

**Meeting: Cabinet**

**Date: 14th December 2021**

**Wards Affected: All Wards**

**Report Title: Introduction of Updated Transport Asset Management Policy and the publishing of related updated Highway Policies.**

**Is the decision a key decision? No**

**When does the decision need to be implemented? November 2021**

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Cllr Mike Morey Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Environment and Culture.

**Supporting Officer Contact Details:** Tim Northway – Principal Engineer (Network Management) (SWISCo)

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## **1. Proposal and Introduction**

1.1 Torbay Council as a responsible highway authority, exercises its highway maintenance functions fully in line with the principles and practices associated with asset management. To demonstrate this, we are presenting the latest versions of our Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy documents to members. This is intended to guide members and customers of how we prioritise our highway maintenance programmes and to give insights into key decisions in this field.

This 'Infrastructure' Asset Management Strategy shares many aims and principles with the recently adopted Corporate Asset Management Strategy but it is wholly aimed at the Highway Asset.

The adoption and publication of these documents is advocated in the current code of practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. By getting cabinet approval for these and then adding them together with other supporting documents, plans and policies, to the Council website, will allow a greater understanding of this discipline to all interested parties.

By adopting this Strategy and Policy it will also allow the Department for Transport and Peer Authorities, to see how we demonstrate a strategic approach to highways management.

1.2 These revised documents are also required to reflect that the changes in the service delivery model, following the transfer of highway functions to SWISCo, will not change the procedures associated with asset management or alter the commitment of officers delivering this service on behalf of Torbay Council.

- 1.3 The proposed Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy are now amended in line with the aims and goals identified in Torbay Council's Community and Corporate Plan.

## **2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments**

- 2.1 The proposals in these documents outline that effective and efficient management of the existing infrastructure is a key factor in the ability of the Council to deliver its services. The "Highway" which is managed by SWISCo on behalf of Torbay Council, as local highway authority (LHA), forms the largest and most valuable public asset within Torbay Councils control, with a gross value in excess of £0.7 billion.
- 2.2 Local highway authorities have to demonstrate their commitment to meeting the aims and requirements of the principles of asset management practices. Part of this process involves an authority scoring itself on a series of related practices, that are listed by the Department for Transport. The indicative capital funding allocation for highway maintenance is top sliced and authorities are then required to claim and defend their right to a scoring band between 1 to 3. 1 being a poor score and 3 being excellent. Failure to reach and retain the higher overall scoring band results in a loss of part, or all of the subsequent 'incentive fund'. Whilst by training practitioners and adopting other processes, Torbay Council have consistently scored as a Band 3 authority and thus avoided the potential loss of funding, it is required to demonstrate its ongoing commitment in adopting the best practices that may in time require investment in asset management systems and other areas. Hence the need to formally adopt the 'Strategy and Policy' documents formally.
- 2.3 The current level of funding for maintaining the most valuable asset in Torbay is under extreme constant pressure. The management needs to be undertaken in a considered manner, which takes into account maintenance needs and financial resources. These considerations must then be balanced against the potential risks, which include service failure and the subsequent demands on the same public finances for damage and liability claims. There is a current estimated backlog of carriageway maintenance schemes in excess of £21M and a significant £4M backlog for street lighting column replacements. With the successful publishing of these documents, we can show how to best invest what funding is received, to try to arrest any further deterioration of these assets.
- 2.4 There is a clear link demonstrated that shows the correlation between the level of investment in the highway network, versus the expected condition as a whole. Whilst lower cost preventative maintenance is the preferred method of extending the functional life of the highway assets, there comes a time in the life cycle, where an asset requires more extensive and vastly more expensive intervention work, if this asset is to remain as a safe functional resource for the authority. It is now becoming apparent that to avoid an escalating rate of failure of some major roads, together with further need for these costlier interventions, the need to invest in additional life cycle planning techniques should be paramount.
- 2.5 Members should be reminded that as a Highway Authority there are certain absolute duties and responsibilities that an authority has. These include a duty to

keep the highway network in a safe condition for all highway users and a responsibility to ensure that deteriorating infrastructure does not create a potential hazard to public safety. By adhering to the proposed Strategy and Policy documents, you are demonstrating an understanding of the necessity to look after this all too important asset to the best of our ability

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### **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- (i) That the implementation and publishing of the Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Asset Management Strategy, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the submitted report be approved.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

Appendix 2 – Infrastructure Asset Management Policy

### **Background Documents**

#### **[Well - Managed Highway Infrastructure by the UKRLG](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed_highway_infrastructure_combined_-_28_october_2016_amended_15_march_2017_.pdf)**

[https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed\\_highway\\_infrastructure\\_combined\\_-\\_28\\_october\\_2016\\_amended\\_15\\_march\\_2017\\_.pdf](https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/11915/well-managed_highway_infrastructure_combined_-_28_october_2016_amended_15_march_2017_.pdf)

Highways Act 1980

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66>

## Section 1: Background Information

### 1. What is the proposal / issue?

The proposal is that Members approve the adoption of the 'Asset Management Strategy' for highways and the 'Infrastructure Asset Management Policy' accompanying this report.

These two documents being the basis of all planning and programming associated with maintaining the Highway Infrastructure within Torbay. They set out the principles of tackling the backlog of maintenance needs and give an overview of the process undertaken to prioritize programmes of work.

These documents are a requirement of the Department for Transport to demonstrate officers and members commitment to maintain the highway infrastructure in a responsible and considered manner.

These documents are also an overview of the remaining plans and policies, that, when considered as a whole, will form the 'Highways Maintenance Manual' which will be a forward-facing set of documents that can be accessed by members and customers alike. For further reference, these supporting documents are:

- Transport Asset Management Plan
- Infrastructure Asset Management Policy
- Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy
- Winter Maintenance and Emergency Plan
- Highway Inspection Manual
- Street Lighting Maintenance Manual

The Policy and Strategy documents encompass the key aspects of maintenance within Network Management.

The compliance of these documents are part of Department for Transport's Self-assessment, and contribute to our funding. The intention for these documents is for them to remain as "Live Documents" which are periodically updated in line with required standards.

These documents are aligned with the wider Community and Corporate Plan and the challenges that face Torbay

- An ageing population
- The need for economic and housing growth
- The climate change emergency
- Substantial reductions in central government funding.

<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>What is the current situation?</b></p> <p>The current situation is that in recent years, levels of funding supplied for the purpose of maintaining highway assets has fallen far short of requirements to provide improvement to Network condition. Whilst, so far, no roads have been closed due to lack of maintenance, it has been necessary to delay a number of schemes due to the availability of funding.</p> <p>Currently, some twenty-five percent of streets on the highway network would benefit from some form of maintenance intervention. Whilst main roads and other classified roads carrying greater traffic volumes have received much of the recent funding, other local roads are deteriorating to a point where if not addressed shortly, more expensive surfacing intervention works will then be required. Investment in lower cost preventative maintenance should be funded to prevent losing the opportunity to use these systems on those parts of the local roads network that are still in a fit condition to receive this work.</p> <p>The present backlog of carriageway resurfacing schemes is now in the region of £21,000,000 whereas in a typical year, there will be just over £1,000,000 to address this. The capital funding provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) is also required for other highway infrastructure and similar maintenance backlogs exist with street lighting, where an estimated £4,000,000 is required to replace aging lighting columns.</p> <p>A further requirement to update and continually review plans and policies, is that all highway authorities are required to carry out a yearly self-assessment for the DfT. The scores generated determine a band between 1 to 3 with level 1 being poor and level 3 being excellent. As these reviews have progressed failure to achieve and remain within the top band are penalized and could result in indicative capital funding being reduced by some 30%. Given the current situation with funding being already under pressure this would be a major blow to maintaining let alone improving the condition of our network.</p> <p>With all of the above in mind the revised documents which back up the policy and strategy will be displayed on the Council's website for immediate reference to members of the public.</p> <p>The documents have been changed to reflect the changes to the network, as well as aligning their goals with the Community and Corporate Plan.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>What options have been considered?</b></p> <p>There are no key options to state as to why these documents are not to be provided. Whilst alternative surfacing treatments can and will be considered as techniques develop and the plans may then be modified to reflect these. These two documents are an essential part of our DfT Self-Assessment and as such, are required to maintain our status as a level 3 authority and to secure the yearly additional funding.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p><b>What is the relationship with the priorities within the Partnership Memorandum and the Council’s Principles?</b>  As part of our strategy, policy and plan for Transport Asset Management, it is key that we demonstrate that our goals align with the Corporate Strategy. Torbay Council's opportunities and challenges are as defined in the corporate policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>An ageing population:</b> Ensuring that risk of potential highway defects is correctly assessed to ensure that all users of the highway network can traverse it safely.</li> <li>- <b>Thriving Economy:</b> To maintain an efficient and effective highway network to facilitate future growth.</li> <li>- <b>Tackling Climate Change</b> To reduce carbon emissions associated with street lighting and make more use of recycling techniques when treating highways.</li> <li>- <b>Substantial reductions in central government funding:</b> Intelligently applying the principles of asset management to future capital schemes to ensure that the current asset register is maintained to the highest standard.</li> </ul>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue contribute towards the Council’s responsibilities as corporate parents?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly contribute towards the Council’s responsibilities as Corporate Parents.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>How does this proposal/issue tackle poverty, deprivation and vulnerability?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly tackle poverty. Deprivation and vulnerability</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>How does the proposal/issue impact on people with learning disabilities?</b></p> <p>The proposal does not directly impact on people with learning disabilities.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with? How will the Council engage with the community? How can the Council empower the community?</b></p> <p>If adopted and approved and successful, the proposal could attract/retain funding, which used properly, will then affect all residents and visitors to the area by improving their journey experience and bettering the well-being of residents by generating pride in their local area.</p>

## Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

<b>9.</b>	<b>What are the financial and legal implications?</b>  Key financial implications are related to the DfT Self Assessment Fund, where authorities are asked to score themselves based on 22 question parameters.  As part of this, compliance and publication with Asset Management documents is a key measurement. The failure to agree and publish these new documents would mean that Torbay Council would score slightly lower, which would affect funding.  Funding affected by self-assessment can be affected in roughly 30-33% increments, so a reduction from Level 3 to Level 2 would roughly mean a 33% reduction in funding from DfT.
<b>10.</b>	<b>What are the risks?</b>  Key Risks are outlined below  1. Reduction in funding due to self-assessment scoring should these documents not be agreed.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012</b>  Currently, there is no extra expenditure required as part of the publishing of these documents.
<b>12.</b>	<b>What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal?</b>  The documents enclosed are updated versions of previously published documents.
<b>13.</b>	<b>What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out?</b>  No Consultation was required.
<b>14.</b>	<b>Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions</b>  No amendments have been made to the proposal as a result of initial feedback.

## Equality Impacts

15.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people			There is no differential impact
	People with caring Responsibilities			There is no differential impact
	People with a disability			There is no differential impact
	Women or men			There is no differential impact
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) <i>(Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)</i>			There is no differential impact
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			There is no differential impact
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			There is no differential impact
	People who are transgendered			There is no differential impact
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			There is no differential impact
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			There is no differential impact



	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		There is no differential impact
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)		There is no differential impact
16.	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Council wide</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	There is no differential impact.	
17.	<b>Cumulative Impacts – Other public services</b> (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	All public services are reliant on the use of a safe and usable highway network to provide their services	