

Draft

**Oxfordshire County Council
Highway Infrastructure
Management Policy**

Foreword

The County Council has long recognised the important role that the highway network plays in keeping people and places connected, especially in a rural county such as Oxfordshire.

Keeping our highway network in good condition is crucial to support our corporate vision of 'A Thriving Oxfordshire'

Providing and maintaining a highway network that meets the needs of all is something the County Council is committed to. However, we face the challenge of achieving this aim against a backdrop of reducing budgets, increasing costs, historic underinvestment and a growing County with increased levels of use of the network.

The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy and the Highway Infrastructure Management Strategy have been developed to help take account of these challenges. The policy is designed to maintain our highway infrastructure efficiently and drive continuous improvement in the way we look after our highway network to ensure that it continues to be safe, serviceable and sustainable. It sets out the principles that will ensure we adopt and develop a strategic approach that takes account of the expectations of stakeholders and customers and targets the council's resources to deliver a network that supports the future prosperity and well-being of the people of Oxfordshire.

1. The Highway Infrastructure Management Framework

Oxfordshire County Council considers effective infrastructure management to be one of the key factors in creating a 'Thriving Oxfordshire' and to facilitate delivery of significant parts of the corporate priorities as set out in the current and emerging Corporate Plans – section 7 of this document sets this out in further detail.

It also enables the Council to meet its legal obligations (e.g. Highways Act 1980) and supports the over-arching goals of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4):-

- *To support jobs and housing growth and economic vitality;*
- *To reduce emissions, enhance air quality and support the transition to a low carbon economy*
- *To protect and enhance Oxfordshire's environment and improve quality of life (including public health, safety and individual wellbeing)*

The County Council has been applying the principles of a formalised approach to highway asset/infrastructure management for a number of years, publishing our first Highways Asset Management Plan in 2008. More recently we have published a new Plan (September 2014) covering the 5 years up to 2019.

The County Council continues to review its approach to highway asset and infrastructure management in the light of national good practice and as a result we have developed a Highway Infrastructure Management Framework which brings together the core elements of the management of the county highway infrastructure and associated assets. This framework places our approach in context, identifying the enablers that support asset management and the elements of asset management planning and delivery that contribute to our infrastructure management approach.

Diagram 1.1 overleaf shows the Highway Infrastructure Management Framework.

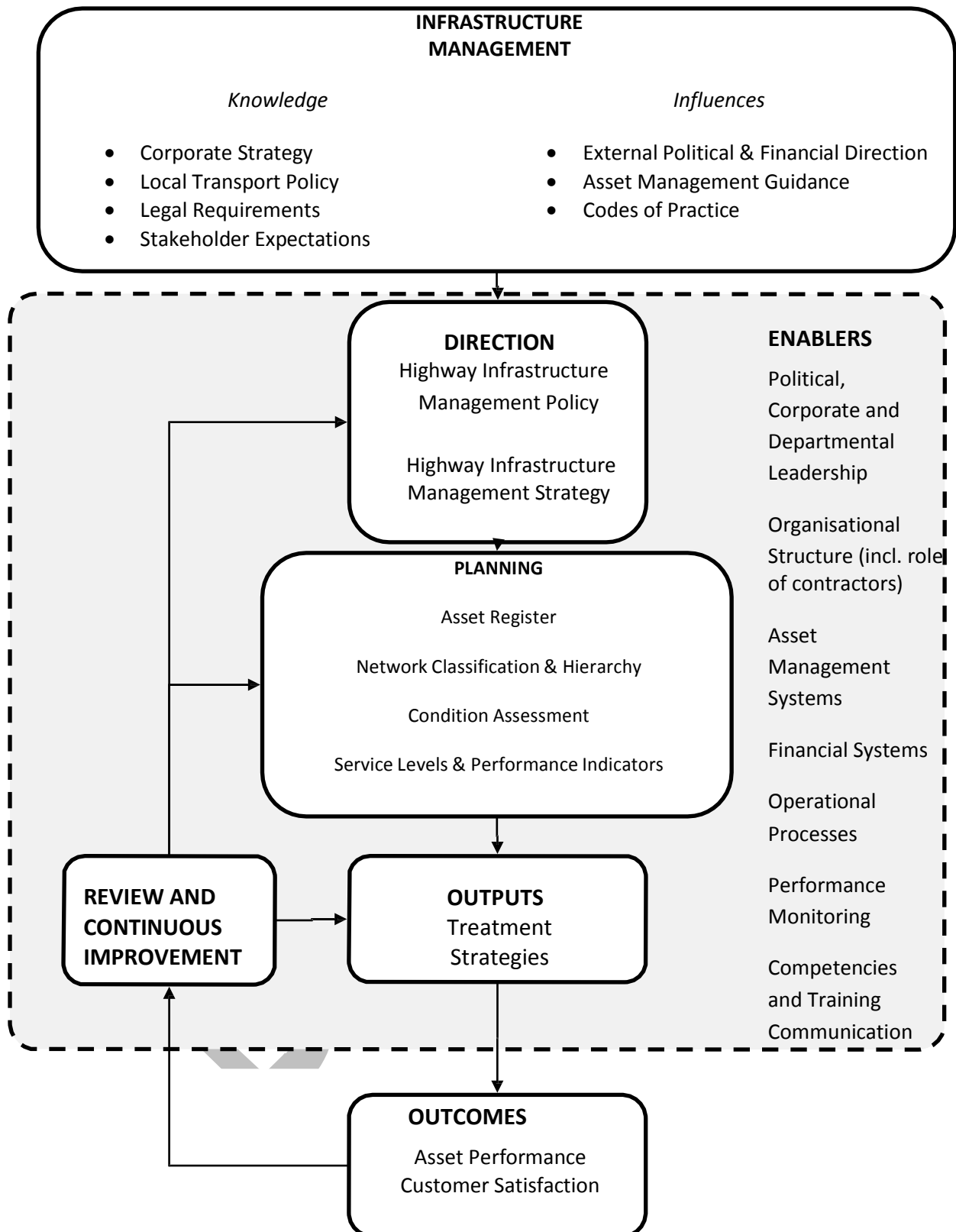
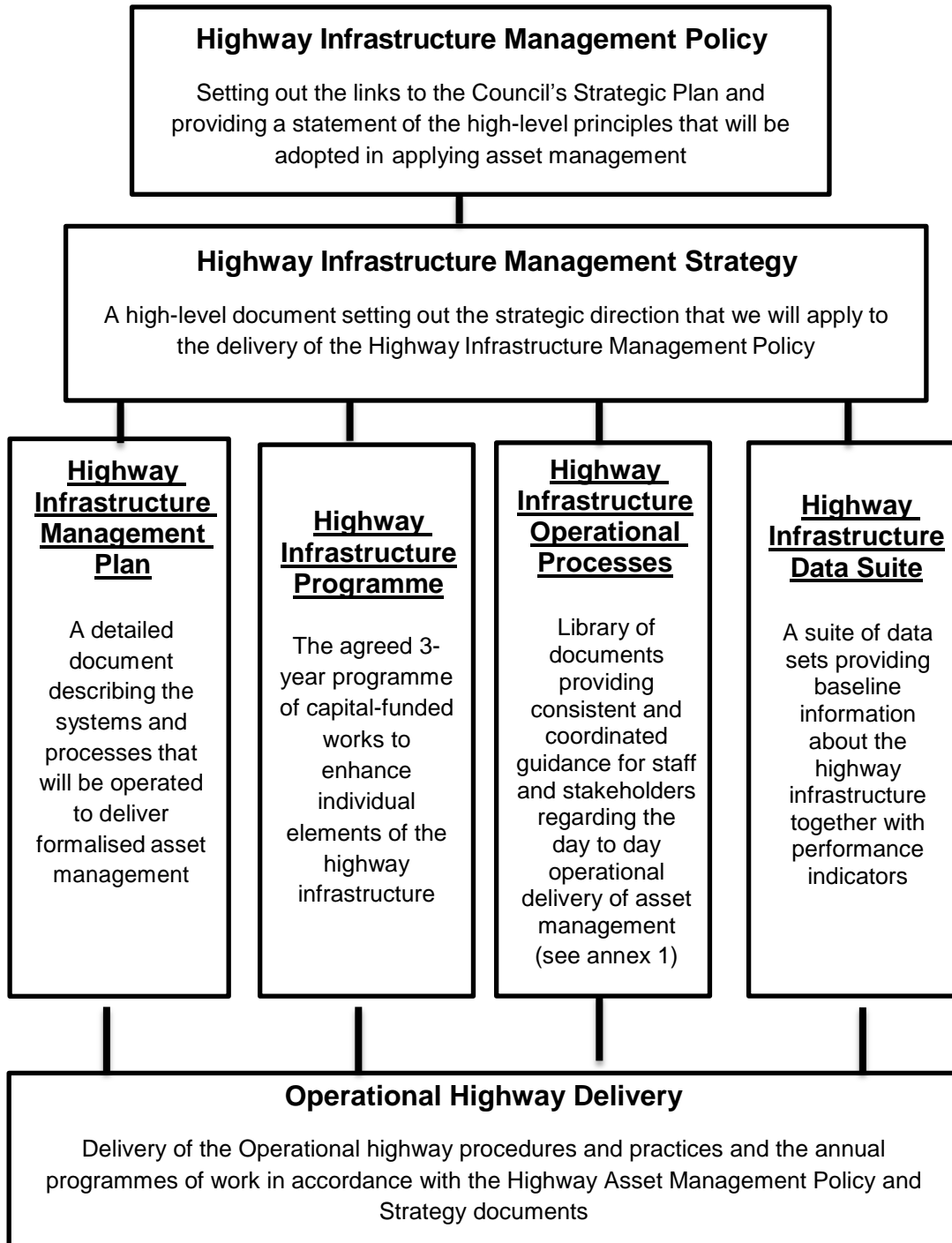


Diagram 1.1 The Highway Infrastructure Management Framework

2. The Document Framework

- 2.1. This policy and the associated Highway Infrastructure Management Strategy document have been developed in accordance with the principles set out in the “*Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document*” (Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme: May 2013) and the new Code of Practice “*Well-managed Highway Infrastructure*” (UK Roads Liaison Group: October 2016). These documents take a whole life cost approach to asset management to ensure the most effective use of budgets over the longer term.
- 2.2. Diagram 2.1 below shows the framework within which these documents will combine to steer the development of a new Highways Infrastructure Management Plan (HIMP) to replace the current Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), a suite of Operational Highway Processes and a library of Data and performance indicators, all of which will guide the delivery of infrastructure management strategy across the network.



Diagr
am
2.1

Highway Infrastructure Management Policy

3. Purpose

- 3.1. This document sets out the policies and key supporting principles which define the broad objectives, overarching structure and direction that the County Council will adopt in managing the condition of the county highway infrastructure.
- 3.2. It will allow better informed decisions to be made about the investment choices required to effectively maintain the whole network, both in the short and the long-term and directly supports the strategic aims of the County Council.
- 3.3. It confirms the role of local communities to assist in determining local priorities for asset maintenance
- 3.4. It supports the County Council's statutory duty to maintain the highway through compliance with (inter alia) section 41 of the Highways Act (1980).
- 3.5. Finally, this policy aligns the County Council's approach to managing network condition with the principles set out in the national Code of Practice "*Well- Managed Highway Infrastructure*" (October 2016).

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy is applicable to the entire infrastructure forming the highway network that is managed and maintained by the County Council; whilst there is no specific mention of the public rights of way network, it is envisaged that the current Rights of Way Management Plan (2015-2025) will be woven into the 3rd and 4th tiers of documents shown in Diag 2.1 above.

5. The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy and Supporting Principles

Policy

- HIMP1. The County Council will develop and operate a formalised infrastructure management approach to ensure the optimal use and direction of the County Council's resources in maintaining the county's highway infrastructure and assets for the benefit of current and future users.***
- HIMP2 The County Council will adopt a whole life cost approach to maintaining its highway infrastructure that, as far as practicable within available budgets, reflects both the structural need of the assets, the strategic importance of the route and local priorities.***
- HIMP3. The County Council will prioritise available resources for maintenance interventions and treatment choices using a risk-based approach taking account of the safety and needs of different groups of user, network hierarchy and levels of use, network condition, customer expectations, environmental impact, and the implications of approved and anticipated developments.***

Supporting Principles

- SP1. *The County Council will aim to extend the operational life of highway infrastructure through the use of appropriately timed preventative and restorative treatments to maintain safety and serviceability whilst minimising reactive repairs, environmental impact and delays to highway users.*
- SP2. *The County Council will develop “life-cycle models” for all key assets to forecast the consequences of maintenance strategies on budget, network condition (both short and long-term) and environmental impact. We will use these models to inform our decisions about treatment strategy, budget requirements and priorities.*
- SP3. *The County Council will use a risk-based approach to review existing infrastructure maintenance hierarchies to ensure that they reflect current functional use and need, and will use these to establish appropriate inspection regimes. These hierarchies will be regularly reviewed, particularly in areas of the County where new developments have resulted in changes to travel patterns and volumes.*
- SP4. *The County Council will identify the strategically critical links and record these as the Resilient Network. We will prioritise the management and maintenance of infrastructure on this network to minimise the impact on economic activity of any ‘loss of service’ that might arise from occurrences such as structural weight limits, severe weather and other disruptive events. We will review the capability of this Network on a regular basis (particularly after any severe weather events) and in the light of emerging patterns of climate change*
- SP5. *The County Council will complete and maintain appropriate inventories of highway infrastructure assets to assist in planning future maintenance, improvements and in assessing the implications of new developments*
- SP6. *The County Council will publish an annual programme of planned works affecting key assets as well as an annual update of our key service levels and performance indicators*
- SP7. *The County Council will consult with stakeholders to support the identification of treatment priorities and levels of service for forward programmes of work, up to 3 years ahead*

- SP8. *The County Council will take account of the environmental and biodiversity impact of our maintenance treatments and services and, where feasible, either reduce or mitigate these impacts.*
- SP9. *The County Council will, wherever possible, take into account the character of local areas and any heritage issues in carrying out our maintenance and management of highway assets*
- SP10. *The County Council will work with adjacent authorities to review and coordinate maintenance and management on key cross-boundary routes*
- SP11. *The County Council will collaborate with others, including Town & Parish Councils, main contractors and neighbouring authorities to increase efficiencies reduce costs and sustain local service levels*
- SP12. *The County Council will, wherever appropriate, encourage additional funding from Districts, Town & Parish Councils to enhance local service levels.*

6. How this Policy Supports the County Council's Strategic Aims

- 6.1. Our corporate vision, set out in the County Council's (draft) Corporate Plan is that there will be "Thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire". To achieve our vision, we will listen to residents so we can continuously improve our services and provide value for money. Our priorities are:-

Thriving communities

- *We help people live safe, healthy lives and play an active part in their community*
- *We provide services that enhance the quality of life in our communities, and protect the local environment*

Thriving people

- *We strive to give every child a good start in life, and protect everyone from abuse and neglect*
- *We enable older and disabled people to live independently and care for those in greatest need*

Thriving economy

- *We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future*

- 6.2. This Policy and supporting principles will further enhance ongoing work to engage with local communities to ensure the delivery of infrastructure management reflects local needs and enables Town and Parish Councils to contribute to the enhancement of their locality, for example by undertaking work to help their areas thrive. Implementation of the Policy will lead to improvements in facilities used by those who walk and cycle, thus encouraging these active modes.

The Policy will also contribute to the 'Thriving People' priority by providing a highway environment that is easy for the old and young to use in a safe manner. We will use available data to develop an analytical "risk-based" approach to infrastructure management to ensure that, within the constraints of reducing budgets, treatments will be more effectively directed to optimise the condition of the network in ways that help people to live independent lives.

The Highway Infrastructure Management Policy will particularly

contribute to delivering the 'Thriving Economy' priority by ensuring that the maintenance and improvement of existing transport links is carried out in ways that support the local economy. The development of our infrastructure management approach will ensure that we are able to make better informed strategic decisions to ensure that we make best use of resources to support this priority. An efficient transport network, in good condition, where disruption and delay is kept to a minimum and where journey times are reliable is essential to support growth.

7. Policy Review

- 7.1. This policy is closely aligned to other developing policy documents, particularly the Local Transport Plan and the Network Management Plan. It will require regular review and sense-checking, particularly while the Corporate Plan is in development.
- 7.2. Thereafter it will be reviewed at least every three years or earlier if there are significant changes in national policy or guidance that affects infrastructure/ asset management

Annex 1

Highway Infrastructure Operational Processes

Documents will cover the following subjects:-

- Street Lighting
- Drainage
- Winter Service
- Highway Safety Inspections
- Structures (e.g. bridges)
- Oxfordshire Together (highways activities)
- Externally funded (incl. by Town/Parish) traffic schemes (incl. Tourism signing, street furniture etc)
- Trees, vegetation and planting
- Decluttering and temporary signing
- Roadside memorials

(Other documents may be added from time to time)