

Cabinet

Report Title	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 25 June 2025
Report Author	Barry Ridgway - Group Manager Assets and Maintenance - Highways Services
Lead Officer	Executive Director - Place
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources and Deputy Leader
Why is this a key decision?	To be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Open
Is the report urgent?	No
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	
Appendices (if any)	1. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The policies, strategies and plans that define how Sandwell Council maintain the Highway Infrastructure is set down within the (Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan) HIAMP. The HIAMP, first published in 2018, has been fully updated and revised.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the revised Sandwell Council Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan as attached at appendix 1.
- 2.2 Delegated authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, to make minor amendments to the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and associated Annexes as required.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 3.1 The Council has a number of statutory duties related to the Sandwell highway network.
- 3.2 The principal statutory duty imposed on Sandwell Council, as the Local Highway Authority, to maintain the highway at public expense is set out in s. of the Highways Act 1980.
- 3.3 The Traffic Management Act 2004 also imposes a Network Management Duty on the Council, as the Local Traffic Authority, to manage the authority's road network to facilitate as far as reasonably practicable the expeditious movement of traffic.
- 3.4 In addition to statutory duties, the Council also has duties of care to ensure the highway network is fit for purpose, as far as is reasonably practicable. These duties are not absolute, but Sandwell must show that decisions are taken on reasonable grounds with due care and regard to relevant considerations set out in best practice guidance.
- 3.5 The policies, strategies and plans that define how Sandwell Council delivers these duties are set down within the HIAMP. The HIAMP has been developed in a way that is aligned and consistent with national best practice and the relevant supporting policies and strategies.
- 3.6 A key aspect of the current HIAMP is the development of lifecycle plans. These lifecycle plans confirm the funding requirement to maintain highway assets against a range of different scenarios and ensure better supported decision making, one which is data led, process driven and customer focused, providing the opportunity to balance affordability and the best use of resources against the funding available.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 None.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Due to be considered at the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board on 1st May 2025.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The HIAMP demonstrates long term maintenance of highway infrastructure to facilitate the Council's strategic ambitions, covering:
- 880km of carriageways
 - 1,440km of footways and cycleways
 - 30,850 streetlights, illuminated signs and traffic signals
 - 172 bridges as well as many other structures
 - 3500km of drainage and culverts including nearly 42,000 gullies
 - A wide range of other street furniture.
- 6.2 Corporate procurement officers will assist Highway Services officers using existing collaborative West Midlands Maintenance Framework Contracts as required.
- 6.3 Compliance with the HIAMP gives Sandwell significant protection against third party claims.

7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 The principal statutory duty imposed on local highway authorities to maintain the highway at public expense is set out in s.41 of the Highways Act 1980.
- 7.2 The Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes a Network Management Duty on a council as the Local Traffic Authority to manage the authority's road network to facilitate as far as reasonably practicable the expeditious movement of traffic.
- 7.3 The recommendations in this report will ensure Sandwell Council is taking all reasonable steps to meet these statutory duties.
- 7.4 Asset management and maintenance is an area of work that the Council's Highways Teams have a successful track record of delivery in. It is managed by governance arrangements outlined in the HIAMP that have successfully delivered these programmes of work for many years.

8. Risks

- 8.1 Given the importance of the highway network to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community the Department for Transport has encouraged local authorities to develop a risk-based approach to asset management of the highway network.
- 8.2 A Code of Practice, titled 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' was released in 2016 as a single document to replace and update the previous codes for the maintenance and management of 'Highways', 'Structures' and 'Public Lighting' and represents best practice in applying a risk-based approach to the asset management of the highway network.
- 8.3 The Sandwell Council HIAMP sets out the Councils approach to the asset management of the highway network and the delivery of a risk-based approach in accordance with best practice guidance. The first iteration of the HIAMP was approved by Cabinet in March 2018.
- 8.4 The risk-based approach and associated mitigation measures detailed with the HIAMP are consistent with best practice and balance the available resources against the challenging circumstances faced by Local Highway Authorities.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 There are no specific equality issues regarding the proposals contained in this report. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 are included in associated Framework Agreement Documentation to draw attention to the detail of, and need to comply with the Act.

10. Other Relevant Implications

- 10.1 Health and Wellbeing - The Highway environment plays an important role in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that highways can bring through promoting social inclusion and interaction. Good highway infrastructure discourages criminal and anti-social activity, reducing the fear of crime, supports the increased use of public transport, delivery of carbon reduction savings and the associated benefits outlined in the Corporate Plan.
- 10.2 Social Value - Highways are the arteries of our communities. They connect our residents to employment, education, local services and indeed the wider world. They enable economic growth, social mobility and are vital in ensuring good health outcomes.
- 10.3 The contracts that deliver the work that result from the application of the HIAMP maximise additional value to Sandwell communities through the inclusion of Social Value requirements.

- 10.4 Climate Change - Well maintained highways support climate change objectives through supporting more active travel choices, delivery of carbon reduction savings and associated benefits outlined in the Corporate Plan.
- 10.5 Corporate Parenting - Good, well maintained highway infrastructure promotes improved physical and mental health and the well-being of children and young people through helping to encourage more walking and cycling, improving road safety and promoting cleaner air quality.

11. Background Documents

Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.

12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes:-

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- Thriving Economy in Sandwell
- One Council One Team Approach.

- 12.1 Growing up in Sandwell - Road traffic injuries are one of the biggest causes of death amongst young people. Good, well-maintained highways make children and young people safer, encourages more walking and cycling and increases wellbeing.
- 12.2 Living in Sandwell - The highway environment plays an important role in the life of Sandwell's communities, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring through improving social inclusion and interaction. Good quality highways infrastructure will make our communities feel safe, more protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods.
- 12.3 Healthy in Sandwell - Good, well maintained highway infrastructure will encourage more walking and cycling increasing personal wellbeing, improving health and promoting cleaner air quality.
- 12.4 Thriving Economy in Sandwell - Well maintained highways bring increased economic and physical activity as well as mitigating against the likelihood of accidents and combatting wear and tear on our infrastructure. Highways are the arteries of Sandwell communities. They connect residents to employment, education, local services and indeed the wider world, enable economic growth and improved social mobility.
- 12.5 One Council One Team Approach - The recent Enventure survey was conducted to gain insight from residents to support Sandwell Council in the development of the budget proposals and future spending priorities. The survey found that "Maintaining Roads and Pavements" was selected as important by high proportions of respondents in both the representative survey (72%) and the online survey (79%). The Council's own recent MEL survey rated highway maintenance at 34% above the LGA average for resident satisfaction.

Relevance Check

Budget Reduction/Service Area:

Service Lead

Date:

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service that you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No