

# Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

2023-2027

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## Introduction

Wirral Council, as the Highway Authority, is the custodian of the borough's highway assets. Highway infrastructure forms the largest and most valuable public asset within the council's control. The council's highway infrastructure currently includes, over: 1,200Km of road; 2,000Km of pavements; 38,000 street lights; 60,000 road gullies; 120 bridges and highway structures, and 300 signalised junctions. This asset has a current estimated total gross replacement value of approximately £2.5 Billion. Management and maintenance of the infrastructure must be undertaken in an organised and 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 will apply the principles of a formalised approach to highway asset management.

## Strategic Aims and Objectives

The council has established a long-term vision and purpose for the borough that is set out in the Wirral Council Plan 2023-2027. Helping the borough build on the resilience of local people and communities is the focus of the Plan. The Plan will help create a unique and healthy place to live within a sustainable and thriving peninsula that offers a more prosperous and inclusive future for all.

This Council Plan sets out how we will continue to navigate the challenges we are facing, but to also seize the opportunities for the future for Wirral, translating our vision of ***Working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities*** into deliverable organisational actions. The priorities detailed in the Plan are:

- To deliver high quality efficient universal services to all residents
- To prioritise those with the greatest needs
- To deliver council services within the means of the council budget
- To be prepared to innovate and face the future
- To play our part in addressing the climate emergency and protecting our environment
- To work across communities with community, voluntary and faith organisations and partners to improve all residents' life chances
- To deliver our ambitious regeneration programme through increased investment, jobs and new businesses throughout the borough

The Council Plan details the five core themes that provide the framework through which the Council Plan priorities will be delivered. Although the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Policy and associated Strategy aim to support the five delivery themes contained in the Wirral Plan 2023-2027; Highways and Infrastructure have a key role in achieving the outcomes of Theme 5, in particular. The focus of ***Theme 5*** is ***working together to protect our environment*** and the desired outcomes include:

- Managing an environmentally friendly and sustainable borough
- Achieving Net zero targets
- Improved transport infrastructure

This Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy, and associated framework will enable the council to deliver effective highway services in the context of all these relevant Council Plan priorities and themes.

## Overall Approach

The approach recognises the ambitions of the Neighbourhood Services directorate in its delivery of effective highways services. The highway network is one of the few services that is used by all Wirral communities and the thousands of visitors we welcome. To support these aims and objectives, the highways service will:

- Collect and maintain asset condition data;
- Take a long-term view using a risk-based approach on the levels of service for each asset;
- Understand the lifecycle and whole life costs of each asset to assess maintenance (keep the asset in a safe and serviceable condition) versus replacement with new;
- Develop maintenance programmes for all assets using condition data, stakeholder input and local knowledge;
- Present an annual Maintenance Programme to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee for decision-making approval;
- Work with our Climate Emergency colleagues to identify opportunities and priorities for reducing carbon emissions; and
- Promote Social Value within communities so they can contribute and participate in aspects of service delivery where appropriate.

## Policy Statements

The following statements are based on the Wirral Local Plan and the contribution from the highway service towards its delivery.

### Statement 1

Wirral Council will publish and operate a formalised Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy, aligned with 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 monitored and reviewed to enable the implementation of the Strategy, which supports the council's ambitious regeneration agenda, whilst ensuring that new infrastructure can be sustainably maintained.

## Statement 2

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

## Policy Delivery

This Highway Asset Management Policy and the accompanying Strategy will ensure the highway network and associated assets are maintained to meet our statutory requirements. They will drive continuous improvement in the maintenance of our highway network to ensure that it continues to be safe, serviceable and sustainable. Supporting the Policy and Strategy are a series of operational documents that will help facilitate the ongoing maintenance and continuous improvement of the council's highway network. These documents will sit within the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

## Policy Review

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Governance Board will annually review the Policy and the Strategy, so they reflect and support the council's vision and objectives. Significant changes in national policy, legislation or guidance may accelerate any reviews. Amendments to the Policy will be reported to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee when relevant.