

Agenda Item No. 7(b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

1 February 2018

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR
WELL MANAGED HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE (HIGHWAYS,
TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To advise Cabinet of the need to develop a risk based approach to highway infrastructure management and maintenance so as to ensure the Council, as local highway authority, meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The first Code of Practice for Highways Maintenance was endorsed by the Local Government Association, published in 1983, and has subsequently been revised at intervals to take account of new and emerging developments in technology, policy and good practice. Many of the key themes of the original Code, including the need for a robust regime of safety inspection and a planned investment programme based on whole life costs, are fundamental to highway maintenance. These were retained throughout the different editions and included in the 2005 edition of this Code. This latter code has been the basis of the Council's approach to and support of its maintenance practice and strategies.

The latest iteration of the code published October 2016 adopts a risk based approach and includes 36 recommendations, but is not prescriptive. It is based on the Department for Transport's (DfT) encouragement to Local Highway Authorities (LHA) developing good asset management practice and provides the mechanism to support this.

The new code, "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure" has an implementation period of 24 months and, from October 2018, there will no longer be the provision to fall back on the prescriptive recommendations of the old code. A LHA will be expected to have developed and documented its own risk based approach to managing its highway network.

Currently, the approach to activities on the highway are fairly prescriptive. For instance, there are guidelines on how authorities approach safety inspections

and their frequencies, and how defects on the highway are defined. The new code of practice departs from this prescription and promotes using risk as a basis for decisions, allowing authorities to develop their own, more local approach, based on evidence. Authorities are encouraged to incorporate their corporate view of risk alongside being very much more evidence led in defining highway network priorities. These can involve developing network hierarchies, for example, that no longer rely solely on classifications such as A or B roads, but take into account, say, actual traffic levels or proportion of HGVs, to develop new levels of service. The principle of the risk based approach is based on alignment with the County Council's objectives and priorities, justified using evidence and demonstrated through performance.

Not only has the DfT set a tight timescale for achieving the risk based approach, but it has been using its Incentive Fund proportion of the annual block maintenance funding allocation to encourage LHAs to demonstrate how effective they are at delivering good asset management practice. The Council is currently ranked as a Band 3 (top band) authority and this ensures the Council receives the maximum allocation annually.

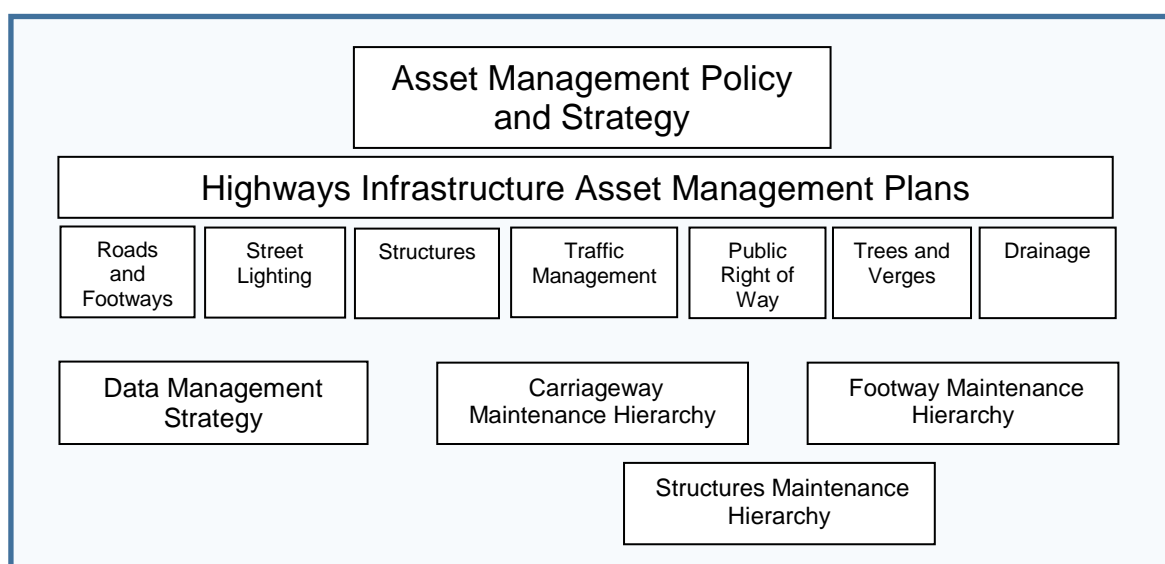
Adopting the recommendations of the new code and providing a risk based approach should reduce the opportunity for legal challenge over the safety of the highway network, thereby reducing the number of claims against the Council. It should also support the Council's Incentive Fund banding, maintaining maximum annual block maintenance funding allocation. Adopting the new Code will help to deliver the Council Plan objective to "repair and Improve the condition of Derbyshire roads".

Work has already commenced in the following areas to meet the requirements of the new code in the form of the asset management work undertaken to date:

- Policy and Strategy development.
- Draft Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) for carriageway maintenance.
- Public facing explanation of the HIAMP and how the Council maintains roads – survey, selection, design, materials, construction, monitoring, repair, preventative/reactive.
- Initial drafts of HIAMP for footways, structures, street lighting, drainage, traffic management and street furniture.
- An Asset Inventory dated 2009 – requiring an update.
- A Data Management Strategy.
- Procurement of a Data Update process.
- Lifecycle Planning for Carriageways – utilising a more effective means of surveying highway condition leading to an informed Forward Works Plan from which the annual Service Plan can be derived.

- Lifecycle Planning for Structures – resolving appropriate and deliverable levels of service.
- Lifecycle planning for footways, street lighting, drainage, traffic management and street furniture remains in draft form.
- A Network Maintenance Hierarchy of Roads that provides the foundation for a risk based policy has been developed, taking account of their usage, thereby enabling a fit for purpose level of maintenance/ service to be transparently applied across the County. The maintenance hierarchy will effectively allow maintenance activities to be prioritised on a needs basis and consider where the most value for money can be achieved.

The structure of the documents to support this approach are set out in the table below and these documents will form the package for the Code of Practice for which Cabinet approval will be sought in summer 2018.



(3) **Financial Considerations** The costs associated with delivering a risk based approach to highway maintenance will be met from existing staff resources and where support is required externally from the Technical Policy budget.

(4) **Legal Considerations** Working towards the requirements of the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highways Infrastructure will provide the opportunity for the Council to take a risk based approach to the obligations to provide a safe highway as set out in the Highways Act 1980 and enable the Council to set risk based levels of service which will support maintenance practices and assist in the defence of claims.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** Clearly there is a substantial amount of work which will ultimately require Cabinet approval. The development of the various documents and work streams will be reported to

the Cabinet Member - Highways, Transport and Infrastructure on a rolling programme, before presenting a complete package of Code of Practice measures to Cabinet in early summer 2018.

(6) **Social Value Considerations** A risk based approach to the maintenance and management of the highway infrastructure network will enable the businesses, residents and visitors of Derbyshire to benefit from a safe and reliable network.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(7) **Key Decision** No.

(8) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(9) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details - Steve Mead, extension 38577.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 10.1 Approves the development of a suite of documents to provide a robust risk based approach to the maintenance and management of the highway infrastructure network, to be developed in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure.
- 10.2 Agrees to receive a further report to approve the New Code of Practice once the documents have been finalised.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment