

# North Northamptonshire Council

## Highways Asset Management Strategy (October 2024)

### 1 Introduction & Policy

North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is responsible for maintaining a highways network that not only serves the residents of NNC but also supports the growth of the North Northamptonshire economy and promotes recreational and other activities. Effective and efficient management of the highways network is a key factor in the ability of the Council to deliver its services and enable the economy of North Northamptonshire to thrive.

Effective asset management is one of the key factors in delivering a highway network that meets North Northamptonshire's needs. Asset management will allow decisions to be made in a consistent manner and will allow the highway assets to be managed and maintained appropriately to ensure safety, serviceability and sustainability, as outlined in NNC's Highways Asset Management Policy.

The policy states that NNC will manage and maintain its highways assets in a planned, cost effective, coordinated, sustainable and efficient manner, over the whole life cycle of the asset.

The Asset Management approach follows best practice and incorporates guidance given in the UK Roads Liaison Group/Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (UKRLG/HMEP), Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document, along with processes and procedures that are consistent with the requirements of BS ISO 55001:2014.

This Highways Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) is designed to set out NNC's long term direction for the management of the council's highways assets and application of the Highways Asset Management Policy. This document also includes the Highways Asset Management Objectives.

The strategy will be achieved by adopting plans and processes that will:

- adopt a life-cycle approach to planning asset investment and management decisions.
- balance competing needs across the highway network and selecting options that best meet desired outcomes and stakeholder requirements.
- comply with mandatory, statutory and regulatory requirements.
- monitor, evaluate and, where required, improve service delivery,
- manage the risks of asset stewardship and operation to ensure continuity of service.
- provide for present needs whilst sustaining natural resources for future generations.
- adopt a continuous improvement approach to asset management practices and performance.
- empower and motivate the workforce involved in the operation and maintenance of the network.
- Outline maintenance regimes for each asset group that seeks to deliver value for money by prioritising works according to need and using cost effective maintenance techniques

Effective Asset Management is one of the key factors in delivering a highway network that meets North Northamptonshire's needs. It will ensure decisions are made in a consistent manner and allow the highway network assets to be managed and maintained appropriately to ensure safety, serviceability and sustainability.

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## 2 Relationship between Policy, Strategy, Objectives and Asset Management Plans

This document is a link between the Highways Asset Management Policy at a high level and the Highway Asset Management Plans at an implementation level. It sets out NNC's strategy and objectives for the management of NNC's highways assets.

The "line of sight" between organisational strategic direction and the day-to-day activities of managing assets is a vital component of the asset management system. This aligns the "top down" aspirations of the organisation with the "bottom up" realities and opportunities of the assets.

## 3 The NNC Highways Asset

### 3.1 Asset Portfolio

This Highway Asset Management Strategy applies to all NNC's highways assets. Key assets include carriageways and paved areas, footways and cycleways, structures, drainage, street lighting, and traffic signals / associated technology. Wider highway assets include boundary fences, geotechnical assets, road markings & road studs, vehicle restraint systems, road traffic signs and environmental / soft estate assets (verges, grassed areas, trees, central reservations, amenity areas, cultural heritage assets and hard landscaping assets).

All of these assets are managed in accordance with the recommendations contained within UKRLG's Well Managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code of Practice.

Each asset is managed discretely using asset management-based principles and intelligence led decision making where possible, taking into account current and future levels of funding. Changes to planned funding levels may impact the desired asset management approach and re-modelling and evaluation will take place accordingly.

Asset management plans will be produced for individual assets and groups of assets to describe how this strategy will be implemented on an individual asset basis. Further information on the scope and condition of the assets will be included in the asset management plans.

### 3.2 Critical Assets

Critical assets are defined on an asset by asset basis dependent upon their location, condition and the impact any failure would have on the safe and smooth operation of NNC's highways network. Those that are critical will be identified and the risks associated with each asset will be addressed within the relevant asset management plan. This will include identification of factors that will influence non-performance and the impact of failure. Those factors will include:

- Location;
- Technical requirements for the asset;
- Failure mechanisms;
- How the asset becomes critical.

The consequence of failure of such assets will be high although they may not necessarily have a high likelihood of failure.

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## 3.3 Consequence of Failure

Where critical and other assets may be subject to sudden failure, measures will be put in place as soon as practicable to ensure safety of road users and to limit further deterioration of the asset. This may include closures, temporary works/provisions and/or implementation of diversionary routes.

In the event of a sudden asset failure, Annual plans will be reviewed, re-prioritised and amended to ensure sufficient funds are made available for the required repairs and renewal.

## 3.4 Desired Future State

NNC is committed to maintaining a highway network that is safe and serviceable to current levels, as well as carry out vital renewal work to help keep journeys safe and reliable to meet the council's vision and priorities. It is also committed to sustaining that network over the medium and longer term. It is recognised that limitations on funding may restrict maintenance spending from time to time and in such situations the network will need to be closely managed to maintain safety and availability.

Detail on current condition and desired future state for individual assets will be provided in the asset specific asset management plans.

## 4 Asset Management

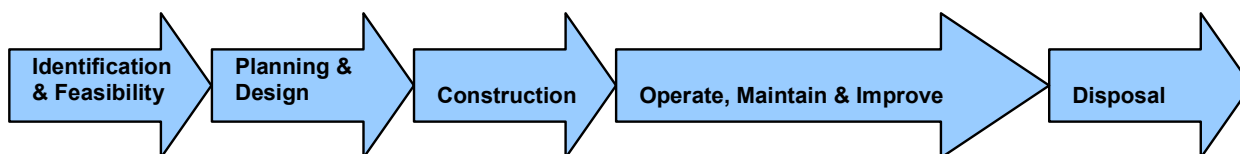
The application of asset management principles is a fundamental element of this Highway Asset Management Strategy.

Asset management is a modern but well-developed discipline that is practised in many countries and across a wide range of industries and is applied to the whole life of assets and determines the optimum way of managing them to achieve the desired outcomes. The stages of an asset's life covered by asset management are illustrated below:

The "operate, maintain & improve" phase is the core area for the management of highway infrastructure assets in NNC, but new and additional infrastructure will be introduced as the need arises and redundant infrastructure will also be removed where no longer required.

There are a wide range of recognised definitions for asset management, all of which align with a core set of principles. The definition of Asset Management in standard BS ISO 55001:2014 is: "coordinated activities of an organisation to realise value from assets".

Within the NNC there are additional requirements and pressures which drive our approach to asset



management, for example, our service providers and supply chain and maintaining a balance of work across the wider portfolio of assets. These external influences mean that asset management principles are applied discretely for each asset type and that a full co-ordinated approach cannot

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always be demonstrated. However, hybrid schemes and efficiencies in use of road space are sought where possible to reduce impact on road users.

### 5 Drivers for Asset Management

#### 5.1 Changes in Investment Levels

The improved awareness and knowledge of the highway assets and their current condition and needs that arise from the application of asset management principles will allow NNC to be positioned to act quickly should opportunities arise for additional funding. The Council is proactive in submitting business cases to the Department for Transport (DfT) to support such additional funding and it is anticipated that such funding will be forthcoming in due course.

NNC will work cooperatively with its service providers and supply chain to ensure that the available budget is spent wisely and delivered efficiently through the development of asset specific asset management plans.

#### 5.2 Management of Service Providers and Supply Chain

The application of asset management principles and the collaborative working practices embodied in such principles will encourage the 'working with' rather than 'working for' culture necessary to be able to act quickly to address any changes, risks and opportunities arising. This will provide frameworks to encourage the early contractor involvement necessary to facilitate effective planning and programming, as well as timely decision making.

#### 5.3 Life Cycle and Risk Management

NNC understands that the way it manages and maintains the highways assets today will have impacts on the way they will have to be managed and maintained in the future.

Life cycle planning comprises the approach to the maintenance of an asset from construction, operation and maintenance to end-of-life disposal. The operation and maintenance phases are the core areas for NNC. Life cycle planning will support levels of funding and investment decisions and substantiate the need for appropriate and sustainable long-term funding.

One to three year programmes of maintenance and renewal schemes are prepared in conjunction with NNC's service providers and supply chain and populated with schemes developed and prioritised on the basis of asset need determined from the condition of the assets, network impact, customer and sustainability factors.

Funding is allocated across different asset groups giving consideration to the above factors but more directly to impact on the safety of the travelling public and the integrity of the network in an environment where funding may be constrained.

NNC understands that the way it carries out repairs and maintenance to assets has an effect on their ultimate service life and advocates a right first time approach. NNC will always look to optimise this relationship and avoid short term repairs and treatments that would only defer problems. Whole life cost analyses will be used when making engineering decisions for repair and treatment options.

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The benefits of a systematic approach to managing current and future risk at strategic, tactical and operational levels are recognised. Risk management will be a fundamental component of NNC's management system for its assets.

### 6 Asset Management Objectives

The objectives provide the specific and measurable outcome or achievement required to implement the Highway Asset Management Policy and this Highway Asset Management Strategy.

#### 6.1 Factors Influencing Objectives

The Highway Asset Management Objectives derive from the following sources:

- Vision and Priorities of NNC
- The Highway Asset Management Policy and this Highway Asset Management Strategy
- The requirements of BSI ISO 55001:2014
- Commercial requirements
- The mechanism of delivery of management of the various assets

NNC will establish and will maintain asset management objectives, which:

- a) Are measurable (i.e. quantified and/or capable of being demonstrated as achieved through objective assessment);
- b) Are derived from, and consistent with, the asset management strategy;
- c) Are consistent with NNC's commitment to continual improvement;
- d) Are communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including contracted service providers, where there is a requirement that these persons are made aware of their obligations;
- e) Are reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they remain relevant and consistent with the asset management strategy;
- f) Consider legal, regulatory, statutory and other asset management requirements;
- g) Take account of the expectations of relevant stakeholders and financial, operational and business requirements;
- h) Take account of asset management related risks;
- i) Consider improvement opportunities including new technologies and asset management tools, techniques and practices.

#### 6.2 Objectives

NNC's priorities are incorporated within the asset management objectives under six headings as follows:

##### 1. Planning for the Future

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- a) Improve the quality of asset data collection and provide systems which allow data to be easily interrogated and interpreted to identify asset needs and opportunities.
- b) Make full use of asset data when making asset investment decisions.
- c) Individual asset leads to acknowledge the need to take a long-term view of their assets and work towards implementation of a Lifecycle Asset Management Plan (10-year plus).

### **2. Growing our Capability**

- a) We will maintain processes and procedures that are consistent with ISO 55001:2014.
- b) We will maintain the operational training levels of our teams to deliver their roles in a safe and competent manner.

### **3. Building Stronger Relationships**

- a) We will work closely with other agencies operating in North Northamptonshire to offer a joined up approach to the delivery and support of renewal and other projects.
- b) We will extend opportunities for asset management training and guidance to our collaborative delivery partners.
- c) We will work collaboratively across disciplines to optimise network occupancy.
- d) We will communicate work programmes to key stakeholders.

### **4. Efficient and Effective Delivery**

- a) We will actively seek opportunities to share roadspace.
- b) We will encourage innovation, bringing new materials, plant, techniques and practices into use.
- c) We will make asset led decisions to ensure that the available funding for each asset type is spent in the most effective way as outlined in each asset specific asset management plan.
- d) We will work with our service delivery partners to ensure work is planned effectively and productivity is maximised.

### **5. Improving Customer Service**

- a) We will engage with user groups to improve accessibility.
- b) We will introduce a priority rating for enquiries which drive an improvement in timeliness of responses.

### **6. Health, Safety & Environment**

- a) We will facilitate road safety audits for all new designs and improvements.
- b) We will identify and implement environmental and carbon initiatives.
- c) We will include asset management related competencies within our competency framework and role descriptions.

The individual highway asset management plans will develop these objectives into specific objectives and a plan that is relevant to the condition, nature and needs of each highway asset.

#### **6.3 Desired Asset Condition/Outcomes**

Effective maintenance and operation of the NNC Highway Network is essential in achieving the objectives.

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The various assets comprising the NNC Highway Network have different design lives and maintenance / renewal intervals. A common desired condition or outcome cannot, therefore, be defined.

Desired future asset condition/outcomes for individual assets are outlined as follow:

Highway Asset	Future condition/outcome
Carriageway	Investment focussed on maintaining a steady state by adopting a preventative maintenance approach while maintaining a safe and serviceable carriageway network
Footway	Investment focussed on maintaining a safe and serviceable footway network, prioritising those footways with the highest footfall
Cycleways	Investment focussed on maintaining a safe and serviceable cycleway network
Structures	Investment focussed on efficient maintenance and long term management of highway structures in order to maintain an open and safe highway network.
Traffic Signals	Investment focussed to provide efficient economical systems to manage traffic flows effectively, reduce congestion and allow automatic fault reporting. The systems employed will be maintained to a usable standard to ensure traffic conflicts are avoided and to maintain safe passage for all highway users.
Drainage	Investment focussed on investigating and improving drainage systems where flooding is impacting properties, while maintaining an open and safe highway network
Street Lighting*	Investment in PFI contract targets improvement in street lighting stock and maintenance at the improved level throughout the duration of the contract.

\*Street Lighting is managed through a PFI Contract with Balfour Beatty which started in 2011 and runs to 2036

The individual Highway Asset Management Plans will define the desired condition, outcomes and maintenance requirements of each asset in detail. However, the over-arching requirement is that the assets are assessed and maintained to remain in a condition where they support the safe operation and availability of the road network and other associated assets. This goal is achieved by planned regular inspection, and consequent repairs / maintenance works programmes.

The aspiration is not to achieve a defect-free asset, but one where defects that affect safety and serviceability are addressed.

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## 7 Stakeholders

There are very many stakeholders that may be affected or have an impact upon management of the asset. The requirements and expectations of each of these may be the same – a safe, serviceable and sustainable network. It is the prioritisation they each give to these outcomes that differ.

A Stakeholder Liaison Process and Communications Plan will be maintained to ensure effective communication with stakeholders.

NNC will ensure that relevant information associated with asset management activities (i.e. schemes or maintenance activities) will be actively communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders.

## 8 Development of Highway Asset Management Plans

The foregoing drivers will be implemented by development of asset specific Highway Asset Management Plans (HAMP's) for key asset groups, which will contain specific requirements for the desired future state of each asset with due reference to deterioration mechanisms, network resilience and critical assets.

Each HAMP will address the following criteria:

- A Definition of the **A**sset
- C The current **C**ondition of that asset and procedures for inspecting the condition
- M Risk-based and value management-based proposals for **M**aintenance of that asset
- I Risk-based and value management-based proposals for **I**mprovement of that asset

Each HAMP will also include a section on the visions and goals for that asset including the desired future state and condition for that asset.

The HAMP's will be simple operational documents containing essential information that will help asset managers and operational delivery teams manage those assets.

## 9 Optimisation and Prioritisation

NNC's approach to managing and maintaining the North Northamptonshire highway assets will be holistic and end-to-end. That is, NNC will always consider how the repair and maintenance of one particular asset or asset group impacts on other assets.

Forward programme meetings will be held and attended by individual asset managers, delivery managers and budget holders, to agree and coordinate plans for future maintenance schemes. A n a 3 year rolling Annual Plan will be developed containing funding across all asset groups. The first year of the programme is approved for schemes in the following financial year (April to March) in February of each year.



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### **10 Communication and Review**

A communications plan will be developed to ensure all issues relevant to Highways Asset Management including this strategy are communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will be reviewed at not more than 12-month intervals. Asset management performance against the highway asset management strategy will be assessed against the desired outcomes outlined for each asset in section 6.3 and further detailed in the asset management plans. Changes will be made to the strategy and highway asset management plans to address any shortcomings.

Opportunities will be sought to benchmark performance against that of adjacent authorities.

### **11 Competencies and Training**

NNC considers the competency and motivation of all involved in the delivery of asset management related duties to be essential, be they directly employed by NNC, service providers or by supply chain partners. Asset management competencies will be included within NNC's competency framework and training will be provided where necessary.