

Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 29th October 2024

Report Title	Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy
Report Author	<p>Graeme Kane, Assistant Director – Highways & Waste Graeme.kane@northnorthants.gov.uk</p> <p>Jonathan Pearson, Highways Service Contract Manager jonathan.pearson@northnorthants.gov.uk</p>

Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	Choose an item.
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk)	Safe and thriving places

List of Appendices

- Appendix A - NNC Highway Asset Management Policy
- Appendix B - NNC Highway Asset Management Strategy
- Appendix C - CCIA Input Data

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To inform the Committee of the new Highway Asset Management documents, which set out how the Council will best manage the Highway Network - taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities, asset condition and best use of available resources, and the impact this will have on the future delivery of highway maintenance.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. This report presents two high level documents which outline the Council's approach to highway asset management. Draft copies of which are included as appendices:

- Highway Asset Management Policy
- Highway Asset Management Strategy

2.2. Highway Asset Management Policy

The Asset Management Policy is a concise, 'high level' document. It sets out the Council's commitment to adopt and maintain an Asset Management approach in the delivery of Highway maintenance services. It demonstrates how effective Asset Management supports the achievement of the Council's strategic vision, objectives and commitments.

2.3. Highway Asset Management Strategy

The Strategy details the way in which the Asset Management Policy will be achieved to maximise available funding. It outlines the overall long term aims, explaining how North Northamptonshire's highway network will be maintained and what the expected outcomes will be.

- 2.4. Following on from the Strategy, will be the development of a set of Highway Asset Management Plans (HAMP's) for each key asset, that will detail how the Asset Management Strategy is applied. These plans will set out agreed levels of service, performance targets and detail the mechanisms for putting together forward programmes. The long-term planned programmes will take the form of a 3-year rolling Annual Plan.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Place & Environment Scrutiny Committee:

- (a) Note the contents of this report and the updated Highway Asset Management documents.
- (b) Consider any areas that Members would wish to discuss, ask questions of, and provide feedback to officers in the meeting in relation to the information provided.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. Following the creation of North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) in 2021, the Council continued to use a range of guidance documents and policies created by Northamptonshire County Council (NCC).
- 4.2. Whilst these documents followed current best practice at the time, they were not aligned specifically to the objectives of North Northamptonshire Council, nor to the specific requirements of North Northamptonshire's Highway network.
- 4.3. These new documents reflect the guidance provided by the National Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme, (HMEP) document 'Highway Infrastructure Asset Management' and the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'.

- 4.4. NNC holds a highways maintenance contract with Kier. The contract began in September 2022 for an initial period of 7 years. There are opportunities for the contract to be extended depending on the performance of the contractor. The first extension can be awarded from April 2025 for one year. A further two single-year extensions can also be earned, dependent on performance, to increase the initial period of the contract to a total of 10 years. The performance is assessed against the Strategic Performance Indicators, whereby the contractor must reach maturity level 3 in order to gain the extension. A further 4 years can be extended by mutual agreement to make the longest possible term of the contract 14 years.
- 4.5. Asset Management Professional Service functions are currently carried out by Kier through the contract. Since the start of the contract, work has been undertaken to develop a data and intelligence led approach to the management of its highway network.
- 4.6. This report presents updated documents for NNC which supersedes the old County Council documents. They also set out a more focused, intelligence-based approach to highway maintenance, centred around a preventative maintenance strategy for the Council's carriageway assets.
- 4.7. Officers have been working closely with Kier Highways in drafting these documents to ensure they align with the Council's requirements. A review of Asset management plans for each main asset group, that cascade from the Strategy document, is ongoing. Work to update the Council's overarching Network Management Plan (currently a 2021 NCC document) is also planned for the coming months.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Producing updated Asset Management documents and following an asset led approach, allows the authority to demonstrate best practice. In recent years the Government has provided additional incentive funding to those authorities who have adopted an asset management approach.
- 5.2. The adoption of a clear strategy will allow the Council to improve its planning in relation to highway maintenance activities.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Following Scrutiny Committee, an updated version of these documents will be prepared for submission to Executive on 16th January 2025.
- 6.2. Work to develop the individual Highway Asset Management Plans for key assets will commence.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. Funding is provided through the Department for Transport's Highway Maintenance Block funding, Local Transport Plan allocations and other grants / third party funding streams.
- 7.1.2. The strategy allows for the distribution of available funds using network intelligence, in particular by targeting those areas where certain assets are considered of 'higher' importance. Budget disaggregation can then be adjusted and incorporated within the relevant Highway Asset Management Plan and delivered through the Highways Maintenance Annual Plan.
- 7.1.3. Effective Highway Asset Management will maximise the life of assets by facilitating a sustainable longer-term approach by ensuring the most effective maintenance interventions are made.
- 7.1.4. The strategy will help provide greater visibility of capital maintenance programmes. Furthermore, through improved planning and targeting of maintenance activities, a long-term reduction in revenue spending can be expected.
- 7.1.5. Improved planning will also help provide a more even distribution of work overtime, reducing the impact maintenance work has on the network whilst also benefitting delivery teams and their supply chains.
- 7.1.6. The Strategy is driven by the need to use network intelligence and condition data to identify the most appropriate schemes to best deliver the Council's preferred outcomes and to make the most effective use of our resources. Whilst selection of these schemes will be driven predominantly by condition data and the use of the multicriteria analysis tool (HEAT), the role of local members to challenge is vital to ensuring that local priorities are incorporated into the Council's Annual Plans.
- 7.1.7. Road condition is a major factor for the public and businesses. Increased investment in Capital Maintenance programmes continues to deliver improved road network to support economic growth.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. As the local Highway Authority for North Northamptonshire, the Council is fulfilling its statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. As outlined in the Highway Asset Management Policy document, this proposal will assist the Council in meeting the priorities in the Corporate Plan around:
- Safe and Thriving Places
 - Enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire and beyond
 - Maintain our highways infrastructure to keep people moving safely around North Northamptonshire
 - Green, sustainable environment
 - Promote sustainable, active travel
 - Connected Communities

- Inform and listen to our communities, giving them a greater say in their future
- Modern public services
 - Provide good quality and efficient services valued by our customers
 - Use our assets, skills, knowledge and technology most effectively

7.3.2 These proposals will assist the Council in developing and delivering its Local Plan and Local Transport Plan which the Council has a statutory duty to deliver.

7.3.3 Adopting an Asset Management approach will ensure that highway infrastructure assets support the delivery of services and the local economy, taking into account the long-term performance of the asset. It will support initiatives to deliver the optimum community infrastructure for new and existing communities within available resources.

7.4. **Risk**

7.4.1. The Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy support the Council's role as the Highway Authority for North Northamptonshire in meeting its statutory duty for maintenance, under the Highways Act 1980.

7.4.2. By establishing a robust approach to Highway Asset Management, the Council will be in a better position to be able to make informed decisions about investment in its highway's infrastructure and on its future spending plans.

7.4.3. Having the necessary funding to maintain the Council's highways network is a continued risk, as highlighted in the service risk register. The Policy and Strategy seek to prioritise the available funding to address defects that present the highest risk to the travelling public.

7.5. **Consultation**

7.5.1. In updating the suite of documents no formal consultation has been completed outside of the Highways Service.

7.5.2. A presentation was made to a Prosperous Communities EAP on 8th May 2024, which outlined to Members present, the principles of Asset Management within the Highways Service along with proposals to update the Policy and Strategy documents.

7.6. **Consideration by the Executive**

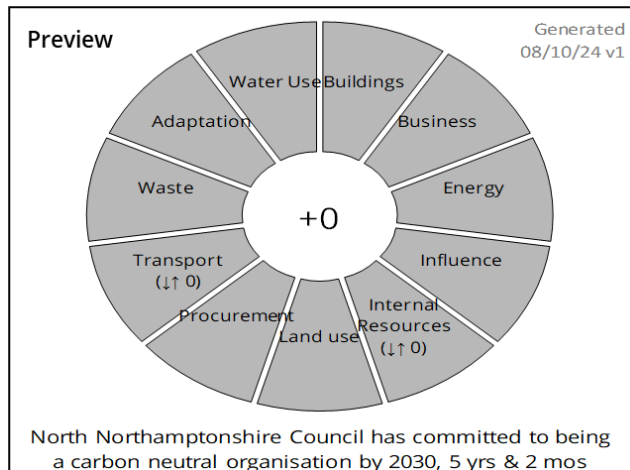
7.6.1. The updated Highway Asset Management documents are included in the Forward Plan for consideration by Executive on 16th January 2025.

7.7. Equality Implications

7.7.1. An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed for this update and this has not identified any adverse impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

7.8. Climate Impact

7.8.1. The climate impact has been assessed as neutral as this report is only concerned with updating existing policies rather than any fundamental change to the way the highways service operates. The Policy supports the Council's commitment to creating and protecting a green, sustainable environment.



7.8.2. Internal resources to be used are existing, business as usual resources and whilst the policies are concerned with maintaining a safe highway network there are no operational changes proposed in the way highway maintenance is delivered.

7.9. Community Impact

7.9.1. By prioritising asset maintenance to reflect the Council's priorities, the Policy and Strategy seek to support our communities.

7.10. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1 There are no obvious crime and disorder objectives of this report.

8. Background Papers

None