

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 20 April 2022

Staffordshire Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan



Cllr David Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport said,

“A well-managed highway network that is safe, serviceable, and sustainable is one of the best ways to foster job creation, encourage economic growth and support local communities. It makes an important contribution to social inclusion, community safety, and education and health.

This new plan sets out in detail how the Council will manage and maintain the County’s highway infrastructure.”

Report Summary:

The highway network is the highest valued infrastructure asset owned by the Council, valued in excess of £7 billion. The safe and usable condition of the network is essential in maintaining economic and social connectivity, both within Staffordshire and with the wider region. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) provides the principles for managing the network, recognising the importance of the highway infrastructure in supporting a number of the Council’s key objectives.

This report provides Cabinet with an explanation on how the Council utilises the principles of the HIAMP to guide the strategy for managing and maintaining the highway infrastructure.

Recommendation(s)

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Approve the new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for Staffordshire and annex documents.
- b. Delegate the power to approve HIAMP supporting documents to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

Local Members Interest
If report is relevant to ALL Members, type 'N/A' into table Insert Members Name and Electoral Division

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Staffordshire Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

Recommendation(s) of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Approve the new Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for Staffordshire
- b. Delegate the power to approve HIAMP supporting documents to the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Reasons for Recommendations:

Summary

1. Staffordshire's road network provides a fundamental resource, essential both to the economy of the area and for the quality of life for residents and visitors. Its effective management and maintenance have an impact on activity of all kinds, from day-to-day journeys to work, school, shopping or for leisure, through to the needs of the emergency services and the road freight industry. The appearance of our streets helps to shape the character and quality of the local environment in which people live.
2. Staffordshire County Council is responsible for maintaining over 6,200km of highway network and its associated assets. Our roads, footways, streetlights, street furniture, drains, trees, signs, road markings and bridges are just some of the different types of highway assets that are considered in our Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP).
3. Like many councils, Staffordshire is facing significant challenges in maintaining a safe and reliable highway network during a time of diminishing resources, ageing highway assets, and increasing public expectation. In recent years the investment in highway Infrastructure

and its performance has been increasingly under the spotlight. The current financial challenges and increased public demands and expectations have meant the management of our highway assets has never been more important to ensure we achieve our strategic outcomes.

4. Having a documented approach to highway asset management is good practice. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan will ensure that the Council as the Highway Authority continues to meet its statutory duties under the Highways Act 1980, optimise the allocation of our resources and secures the maximum available funding from central government.
5. The HIAMP requires a suite of individual supporting operational process documents to be developed and/or reviewed. The management of unsurfaced roads and highway trees are included as annexes to the HIAMP. It is proposed that further documents when available are approved under delegated powers by the Director of Economy, Infrastructure and skills, in conjunction with the County Treasurer and County Solicitor.

Report

Background

What is a HIAMP?

6. The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan is the link between our strategic objectives and our operational activities. The HIAMP sets out in detail how the authority manages each of our highway assets to meet strategic goals in the most effective manner having regard to statutory requirements, customer expectations and funding constraints.
7. The HIAMP supports delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and also ensures we are able to maximise DfT Incentive Fund resource, make the case for additional funding, and optimise our ability to defend claims. The format and content is based on national guidance, linking optimum allocation and resources to achieve the council's strategic ambitions.
8. For a connected Staffordshire, the HIAMP will help all those involved in delivering highway services, including members, senior decision makers, asset managers, service providers and practitioners, to embed asset management principles into the management of the asset.

The HIAMP for Staffordshire

9. The current HIAMP was approved by Cabinet in March 2019. Despite making significant progress in recent years, we, like other highways authorities, are in an increasingly challenging environment, with deteriorating assets, increasing demand, uncertainty around future funding and, more recently, facing the impacts of the covid pandemic. It is therefore timely to develop a new single and updated HIAMP document, to identify a clear investment strategy and action plan for the future that is fit for purpose and recognises the challenges and opportunities ahead.
10. The new document is a forward-looking document covering the next three years which sets out:
 - a. how highways asset management, as a key enabling service, contributes to achieving strategic outcomes and delivering Staffordshire Council's strategic plan
 - b. describes how we go about asset management and risk-based decision-making
 - c. explains what we know about the condition of our assets both now and going forward based on various investment levels
 - d. sets out our service levels in terms of what we do and what we do not, alongside an assessment of associated risks
 - e. outlines our progress in implementing the recommendations contained in Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice which provides guidance to councils regarding the management and maintenance of local roads.
11. The HIAMP was presented to the Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 28 February. The committee endorsed the approach taken in the new HIAMP.

Link to Strategic Plan

12. Asset management supports making the case for funding, for better communication with stakeholders, and facilitates a greater understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth, climate change and social well-being of local communities, in line with the outcomes and priorities set out in the Council Strategic Plan.

Legal Implications

13. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

14. The new revised plan has no detrimental impact on operations or costs.

Climate Change Implications

15. Maintenance of highways, forms part of a sustainable transport system capable of supporting the County's environmental, social and economic objectives sustainably.
16. The HIAMP considers the direct and indirect impact of highway maintenance on the environment and our communities by ensuring whole life carbon costs are taken into account when determining interventions, materials and treatments.
17. The HIAMP is aligned to support the net zero aspirations of the Council and the targets set in the Highway Infrastructure Roadmap to Net Zero 15-year plan.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
Appendix 2 – Management of Highway Trees
Appendix 3 – Management of Unsurfaced Roads

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