

## Highway Operational Standards (HOS) Annual Review

To: Highways and Transport Committee

Meeting Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021

From: Steve Cox, Executive Director for Place and Economy

Electoral division(s): Countywide.

Forward Plan ref:

Key decision: No

Outcome: To consider and approve the County Council's Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Highway Operational Standards documents. This will ensure that the Council has a current suite of documents setting out the standards for the management of the highway assets for which it is responsible.

Recommendation: That the Committee:

- a) Approves the latest version of the Highway Asset Management Policy, Appendix 1
- b) Approves the latest version of the Highway Asset Management Strategy, Appendix 2
- c) Approves the Highway Operational Standards (HOS), Appendix 3
- d) Agrees that the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make minor amendments to Appendix R of the Highways Operational Standards (Appendix 3 to this report), in accordance with the approved asset management principles.
- e) Agrees that the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make minor amendments to the budgetary apportionments derived from Appendix Q of the Highways Operational Standards (Appendix 3 to this report).
- f) Agrees that the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Highways and

Transport Committee, can append to the HOS other policies that might be approved by this committee.

- g) Agrees that Executive Director – Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Highways and Transport Committee, can make amendments to the Highway Operational Standards (including Appendix R) to reflect actual amounts of capital funding received via the Needs Based Formula and Incentive Fund.

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Member contacts:

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 The Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy were first developed in 2013/14 and approved by Cabinet in March 2014. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) was subsequently approved by Highways and Community Infrastructure (HCI) Committee in November 2014 and was fully implemented on 1 April 2015. The suite of asset management documents is reviewed on an annual basis and brought before Members of the appropriate committee for approval each year.
- 1.2 In 2017/18 the HIAMP was significantly revised to reflect the implementation of the new national Code of Practice “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” and subsequently renamed as the Highway Operational Standards (HOS). This revised document was approved by HCI Committee at its meeting held 13 March 2018.
- 1.3 The current iterations of the asset management policy, strategy and HOS were approved by HCI on 10 March 2020.

# 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The proposed suite of highways asset management documents continues to set out the Authority’s preventative, long-term approach to highways maintenance. It is this approach that enables the optimum use of the funds available to the Authority, via the application of appropriate maintenance treatments, at the correct points in the lifecycles of highway assets.
- 2.2 Central Government’s commitment to highway asset management has been demonstrated via the incentive funding mechanism. The amount of funding that the Council has received in recent years from the Department for Transport (DfT) via the Incentive Fund has depended upon the extent that the Council has implemented and maintained highway asset management strategies and policies. It is anticipated that this funding mechanism will continue for year 2021-22 and therefore the Council is expected to gain up to £2,515,000 of this funding in 2021-22 as a result of demonstrably implementing a robust asset management approach.
- 2.3 Authorities are assessed for Incentive Funding based upon their responses to a broad range of questions regarding highways asset management. DfT assesses these responses and places authorities within one of three bands. To achieve maximum funding, an authority must be placed within Band 3. The Council has previously achieved Band 3 status. It is therefore important that the Authority continues with its implementation of the asset management approach
- 2.4 The HOS (Appendix 3) contains a number of assumptions regarding funding levels in 2021/22 and beyond. Since the Authority has not yet received notification of funding levels from 2021/22 from DfT, it has been assumed that the levels of capital funding for highways maintenance provided to the Authority via the needs based formula and Incentive Fund will be as received in 2020-21. These assumptions are reflected in the forward programme of capital works.
- 2.5 In year 2010-11, the County Council committed to invest an additional £90 million in highways maintenance via prudential borrowing. These funds have primarily been used for larger

carriageway maintenance schemes, within the approved forward programmes. The use of these monies was “front loaded”, with high investment levels in the early years, in accordance with the preventative approach. However, these funds are now nearly exhausted, with the final £2.7 million to be invested in year 2021-22.

- 2.6 At its meeting held 5 February 2019, the Full Council voted to provide an additional £18 million funding for highways maintenance, to be spent over the years 2020-21 to 2023-24, in accordance with the profile agreed by the Council. Full Council has also provided an additional £1 million per annum from year 2024-25 to fund preventative surface treatments. This means that the base budget will be elevated by £7 million from 2024-25 in perpetuity. All of these funds have to date been used for preventative carriageway surface treatments, as opposed to larger maintenance schemes.
- 2.7 The cessation of prudential borrowing funding and the simultaneous increase in funds used for surface treatments would create an imbalance between monies spent on surface treatments, such as surface dressing, and monies spent on larger schemes, to address roads that are in poorer condition and require deeper treatments. It is therefore proposed to rebalance these funds, to largely reflect the existing approach. It is proposed that, for any given year, 58% of the additional revenue funding be allocated to surface treatments, with the remainder being capitalised. These capitalised funds would be used for larger carriageway patching, deeper treatments and carriageway resurfacing schemes. These proposals are reflected in the HOS and its associated forward programme of capital works.
- 2.8 The continuing development and implementation of the asset management approach will be essential in making the best use of the limited revenue funds that are available to the Authority, via the adoption of whole life costing and life cycle planning principles as set out in the strategy (Appendix 2).
- 2.9 A key element of the Authority’s implementation of the asset management approach is a 3 year forward programme of capital maintenance schemes. This programme is presented to the Committee as Appendix R to the HOS (Appendix 3 to this report). The inclusion of the capital maintenance programme within the HOS reflects the linkage between the Asset Management Policy, Strategy and HOS with the resultant programme of works, which is based upon asset management principles. The Committee is asked to approve the HOS, including its associated programme of works. The Committee is further asked to approve the recommendations that changes to this programme can be made by the Executive Director – Place and Economy, in liaison with the Chair or Vice Chair of this Committee.
- 2.10 All of the documents have been updated to reflect the latest information available and some minor textual amendments have been made to aid clarity. There are no substantive changes to the Policy and Strategy documents. The substantive changes to the HOS document are highlighted in yellow in Appendix 3.

The key changes contained with the HOS are as follows:

- The rebalancing of funding as set out in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7 of this report. These changes are reflected in the capital maintenance programme.
- An amendment to the Tree Policy such that trees that must be removed from the highway are replaced with two trees wherever possible. This is a formalisation of practice that has

been undertaken since summer 2020.

- The lifecycle plans for carriageways and footways have been removed from the HOS. These have been removed because the plans are based upon projected forward funding levels and at present there is no indication of the future levels of capital funding from DfT. Lifecycle plans for the relevant assets will be reinstated in the document when there is sufficient information regarding future funding levels.

### **3. Additional Funding**

3.1 At its meeting held on 9 February 2021, Full Council approved further funding for highway maintenance. This funding is broken down as follows:

- An additional £4 million per annum for each of the years 2021-22 to 2025-26 for the maintenance of footpaths and pavements. This is a total of £20 million additional funding, which is a mixture of capital and revenue.
- A total of £6.97 million for improvements to the B1050. These monies are to be spent in years 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- An additional £2.73 million to be spent on flood attenuation and biodiversity, over the years 2021-22 to 2025-26.

3.2 It is proposed that the additional £20 million for the maintenance of footpaths and pavements be allocated to the maintenance of footways across the county.

3.3 It is anticipated that the funding for the B1050 will be used to enable a major maintenance scheme of the B1050 Shelford Road at Willingham. Design work will be undertaken in year 2021-22, with the major maintenance works being undertaken in year 2022-23.

3.4 It is proposed that £200,000 per annum of the additional monies for flood alleviation and biodiversity will be allocated to drainage maintenance, with a further £210,000 per annum being used to fund verge maintenance.

### **4. Alignment with corporate priorities**

4.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- This suite of documents sets out the Authority's policies to help provide and maintain a safe and serviceable highway network for all users, thus helping ensure that safe facilities are available for walking, cycling and other non-motorised forms of transport. The resultant network will facilitate the pursuit of healthy, sustainable modes of transport.

## 4.2 Thriving places for people to live

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The continued use of whole life costing and lifecycle planning principles will help ensure that well-maintained highway infrastructure is able to support the development and maintenance of a thriving local economy in the long term.

## 4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## 4.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The asset management approach is predicated upon the preventative maintenance of highway assets. This means that more surfacing treatments are applied to roads, at the appropriate points within their lifecycles. These treatments preclude the need to deeper treatments at later dates, when roads have deteriorated further. The advantages of such an approach are:
  - Less disruption to the travelling public, thus minimising carbon emissions as vehicles spend less time waiting at traffic signals and are less likely to have to follow diversion routes;
  - Less use of virgin aggregates, with associated reductions in transportation of materials to sites;
  - Greater use of recycled materials, thus minimising carbon emissions from materials manufacture and transport.
- Appendix Three to the report contains a policy setting out the Authority's approach to its management of highway trees, recognising the importance of trees to the environment.

# 5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

## 5.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of significant implications in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.3 regarding the Incentive Fund and its relationship to the adoption and implementation of highway asset management principles.

## 5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The standards contained within the HOS, especially Appendix A to the HOS, will be key considerations in the Authority's statutory defence to third party claims, under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980.

### 5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The policies and standards set out in these documents support the provision and maintenance of highway infrastructure for all users.
- The Policy (Appendix 1) and Strategy (Appendix 2) contribute to the Combined Authority Local Transport Plan objective of supporting and protecting vulnerable people.
- A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the following policy within the HOS document:
  - Tables and Chairs
- Equality Impact Screening Assessments have been undertaken for the following policies within the HOS document:
  - Appendix A - Highway Safety Inspections – Cat 1 (1a and 1b) Defect Investigation levels
  - Appendix B – Reactive Maintenance Investigatory levels for Category 2 defects
  - Appendix R - Highway Capital Maintenance Programme
- As indicated in the HOS document, where applicable site specific Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken in relation to the implementation of the following policies:
  - Bollards and Marker Posts
  - Disabled Parking Bays
  - Parking
  - Pedestrian Crossings
  - Pedestrian Dropped kerbs

### 5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

### 5.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

**Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?** Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood

**Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?** Yes

Name of Officer: Gus De Silva

**Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?** Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

**Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?**

Yes

Name of Officer: Elsa Evans

**Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?** Yes

Name of Officer: Sarah Silk

**Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?** Yes

Name of Officer: Richard Lumley

**Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health** No

Name of Officer:

#### 6.1 The Source Documents are:

- Code of Practice "Well-managed highway infrastructure" 2016
- Conservative Budget Amendment approved at the meeting of the Council held 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

#### 6.2 Locations

- <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/codes/index.cfm>
- [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)