

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 27 November 2023

Title: Highway Asset Management Plan Annual Information Report 2023

Portfolios: Environment	Cabinet Member: Councillor Hannah Johnson
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Report from Service Area: Regeneration and Economic Development

Responsible Officer: John Sparkes, Director of Regeneration and Economic Development
Tel: (0191) 643 6091

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) Annual Information Report for 2023 to Cabinet. This fulfils the commitment to provide Cabinet with an annual information report outlining the highway and infrastructure work undertaken over the last 12 months. It includes future planned work activities as well as other items of relevant interest. The annual information report attached to this report is the seventh annual report presented since adoption of the HAMP.

1.2 Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet note the content of the HAMP Annual Information Report 2023, attached as Appendix 1.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 25 August 2023.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

The proposals in this report relate to a number of themes in Our North Tyneside, the Council Plan 2021 to 2025, in particular:

- A secure North Tyneside: We will continue to invest £2m per year on fixing our roads and pavements
- A green North Tyneside: We will increase opportunities for safe walking and cycling, including providing a segregated cycleway at the coast
- A thriving North Tyneside: We will review how the council purchases and contracts for goods and services to maximise value for money, social value and environmental sustainability

1.5 Information:

Background

- 1.5.1 In September 2017, Cabinet adopted an updated Highway Asset Management Plan 2017 - 2032 (HAMP). This sets out the Authority's approach to maintaining the highways for which the Authority is responsible over a 15-year period and responds to the Elected Mayor and Cabinet's policy direction which included providing a greater emphasis on footways to help support walking and other means of active travel. It also responds to feedback from residents which has consistently told the Authority that the maintenance of roads and footpaths is a top priority. This is reflected in the 'Our North Tyneside Plan' including a commitment to invest additional capital funding in repairing roads and pavements. A well-maintained highway network is vital for supporting the local economy and general wellbeing of the Borough.
- 1.5.2 The HAMP includes a commitment to provide Cabinet with an annual information report outlining progress and key issues associated with the

maintenance of the Authority's public highway network which includes around 900km of roads and over 2000km of footpaths together with more than 200 bridges, subways and other structures. The report has a particular emphasis around the condition of the network and the resources required to maintain it effectively.

1.5.3 Much has been achieved over the lifetime of the HAMP and since 2017, around £95m has been invested in maintenance and improvement works. Investment in specialist ICT highway asset management systems has enabled the gathering of accurate inventory and condition data which allows resources to be targeted in the most effective way. Other innovation includes systems to identify the best treatment options to maximise the life of the asset and get best value for money.

1.5.4 The following has been achieved over the lifetime of the HAMP:

- 178 km of road renewed and 92km of footways improved
- 56 bridges repaired
- 295 footway improvement schemes completed
- 19 major highway projects delivered (e.g. Four Lane corridor improvements)

1.5.5 Currently the highway maintenance capital improvements which are delivered through the HAMP are financed through the following funding streams.

- Government annual grants (Local Transport Plan Maintenance Block allocation). The 2023/24 allocation was £1.253m. This is used for planned maintenance such as road resurfacing and bridge refurbishments
- Government Highway Maintenance Incentive Fund. The 2023/24 allocation was £313k. This is allocated to Authorities that are able to demonstrate best practice in highway asset management. The funding is used to top up the maintenance block funding and associated work programmes
- Government Pothole Fund. The 2023/24 allocation was £1.253m. This is further funding allocated to local authorities for works to repair potholes or undertake works to prevent them forming in the first place

- Additional Central Government roads funding which was announced in the March budget and allocated to highway authorities to spend in 2023/24. The Authority's allocation was £501,000
- Authority investment in additional highway maintenance. For a number of years now, £2m has been invested by the Authority to improve highways. The funding is spent on additional road resurfacing and footpath renewal work that could not otherwise be achieved through regular Government funding. The Authority's Investment Plan currently includes a commitment to continue with this additional investment
- External grants. This is funding for specific projects acquired through bids to various external funders. The Authority has been highly successful in securing numerous capital grants for major highway improvement schemes totalling around £37million over the last 10 years.

1.5.6 Since the introduction of the HAMP, the Authority has been able to maintain the highway network to a good standard, mainly due to its commitment to provide additional investment. However, this has not been without its challenges, most notable of which is inadequate funding from Central Government coupled with increased costs of materials arising from inflation and other world events. The central funding available has not increased in line with these inflationary materials price pressures. Improvement of the network would not have been possible had the Authority been solely reliant on Government funding.

1.5.7 The requirement to operate within government funding restraints and the increased costs of highway maintenance due to continuing inflation pressures in the supply chain are significant challenges. However, in response to these challenges, the HAMP provides a structured programme of targeted investment into the highway network with the objective of ensuring it is maintained in a serviceable condition to meet the needs of the travelling public and businesses.

1.5.8 The Authority has also seen a change in how it manages and invests in the highway network. In line with the Authority's commitment to increase active travel, the Authority has continued to introduced schemes that have reallocated road space to cycling. In October 2023, work commenced on a £11m scheme to build a new sustainable cycling and walking route along the seafront. This builds on previous similar schemes already delivered and,

together with other similar planned works, will see a greater use of the highway by a broader mix of users.

- 1.5.9 However, this opportunity to increase active travel and investment in the Authority's highway infrastructure will also bring increased maintenance liabilities that will need to be factored into the Authority's future financial planning. Based on current funding trends, there is a concern that it will be difficult to sustain the condition of the network in future years. In addition to limited Government funding for core maintenance works, the construction market is still recovering from the impact of the war in Ukraine and inflation remains higher than the Government target. At its peak the cost of surfacing materials was around 22% higher than normal. Although prices are now stabilising, these are still significantly higher than in recent years. As such, as the Authority looks ahead, it will need to align its core maintenance funding with external investment and targeted interventions where they will have the maximum impact.
- 1.5.10 Over the last 12 months, a number of positive changes to the highway maintenance service have been made such as improvements to operational processes and a number of service action plans have been developed. For example, a feasibility study is currently being undertaken around potentially introducing a core testing regime to ensure that public utility reinstatements are undertaken correctly to protect the future structural integrity of the highway. This would be achieved by undertaking core sample testing of the construction layers of reinstatement works to ensure compliance with the national code of practice.
- 1.5.11 Cabinet is therefore invited to consider and note the contents of the HAMP Annual Information Report 2023, attached as Appendix 1. The report will be used to inform investment choices and address the current challenges of maintaining the highway network. The report is aimed at supporting those investment choices so that any decisions about changes in highway maintenance priorities and resources can be made in an informed manner having regard to the Authority's policy objectives.
- 1.5.12 Following the Cabinet meeting, all ward councillors will be invited to view the HAMP Annual Information Report via the members intranet. The report will also be published on the Authority's website so it can be viewed by the public.

Key Highlights of the HAMP Annual Information Report 2023

1.5.13 The following key highlights can be drawn from the annual report:

- The highway network is the most extensive and valuable asset in the Authority's ownership
- The highway network is a strategically important asset and a well-maintained network is vital to support the local economy. Every day, thousands of residents are reliant on the highway network to travel to work and school. Visitors to the borough also use the network to access the Authority's various tourist attractions which further stimulates the local economy
- The current total value of highway assets is **£1,840,000,000 (£1.84 billion)** on a Gross Replacement Cost basis
- The successful implementation of the HAMP and the adoption of asset management principles by the Authority is demonstrating that, over the years, the general condition of the road network is good – however, the Authority is now at a point where further investment should be considered if a decline in condition is to be avoided.
- Due to continued additional Authority investment over the years, the highway network is currently in a good state and adequate to perform its function. However, given the constraints around Government funding coupled with concerns around inflation, it will become increasingly challenging to maintain the highway in a serviceable condition.
- The report suggests that consideration should be given to reviewing investment and maintenance priorities in light of the emerging funding and inflation issues. Discussions will continue around what options might be available for the future management of the network in the most effective way.
- With regard to reactive maintenance and core services, the Technical Services Partnership continues to achieve its Key Performance Indicator targets and through its Annual Service Plan is identifying innovative ways of working and service improvements which is evident in the report.

- Customer engagement remains a prominent feature of the HAMP. Feedback received from customers on their investment priorities is used to inform forward programmes of improvement work.
- The Authority has successfully delivered all programmed highway asset improvement schemes to date.

1.6 Decision options:

As this report is for Cabinet's information there are no decisions options.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

No alternative options have been outlined as no further direct decisions by Cabinet are sought in relation to the HAMP Annual Information Report 2023.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Highway Asset Management Plan 2017 to 2032 Annual Information Report, November 2023

1.9 Contact officers:

Mark Newlands, Highways & Infrastructure Manager, 0191 643 6129

Nick Preston, Capita Operations Manager, 07594 522 116

Amar Hassan, Principal Accountant, 0191 643 5747

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

[North Tyneside Highway Asset Management Plan 2017 - 2032](#)

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no immediate financial and resource implications directly arising from this report. However, there are a number of issues contained in the HAMP Annual Information Report which do themselves have long term financial

implications for the Authority. Maintaining the highway in a good condition continues to be challenging at current levels of government funding and consideration now needs to be given to future funding and priorities in order to maintain the network to a high standard. Therefore, investment and prioritisation options will need to be reviewed and considered as part of the medium-term financial planning process.

2.2 Legal

Under section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 the Authority as a Highway Authority has a statutory duty to maintain highway maintainable at public expense, namely, roads, footways and cycle tracks.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

The Annual Information Report (at Section 10) describes the approach to customer engagement.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equality and diversity issues directly arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

The risks associated with matters in this report are managed in accordance with the risk protocols set out in the Highway Asset Management Plan 2017 to 2032.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report. However, the information report informs Cabinet of the condition of the built environment with regards to the Authority's highway infrastructure.

Wherever possible, the Highways Service seeks to utilise sustainable methods of construction in order to support the Authority's Carbon Net-Zero 2030 Action Plan. This includes the use of recycled materials, low temperature asphalt products and so on. The report also reflects on the improvement to infrastructure that supports active travel and works that support the borough's adaptation to climate change, including drainage works, which improve flood resilience.

PART 3 – SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Director of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Chief Executive