

# Highway Asset Management

**Council of the Isles of Scilly**

**Highway Asset Management Policy**



Council of the  
ISLES OF SCILLY

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## Introduction

This policy has been prepared to outline the principles and practice for the management of the Council's highway assets, with reference to the recommendations contained within the national 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.

## Purpose and aim of the policy

Asset management is widely recognised as a means to develop longer term planning, ensuring that levels of service are defined and achievable within available budgets. It supports the case for funding and facilitates a better understanding of the contribution highway infrastructure makes to the economy and social well-being of communities.

This policy aims to reference and demonstrate alignment to many of the Council's strategic aims and goals. Effective and efficient management of the highway infrastructure is a key factor in the ability of the Council to deliver many of its services and objectives contained within the Corporate Plan 2022-2026, specifically :-

### **OBJECTIVE 7**

Seek funding to support businesses and residents to adapt to climate change and reduce their carbon emissions.

### **OBJECTIVE 10**

Make it easier for pedestrians to walk around St Mary's by improving pavements and making them safer and more accessible for all.

### **OBJECTIVE 11**

Tackle traffic management, road safety and parking on St Mary's, focussing on problem areas such as the industrial estate and Hugh Town.

### **OBJECTIVE 21**

Make the case to government for funding arrangements for the Council that better reflect our island context and the range of services that we must offer.

Other strategic plans are also relevant as follows:-

- Local Flood Risk management Strategy 2017 – pending update in 2025
- Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan 2023 – 2033

# Strategic Framework



## Policy statement

The Council believes that effective asset management is fundamental to the delivery of its services and the delivery of its long-term vision and strategy for key infrastructure. Asset Management principles enable informed decisions to be made about investment and maintenance funding, assist in the targeting of resources to where they can be most effective and enables the management of risks associated with its statutory duties to manage and maintain public infrastructure.

## Policy detail

In adopting an asset management approach to the management of highway infrastructure the Council will be implementing a regime which includes:

- A systematic approach which takes a long-term view
- The consideration of the whole of life costs of maintaining an asset
- The explicit consideration of customer expectations and defined levels of service
- The optimisation and prioritisation of works based on assessed needs derived from the defined levels of service
- The use of lifecycle planning to inform the optimal treatment at each stage of the assets life

All of the above when implemented in a formalised approach enables better decision making which takes account of the relationship between cost and performance.

## Constraints

Whilst the policy describes a recognised and logical regime, it is evident that the limited economies of scale and remoteness of the islands significantly inhibits the Council's ability to achieve full benefit from the principles outlined. For example, the challenges for accessing specialist plant and bulk materials in a timely manner considerably limits some of the potential for efficiency from the supply chain. Furthermore, additional skills and resources may often need to be procured adding to costs.

## Consultation and engagement

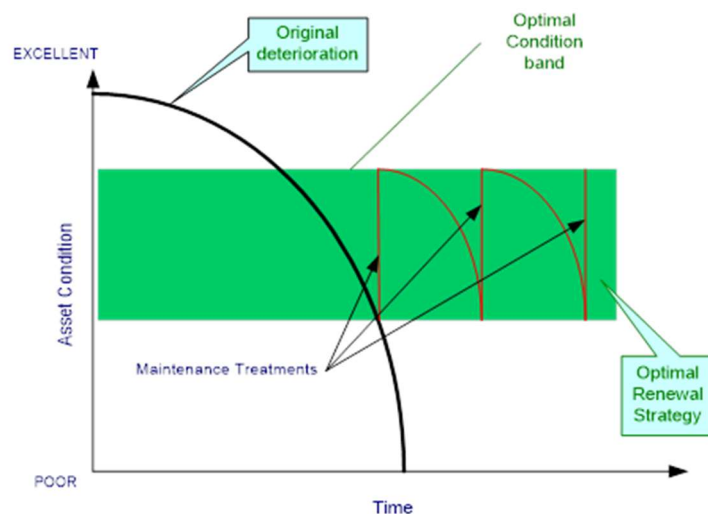
The Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan was consulted upon in 2022 and adopted in December 2023. This Plan includes specific references to the improvement of highway infrastructure which are relevant to the application of an asset management approach.

Further specific consultations are employed for projects and initiatives to meet aspirations for Active and Sustainable travel.

## Lifecycle Planning and budget projection

Lifecycle planning is a technique which enables linkages to be made between a particular assets, the desired level of service, the current condition, future maintenance needs and future funding. It should be a consideration in all infrastructure investments to ensure long term funding provision.

At a detailed level a lifecycle plan can be developed for determinate life assets charting the journey from construction to expiry, when the cycle is repeated. This is illustrated in the diagram below.



Lifecycle planning also enables the development of work programmes which make best use of the available funding, mitigating the risk of failure by allocating funds to where they will be most beneficial. It should be noted that this type of allocation moves away from a more traditional “worst first” approach and targets work programmes at those parts of the infrastructure which present the greatest risk and where early treatment can achieve the most cost effective outcome, namely a ‘stitch in time’ approach.

Such an approach enables the delivery of a service which is as effective as possible, allows an optimal allocation of resources to those areas which will contribute most to the overall goals and objectives of the Council and allow an assessment to be made of the residual risk. When new assets are constructed the ongoing costs of lifecycle maintenance and replacement will be factored into long term budgeting processes.

## Forward Programming

A prioritised forward programme of work for a rolling period of three to five years will be held for each major highway asset group (i.e. carriageways, footways, drainage). The schemes on this programme will be derived from the annual service and specialist inspections and surveys which are detailed in the Highway Maintenance Manual. Schemes should be costed and reviewed annually to ensure that the programme is up to date and that prioritisation within the programme is still valid when considering any future risk issues and timely investment opportunities.

Specifically, it is prudent for the Council to establish a three to five year carriageway maintenance cycle for smaller sections of road in need of patching replacement using a hot applied bituminous material. A ten to fifteen year road re-surfacing cycle is also desirable for larger lengths of road where more extensive works are necessary based on survey information and inspections. Such a regime supports the purpose and aim of this policy and promotes more cost effective use of typically more expensive short term life patch and repair products.

## Budget Management and Planning

Budgets for infrastructure management are typically allocated into revenue and capital expenditure.

It is important to understand the revenue costs for safety and routine management of the road network compared to the costs of repair and replacement of assets, for which capital funding may be more relevant. This then links to the core service level headings described in the Highway Maintenance Manual for Safety, Serviceability and Sustainability.

This will enable understanding of the pressure upon revenue funding where frequent and costly reactive work may be increasing, due to underlying condition issues. It also quantifies the typical costs of routine and scheduled works each year, depending upon frequencies set out in the Highway Maintenance Manual.

The forward programme of work generated by annual service and specialist inspections enables the quantification of a 'backlog' of capital funded works, which fall under the Sustainability heading. Regular updating of the programme and estimated costs provides information for forward budget planning and supports bidding and funding opportunities, with the aim of timely intervention within the lifecycle.

## Environmental considerations

The determination of materials, products and treatments for newly constructed assets and maintenance schemes will take into account the unique character of the area and any designations. However, consideration of lifecycle costs and durability will also be required to ensure sustainability and long term affordability.

## Risk Management

The adoption of an asset management approach can be seen as an exercise in managing risk, the key aspect of which is the asset hierarchy reflecting their priority and importance in service delivery terms, relative to one another. This then enables the quantification and allocation of risk. This principle flows through the whole of the Asset Management Framework and is a fundamental input into the determination of levels of service, the determination of the scope and frequency of inspections, the allocation of budgets and the development of work programmes. The Council has developed a clear hierarchy within its Highway Maintenance Manual.

When used in conjunction with lifecycle planning and deterioration models the asset management approach enables an organisation make accurate predictions of funding required to sustain levels of service and to quantify the risk to the organisation in terms of service delivery, third party liability and the loss of value and integrity of the infrastructure assets.

Asset management is a way of operating which seeks to incorporate all aspects of management activity into one overarching, inter-related system so that conflicting demands, goals, objectives, delivery targets and statutory obligations can be balanced, and residual risk identified.

## Performance management

The management and mitigation of risks begin at a corporate level and are translated through service planning policies and plans accordingly. This policy sets a broader high level context highway asset management and is supported by a more detailed policy regime within the Council's Highway Maintenance Manual.

The effectiveness and application of this policy will be regularly reviewed as part of the ongoing management of Service planning.



## Communicating the policy

This policy will be made available on the Council's website.

## Non-compliance

Failure to adhere to the policy may ultimately leave the Council in a position where it is not able to discharge its statutory duty to maintain and lead to a deterioration of the value and condition of publicly owned infrastructure.