

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 19 December 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy, and Transport

Title: Highway Policies Review

Purpose: To seek approval of amendments to the Council's Highway Asset Management Strategy, and Highway Asset Management Policy

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the proposed amendments to the Highway Asset Management Policy as summarised in Appendix 1 and set out in Appendix 2; and**
 - (2) Approve the proposed amendments to the Highway Asset Management Strategy, including the review of the Network Hierarchy as summarised in Appendix 1 and set out in Appendix 3.**
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1. Background Information

1.1. Many of the tasks carried out by East Sussex Highways are statutory duties or powers defined by legislation. The highway policies set out the County Council's position where local discretion is permitted in how duties or powers are applied, or in areas for which there is no legislation.

1.2. Highways maintenance policies and standards have been developed and adopted by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) over the years to:

- Ensure compliance with new statutory requirements and industry best practice.
- Respond to incremental changes and improvements to operational practices.
- Provide consistency and clarity for customers and key decision-makers.
- And manage the Highway Authority's risk.

1.3. The ESCC Highway Asset Management Policy is a stand-alone document which establishes the Council's commitment to Highway Asset Management and demonstrates how infrastructure investment through an asset management approach aligns with the Authority's corporate vision and Council priorities. The Highway Asset Management Strategy describes how the policy is delivered.

1.4. The Policy and Strategy were last approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in November 2018.

1.5. In line with the Well-manged Highway Infrastructure (WMHI) Code of Practice requirement for evidence-based reviews, the Highways Service has created a policy review process. This ensures all policies and plans are reviewed every two years at a minimum or more frequently if triggered by an emergency event, change in legislation/ best practice guidance or in response to feedback from stakeholders etc. This report is the result of the 2022 review.

1.6. The next review, scheduled for 2024 will include reference and links to the Local Transport Plan 4, which is currently in the initial stages of consultation.

2. Supporting Information

2.1. The review of the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy formalises practices that are already in place and therefore will not result in a change to the service, amendments are made to ensure that the documents and methodology comply with:

- Current legislation, guidance, and best practice.
- Corporate policies and priorities, including the local transport policies.
- Current Highways and Infrastructure Service Contract needs.

2.2. Consultation has been carried out with key stakeholders, including the relevant Highways teams, including Asset, Commercial and technical experts.

2.3. The amended policy and strategy have been compared to those of neighbouring authorities and those considered best practice to ensure a consistent approach.

2.4. The 2017 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been reviewed and updated to reflect the current EQIA framework. Analysis and evidence demonstrate that there is little potential for discrimination and that appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups have been considered. See Appendix 4.

2.5. A review of the Network Hierarchy is included in this Highway Asset Management Strategy, this details the process used to define each road; from Strategic Route or Minor Road. The network hierarchy helps define the level of inspection required and the priority for maintenance. It is also used to help identify the Resilient Network which are roads identified to maintain economic activity and access to key services in times of extreme weather and other emergency scenarios.

2.6. Following the internal review of the existing Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy, proposals have been made to amend them as appropriate. A rationale for the amendments to the Policy and Plan is provided in Appendix 1

2.7. These amendments will not result in a change to the service and there is no additional maintenance or cost associated with the amendments.

3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. The Lead Member is recommended to approve the amendments to the Highway Asset Management Policy and the Highway Asset Management Strategy as summarised in Appendix 1 and set out in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 to ensure that East Sussex County Council has a clear and consistent asset management approach to maintaining and managing the highway network.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Highway Asset Management Policy (2018)

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/obwha0dp/highway-asset-management-policy.pdf>

Highway Asset Management Strategy 2018-2024

<https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/0q1kopuy/access-highway-asset-management-strategy.pdf>