



**Meeting: Transport Working Party**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Wards Affected: All Wards**

**Report Title: Adoption of Transport Asset Management Plan**

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The maintenance of the nation's highway networks are currently being highlighted due to the all too obvious deterioration of carriageway surfaces and the increasing number of visual defects such as potholes. The Department for Transport (DfT) is responding to this issue by increasing the levels of investment in this critically important asset but wants to see that the increased funding is being spent in the most appropriate manner. The 'Chartered Institute of Public Finance' (CIPFA), 'Highways Asset Management Finance Information Group' (HAMFIG) and more recently the 'Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme' (HMEP) have all been involved in developing tools and guidance for highway authorities to prove that the funding provided for highway maintenance is invested on the network in accordance with the principles of asset management. This report introduces the strategic version of Torbay Council's Plan that will be made available on its website to show how asset management techniques apply to this authority.
- 1.2 The financing of highway maintenance for local authorities is to be increased over the term of the next parliament. However, part of this additional funding may be allocated to those authorities that can prove that they have adopted and are using the principles of asset management for the planning of their maintenance schemes. Torbay Council has been basing its maintenance projects on these principles but now that improved toolkits such as 'Lifecycle Planning' are available, is now in a position to publish the strategic version of the asset management plan. If this is done in a timely fashion it will mean that Torbay Council will be able to bid for this additional pot of money with a better chance of eventual success. If there is no such plan in evidence this could jeopardise more of the highway network which is all in need of major investment.
- 1.3 The ring-fencing of the DfT funding was removed in the name of localism which means that capital funding previously assured for structural maintenance schemes

may be diverted from this task by more pressing needs for an authority. However, Members need to be aware of the long term effect of taking money away from highway maintenance and should therefore pay particular attention to the 'appendix A' of the Plan. This is not saying that such a decision may be wrong but it does show that there will be detrimental impacts to the highway network in a relatively short time.

## 2. **Proposed Decision**

- 2.1 That the strategic Transport Asset Management plan for the maintenance of the highway asset be adopted by the Council.

## 3. **Action Needed**

- 3.1 Members will be required to sign up to the principles of asset management and to approve the indicative three year programme of carriageway structural maintenance developed by the associated toolkit.

## 4. **Summary**

- 4.1 Torbay Council has always tried to use lower cost preventative carriageway treatments to extend the useful life of its highway asset to make the maximum use of the limited funding that has been available for highway asset management. This has delayed the deterioration of roads that have received this treatment but the lack of appropriate funding for other roads requiring more expensive structural repairs has created problems elsewhere.
- 4.2 The Lifecycle Planning Toolkit charts which are used within the plan show that even the anticipated additional funding will mean that the overall condition trend to the highway condition will still be a decline, however, the Council needs to show that it is willing to adopt the principles of asset management to ensure that it can attract as much central funding as is possible.
- 4.3 There is a current maintenance backlog of £11.5M for surfacing schemes. This figure can only increase without appropriate levels of funding. With the increasing expectations of road users to address the challenge of improving the highway condition the issue is being raised as a national concern which will require positive intervention in the fullness of time. The Council needs to be in the best possible position to benefit from any additional funding and the adoption of this plan is a positive step in this direction.

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## **Supporting Information**

### 5. **Position**

- 5.1 The use of asset management techniques in highway maintenance is being advocated by many advisers to the DfT. As the DfT is the major investor for highway maintenance they have a desire to ensure that the funding provided is to be spent in the most effective manner.
- 5.2 This strategic plan summarises the Council's recent history in dealing with the

highway asset and shows how the anticipated levels of funding will still show a gradual overall decline in the condition of the asset.

**6. Possibilities and Options**

6.1 That the adoption of this Plan gives the Council more opportunity to bid for additional funding to the benefit of all residents and visitors to this area.

**7. Preferred Solution/Option**

7.1 That the Plan be adopted.

**8. Consultation**

8.1 As a technical document it would not be appropriate to consult on this policy, however, the Plan should be made publically available on the Council's website.

**9. Risks**

9.1 By not adopting the plan, the Council will be expected to only receive a base level of funding for its highway maintenance based on its current length of highway network.

9.2 The collation of additional highway asset data is required to improve the authority's chances of defending third party claims and to identify other parts of the network in need of investment.

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Transport Asset Management Plan – Strategic Version

**Additional Information:**

None.

**Documents available in Members' Rooms:**

None.

**Background Papers:**

HMEP, UK Roads Liaison Group – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document (2012)

HMEP, UK Roads Liaison Group – Highways, Maintaining a Vital Asset (2013)

HMEP – Lifecycle Planning Toolkit, User Guidance (2012)

CIPFA, HAMFIG - The Code of Practice on Transport Infrastructure Assets (2013 updated)

Audit Commission – Going the Distance (2010)

DfT – Action for Roads (2013)