

CABINET MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2021-26

Purpose of Report:

To seek Cabinet's approval of the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2021-26.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to approve the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2021-26, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A to this report.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Maintaining an up to date Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy is regarded as best practice and is a requirement by Government for the provision of current and future capital funding for highway maintenance. The revised Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will assist the Council in managing its highway assets efficiently.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

No action – No action would result in a reduction in the capital allocation for highway maintenance from the Department for Transport Incentive Fund and possible reputational damage to the Council.

Impacts analysed;

Equality Privacy Sustainability Crime and Disorder

Is the Decision consistent with the Council's co-operative values? Yes

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Is it included in the 28 day Notice of Decisions? Yes

HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2021-26

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval of the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2021-26.

2.0 Description of Decision

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the adoption of the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2021-26, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A to this report.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Sunderland's highway assets have an estimated value in excess of £2.3bn. Our roads, footways and cycle tracks are vital arteries that allow people and goods to move within and beyond the City.
- 3.2 The highway network supports businesses, provides access to work, schools, hospitals and leisure facilities. An effective highway network is fundamental to the City's residents, communities and businesses.
- 3.3 The Department for Transport expects Highway Authorities to adopt sound asset management policies and has encouraged them to do so by linking this to eligibility for capital funding.
- 3.4 The Council last adopted a Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy in January 2018, which re-enforced the Council's commitment to effective Highway Infrastructure Asset management.

4.0 Current Position

- 4.1 The Council's policy is to reflect and adopt current asset management best practice as an approach to maintaining, managing and improving the city's highways, against a backdrop of continued governmental financial constraints. Implementing effective asset management will ensure that the Council can:
- Correctly identify the assets it has.
 - Know the extent and condition of these assets.
 - Understand what highway users expect in terms of the condition, the availability, and the environment surrounding the City's roads, footways, and cycle tracks.

- 4.2 The Council adopted a Highway Asset Policy and Strategy in January 2018. This strategy allowed the Council to meet the obligations and best practice requirements placed upon it by central government and took a long term view on how to manage the Council's highways effectively and efficiently. The revision of this Policy and Strategy will allow the Council to pursue fresh long term strategies for highway management, in order to make the best use of the funds and resources at its disposal. The adoption of this Policy and Strategy shows a continued commitment by the Council to maintaining an effective highway network, and aligns with the Themes and Objectives set out in the City Plan 2019-2030.
- 4.3 The Council will work in collaboration with its neighbouring Highway Authority's and its appointed contractors to seek efficiencies and innovations in products, procurement and service delivery, in order to maximise the benefits of the investment in the City's highways assets.
- 4.4 The Asset Management Strategy supports the three key themes of the City Plan 2019-2030 set out below and which are developed in more detail in the attached document (Appendix A):
- A DYNAMIC SMART CITY
 - A HEALTHY SMART CITY
 - A VIBRANT SMART CITY

The fundamental aim of the strategy is to make effective asset management central to the highways service, with the intention of driving long-term planning based on robust condition evidence. The approach will take into account the whole-life-cost of highways, looking at early intervention with the right solution in the right place at the right time.

- 4.5 A Highways Asset Management Framework has been developed as part of the Policy and Strategy document. This details all the activities and processes that are necessary to develop, document, implement and continually improve our approach to asset management. This document also includes how the Highway Service will manage risk, performance and data, as well as how it will respond to climate change, delivering customer satisfaction and innovation.

5.0 Reasons for Decision

- 5.1 The adoption of an up to date Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy is regarded as best practice, and is a requirement of Government for the provision of current and future capital funding for highway asset maintenance. This new policy and strategy will enable the Council to demonstrate to the Department for Transport that the Council has embedded asset management principles into its core strategies and policies.

- 5.2 The revised Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will assist the Council in managing its highway assets efficiently with the resources available, to ensure value for money and to maximise their lifespan.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The alternative 'do nothing' option would result in a reduction in the capital allocation for highway maintenance from Government through the Department for Transport Incentive Fund and possible reputational damage to the authority.

7.0 Impact Analysis

a) Equalities

N/A.

b) Sustainability

N/A.

8.0 Relevant Considerations

8.1 Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy

a) Financial Implications – there are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Adopting the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy will, however assist the Council with securing and maximising funding from the Department of Transport Incentive Fund for future highways maintenance.

b) Legal Implications – The Assistant Director of Law and Governance has been consulted in relation to this report, and there are no implications arising out of the adoption of the attached Policy and Strategy.

c) Policy Implications - The Policy and Strategy have been drafted with the assistance of the Corporate Strategy team.

9.0 Appendix

Appendix A – Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy

