

19 FEBRUARY 2020

REPORT TITLE	Proposed Approval of Updated (2020) Highways Asset Management Policy, Strategy & Communications Plan
REPORT OF	Mark Smith, Interim Director – Highways & Streetscene

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet Member approval for the updated (2020) Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (HIAMP), Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy (HIAMS) and Highway Communications Plan appended to this report.

The maintenance of highways is a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and is a Key Decision included on the Council's Forward Plan.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Cabinet Member is requested to approve the updated (2020) Highway Asset Management Policy (HIAMP), Highway Asset Management Strategy (HIAMS) and Highway Communications Plan appended to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To obtain the full funding available through the Department for Transport (DfT) Incentive Fund, it is necessary to update the HIAMP, HIAMS and Highways Communications Plan to reflect the end of the Wirral 2020 Vision and implementation of the Wirral 2025 corporate vision.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A review of the existing Highways Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Communications Plan documents, last updated in 2017, is a requirement of the Department for Transport (DfT) Incentive Fund. Therefore, no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2017 the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approved the HIAMP and HIAMS developed during a review of highways asset management. The 2020 HIAMP, HIAMS and Communications Plan have been updated to reflect the end of the Wirral 2020 vision and start of the 2025 Plan. As the documents represent a continuation of the Policy and Strategy approved in 2017, this is not considered to be a Key Decision.
- 3.2 In December 2014, the Government announced that £6 billion was being made available between 2015/16 and 2020/21 for local highways maintenance capital funding. From that funding, £578 million has been set aside for an Incentive Fund scheme, to reward councils who demonstrate through the self-assessment process that they are delivering value for money in carrying out cost effective highway asset management.
- 3.3 As a member of the Liverpool City Region (LCR), Wirral Council has automatically received the full available funding since the Incentive Fund began in 2015/16. The period of grace provided by LCR membership is due to end in 2020/21.
- 3.4 To maintain the current allocation from the Incentive Fund, the Council must demonstrate it is operating as a high performing (Band 3) authority with respect to Highways Asset Management. Following a recent audit of the Council's highway asset management procedures it is estimated that Wirral is currently a Band 2 authority but with specific improvements currently being developed it will secure a Band 3 score before the next self-assessment submission in February 2021. There are a number of drivers for continuing to develop a stronger approach to asset management for highways; which are the Council's highest value asset, with a gross replacement cost presently estimated at £2.1 billion.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Under the funding scale established by the Department of Transport in 2015/16, Band 3 authorities will receive 100% of available funds, Band 2 authorities will be eligible for 30% of the funding, while Band 1 authorities will receive no funding.

- 4.2 In 2019/20 as a Band 3 authority through the LCR Wirral Council received £554,000 from the DfT Incentive Fund. Band 2 authorities received £166,000.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain highways, as the highway authority.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The continued development of the HIAMP, HIAMS and the highways communication plan, data collection and management, policy reviews and asset valuation will be managed using existing revenue and capital resources as appropriate.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to develop an asset management approach for the highway infrastructure will limit the opportunities for the Council to benefit from medium and long term savings arising from whole life costing in maintenance investment decision making.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Authorities in Liverpool City Region have been engaged throughout the review process, via an Asset Management working group.
- 8.2 The Wirral Council Corporate Communications Team have been consulted regarding the Communications Plan and the document will be reviewed and approved by the Team before being finalised.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 While there are no direct implications to the environment and climate change, the 2020 HIAMP supports the Wirral 2025 Vision outcome relating to maintaining a sustainable environment.

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APPENDICES:

2020 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy
2020 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
2020 Highway Asset Management Communications Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Executive Member Decision – Highways and Transport	6 December 2017