



## **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 29 January 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT (HIAM) POLICY AND STRATEGY</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report presents and recommends approval of the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and Strategy for 2023-27. The Policy and Strategy are high-level, overarching, documents that form part of a highway asset management framework.

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 and network management strategies and policies. The HIAM Policy and Strategy 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 Policy 2023-27, included at Appendix 1 to this report;
2. Approve the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy 2023-27, included at Appendix 2 to this report, and
3. 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) Policy and Strategy are 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.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Not updating the existing HIAM Policy and Strategy was considered. However, this would fail to adequately address the new Council Plan priorities and is not recommended.
- 2.2 Not producing a HIAM Policy and Strategy was considered but rejected. The previous Policy and Strategy 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 Policy and Strategy will provide confidence to funders.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The HIAM Policy and Strategy were previously presented to this Committee on 3 December 2020 and have been 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 documents now prepared and included at Appendix 1 and 2 to this report. The Policy and Strategy are high-level, overarching, documents that form part of a highway asset management framework, which will include a HIAM Plan and a HIAM Performance Management Framework (PMF). The HIAM Plan will include operational policy documents, which will detail how the principles of the HIAM Strategy will be delivered operationally. The HIAM PMF will provide a toolkit for monitoring and reporting performance. 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.
- 3.2 The HIAM Policy serves as a guiding principle for the Council's actions. The Policy 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 Policy is underpinned by a commitment towards continuous improvement in how the council manages its highways.
- 3.3 The HIAM Strategy outlines the Council's vision and approach for the next four years, linked to the Council Plan and the remaining four years of the first CRSTS

funding allocation. It recognises 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 objectives of the strategy are aim to:

- enhance the road network's condition,
- minimise disruptions from repairs, and
- maximise value for money.

- 3.4 Emphasis is placed on fostering community satisfaction by ensuring that the infrastructure is well-maintained and safe. One of the key drivers for this strategy 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 Strategy identifies several other 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 Policy and Strategy. The HIAM Strategy includes all the financial implications relevant to Wirral's highway asset management procedures.

#### **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 Policy and Strategy have been developed 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 Policy or Strategy 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 the HIAM Policy and Strategy is to deliver services within the means of the council's budget, but also be prepared to innovate and face the future. These factors have been considered in the HIAM Policy and Strategy. Whilst there are no current direct resource implications arising from this report or any decision to approve the HIAM Policy and Strategy, strategic corporate commitment will be required to maintain the appropriate resource

allocation towards staffing and ICT support in order to effectively deliver the Policy and Strategy.

- 6.2 There are likely to be further specific relevant resource implications arising from the HIAM Plan operational policies and the HIAM PMF, which will be considered in subsequent reports to this Committee when these aspects of the overall HIAM framework are presented.

## **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 Policy and Strategy, risk management is considered in the documents. There are likely to be specific relevant risks associated with HIAM Plan operational policies, and the HIAM PMF, which will be considered in subsequent reports to this Committee when these aspects of the overall HIAM framework are presented.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Development of the HIAM Policy and Strategy has taken account of regular customer 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-impact-assessments>

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The HIAM Policy and Strategy 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 associated with highway maintenance. This will be achieved by continuing to deliver more sustainable maintenance practices such as 're-tread' and

surface treatments which carry significantly less carbon emissions than traditional methods of road re-construction. The strategy also outlines the challenges posed by climate change adaptation, with predictions indicating potential significant pressures on the highway network.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The policy and strategy align with Wirral's Community Wealth Building principles by emphasising collaboration, sustainable practices, and community engagement. The strategy 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.

**REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Fox**  
Assistant Director, Highways and Infrastructure  
telephone: Tel: 0151 606 2334  
email: simonfox@wirral.gov.uk

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy 2023-27  
Appendix 2 – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy 2023-27

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

## 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, which is:

In relation to all highways matters and as highway authority, street authority, bridge authority, including but not limited to public open spaces, street furniture on the highway and open spaces or parts of open spaces immediately adjacent to the highway.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Street Lighting Policy	3 December 2020