

Cabinet

1 March 2022

Dorset Highways Asset Management Plan Review 2022

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr R Bryan, Highways, Travel and Environment

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation: That the Cabinet approve the proposed Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy, which is a summary document of the revised Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP).

Reason for Recommendation:

The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy was reviewed by the Place and Resources Overview Committee on the 10th February 2022, and a recommendation was made that it is submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy document sets out how we have aligned our approach to support Dorset Council priorities and how the authority will manage its highway assets.

It further documents our investment strategy across all highway asset groups, based on anticipated funding, which was determined by the Task and Finish Group for Highways and Transport.

The Department for Transport criteria states that we must have a current asset management policy, and strategic document, reviewed in the last two years,

which must be signed off by senior decision makers, or we lose up to £2million of DfT incentivised funding.

1. Executive Summary

Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy

1.1 The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy document is a summary of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) review. It is a key strategic document that is a requirement of the criteria documented in the Department for Transport's self-assessment questionnaire, linked to £2million of Incentivised funding.

1.2 The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy document sets out how our highways asset management approach supports key priorities set out in the Dorset Council Plan.

1.3 It further documents consideration of investment scenarios across all of our highway assets, which was discussed with the Task and Finish Group for Highways and Transport.

1.4 The outcomes of those discussions are illustrated in a proposed investment strategy across all highway assets, to include recommendations for a five year annual commitment of £6.7million of corporate capital funding to support highway maintenance strategies.

1.4 The full HAMP was last approved in December 2018 by the former Dorset County Council and Shadow Executive for Dorset Council, for implementation from 1st April 2019, and is therefore now due for review. The HAMP was also considered by Place & Resources Overview Committee on 10 February 2022. A copy of the extract note from that meeting can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

1.5 A copy of the full draft Highways Asset Management Plan is contained within the supporting documents.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The proposals in this document link to annual capital investment from the Department for Transport Maintenance Block capital funding, Incentive Fund and Pothole Fund.

2.2 There are recommendations that link to a five year commitment to an additional corporate capital top up equating to £6.7million per year, which is included in the 2022/23 budget approved by Full Council.

2.3 This increased capital investment is expected to reduce future reactive, highway maintenance activities.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

3.1 The HAMP demonstrates how our Highways Service strategy is aligned to, and supports, all of the key priorities documented in the Dorset Council Plan, including safety and wellbeing. This is achieved by implementing a risk based approach to management of our highway assets.

3.2 This includes strategies that will promote active travel, leading to improved physical and mental wellbeing, and reduce pollution to improve air quality.

4. Climate implications

4.1 The Highways asset management policy and strategy documents show how we are tackling climate issues, both in terms of reducing carbon use, and managing the effects the changes to our climate is having on highway network resilience.

4.2 This includes supporting active travel, showing our move to low carbon systems, and demonstrating the hierarchy for treatment starts with low carbon responses.

4.3 The strategy also considers future investment required to manage the impacts of climate change effectively.

5. Other Implications

5.1 None

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

6.2 The Highways Asset Management strategy documents how under investment across all of our highway assets is impacting on the condition of our highway assets. It means we're in a situation of managed decline, and this has a negative impact on the number of reactive responses required, and future risk to the

authority in terms of finance (cost of reactive revenue responses), safety, and reputation.

6.3 The strategy for managed decline is set by the Department for Transport in the knowledge that their base funding is not sufficient to maintain the overall condition of the UK's roads.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

7.1 The EQIA form has been signed off and approved. It was agreed that there would be neutral impact against all protected characteristics groups, with an acknowledgement that there could be potential for those groups, including rural isolation and people with caring responsibilities, to be impacted upon by highway strategies. Though at this stage there is no clear change to strategy that would suggest there would be any negative impact.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Highways Asset Management Strategy 2022

Appendix 2 Extract of the notes of the Informal Meeting of the Place and Resources Overview Committee held on 10 February 2022

9. Background Papers

[Highways Asset Management Plan Full Draft](#)

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy

10 Introduction

10.1 The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy document provides an overview and summarises strategic elements contained within the detailed Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) review.

10.2 It is a key strategic document that is a requirement of the criteria documented in the Department for Transport's self-assessment questionnaire, linked to £2million of Incentivised funding. The requirement in the DfT's self-assessment questionnaire referencing our asset policy and strategy, is a show stopper question. This means if we don't have a strategy asset management document, we are Band 1 (lowest) in that question and therefore Band 1 overall, meaning we would lose 100% of the £2million of incentivised funding.

10.3 There is a requirement that the HAMP should be reviewed every two years and be signed off by 'senior decision makers'. As our HAMP was last approved in December 2018 by the former Dorset County Council, and Shadow Executive for Dorset Council, for implementation in April 2019, it is therefore due for renewal, or we fail to meet the requirements of the Band 3 requirement to secure 100% Incentivised Funding.

10.4 Because of the detailed nature of our live HAMP document, it was preferred that a summarised strategic document would be submitted for approval, which would be our public facing document, with the full revised draft HAMP included as a background paper for reference.

Purpose

10.5 The Highways Asset Management Plan is a 'live' document which we annually review which offers transparency in demonstrating to our stakeholders, how we manage our highway assets. It has served to enable officers to engage with the Task and Finish Group for Highways and Transport, to discuss and understand performance, potential investment scenarios and impacts across each of our highway assets.

- 10.6 The review of our strategy through the HAMP gives asset lead officers the opportunity to reassess appraisals of specific asset groups, documenting what we know about each asset group, what we don't know, and actions /opportunities to improve asset knowledge. There is a summary of performance associated with each asset group also, where condition data is available.
- 10.7 Each asset group, where it has been achievable, has documented investment scenarios, which have been presented and discussed with the Highways and Transport Task and Finish Group for consideration. These have been derived from nationally promoted lifecycle planning toolkits, to project the impacts of investment scenarios.
- 10.8 Confirmation of Maintenance Block, Incentive Fund, and Pothole funding from 2022/23 has yet to be confirmed by the Department for Transport, therefore we have based figures on expected budgets, arising from the budget announcement in November 2021.
- 10.9 The strategy links to Dorset Council priorities reinforcing outcomes documented in the Highways Service Plan particularly linked to keeping our highway users safe, maintaining resilience which supports our economy and how we are adapting our approach to give consideration to climate change through promotion of active travel, which considers the impacts on our highway assets arising from climate change.

Conclusion

- 10.10 The Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy is important as it defines how our approach to management of our highway assets supports Dorset Council priorities, which we can then communicate to all Highways staff, Dorset Council Members, Parish and Town Councils and the public.
- 10.11 We can also then be confident that we meet the requirements of the DfT's self-assessment criteria to ensure we secure 100% of the £2million DfT Incentivised Funding.
- 10.12 We are required to publish our asset management strategy on our website.