

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT

POLICY - 2020

1. Introduction

Wirral Council, as highway authority, is the custodian of the borough's highway assets and highway infrastructure forms our largest and most valuable public asset within the Council's control. Its management and maintenance need to be undertaken in an organised, efficient manner to ensure that the network meets the needs and expectations of our stakeholders as much as possible within the constraints we face. 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. A major review and update enabled publication of the Highway Asset Management Policy 2017 which aligned with the 'Wirral Council Plan: A 2020 Vision' (2015–2020). This Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy document has been developed following a review of the 2017 Highways Asset Management Policy document and aligns itself to the Wirral Council Plan 2025.

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy (HIAMP) and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy (HIAMS) support the Council's vision and strategic priorities by providing an approach to management and maintenance of our highway network that supports economic growth and a good quality of life for our residents, visitors and business in the borough. The HIAMP and HIAMS are designed to drive continuous improvement in the way our 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 our 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 national Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' published in October 2018 by the UK Roads Liaison Group. The Policy also supports the Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway through compliance with Section 41 of the Highways Act (1980).

2. Wirral Vision 2025 & Local Plan

The Council accepts that there have been and continue to be a number of significant challenges ahead, not least changing priorities and changing budget requirements such as those resulting from Covid-19. To support these priorities the Council need to take hard decisions about transforming existing services. Highway and infrastructure services will be regularly reviewed. Some services will also need to be more targeted and we will continue to consider new ways of commissioning services to improve value and quality. Decisions about the future commissioning of highway services will be better informed by the continued development of our formalised asset management approach.

The Wirral Council Plan 2025 is keenly aware of the impact of highways on Wirral as a place to live and work. The Foreword for the Plan, written by the Council Leader, states:

“...we are responsible for improving the quality of life every resident gets to enjoy. We do this by delivering better outcomes for local people.

We do this by delivering better outcomes for local people; by keeping the streets clean and improving the environment, making sure communities have good, affordable housing, are safe and roads are kept in good condition.”

The Wirral Council Plan sets out 5 clear outcomes. Highways services contribute to achieving to achieving these outcomes in a wide variety of ways as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Wirral Council Plan Outcomes

Wirral Council Plan 2025 Vision	Impact / Outcomes for Highways & Highway Services which contribute to Vision 2025.
Sustainable Environment	Manage services using a formalised, risk-based approach to asset management that makes best efficient and effective use of resources; Maintain good quality networks with appropriate ride quality for all modes of transport on the highway for use by vehicles, cycles and pedestrians; Plan capital investments based on whole-life issues; Implement highways flood prevention schemes where identified; Use of recycled materials and minimisation of waste and

Wirral Council Plan Vision	Impact / Outcomes for Highways & Highway Services which contribute to Vision 2025.
	carbon use in support of climate change objectives; Engage contractors based on Social Value.
Inclusive Economy	Manage the condition of highway assets such that they do not restrict the reliability of journeys or increase congestion without good cause; Communicate road works to road users so that alternative travel plans can be made.
Brighter Futures	Maintain highways so that they can be used safely and reliably, both generally & specifically near schools and residential areas by cars, buses, bicycles and pedestrians; Manage the Resilient Network.
Active and Healthy Lives	Ensure highways are maintained so that they can be used safely and reliably and deliver a ride quality that, where possible, does not adversely affect air quality. Align with Wirral's Active Travel policy, providing enhanced access to alternative sustainable routes and modes, notably cycling, balanced against the needs and expectations of Wirral's residents.
Safe & Pleasant Communities	Manage the condition of highway assets so that they contribute to an environment in which all residents can be proud, and enable community cohesion; Replace streetlights in Wirral with LED lights by 2022 Engage with stakeholders to ensure that, where possible, services reflect their needs.

The Local Plan for Wirral has been issued for consultation. The outcome of the consultation and subsequent Local Plan adopted by Wirral Council may impact on the services delivered by Highways. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy will therefore be reviewed and updated as necessary when the Local Plan is published.

3. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

The following Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy statements have been developed based on the required outcomes of the Wirral Council Plan 2025 and the Wirral Local Plan and the contribution that highway services make towards delivering those outcomes.

Statement 1

Wirral Council will publish and operate 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 managing and maintaining the borough's highway assets for the benefit of current and future stakeholders. Plans and practices will be developed and reviewed to support the Strategy.

Statement 2

Wirral Council will plan all aspects of maintenance intervention and treatment choices using a formalised asset management, risk-based approach taking into consideration the safety of stakeholders, the prevailing budget environment, customer expectations, network hierarchy, levels of service, network condition and social / environmental impact.

4. Key Supporting Principles

The Strategy 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 and serviceable, customer focused highway network;
- Set out clear decision-making processes and levels of service through consultation with stakeholders;
- Aim to provide effective prediction of future requirements and make value for money decisions based upon whole-life lifecycle models for all core 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 resources and methods throughout an asset's lifecycle with the aim of reducing, and where possible mitigating, environmental impacts;
- The highway network hierarchy will be reviewed to ensure it meets the borough's resilience requirements against disruptive events; management and maintenance of the networks will be prioritised, as required, to reduce

- the impact of these events;
- Adopt a risk-based approach for all aspects of highway management 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, and in particular the Liverpool City Region, to increase efficiencies, reduce costs and sustain local service levels.

5. Policy Review

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

