moving safely and efficiently, supporting reliable public transport services, and encouraging healthy active travel.

Purpose

This Policy supports the Council's vision and strategic priorities by providing a high quality highway network that is vital to support economic growth and a good quality of life for residents, visitors and business in the borough.

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (HIAMP) and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy (HIAMS) have been developed to take account of the Council's many challenges. The Policy is designed to drive continuous improvement in the way the highway network is maintained to ensure that it continues to be safe, serviceable and sustainable. It sets out the principles that will ensure we adopt and develop a strategic approach that takes account of the expectations of customers and, targets the Council's resources to deliver a network that supports the future prosperity and well-being of our local residents.

The HIAMP and HIAMS reflect the latest guidance on the application of asset management principles from the new national Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' published in October 2016 by the UK Roads Liaison Group.

The Policy is based on the need to:

- Support the vision and aims of the Council;
- Support transport objectives and other corporate and local strategies, objectives and plans;
- Meet statutory obligations;
- Provide a safe, serviceable and fit for purpose customer focused highway network;
- Set out clear decision making processes and levels of service through consultation with stakeholders;
- Provide effective prediction of future budget requirements and make value for money decisions based upon life-cycle models for all key highway assets; these models will allow us to predict and undertake timely intervention, using appropriate maintenance methods and maximising operational life for optimum whole life costs (both short and long term);
- Take account of the needs of all highway users and support measures that will improve assets that encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- Utilise the most sustainable methods throughout an asset's lifecycle with the aim of reducing, and where possible mitigating, environmental impacts;
- Identify the network hierarchy and review the resilience of these networks towards disruptive events; management and maintenance of the networks will be prioritised to minimise the effect of these events;
- Adopt a risk based approach for all aspects of highway maintenance including setting levels of service, inspections, responses, resilience, priorities and programmes to obtain a clear understanding and assessment of the likelihood of asset failure and the potential consequences; and,
- Collaborate with our partners and stakeholders in addition to neighbouring authorities to increase efficiencies, reduce costs and sustain local service levels.

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

This policy document outlines the Policy and key supporting principals defining the overall structure and direction the Council will adopt in managing the highway network.

The Policy will allow better informed decisions to be made regarding the investment judgements required to effectively maintain the whole network, and directly supports the strategic aims of the Council.

The Policy also supports the Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway through compliance with Section 41 of the Highways Act (1980) and to manage the network with the principals set out in the new national code of practice 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure' published in October 2016.

The Policy

Statement 1

Wirral Council will develop, operate and publish a formalised Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy, aligned to the corporate vision, to ensure the optimal use and direction of the Council's resources in maintaining the borough's highway assets for the benefit of current and future stakeholders. A number of statements and practices will be developed and reviewed to support the Strategy.

Statement 2

Wirral Council will prioritise all aspects of maintenance intervention and treatment choices using a risk-based approach taking into consideration the safety of stakeholders, customer expectations, network hierarchy, levels of use, network condition and environmental impact.

Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed in-line with the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy and the review of the Wirral Council Plan in order that it remains current and reflects and supports the Council's objectives investing in the future of Wirral. However, if there are significant changes in national policy or guidance that affects management of the highway, the review will be brought forward.

