

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2024

REPORT TITLE:	HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE PLAN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report presents and recommends approval of the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Performance Plan for 2023-27. The Plan brings together previous Performance Management Framework (PMF), Communications Strategy, Risk Management and Asset Data Information Plan. The Performance Plan provides clear details of how the Highway and Infrastructure will be managed, monitored, communicated and assessing the risks to deliver the outcomes outlined in the Policy and Strategy.

One of the key themes contained within the Council Plan for 2023-27 is: working together to protect our environment, which includes a commitment to introduce clear highways and infrastructure policies.

The HIAM will contribute to the Council Plan priorities, to deliver high quality efficient universal services to all residents; prioritise those with the greatest needs; deliver council services within the means of the council budget; be prepared to innovate and face the future; play our part in addressing the climate emergency and protecting our environment.

This matter is a Key Decision as it affects all wards within the borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. approve the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Performance Plan 2023-27, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report; and
2. authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services to make any non-substantive revisions or amendments to these documents as are necessary to align with the Council's corporate objectives or with legislative changes.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Performance Plan is designed to optimise the Council's resources in managing and maintaining the borough's highway assets. They align with the Council Plan 2023-27 and are linked with the council's broader vision for regeneration, sustainability and net zero. Approving these documents will ensure a systematic, risk-based approach to well managed highway maintenance in Wirral.
- 1.2 Bringing together the existing Performance Management framework (PMF), communications Strategy, Risk Management Plan and Asset Data information Plan, into one document, provides a clear plan to monitor, deliver, assess the risks and how we communicate the performance of the assets to meet the Council's new priorities.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not updating the existing HIAM Performance Management Framework (PMF), Communications Strategy, Risk Management Plan and Asset Data Information Plan was considered. However, this would fail to adequately address the new Council Plan priorities and is not recommended.
- 2.2 Not producing a HIAM Performance Plan was considered but rejected. The previous plans were developed to help the council meet the highest level of the Department for Transport (DfT) self-assessment process, in order to maximise incentive fund grant award. Whilst it is not a current requirement to provide a HIAM Policy and Strategy to benefit from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) grant funding or other devolved grant for highway infrastructure management, a clear highway and associated plan, that will produce regular performance reporting, showing clear outcomes, is essential in providing confidence to funders and provide clear evidence for future bidding of CRSTS 2.
- 2.3 Not providing an assessment of risk to the performance of the assets, how they are delivered and reported, would leave the Council open to failure to meet its statutory obligations, along with reputational damage.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The HIAM Plan brings together the Performance Management Framework, Communications Strategy, Risk Management Plan and Asset Data Information Plan, which were previously presented to this Committee on 3 December 2020. They have been condensed and refreshed to align with the Council Plan 2023-27 priorities and themes, and with the remaining term of

the current LCRCA CRSTS funding. The current documents are recommended to be replaced with the document now prepared and included at Appendix 1 to this report. The Performance Plan is an overarching, document and will have various other plans and processes aligned to it, that will provide the operational principles to deliver the service. These latter documents will be developed in consultation with Members of this Committee over the coming months, to ensure Member's priorities are properly considered. The HIAM PMF will provide a toolkit for monitoring and reporting performance, which includes regular reports to Member's.

- 3.2 The HIAM Performance Plan serves as the core principle for the Council's actions. The Plan underscores the importance of using a risk-based approach for maintenance intervention, ensuring that decisions are made considering safety, budget, customer expectations, network hierarchy, and environmental impact. The Plan, by using the Performance, underpins a commitment towards continuous improvement in how the council manages its highways.
- 3.3 The HIAM Performance Plan provides the Council's approach for the next three and half years, linked to the Council Plan and the remaining years of the first CRSTS funding allocation. The pivotal role of the highway network in keeping places and people connected, ensuring that residents, businesses, and visitors can move around efficiently and safely. The Plan sets how we intend to enhance the road network's condition; minimise disruptions from repairs, and maximise value for money.
- 3.4 The Performance Plan and future operational polices and processes places the emphasis on fostering resident contentment by ensuring that the infrastructure is well-maintained and safe. One of the key drivers that underpins this Plan is the code of practice recommended by DfT, 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', which provides guidance on best practices in highway infrastructure management.
- 3.5 The HIAM Performance Plan takes into account future pressures that the council needs to prepare for. These include population growth, new developments, and the associated increase in highway assets. Additionally, financial pressures, sustainability challenges, and the potential impacts of climate change are also considered. To address these challenges, the council will leverage good collaboration, partnership working and shared learning, particularly with the LCRCA and other key stakeholders.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report or the approval of the HIAM Performance Plan. This Plan is based on the current level of capital funding already allocated under the current CRSTS provisions, which is sufficient to meet current demand.
- 4.2 There is continued pressure on the revenue budgets, due to the static funding disbursement and the above inflation costs incurred over the past 3 years for

materials. However, the risk-based approach, is essential to mitigate these pressures.

- 4.3 Grant-funded capital planned works investment in the highway network will mitigate future reactive maintenance interventions, by being more proactive, to control revenue budget pressures.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Highways Act 1980 places a duty on the council, as the local Highway Authority, to maintain the public highway network in a condition that is safe for users. The public highway network includes all adopted roads, footpaths, and verges. The HIAM Performance Plan enables and monitors operational delivery to ensure the council's highway network and associated assets are maintained to meet statutory requirements and will be reviewed annually by officers. If there are significant changes in national policy, legislation or guidance that affects the management of highway infrastructure, the review will be brought forward, and amendments made by officers. Any significant amendments to the HIAM Plan will be reported to this Committee for approval where necessary.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 A key consideration of the Council Plan 2023-27 and central to the HIAM Policy and Strategy which was approved by this Committee last January is to deliver services within the means of the council's budget, but also be prepared to innovate and face the future. These factors are central to the HIAM Plan. Whilst there are no current direct resource implications arising from this report or any decision to approve the HIAM Plan, strategic corporate commitment will be required to maintain the appropriate resource allocation towards staffing and ICT support in order to effectively deliver the Plan.
- 6.2 There may be some specific relevant resource implications arising from the HIAM Performance Plan operational policies, which will be considered as part of the consultation with this Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Whilst there are no current direct risk implications arising from this report or any decision to approve the HIAM Performance Plan. There will be specific relevant risks associated with HIAM Performance Plan operational policies, including HIAM Risks, which will be considered in subsequent reports to this Committee when these aspects become apparent.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Development and implementation of the HIAM Performance Plan will consider resident and stakeholder feedback received during ongoing operational service delivery.
- 8.2 The council participates in the National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey. This survey collects public views on, and satisfaction with, highway and transport services in Wirral. It is a standardised collaboration between Highway Authorities across the UK, enabling comparison, knowledge sharing, and the potential to enhance efficiencies through the sharing of best practices. The feedback from this survey provides the council with valuable insights into its performance in the eyes of the public. It assists in setting consistent service levels and gauges the impact of service improvements.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The equalities impact assessment for this report can be found here:
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impactassessments>
- 9.3 This assessment was previously used for the HIAM Policy and Strategy reports, has been reviewed and is still valid.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The HIAM Performance Plan and all policies derived from it will emphasise the importance of environmental and climate considerations in the management and maintenance of the highway network. They highlight the development of a carbon calculator tool, working closely with the Climate Change team, which will identify opportunities and priorities for reducing carbon emissions and improve air quality associated with highway maintenance. This will be achieved by continuing to deliver more sustainable maintenance practices such as surface treatments which carry significantly less carbon emissions than traditional methods of road re-construction, along with methods of operation, to reduce travel, excavation of waste and the reduction of hot materials. The maintenance of the highway and its associated assets face challenges posed by climate change adaptation, with predictions indicating potential significant pressures on the highway network.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The HIAM Performance Plan aligns with Wirral's Community Wealth Building principles by emphasising collaboration, sustainable practices, and community engagement. The Plan promotes partnership working and shared resources through its membership to the Liverpool City Region Key Route Network and Combined

Authority. The Council's commitment to sustainable highways maintenance and responsible procurement supports environmentally conscious decisions as does the commitment to explore further sustainable practices. In addition, a focus on officer training and sound, risk-based financial planning aligns with leveraging financial power for local benefit.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2023-27

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Well-managed Highway Infrastructure, Code of Practice published by DfT (October 2016)

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with Section 5.2 (b) of its Terms of Reference.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee - HIAM Policy & Strategy	29 January 2024
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee - Strategy and Street Lighting Policy	3 December 2020