

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Highway Asset Performance Report
Date of meeting:	15 September 2017
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe, Executive Director of Environment and Community Services

Strategic impact

The highway network is fundamental to the local economy and plays a major part in many aspects of our lives. An effective network enables everyone to move around the county more easily for access to work, key services and leisure.

Our goal for is to provide a value for money highway service, whilst continuing to provide a safe highway network and maintaining public satisfaction, in line with corporate priorities.

Executive summary

This report highlights performance of the highway asset against current service level priorities, based on previous Member decisions. It covers planned capital structural maintenance of the assets only.

The 2017-18 budget of £38.4m includes the final year of surface water drainage scheme in Greater Norwich funded from the DfT Challenge Fund, together with some National Productivity Investment Fund we were able to use for maintenance, and a County Council contribution of £0.634m for Market Town drainage. The estimated budget is £31.3m in 2018-19.

The condition data for 2006-7 is used as a baseline against which the highway backlog is measured. The overall highway asset backlog at June 2017 is £51.4m, which has slightly increased from the 2015/16 figure of £48.9m. This compares with in £59.4m in 2014/15 and £72.5m in 2013/14.

Public satisfaction with highway condition in Norfolk, remains positive. In the 2016 survey we are ranked 3rd overall of 28 shire counties, compared with 2nd last year. The slight increase in the backlog and maintenance of comparatively good public satisfaction suggests that the current asset management strategy has been effective.

The report also covers the review of the Code of Practice for Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure and some proposed changes to standards that require Member approval.

Recommendations:

1) Members to note;-

- a) Progress against the Asset Management Strategy Performance framework and the continuation of the current strategy and targets**

2) Members to review and approve the proposed;-

- a) Adoption of the Recommendations in Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure a Code of Practice**
- b) An improvement plan to prepare for the introduction of the Code**
- c) The Asset Management Framework**
- d) Frequency of highway safety inspections**

1. Proposal

1.1. **Highway Asset Performance**

- 1.1.1. Our Highway Asset Management Policy was agreed in July 2014 by EDT committee. The Strategy was reviewed on 14 October 2016 by the EDT committee who approved a performance framework.
- 1.1.2. This allows members to be informed on whether the strategy is delivering the performance targets, and to take corrective action or manage changing circumstances such as annual budgets or the regulatory framework. Evidence is in section 2.

1.2. **Well Managed Code of Practice for Highway Infrastructure**

- 1.2.1. The Code of Practice is not statutory but provides highway authorities with guidance on highways management. Adoption of the recommendations within this document is a matter for each highway authority.
- 1.2.2. Highway authorities have certain legal obligations to which they have to comply, and which will on occasion be subject to claims or legal action by those seeking to establish non-compliance. It has been recognised that in such cases, the contents of the Code may be considered relevant best practice.
- 1.2.3. The standards included in our Transport Asset Management Plan are developed with reference to the Code, based on our own legal interpretation, risks, needs and priorities.
- 1.2.4. A new Code of Practice was published in October 2016. It changed to a risk-based approach determined by each Highway Authority and will involve appropriate analysis, development and approval through authorities' executive processes. Its use evidenced by Member's approval will aid the development of our service.
- 1.2.5. Approval is sought to adopt the 36 recommendations and an Improvement Plan to manage this change.
- 1.2.6. The individual proposals for highway safety inspections, are detailed in section 4 and have been developed with the new Code in mind.

2. **Highway Asset Performance**

2.1. **Performance Framework**

- 2.1.1. The progress of our Asset Management Strategy is informed by the performance measures agreed with this committee on the 14 October 2016. The 2016-17 result can be seen in App A. These are generally in line with targets and no change to the strategy and performance targets are suggested at this stage. Members are asked to note the progress.

2.2. **Asset Condition**

- 2.2.1. It was recognised that the current level of funding makes the maintenance of current condition challenging and that in most circumstances the strategy will be to manage a slight deterioration.
- 2.2.2. Any shortfall in achieving 2006-07 service levels, or otherwise agreed in 2013-14, is described as a backlog. The overall highway asset backlog at April 2017 is £51.4m. This is a slight increase compared with £48.9m in 2016. This has been summarised in Appendix B.
- 2.2.3. The progress of the Greater Norwich Drainage scheme has reduced the drainage backlog but this has been balanced by the slight decline in road condition. A summary on the performance of individual asset types can be seen in Appendix C.

2.3. **Customer Satisfaction**

- 2.3.1. The National Highways and Transport Network Survey is carried out annually. For the 2016 survey 3,300 Norfolk residents, chosen at random, were asked to rate a range of highway and transportation services, including public transport, walking and cycling, congestion road safety and highway maintenance.
- 2.3.2. Altogether 106 local authorities signed up for the 2016 survey. Out of the 28 county councils, Norfolk ranked:
- 2.3.3. Overall – 3rd
Traffic management – 3rd
Condition of highways – 5th
Local bus services – 5th
Street lighting – 9th
Road safety education – 10th
Satisfaction with public rights of way – 25th
- 2.3.4. Overall Norfolk County Council ranked second against comparable county councils, compared with second in 2015.
- 2.3.5. The results of the 2017 survey are due to be released shortly after the committee meeting, and published on 30 October.

3. Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure a Code of Practice

- 3.1 We propose to adopt the 36 recommendations.
- 3.2 An improvement plan (see Appendix D) has been drafted to enable the recommendations of the new Code to be adopted for 2018-19. Approval is sought from members for the plan.
- 3.3 Recommendation 2 states, “An Asset Management Framework should be developed and endorsed by senior decision makers. All activities outlined in the Framework should be documented.
- 3.4 We are currently using the framework described in “The Asset Management Framework Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document May 2013” (see Appendix E) in the continuing development of our Transport Asset Management Plan and seek formal approval for this.

4. Highway Standards

- 4.1. As part of the report to this committee in Oct 2016 a change in inspection frequency for our main roads from monthly to 6 weekly, creating an efficiency was agreed for 2017-18 and was approved 14 Oct 2016 for 2017-18.
- 4.2. Upon implementation an opportunity was identified to extend the principle to our Town Centre inspection of both roads and footways.
- 4.3. The table to the attached Appendix F shows the proposals we are seeking approval for.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. It is anticipated that proposed changes in highway safety inspection frequency, will allow us to target our available resources as efficiently as possible.

6. Issues, risks and innovation

- 6.1. We have analysed our traffic data and third party claims and following a risk-based approach believe the change in highway safety inspections frequency and winter service decision making will not diminish highway safety.

- 6.2. If the funding for the quantity of our highways schemes is reduced in future years due to changes in budgets or inflation, the performance framework targets should be revisited as they are unlikely to be sustainable.

7. Background

- 7.1. At the EDT committee meeting on 14 October 2016 Members approved the Highways asset management strategy and performance framework- [EDT committee minutes 14 Oct 2016 Highways asset management- Improvement plan](#)
- 7.2. At the EDT committee meeting on 27 January 2017 Members approved the Highway capital programme and Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) - [EDT committee minutes 27 Jan 2017 Highways Capital Programme and TAMP](#)
- 7.3. This was subsequently approved by the Full Council meeting on the 10 April 2017. [Norfolk County Council minutes 10 Apr 2016 Highways Capital Programme and TAMP](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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