

Cabinet

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	5 December 2018
<p><u>Cabinet Member(s)</u> Daryl Turner – Cabinet Member for The Natural & Built Environment</p> <p><u>Lead Director(s)</u> Mike Harries - Corporate Director for Environment and Economy</p>	
Subject of Report	Approval of Strategic Documents linked to new 'Well Managed Highways Infrastructure' (WMHI) Code of Practice
Executive Summary	<p>This report accompanies the revised Highways Asset Management Plan, Revised Maintenance Plan, New Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects and Winter Maintenance Plan.</p> <p>The new code recommends adopting a more risk based approach based on local priorities & risk. Findings from the Policy Development Panel have been linked with the new WMHI guidance and have informed the changes made in these documents.</p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p> <p><i>Please refer to the protocol for writing reports.</i></p>	Equalities Impact Assessment:
	<p>Use of Evidence: The revisions reflect the recommendations made in the UK Roads Liaison Groups 'Well Managed Highways Infrastructure' Code of Practice.</p> <p>Findings from the Policy Development Panel have been linked with the new WMHI guidance and have informed the changes made in these documents.</p>
	Budget: The Asset management document sets out the proposed investment strategy.
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council's approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:</p>

	<p>Current Risk: HIGH Residual Risk HIGH</p> <p>The potential risks associated with third party claims arising from non-conformance with new Code of Practice is considered high but mitigated by the adjustments made in the revised documents.</p> <p>The approval of this Highways Asset Management Plan also aligns to the criteria set out in the DfT Self-Assessment exercise linked to the £2.3million incentivised funding.</p> <p>Outcomes: These key strategic documents underpin the delivery of the Highways Service which supports outcomes linked to the corporate objectives.</p> <p>Other Implications: None.</p>
Recommendation	That the Cabinet approve the revisions to these strategic documents.
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure the authority has a robust risk-based approach to asset management, highway inspection and defect repair and winter service which meet the requirements of the new code and criteria linked to incentivised funding.
Appendices	<p>Appendix 1 - Highways Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects.</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Winter Maintenance Plan.</p>
Background Papers	None.
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1. Revised Strategic Documents – Highways Infrastructure Assets

1.1 This report accompanies the submission of key strategic documents for approval. These documents are:

- The Highways Asset Management Plan (Draft) (Appendix 1).
- The Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects (Draft) (Appendix 2).
- Dorset Highways Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan 2018/19 (Appendix 3).

1.2 The revision of these strategic documents are linked to the new 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' (WMHI) Code of Practice, and fulfils the criteria set out in the DfT's self-assessment exercise, linked to £2.3million of Incentivised Funding.

2. Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects

2.1 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' (WMHI) is the new Highway Code of Practice and was published on 28 October 2016. It replaces Well Maintained Highways and Well Lit Highways, with a single code focussing on the need to promote an integrated approach to asset management that is based on local needs, priorities and with the key factor of affordability.

2.2 The underlying principle of the new code is that authorities should adopt their own risk-based approach and a risk management regime, such as those set out within ISO31000, for all aspects of highway maintenance policy.

2.3 The Council's current Highway 'Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects' has been robust and resulted in a good highway claim repudiation rate. However, it is now inconsistent with new national guidance which defines good asset management practice. Adoption of the new Highways Code of Practice for the Classification of Highway Safety Hazards and Defects would enable the council to continue to defend claims robustly.

2.4 The new code does not provide prescriptive or minimum standards, as was the case with Well Maintained Highways, but expects authorities to establish and implement realistic levels of service appropriate to their own circumstances.

2.5 Findings from the Policy Development Panel have been linked with the new WMHI guidance and have informed the changes made in these documents. Although the new code is not a statutory document it will be referenced and accepted as the expected approach to highway asset management and will form one of the key elements of the Self-Assessment Process for DfT funding.

2.6 Therefore, it is imperative we meet the recommendations of the new guidance to ensure we remain a Band 3 Authority and securing the highest level of funding as a drop to Band 2 would result in a reduction of £1.2 million.

2.7 Authorities were given until October 2018 to review policies and procedures and implement the new code. Risk and insurance managers have been involved during this transitional period, working closely with colleagues in highways to ensure, the authority has a robust risk-based approach to asset management, highway inspection and defect repair, which meet the requirements of the new code.

3. The Highways Asset Management Plan

- 3.1 The Highways Asset Management Plan has been revised to reflect our current approach to the management and maintenance of our highways assets and follows discussions through the Policy Development Panel relating to investment strategies and levels of service.
- 3.2 The revised HAMP document reflects recommendations in national guidance, in the form of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) and conforms to the criteria set out in the Department for Transport's self-assessment criteria, which links to £2.4 million Incentivised Funding.
- 3.3 For the purpose of this approval the Draft Asset Policy and Strategy document is attached as Appendix 1.

4. Dorset Highways Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan 2018/19

- 4.1 The revised Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan reflects changes made to the old Code of Practice (Well Managed Highway Infrastructure). At present the new Code makes no changes in relation to winter service.
- 4.2 However following a review of the previous season and a review of the routes, there are some amendments to the routes, in particular to the split of the Toller Down and Sherborne domains (which were formerly merged for the purpose of treatments). Appendix 3.

5. The Highways Maintenance Plan

- 5.1 The revision of the Highway Maintenance Plan has been deferred until the formation of the new authority.
- 5.2 The HAMP documents refer to levels of service associated with all asset groups which at present are unchanged from the previous document.
- 5.3 We will be guided by the new authority members as to whether a revised Highways Maintenance Plan is required.

6. Code of Practice

- 6.1 The new Code of Practice specifies that our revised strategic documents need to demonstrate that all involved in the delivery of the Highways service from asset management, safety inspections to claims management, all have the skills and competency required to implement and work within the remit of the new regime (Appendix 2).

Mike Harries
Corporate Director for Environment and Economy
November 2018