

# HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

16 November 2015

## **Purpose and Aim of the Policy**

The Council's vision is of a Borough that is more confident, more vibrant and more successful than ever before. A place where people prosper and grow, where they feel happy, safe and healthy. A place where people can see that our drive, integrity and imagination have delivered genuine improvements and exceptional value for money. A place that every single one of us is proud of.

The provision, maintenance and management of public infrastructure such as highways, bridges, street lighting, public rights of way and public open spaces is key to the delivery of this vision

The highway infrastructure asset is the most valuable asset owned by the Council and vital for local economic prosperity and the residents' quality of life. The significant levels of funding necessary for the management of this asset are under continuous scrutiny, with increasing pressure from central government and the public for transparency, accountability and more efficient use of the limited resources available.

Asset management of the highway infrastructure is accepted as a key factor in enabling the Council to deliver its services and corporate objectives in an efficient and effective manner. It enables the management of highway infrastructure assets through long-term planning, ensuring that standards are defined and achievable for available budgets. It also supports the case for funding and ensures better communication with customers and stakeholders, giving them a greater understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure assets make to economic growth and the needs of the local community.

## **Policy Statement**

The Council believes that effective highway infrastructure asset management is fundamental to the provision of its services and the delivery of its long-term vision and strategy. Asset management principles enable informed decisions to be made about investment and maintenance funding, assist in the targeting of resources to where they can be most effective and enables the identification and management of the risks associated with its statutory duties to manage and maintain public infrastructure.

## **Policy Detail**

In adopting an asset management approach to the management of the highway infrastructure asset we will implement a methodology which includes:

- Applying a systematic approach to the management of highways assets which takes the long-term view;
- Enhancing current methods for optimising and prioritising highway maintenance schemes to take account of whole life costs, risk management and defined levels of service;
- The use of lifecycle planning for determining suitable, cost effective planned maintenance treatments to be carried out at the optimum time in the asset's lifecycle in order to maximise the life of the asset and to understand the level of funding required over the lifespan of the asset;

- Developing rolling works programmes for all highways infrastructure assets with the aim to deliver long-term sustainable preventative maintenance schemes;
- A Communications Strategy which ensures a clear and effective dialogue with customers and stakeholders giving them the opportunity to contribute to the management of the highways asset;
- Consultation with customers and stakeholders and consideration of their expectations when defining levels of service and publishing our performance against these targets;
- Striving to achieve an overall Excellent level of service for the highway infrastructure, subject to sufficient funding being made available. Regular review of the performance management framework to set realistic levels of service and performance targets will enable auditing and monitoring of the delivery of the asset management strategy and demonstrate that investment is being used efficiently to deliver value for money;
- Assessment and management of current and future critical, strategic, tactical and operational risks associated with highways infrastructure assets along with determining appropriate mitigation measures. This will assist in reducing the risk of injury to customers and minimise the financial exposure of the council;
- Managing and regularly reviewing our asset management policy, strategy and highway infrastructure asset related plans making sure these documents are aligned to our corporate objectives and current recommendations from central government and relevant professional bodies;
- Maintaining, reviewing and updating our asset registers to ensure we hold sufficient accurate and up-to-date data;
- Benchmarking our asset management policy, plans and strategies with other similar local authorities and learning from examples of best practice;
- Actively collaborating with other local authorities and service providers to ensure the delivery of improved services, greater efficiencies and increased financial savings;
- Entering into shared procurement alliances with other local authorities in order to procure common services and deliver significant economies and improved highway maintenance services;
- Undertaking reviews of highway maintenance service areas in order to understand these operations through the eyes of our customers and stakeholders with the purpose of identifying processes that don't add value and can therefore be eliminated resulting in a better customer experience at a reduced cost; and
- Proactively seeking continual improvement of our asset management capabilities and activities to ensure value for money for customers and stakeholders.

All of the above actions, when taken as a whole, provide a robust decision making process which recognises the relationship between cost, performance and levels of service. This in turn allows potential for the delivery of an improved level of service for the resources available or, where owing to reduced budgets, can assist in ensuring the effects of a decrease in levels of service are mitigated so far as is possible.