



Leicestershire County Council

Highways Asset Management Policy

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Foreword

The County Council recognises the important role that the highway network plays in keeping people and places connected, especially in a rural county such as Leicestershire. Keeping our highway network in good condition is important to support economic growth and a good quality of life for the residents, visitors and businesses of the county.

Providing a high-quality highway network that meets the needs of our customers is something that the County Council is committed to. The Authority has a statutory duty to maintain the highway and we face the challenge of achieving this against a backdrop of a national pandemic (Covid-19), an uncertain economic situation caused by Covid-19 and the ongoing impact of austerity, increasing levels of use and increasing pressures on other County Council services.

We are continuing to work to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach is taken during these challenging times, in order to achieve our aims and objectives.

The Highway Asset Management Policy and the Highway Asset Management Strategy have been developed to help us take account of these challenges. The policy is designed to drive continuous improvement in the way we maintain our highway network, ensuring that it continues to be safe, serviceable and sustainable.

It sets out the principles that will help to ensure that we develop and adopt a strategic approach – one that takes account of the expectations of stakeholders and customers and targets resources to deliver a network that supports the future prosperity and wellbeing of the people of Leicestershire.

1. The Highway Asset Management Framework

- 1.1 The County Council has been applying the principles of a formalised approach to highway asset management for many years, implementing its first Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) in 2007. More recently the direction and principles with which we have applied asset management were set out in our Highways Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAMP), which was revised in October 2019 and supported by a number of documents, including our Network Management Plan (NMP), Winter Service Operational Plan, Carriageway - Skidding Resistance procedure.
- 1.2 The County Council continues to review its approach to highway asset management in the light of the Highway Management Efficiency Programme (HMEP) guidance and the UK Roads Liaison Group “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice (published October 2016). This sets out the principle of applying a locally appropriate risk-based approach to the inspection, prioritisation and treatment of the highway network. As a result, we have developed a Highway Asset Management Framework, which brings together the core elements of asset management. This framework places our approach in context, identifying the enablers that support asset management and the elements of asset management planning and delivery that contribute to our asset management approach. Figure 1 overleaf shows the Highway Asset Management Framework.

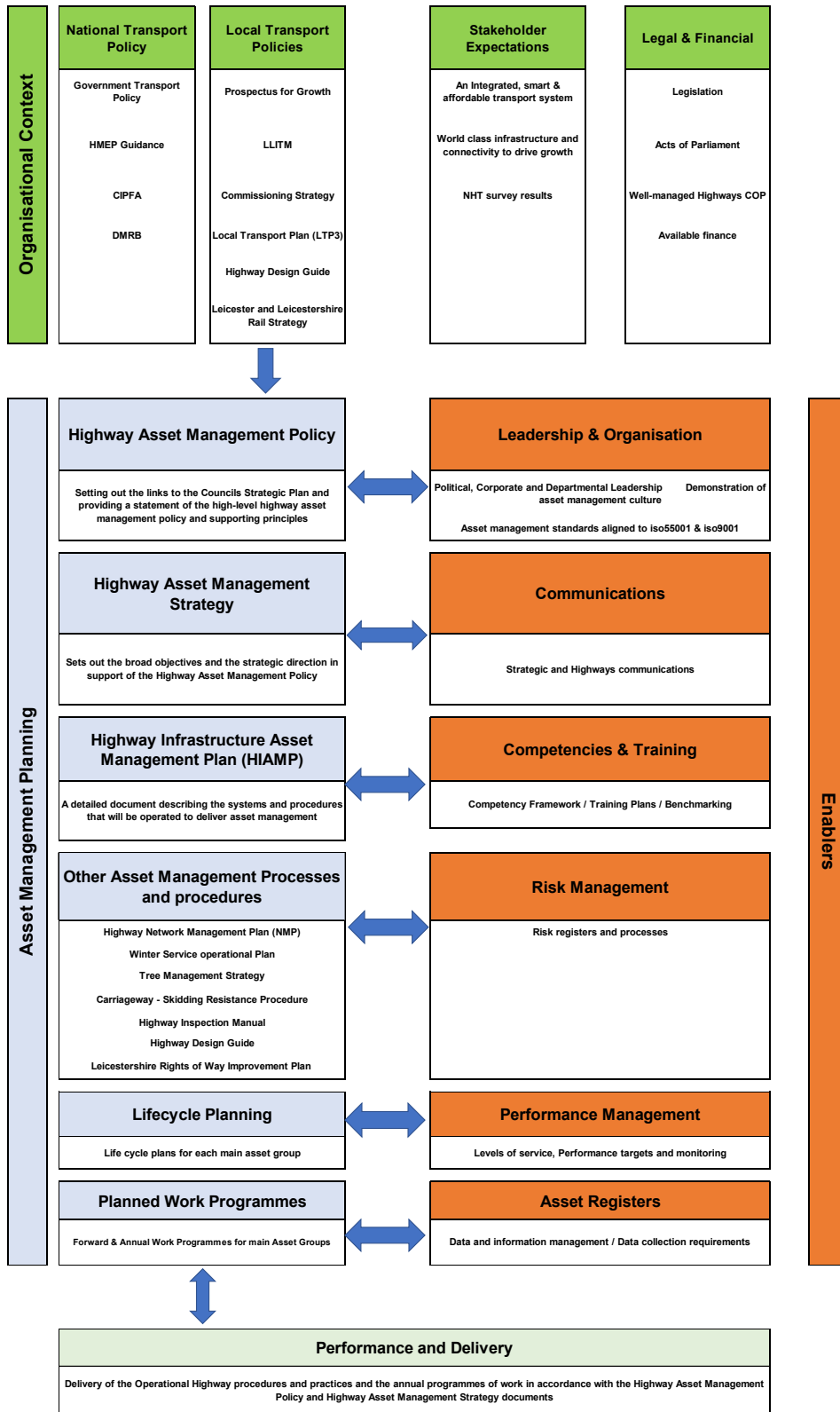


Figure 1- Highway Asset Management Framework

2. The Document Framework

- 2.1. This Policy, along with the associated Highway Asset Management Strategy document, have been developed in accordance with the principles set out in the “Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document” (published May 2013) and the new Code of Practice “Well-managed Highway Infrastructure” (published October 2016 and came into force October 2018). A position statement has been written in conjunction with independent consultants SNC – Lavalin’s Atkins to show our commitment to achieving the 36 recommendation of the new code of practice.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2020/2/24/position-statement.pdf>

- 2.2. Diagram 2 below shows the framework within which these documents will sit.

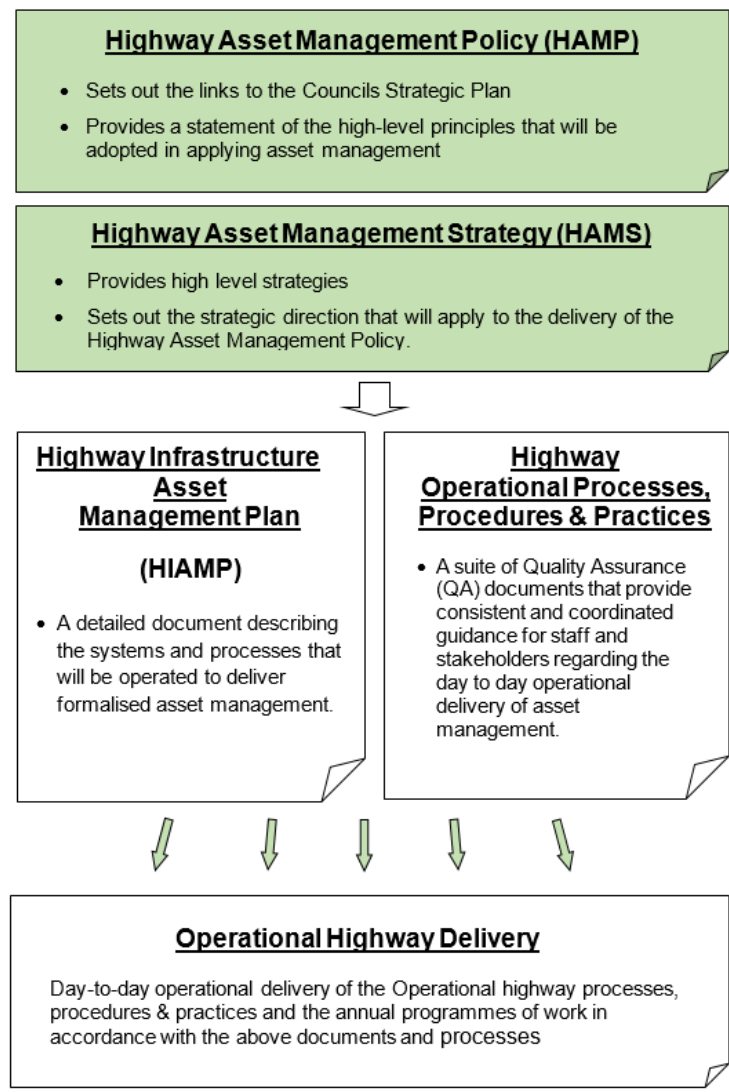


Diagram 2 – Asset management framework

3. Purpose

- 3.1 This document sets out how the County Council will manage the condition of the county highway network. It does this through policy, key supporting principles, broad objectives and an overarching structure that provides direction.
- 3.2. This policy will allow better informed decisions to be made about investment choices that are required to effectively maintain the whole network, both in the short and long-term. It directly supports the strategic aims of the County Council.
- 3.3. The policy also supports the County Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway through compliance with section 41 of the Highways Act (1980).
- 3.4. Finally, this policy aligns the County Council's approach to managing network condition, with the principles set out in the national Code of Practice "*Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure*".

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy is applicable to the entire infrastructure forming the highway network that is managed and maintained by the County Council, apart from the public rights of way (PRoW) network. Management of the PRoW network is dealt with in the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP).

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2015/12/8/leics_rowip2.pdf

5. The Highway Asset Management Policy and Supporting Principles

Asset Management Policy (AMP)

AMP 1. The County Council will develop and operate a formalised asset management approach. This will support the optimal use and direction of the County Council's resources in maintaining the county's highway assets for the benefit of current and future stakeholders.

AMP 2. The County Council will prioritise available resources for maintenance interventions and treatment choices using a risk-based approach, taking account of the safety of stakeholders, network hierarchy, levels of use, network condition, environmental impact, and customer expectations.

Supporting Principles

- SP1.** The County Council will consult with stakeholders to support the identification of treatment priorities, levels of service and the management of risk.
- SP2.** The County Council will aim to extend the operational life of highway assets using appropriately timed preventative and restorative treatments to maintain safety and serviceability whilst minimising reactive repairs and environmental impact.
- SP3.** The County Council will develop “life-cycle models” for all key assets to forecast the consequences of maintenance strategies on budget, and network condition (both short and long-term) and environmental impact. We will use these models to inform our decisions about treatment strategy, budget requirements and priorities.
- SP4.** The County Council will publish an annual programme of planned works affecting key assets, as well as an annual schedule of our key service levels and performance indicators.
- SP5.** The County Council will review the benefits of non-statutory, low-priority assets against the cost of maintenance. Where we identify redundancy or high cost linked to minimal benefits, we will seek to rationalise the asset by devolving, decommissioning or reducing the asset or its service levels. Rationalisation will be subject to an assessment of risk and consideration of the views of stakeholders.
- SP6.** The County Council will use the outputs from our asset management processes to support measures that will focus on improving assets that encourage walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport i.e. sustainable travel.
- SP7.** The County Council will take account of the environmental impact of our maintenance treatments and services and where feasible, either reduce or mitigate these impacts.
- SP8.** The County Council will work with regional partners, such as Midlands Connect, to review and coordinate maintenance and management strategies on the emerging Major Route Network (MRN) for the Midlands.
- SP9.** The County Council will review the resilience of our network to disruptive events, identifying the strategically critical links and recording these as the Resilient Network. We will prioritise the management and maintenance of this network to minimise the impact that severe weather and other disruptive events would have on economic activity and to maintain access to key services.
- SP10.** The County Council will continue to ensure that, as far as possible, our Priority 1 and Priority 2 winter maintenance network, used for precautionary gritting, is treated in advance of forecast snow or ice.

- SP11.** The County Council will collaborate with others, particularly our supply chain, local communities and neighbouring authorities, to increase efficiencies, reduce costs and sustain local service levels.
- SP12.** The County Council will continually review and develop our asset management approach across all service areas to ensure we meet these principles and seek ways of working more efficiently.

6. How this Policy supports the County Council's strategic aims

- 6.1. The Council's vision and priorities for the county and the organization, set out in the council's Strategic Plan, is "Working together for the benefit of everyone: Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22" has been developed by the council by focusing on the things that will make life better for people in Leicestershire, including the partnerships needed to make these improvements happen.

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-plans/the-strategic-plan>

- 6.2. The Strategic Plan recognises that in the immediate and foreseeable future the County Council is facing major challenges with an international and national pandemic which will exacerbate an already difficult funding position, with significant reductions needed in our spending, due to budget deficit reduction requirements. The Strategic Plan sets out how the County Council will continue to support the Authority's vision through this period of uncertainty and austerity by focusing on five strategic outcomes. The Highway Asset Management Policy will directly contribute to supporting three of these strategic priorities;

Strong Economy

The County Council recognises that well-managed highways are a key enabler of this outcome and will directly benefit economic growth by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods. An efficient transport network, in good condition, where disruption and delay are kept to a minimum and where journey times are predictable and reliable, is essential to attract and support growth. The development of our asset management approach will ensure that we are able to make better informed strategic decisions to ensure that we make best use of reducing resources to support this outcome. The highway infrastructure will also help sustainable growth and is an attractive place where businesses are supported to flourish

Keeping People Safe

Included in its aims is the objective of making roads safer, as well as protecting the environment.

Great Communities

Recognises the need to change the way that we deliver services and to work more closely with communities and partners to preserve the vision through the current period of economic and social change. The Highway Asset Management Policy will underpin the principle of working in partnership with communities to sustain the local highway environment. It will also provide a cornerstone for the commissioning and procurement of more efficient and appropriately focused highway maintenance services that take account of the challenging economic pressures faced by the County Council and Leicestershire communities are resilient to emergencies.

- 6.3. To support these priorities the County Council will need to make hard decisions about transforming existing services. We will need to reduce and replace some services whilst other services will need to be more targeted. We will also need to explore new ways of commissioning services to improve value and quality. Decisions about these changes will be better informed by the development of a formalised asset management approach.
- 6.4. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that in order to support these outcomes, it will be necessary for our declining budgets to be increasingly focused on keeping roads in good repair and that we will continue to place a high priority on delivering a high level of precautionary winter salting and snow clearance.
- 6.5. The County Council recognises that a network in poor repair is likely to present increased risks to users. This highway asset management policy will support the development of an analytical “risk-based” approach to asset management to ensure that, within the constraints of reducing budgets, treatments will be more effectively directed to optimise the condition of the network.
- 6.6. By developing an evidence-based approach to the management of all key assets we will minimise the frequency of repairs across the whole network and will extend the life of existing assets. This in turn means less frequent renewal and therefore reduced demand for natural resources and reduced carbon emissions, due to the processing and transport of materials.
- 6.7. Efficient maintenance of the network will result in less disruption and congestion, leading to reduced carbon emissions.
- 6.8. This policy supports a Resilient Network that will focus resources on sustaining a functioning core network during extreme weather events and during major incidents and disruption.

7. Supporting Environment & Transport's Business Plan

- 7.1 The County Council recognises the significant challenges that it faces in delivering services against a background of a national pandemic and austerity measures. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out this challenge and identifies where the County Council intends to deliver efficiencies and savings in the medium term. To help support these changes the County Council has developed a Departmental Business Plan.
- 7.2 This Highway Asset Management Policy supports the Environment and Transport Department's Business Plan. It will do this by setting out an evidence-based approach for commissioning appropriate work programmes that will meet the management and maintenance needs of the highway network.
- 7.3. The Environment & Transport Business Plan explains that, whilst the authority's current Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) remains in place for the time being, as part of the development of service specific plans and strategies it will be assessed and reviewed where appropriate to ensure that it remains fit-for-purpose.

8. Policy Review

- 8.1 As part of the ISO 55000 and ISO 9000 accreditation checks, audits are carried out to ensure that we are making continual improvements and are following proper procedure.
- 8.2 This policy is closely aligned to other policy documents, particularly the Environment and Transport Department's Business Plan and the Network Management Plan (NMP). Review and 'sense-checking' will take place to ensure that, where appropriate, they continue to align during any development of updated documents.
- 8.3. The policy will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier if there are significant changes in national policy or guidance that affects asset management.