



Environment & Regeneration
Directorate
Neath Port Talbot Council (npt.gov.uk)

Highways Asset Management Plan 2023-26

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Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) provides an integrated framework for the delivery of highway maintenance services across the Authority's road network and optimises resources for the management of the highway infrastructure. Neath Port Talbot's road network is predominantly urban and has a total carriageway length of 858km whilst the footway network totals around 999km.

This document sets out the Council's objectives, policies and strategy for managing its highway infrastructure assets. It recognises the importance of highway infrastructure in supporting corporate, national, regional and local objectives and complying with legislation, such as the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, and the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. The plan also recognises the risk-based approach, such as that laid down in the latest Code of Practice, 'Well-managed highway infrastructure', and considers its application to target areas of greatest benefit and need. National guidance and increasing financial pressures move the Authority anyway towards a more risk-based approach, which will help ensure funding is invested where it is most needed and to best effect.

Although the highway network can be given a monetary value, it plays a far more important role in the economic and social environments and contributes greatly to the well-being of the county and to Wales as a whole. The network connects villages, towns and communities and

underpins the economy. It enables people to follow their leisure pursuits and commute to and from work. Many of these objectives are encompassed within the new well-being objectives of the Authority's Corporate Plan and in the aspirations set out in The Wales Transport Strategy 2021.

The production of the Plan has brought together practitioners responsible for the different asset groups within the council and follows the principles established nationally in Wales through the County Surveyors Society. The purpose of this Highway Asset Management Plan is to ensure the delivery of highway services in an intelligence led and customer responsive way. This approach will ultimately deliver greater value for money and help achieve key council goals and objectives. Asset management requires a reliable knowledge of asset components and involves developing and maintaining comprehensive inventory and condition data. It also requires an understanding of individual asset group lifecycles and how long components can be expected to last. This knowledge provides the basis for predicting the annual level of investment required to deliver an appropriate level of service in the most cost-effective manner.

An asset management approach to highway infrastructure maintenance provides a framework for informed decision making. This plan sets out the management arrangements required to ensure the benefits of investment are optimised and that the highway asset is managed to meet the expectations of the highway user, within the context of the council meeting its statutory duties as the Highway Authority.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Highway Asset Management Planning

Highway Asset Management Planning is a process intended to ensure that public infrastructure is managed cost effectively and that available funding is put to best use. To this end, the following definition of Asset Management, which is contained within the Framework for Highway Asset Management, has been accepted by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council:-

“Asset management is a strategic approach that identifies the optimal allocation of resources for the management, operation, preservation and enhancement of the highway infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future users”

“The adoption of asset management has been proven to provide significant financial benefits” as determined by the review of accounting, management and finance mechanisms for Local Authority Transport Infrastructure Assets. This Asset Management Plan sets out how Neath Port Talbot CBC intends to access the potential benefits founded on the principles of: -

- **Affordable standards:** the Plan establishes standards that can be afforded and communicates them in such a way that the public know what service to expect.
- **Long term planning:** the Plan covers a set time period to ensure the right balance of short-term fixes, preventative actions and planned replacement of aged assets.

- **Appropriate Budget allocation:** the Plan identifies data and analysis concerning our assets to inform decisions about how best to allocate finite resources. It also identifies gaps in knowledge and associated actions.
- **Management of risk:** Within the context of long-term planning and the setting of standards and budgets, the plan aims to gauge and manage the risk associated with decisions made.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the Council's Highway and Winter Maintenance plans.

1.2 Drivers for Change

In July 2005, the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) published "Well Maintained Highways" the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. This Code emphasised the need to establish a logical management system to deliver value for money in highway maintenance. The Code recognised the need for local flexibility implied by the new focus on the needs of users and the community. It encouraged authorities to respond enthusiastically and creatively to the challenges posed by Best Value, The Wales Programme for Improvement, and general Sustainability.

The objectives of the Code of Practice were:

- To encourage the adoption of asset management planning as a means of demonstrating value for money in the delivery of highway maintenance, consistent with the wider principles of

integrated transport, sustainability and Best Value.

- To encourage the development, adoption and regular review of policies on highway maintenance, consistent with the wider principles of integrated transport, sustainability and best value.
- To encourage a focus on the needs of users and the community, and their active involvement in the development and review of policies, priorities and programmes.
- To encourage harmonisation of highway maintenance practice and standards where these were consistent with users' expectations, whilst retaining reasonable diversity consistent with local choice.
- To encourage the adoption of an efficient and consistent approach in the collection, processing and recording of highway inventory, condition and status information for the purpose of both local and national needs assessment, management and performance monitoring.
- To encourage the adoption and regular review of a risk management regime in the determination of local technical and operational standards, the rectification of defects arising from safety inspections, and investment priorities.
- To encourage continuing innovation in the procurement of highway maintenance services, whilst complying with high standards of corporate governance.

A revised Code of Practice for Highways “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” was published in October 2016. The revised code requires authorities to apply a “risk-based approach” to the management of all highway assets. The County Surveyors Society Wales (CSSW) is co-ordinating the development of a nationally consistent response to the code across all Welsh local authorities. Using CSSW’s national Highway Asset Management Project, guidance is being developed to enable authorities to apply a consistent method of risk assessment.

Neath Port Talbot has established a Highway Maintenance Plan which describes how NPTCBC aims to:

- Maintain a safe passage for highway users.
- Protect the asset value of the highway.
- Ensure consistent standards of maintenance across the County Borough relative to road usage.
- Ensure expeditious movement of traffic by complying with the Traffic Management Act.
- Establish a “Needs Based” programme for the maintenance of the network.
- Target resources and maximise the benefit from available funds.

- Facilitate technical and financial monitoring to establish trends in highway condition and to assess achievement against expenditure.
- Provide a framework for reviewing policies and standards and for developing strategies.
- Implement the principles outlined in the latest Code of Practice.
- Ensure that all highway maintenance is undertaken with due regard for environmental considerations.
- Ensure that all highway maintenance is undertaken with due regard for the Section 6 Duty under Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which states that '*A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions.*'

As well as endorsing the above aims and objectives, implementation of the HAMP aims to support:

- The current and future requirements of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) and specifically the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Highways Network Asset Code.

- The desire of Welsh Government to see authorities use asset management as a framework for the maintenance and development of highways, and to maximise the cost benefits of investment.
- The pressing need to manage ever increasing budget pressures resulting from the national financial position, exacerbated further with the sharp rises in inflation and inexorable cost increases within the construction industry, due to recent global economic factors.
- The introduction of the Prudential Code.
- Arresting the ongoing deterioration in some highway assets.
- The targeting of increasingly scarce resources to best effect.
- A positive response to increasing public expectation.
- Links to communities and promotion of economic wellbeing.
- Corporate drives towards the regeneration of coastal and valley communities.
- Continuing requirements to improve safety and reduce risks to highway users.

- The implementation of defensible strategies in the context of the National Police Chiefs' Councils investigations of fatal and serious injury road collisions.
- Compliance with Department for Transport (DfT) booklet "Maintaining a Vital Asset".

1.3 Progress to Date

This is the sixth update of the Neath Port Talbot CBC Highway Asset Management Plan, which was first produced in 2006. Some of the significant actions taken in the intervening periods include:-

- Development of an in-house condition survey for the classified and un-classified carriageway networks, as well as footways and footpaths, the data from which is used to inform works programmes.
- Identification of inventory and condition data for safety barriers, from which a maintenance programme is developed and actioned.
- The setting up of an inventory database and replacement system for highway signage.
- A review of the council's street lighting following life cycle analysis culminating in a £21 million investment programme to replace aged stock financed through prudential borrowing as part of the Council's Forward Financial Plan.

- A drainage review, which has created a comprehensive database of the culverts, gullies and ditches from which improved maintenance schedules have been produced improving cyclical maintenance.
- In 2015 the Authority published a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP). Work is underway to review this document which is expected to be republished in March 2024. Some actions completed to date in line with the Authority's FRMP include:
 - Implementation of 3 major construction projects at Aberavon Sea Front, Varteg Road, Ystalyfera and Rock Street, Glynneath to protect properties from Flooding and coastal erosion.
 - The development of 6 Flood Alleviation Business Cases at Skewen, Briton Ferry, Melyn Cryddan, Cadoxton, Ystalyfera and Glynneath.
 - Development and construction of the county's first Natural Flood Risk Management Scheme in Gnoll Country Park, Neath.
 - Continued investigation, locating and mapping of the entire drainage infrastructure in high-risk communities.
 - Implementation of a more robust and focused maintenance programme for 'Critical Flood Risk Assets'.
 - Implementation of a full CCTV survey and Structural Inspection of all 'Critical Flood Risk Assets'.

- An updated programme of works to strengthen substandard bridge decks, parapets and other structures.
- The new Baglan Energy Park link bridge was completed in April 2015 and forms an integral connection in a network route between Port Talbot and Swansea.
- In 2018, a detailed action plan for the management of potholes was endorsed, setting out key goals and future ambitions for the Highway Maintenance Services. Continuing works includes:
 - Investment in an alternative pothole repair system, by way of a new JCB Pothole Pro machine, as approved by the Members of the Environment and Regeneration Streetscene Services Cabinet Board in December 2022.
 - Exploration of Digital Solutions in the development of a new Highways Management System, which integrates Service First and Highway Inspector reports.
- The NPT Bee Friendly scheme was established in 2021 and appropriate sites on the highways network adopted for meadow management. This has increased the extent of wildflower habitat across NPT, demonstrating how the highways network can contribute to the S6 Biodiversity Duty. Approximately 32 hectares are now under management as meadows through the NPT Bee Friendly scheme.

1.4 Council Expectations from the HAMP

The Council expects, through the continued refinement of the Highway Asset Management Plan, to continue development of a more planned and holistic approach to maintaining and improving highway assets for users, in line with its statutory duties, which maximises return on investment.

1.5 Corporate Asset Management within Neath Port Talbot CBC

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is committed to continuous improvement. The corporate approach to asset management, particularly in the management and use of the Council's property and highway infrastructure assets, forms part of their commitment to support the objectives of the The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Corporate strategy helps to:

- Promote a corporate approach to the management of assets in pursuit of corporate aims and objectives, following the agreed protocol for Capital Programme Management.
- Secure continuous service improvement and build an understanding of the importance of assets in supporting service delivery.
- Manage property and infrastructure holdings and develop information covering their sufficiency, suitability and cost.

- Manage risk across the Council's range of assets.
- Ensure decision making procedures are developed for capital works which sets out how works will be prioritised within available budgets.
- Ensure that capital projects are delivered on time and within budget.

1.6 Goals and Objectives of Highway Asset Planning

The main objectives of this plan are: -

- To identify the extent and condition of the Council's highway infrastructure.
- To understand asset and maintenance treatment lifecycles.
- To inform budgeting and Works Programmes.

In mapping the way forward, gaps in knowledge and good practice have also been identified along with appropriate improvement actions. Alongside the clinical approach of analysing asset condition and lifecycle data, the input of elected ward members is also recognised, with particular regard to local streets in the production of programmes and actions.

It is also noted that environmental factors (particularly with regard to coal tar contaminated highways that have high waste material disposal costs), and economic factors, are driving a critical reappraisal of traditional maintenance treatments. Furthermore, the requirement to “do more with less” whilst ensuring solutions are “fit for purpose” has signalled the need to introduce lower cost treatments leaving in place as much as possible of the existing surface material, which is, in itself, a finite resource. To this end, Neath Port Talbot CBC has carried out surface preservative treatments using the latest materials and techniques and is currently assessing other preventative methods, along with recycling techniques for the purpose of lowering carbon footprint and increasing sustainability in its maintenance practice. The latest micro-surfacing treatments and injection jet patching are also innovative systems that are frequently in use today.

The Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme’s (HMEP) booklet ‘Maintaining a Vital Asset’ sets out the UK Government’s expectations of councils in maintaining their networks. If the Council is to meet these expectations, it can only do so through the better use of its resources and the adoption of asset management planning. In addressing the expectations of Government in the areas of carriageways and footways, the Council has demonstrated a cost effective and innovative approach through the efficient use of internal resources, inventory and condition data providing for informed decision-making.

Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of asset management principles since the HAMP was first published. The identification of risks, performance gaps and the subsequent

improvement actions are now enabling an improving level of asset management aimed at, in the first instance, arresting further deterioration of the Council's highway asset.

1.7 Time period and updating of this HAMP

This Highway Asset Management Plan covers the period 2023-26, although the actions are based on longer term lifecycle plans. During this period, account will also be taken of any changes in knowledge and understanding as a result of the ongoing reviews and risk assessments etc.

1.8 Application of the HAMP

The HAMP aims to bring together all the Authority's goals, objectives and policies, utilising both existing and new practices, and sets out how the principles of asset management are being applied to ensure the highway service meets the requirements of the Council and highway users, whilst promoting sustainable development in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Effective planning will ensure that the network functions efficiently by highlighting the maintenance needs of the various highway components, whilst taking into account the effects of damage caused by increased traffic flows, the presence of heavier and larger vehicles, increasing inflation, new legislation, climate change, expanded operations by utility companies and increasingly constrained budgets.

The plan is expected to provide an effective management tool for the running of the highway network, with highway asset inventory and condition surveys enabling cost and risk to be appropriately considered within the lifecycle analysis process in order to inform summary actions, service standards and works programmes.

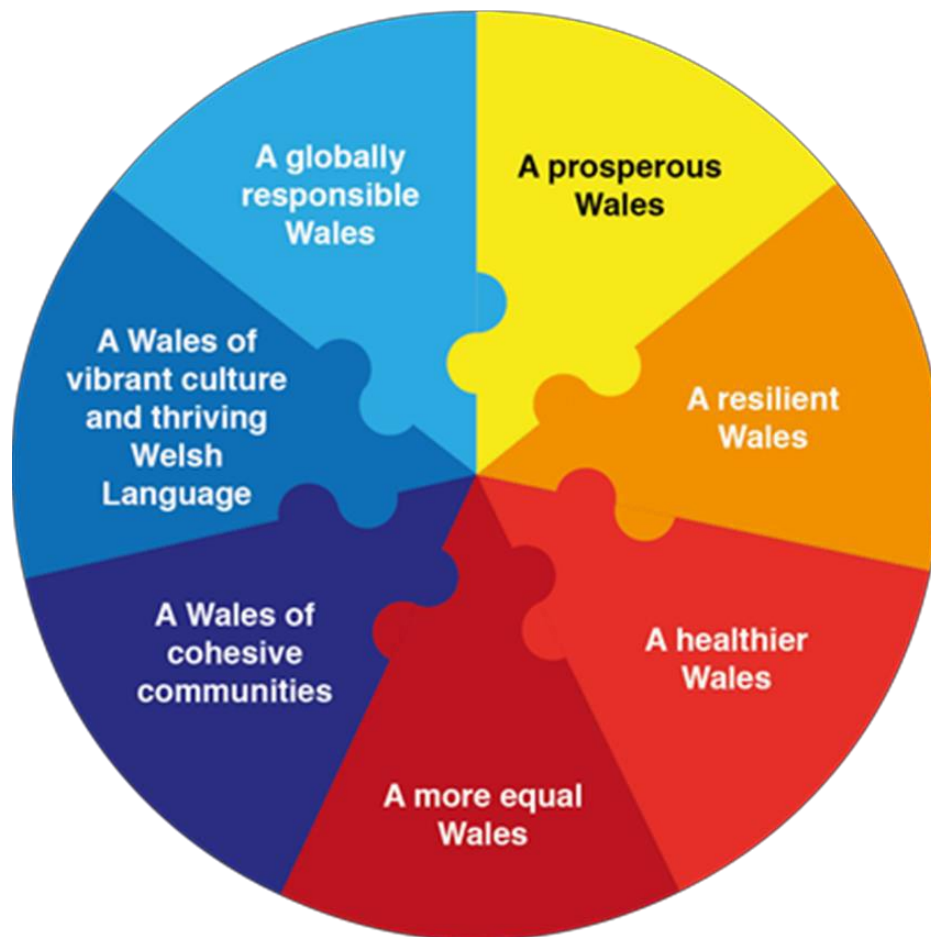
Continued assessment and monitoring over time will provide the basis for measuring performance standards.

1.9 Strategic Document Framework

The Neath Port Talbot Council Corporate Plan 2022-27 is produced to meet the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG) and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 by setting out well-being objectives, improvement priorities, the steps we will take to achieve them and how we will measure progress.

Well-being objectives and improvement priorities show how the Council contributes to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Neath Port Talbot and to the following seven national well-being goals contained within the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

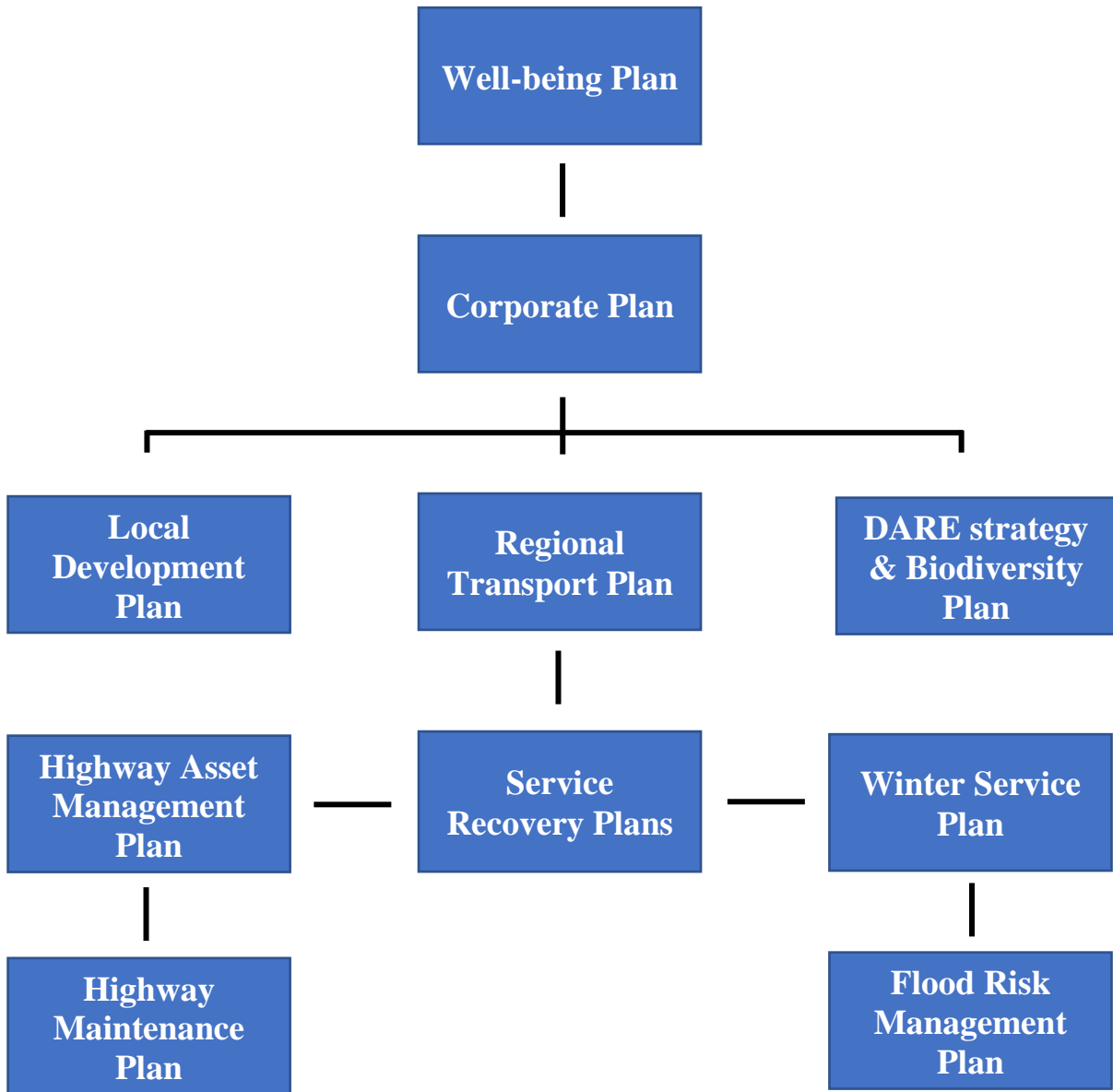
Figure 1.9 National well-being goals



This contribution is made through the way in which we work in accordance with the sustainable development principle contained within the Act.

The strategic document framework below details the relationship between NPT's various strategic documents and shows how the Highway Asset Management Plan fits in.

1.9.1 Strategic Document Framework

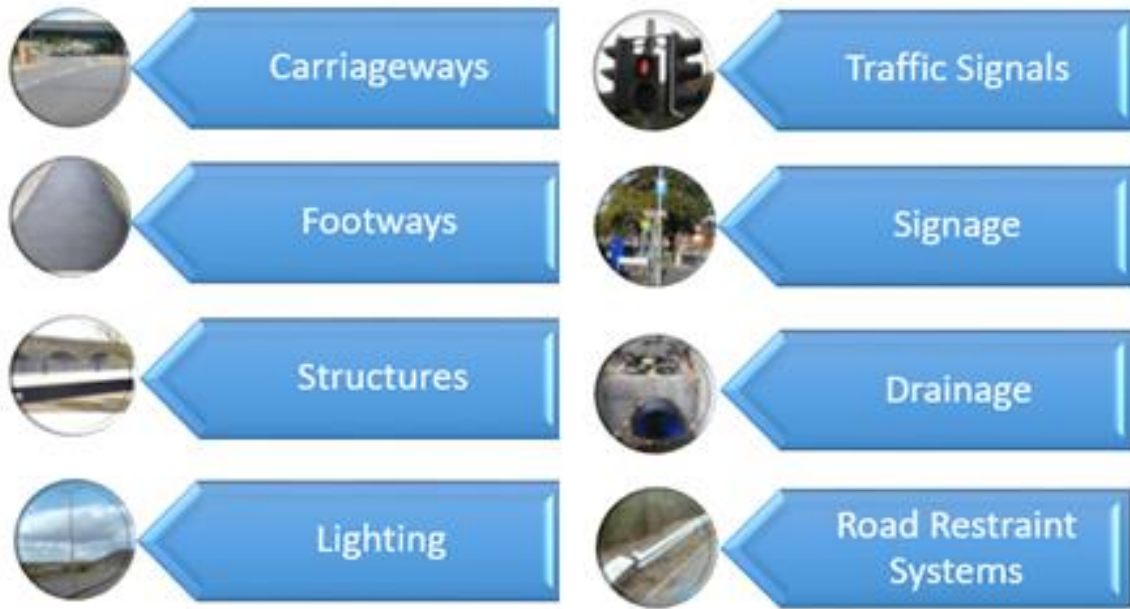


2.0 Asset Description

2.1 The Highway Asset

Neath Port Talbot CBC is the custodian of detailed spatially referenced data sets for the eight main asset groups shown in Table 2.1.1 below.

Table 2.1.1 – Main highway asset groups



An inventory overview of the main highway asset groups is shown in the table 2.1.2 below:

Table 2.1.2 - Main highway asset inventory

Neath Port Talbot CBC – Main Highway Asset Inventory		
Asset Description	Amount	Unit
Carriageway	858	Kilometres
Footways	999	Kilometres
Safety Barriers	40.12	Kilometres
	370	Sections
Post and Rail barrier	31.32	Kilometres
	498	Sections

Neath Port Talbot CBC – Main Highway Asset Inventory (cont.)		
Asset Description	Amount	Unit
Drainage:		
Critical and High Priority Culverts	94	Number
Road Culverts	2,003	Number
Gullies	31,947	Number
Highway surface water drains (survey ongoing)	1012.19	Kilometres
Structures:		
Bridges	392	Number
Culverts > 1 metre Diameter	126	Number
Retaining walls (in NPT ownership)	732	Number
Retaining walls (ownership unknown)	1,262	Number
Street Lighting	19,553 Lanterns 19,209 Columns	Number Number
Traffic Signals (light heads on junction control and pedestrian crossings)	87 Sets of Signals 514 (Red, Amber, Green) 269 (Red/Green Person)	Number Number Number
Signage:		
Illuminated	2,916	Number
Non illuminated	10,647	Number

Since the original HAMP was produced in 2006 the asset inventory has developed to such an extent that we now also have detailed information on the following additional assets groups shown in Table 2.1.3 below: -

Table 2.1.3 – Additional highway asset groups

Asset Description		
Benches	Litter Bins	Salt Bins
Bollards (unilluminated)	Pedestrian Barriers	Street Name Plates
Bus Shelters and Stops	Pedestrian Crossings	Traffic Calming Measures
Cycle Routes	Post and Rail Fencing	Trees
Dog Bins	Residents Parking Bays	Weather Stations
High Friction Surfacing	Road Markings	

2.2 Assets Not Covered by this Plan

Assets not covered by this plan include the following:-

- Motorways and Trunk Roads (for which Welsh Government is Highway Authority).
- Footpaths and car parks identified by Estates as being in Authority ownership but not part of the maintained adopted highway.
- Garage compounds owned by others.
- Public Rights of Way.
- Unadopted / private roads and structures.
- Lighting to car parks and parks not maintained by the Highway Authority.
- All other assets within the highway that fall under the responsibility of other organisation such as utility companies.

2.3 Asset Growth

Over the three years since the last HAMP, the carriageway asset within Neath Port Talbot has grown by 4.74 kilometres, representing a 0.55% network growth.

This increase has been due to new residential housing developments in the local area resulting in the adoption of new roads by the Authority. It is expected that, despite the economic downturn, this growth pattern will continue over the length of the Plan.

Such growth has resulted in an increase in other assets such as footways, drainage systems, street lighting and carriageway markings, highlighting the need to periodically update the relevant asset information.

Furthermore, increased use of expensive high specification materials, such as anti-skid and coloured surfacing (often implemented as part of accident reduction measures) together with block paviers and decorative stone flags in town centres (as part of regeneration schemes), increases the overall cost of asset maintenance.

3.0 Community Requirements

3.1 Public engagement and reporting

Previous corporate communications and community relations strategies were developed to help meet the requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to involve people

in the work that the Council carries out. They were also designed to make our collective communications and community relations efforts more consistent, effective and relevant, and to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. A draft Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027 is currently in development to further strengthen the achievements accomplished to date.

The Council's website has been designed and developed to improve and encourage communication and engagement to help listen to what citizens have to say. Furthermore, we are using citizens' and wider stakeholders' stories to bring the Council's work to life, celebrating successes and highlighting areas where more work needs to be done to achieve our objectives.

With particular regard to the highway infrastructure, the main source of identifying local needs is through correspondence and via the Council's Service First Contact Centre and Customer Response Management system, which handles queries and complaints from the public. Requests for service from the general public are carefully monitored and the detailed reports, along with accident claims, provide a valuable source of information. This information can be fed into the budget and works programming processes.

This Authority has also established a process of dialogue with elected Ward Members prior to finalising the Planned Works Programmes. This process affords Members an opportunity to table concerns/requests in response to the needs of their ward constituents,

which can be considered in conjunction with the works identified from the condition surveys and other means.

3.2 Results of Consultation and Use of Results

Information in the previous section can help identify specific problem areas relating to the highway / drainage infrastructure and assist in identifying:-

- Potential projects for inclusion in future works programmes.
- Maintenance hot spots.
- Future minor works programme for the new JCB Pothole Pro machine.

However, whilst feedback is useful it is not intended that the Highways Asset Management Plan will be particularly driven by public consultation alone as many of the issues addressed by the HAMP are technical in nature and need to be considered in the context of longer-term analysis and projections.

It is anticipated that there will be continued consultation with specific stakeholders in future years, such as statutory undertakers. This will allow the Council to obtain the benefit of their input, to co-ordinate investment, and to ensure a shared understanding of asset management as it affects their particular areas of interest. This will help ensure that stakeholder input is appropriately considered in the establishment of policy and practice adopted by the Authority. Input from stakeholders is also a valuable source of information concerning

some aspects of the network and associated maintenance strategies. Their data will, along with technical surveys and other related information, contribute to ensuring appropriate asset management decisions are made.

3.3 National Underground Assets Register (NUAR)

Neath Port Talbot Council has also signed up to the UK Government sponsored digital platform which supports the Health and Safety Executive guidance document, 'HSG47 - Avoiding danger from underground services.

The new platform will provide important information for planners and operators alike in the formulation of control measures to minimize the risks when working over or near to underground services.

At present, asset owners are tasked to collect and validate available datasets, notwithstanding any limitations in terms of accuracy, to ensure that any legal obligations are met.

An additional level of investment would ultimately be required to deliver the full ambitions of the project, as would be necessary to:

- Centralise asset inventory for multi-disciplined services across NPT
- Accurately collect and maintain inventories of new asset groups.
- Ensure the sustainable and repeatable delivery of data so that the platform is kept reliably up to date.

A review on the costs and benefits of the scheme is planned to be further presented for scrutiny in April 2024.

4 Future Demands

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the anticipated demands on the highway assets over the duration of this Plan. These demands, together with the associated risks, have been considered when formulating the plan.

4.2 Traffic Growth and Composition

Transport for Wales has developed strategic transport models (computerised representations of the transport network) to cover the whole of Wales. These models represent all the main forms of transport such as car, bus and rail. The models contain information on the trips that people make using each form of transport.

The transport model covering South East Wales was developed by Welsh Government between 2015 and 2017, whilst the transport models covering the rest of Wales were completed at the end of 2020.

These transport models are:

- Giving a better understanding of how the entire transport network works.
- Allowing assessment of the likely transport impact of different development scenarios, such as where new houses are built.

- Providing a simple means of testing a variety of new transport solutions so that new schemes can be proposed that make a positive difference to people’s lives.

Past increases in car ownership and the general reliance on the private car has put pressure on roads and existing junctions through increased demand for road space. A number of key roads and junctions are at capacity and congested which is constraining growth in some areas and affecting the daily life of residents. The statistics below, from the Department for Transport, indicate the changes in volume of traffic over the past 10 years or so.

The volume of traffic for all roads in Neath Port Talbot (Table 4.2.1) reflects a reduction in traffic from 2007 to 2010 (from 1.38 billion kilometers in 2007 to 1.27 billion kilometres in 2010) but then an increase in traffic from 2010 to 2019, until the inevitable reduction shown in the 2020 figures due to Covid-19. The reason for the fluctuation in traffic is unknown and could be a result of a number of factors, such as cost of fuel, financial downturn, or residents choosing more active forms of travel.

Table 4.2.1 Volume of Traffic 2007-2020 (All Roads) Within Neath Port Talbot

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Billion Vehicle Km	1.38	1.34	1.32	1.27	1.3	1.29	1.3

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Billion Vehicle Km	1.33	1.42	1.41	1.43	1.46	1.47	1.12

Table 4.2.2 shows the same trend within Neath Port Talbot for volume of traffic by class of road between 2007 and 2020.

Table 4.2.2 Volume of Traffic by Class of Road 2007-2020

	Motorway	A Trunk - Urban	A Trunk - Rural	A County - Urban	A County - Rural	All Major Roads
2007 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.55	0.02	0.2	0.11	0.24	1.12
2008 – billion vehicle kilometres	0.53	0.02	0.2	0.11	0.23	1.09
2009 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.51	0.02	0.2	0.11	0.23	1.07
2010 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.48	0.02	0.19	0.11	0.22	1.03
2011 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.51	0.02	0.19	0.11	0.23	1.06
2013 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.52	0.02	0.2	0.11	0.22	1.06
2015 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.54	0.02	0.21	0.15	0.23	1.14
2016 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.52	0.02	0.21	0.15	0.23	1.12
2017 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.53	0.03	0.21	0.14	0.24	1.14
2018 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.52	0.03	0.21	0.15	0.25	1.17
2019 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.52	0.03	0.21	0.15	0.25	1.17
2020 - billion vehicle kilometres	0.37	0.03	0.17	0.12	0.19	0.87

Whilst the overall level of traffic in NPT had been relatively static over the few years leading up to the Covid lockdowns, demand for road space in some localised areas is high and increasing. As a result, due to the level of traffic, local topography and the existing road system within urban areas, a number of congestion hot spots exist across the County Borough.

Within the Neath area:

- Pen-y-Wern Junction (Bryncoch, Neath):
Experiences congestion at peak times and, any further development in the area would have an impact on the junction and could require road improvements between the junction and the Neath River viaduct. As a result, Neath Port Talbot secured Welsh Government funding to design a scheme to improve the 120m length of highway between two roundabouts creating two left turn lanes and increasing the queuing capacity of both of the roundabouts. Funding to deliver this scheme is needed but Welsh Government are no longer supporting schemes that improve highway capacity.
- Cwrt Herbert / Roman Way:
Experiences congestion at peak times, one factor being the proximity to Dwr y Felin School and the Neath Port Talbot College campus. Land adjacent to Roman Way offers an opportunity to provide bulky goods shopping or housing in a central sustainable location, but such development could also increase traffic generation.

- Neath Abbey / Tesco:
Experiences congestion at peak times causing tailbacks onto the A465 trunk road/dual carriageway.
- Neath Town Centre (Stockham's Corner / Cimla Hill / Gnoll / Victoria Gardens):
Faces congestion, air pollution (Victoria Gardens) and in worst cases 'gridlock' at peak times. While development and regeneration proposals aim to revitalise the town centre, congestion could constrain demand.
- Melincryddan:
Experiences some congestion at peak times in the area between the Briton Ferry Road / Exchange Road (Lidl's) junction and Furnace Terrace, there is queuing in a north-easterly direction
- M4 J44
There is frequently congestion on the M4 around J44. This causes traffic to divert onto local roads to avoid this section of the M4.
- M4 J43/A465
Traffic builds up on the A465 approach to J43 causing daily tailbacks to Neath at peak times. Traffic diverts through Skewen and Briton Ferry to avoid this area due to the congestion.

Within the Port Talbot area:

- M4 Junctions 41 / 40 (Port Talbot):
These junctions currently provide access points to Port Talbot, Cwmafan and the Afan Valley. With the completion of the PDR (Peripheral Distributor Road) the Welsh Government has experimented with slip road closures, or partial closures (at Junctions 40 and 41), to discourage the use of the M4 for local traffic. It was decided that the M4 junctions were to remain open for the time being as junction restrictions may ease congestion problems on the M4, the changes could make access to some areas more difficult.
- Heilbronn Way:
Experiences congestion at times.
- Water Street:
Experiences congestion at peak times.
- A48 Junction at Old Road, Baglan:
Experiences congestion at peak times.
- A48 Junction at Sunny Mount and Pentwyn Baglan Road:
Experiences congestion at peak times.

Within the Pontardawe area:

- Tesco / Pontardawe Inn:
Experiences congestion at peak times.
- The Cross:
Experiences congestion at peak times. There is little potential to improve road capacity to address traffic congestion in Pontardawe, the emphasis will need to be on managing access to the town.

4.3 Transport Strategy / Active Travel / Demands for Additional Assets

The Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales 2015-2020 remains in place pending the new Regional Transport Plan and covers the four Local Authority areas in the region namely:

- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- City and County of Swansea
- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council

The vision of the Joint Transport Plan 2015-2020 is to improve transport and access within and beyond the region to facilitate economic regeneration, reduce deprivation and support the development and use of more sustainable and healthier modes of transport.

The Transport Act 2000 and the Transport (Wales) Act 2006 require each local transport authority to replace the plan not later than five years after the date on which it was made. However, in 2019 the Welsh Government extended the 2015-2020 Joint Transport Plan owing to the emerging Wales Transport Strategy – Llwybr Newydd.

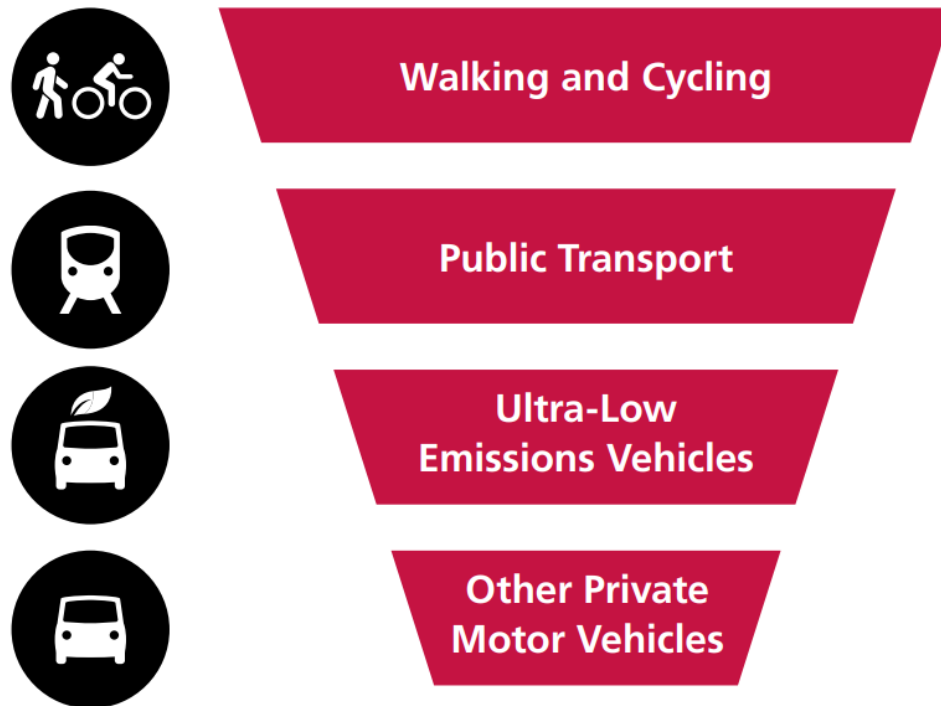
The Welsh Government issued guidance to the Regional Corporate Joint Committees in June 2023 for the development of Regional Transport Plans which will replace the current Joint Transport Plans. Regional Transport Plans need to be submitted to WG for approval by 29th March 2025. The guidance requires that the Regional Transport Plans will be shaped by Llwybr Newydd and aligned with Future Wales – the National Plan to 2040, and the emerging Regional Development Plans.

4.3.1 Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021.

Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy was published in 2021 and changes the focus of transport priorities and sets out a hierarchy of travel for the future, as shown in figure 4.3.1

The strategy sets out to achieve a shift away from private car use to more sustainable transport modes for the majority of journeys; with aims to provide safe, accessible, well-maintained and managed transport infrastructure. Where new transport infrastructure is required, we will use the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy to guide decisions, and we will aim for it to be future-proofed in terms of adaption to climate change and facilitating more sustainable transport choices.

Figure 4.3.1 - The Sustainable Transport Hierarchy.



Since the development of the Joint Transport Plan in 2015 the focus set by the Welsh Government has moved away from improving the highway to increase capacity towards developing more sustainable modes of transport. As a result, highway improvement schemes proposed by Local Authorities have been reviewed as part of Welsh Governments Roads Review.

4.3.2 The Welsh Government Roads Review.

In 2021 the Welsh Government set up a review panel to consider highway improvement proposals. The review set out to test when to invest on roads consistent with Llwybr Newydd, Net Zero Wales, and

WG priorities. The findings of the Roads Review Panel were published in *The Future of Road Investment in Wales 2023*.

Cymmer Carriageway Improvements in Neath Port Talbot was considered by the roads review panel. The findings of the panel were that The Cymmer Carriageway Improvements scheme could proceed, subject to quantification of the carbon impact of construction and evidence that it has been minimised, and evidence that the local community has been fully engaged and is supportive of the proposed scheme.

4.3.3 The National Transport Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027

The National Transport Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027 sets out how Welsh Government will deliver against the priorities and ambitions set out in the *Llwybr Newydd*. The central role of Local Authorities in the development and delivery of local transport services and infrastructure is recognised, along with a commitment to provide a mix of core funds and grants for development works and grants for the delivery of infrastructure projects.

4.3.4 Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales 2015-2020

The following key transport issues formed the basis for the development of the Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales 2015-2020:-

- Active travel is being promoted by NPT. Active travel simply means making purposeful short-distance journeys using physically active means, such as walking and cycling, to reach destinations like a school, workplace, shops, or to access services. This mode of travel can be combined with public transport. However, active travel does not encompass journeys solely for recreational or social purposes.
- NPT aim to achieve a significant modal shift to walking and cycling as the most sustainable form of transport. Ideal for shorter trips, walking is key to encourage more people to reduce the use of cars. Walking also forms part of public transport journeys i.e., walking to and from buses, trams and trains. Positive impacts include reduced congestion, reduced air pollution, higher quality public realm and better physical, mental and social health.

Investing in infrastructure and support for walking and cycling can increase economic growth and vibrancy. Those walking and cycling tend to spend more money locally than drivers. Increasing walking and cycling can stimulate economic growth in urban areas and benefit local shops.

As a result, good infrastructure for walking and cycling is important. People also need encouragement, support and guidance to change their behaviours and switch their journeys to on foot or by bike.

Factors that affect how people travel include:

- Road traffic volumes in the region and pressures in terms of unreliable journey times, localised congestion, reduced air quality, increased noise, vibration and carbon emission issues.
- Road safety issues and associated public concerns - whilst there has been a general reduction in serious injuries and deaths from road traffic collisions, there are wide variations across the region and for particular road users' categories.
- Disparities in car ownership and use - whilst both have increased overall, growth has not been consistent across the region. Those with cars are able to participate in a far wider range of opportunities than those reliant on public transport, walking or cycling for mobility.
- Variations in Public Transport provision - these broadly match population distribution, with higher frequency services and better coverage to the south and east of the region, where the majority of the population live, with less extensive provision in the more sparsely populated rural areas. Rail, bus and coach services are provided by private sector companies through mainly commercial services along with services supported with Welsh Government funding.
- Access constraints - physical access to bus and rail services remains a barrier to mobility impaired in some locations.

- Transport poverty, along with the expenses associated with owning a vehicle and using public transport, renders these choices unaffordable for numerous individuals. Consequently, this affects their capacity to access crucial services and employment opportunities.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the way many people travel has changed significantly, as a considerable number continue to work from home. The bus network experienced a substantial impact during the pandemic, resulting in a decline in the number of users. In addition, the Welsh Government has been subsidising the bus industry to maintain services at pre-pandemic levels. However, this support is currently under review, and it could potentially lead to a reduction in service provision in the near future.

Other key issues that influenced the Joint Transport Plan 2015-2020 include:-

- Freight operations are an essential contributor to the economy but are planned and delivered by the private sector within European and UK legislative processes.
- Ports and shipping facilitate the movement of passengers and freight to and from the region and are a critical link in the national supply chain network.

Under the existing Joint Transport Plan the vision for South West Wales is to:

“Improve transport and access within and beyond the region to facilitate economic development and the development and use of more sustainable and healthier modes of transport.”

From this vision stems the following strategic objectives:-

- To improve the efficiency and reliability of the movement of people and freight within and beyond South West Wales to support economic growth in the City Region.
- To improve access for all to a wide range of services and facilities including employment and business, education and training, health care, tourism and leisure activities.
- To improve the sustainability of transport by improving the range and quality of, and awareness about, transport options, including those which improve health and well-being.
- To improve integration between policies, service provision and modes of transport in South West Wales.
- To implement measures which will protect and enhance the natural and built environment and reduce the adverse impact of transport on health and climate change.

- To improve road safety and personal security in South West Wales.

The long-term strategy of the plan identifies:-

- Improving strategic east/west road and rail links – to create more reliable internal connectivity and improved connectivity with the rest of Wales, the UK and our European neighbours.
- Improving linkages between key settlements and strategic employment sites – to create a range of attractive passenger transport and walking and cycling opportunities linking key settlements with their hinterlands and with strategic employment sites.
- Improving the efficiency of the highway network – through a range of appropriate mechanisms including demand restraint.
- Improving the integration of land use and transportation planning – through the use of accessibility planning, to ensure that development is properly located, and to encourage more sustainable travel choices and reduce the barriers to interchange.
- Improving Strategic Bus Corridors – to create more reliable and attractive connectivity between key settlements.

- Improving safety in transport – to reduce personal injuries and fears for personal safety.
- Providing more and better information - to raise awareness of the range and use of sustainable transport options.

Furthermore, a range of policies are identified under the following broad headings:-

- Reducing Greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts from transport, including the development of innovative infrastructure solutions to support the fuels of the future, such as hydrogen and electric powered vehicles.
- Integrating local transport.
- Improving access between key settlements and sites.
- Increasing safety and security. Enhancing international connectivity.

The existing Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales is expected to be replaced by the Regional Transport Plan for South West Wales in 2025. The revised plan will be based on the priorities in the Llwybr Newydd.

Completed developments under the current plan include, but are not limited to:

- Harbourside strategic employment site – reduction in ground contamination, removal of buried structures and voids and construction of access road and associated drainage works.
- Improvements to the signalized junctions in Neath Town Centre to improve sequencing and the provision of traffic safety cameras on traffic signals at Afan Way and Fabian Way.
- Active travel routes between Trebanos and Ystalyfera; between Neath and Tonna; between Blaengwrach and Glynneath; and along Dwr-y-Felin Road.
- Bridge strengthening at Pontwalby bridge, Heol y Deryn and Afan Way.
- Blaengwrach River Bridge, Nant Tewlaeth Footbridge, Cwm Cottages Footbridge, Bryndda Footbridge and Park Street footbridge replacements.
- Retaining wall strengthening/repair work at Gnoll bank, Fairyland, Ynyscorrwg farm (Glyncorrwg) and Ffordd Silkin.
- Stabilisation works at Ponrhydyfen landslip, Bryn to Goytre Cycle route landslip and Tonmawr Road.
- Speed reduction measures on A474 Cwmgors to Pontardawe and A4109 Inter Valley Road.

- Culvert strengthening at Cwmcregan, Green Hill and Primrose Bank
- Port Talbot Integrated Transport Hub.

Future Developments:

The following proposed developments are relevant to Neath Port Talbot:-

- The establishment of a new Freeport at Port Talbot and Milford Haven could create up to 16,000 new jobs and attract £5.5bn of investment. From a highway perspective, despite the percentage of HGVs on urban Principal A roads decreasing over the last decade, the Freeport development would inevitably bring about a local increase of this traffic category, thereby accelerating the rate of deterioration of roads that link the Freeport with the M4. Such levels of deterioration would put increasing pressure on the already insufficient highway maintenance budgets.
- Wildfox Resorts Group's first resort is expected to be the £300M Afan Valley development, due to open in 2027. Afan Valley would be the first of three proposed resorts in the UK, featuring 570 lodges and a range of facilities, which include a hotel, climbing centre, spa, central plaza, restaurants, an indoor water park, car parks and a series of mountain bike trails, all set within a wider area of mountain biking and hiking in the Afan Valley.

Such an attraction is certain to put further demand and maintenance pressures on some highways as the anticipated increase in traffic flows along the A4107 would significantly shorten the renewal cycle of the asset.

- Cymmer Viaduct, a Grade II listed structure, has failed its structural assessment and is in urgent need of replacement or bypass. The structure is on a bus route and is currently the only viable means of accessing the upper Afan Valley. In 1999, as an interim measure an 18-tonne weight limit and single lane working, controlled by traffic lights, was introduced. The long-term plan is to close the viaduct to vehicular traffic, refurbish it so as to open it to pedestrians, and then upgrade the existing lower route to make it suitable to larger vehicles. The feasibility and outline design has been completed and detailed design is currently taking place with construction programmed for 2024/25.
- Public transport connections at interchanges – a proposal to look at improving the connections between various modes of travel.
- Baldwins Bridge – joint scheme with City & County of Swansea who are managing the project - Design complete.
- Plans to tackle urgent transport issues affecting Cymmer, Abercregan and Glyncorrwg has received backing from Welsh Government Roads Review with the Cymmer Carriageway Improvements project being listed as a “Local Authority Scheme”. This means it can qualify for Welsh Government

transport grant funding subject to meeting new criteria in Wales for road building and the Welsh Government's commitments under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

4.4 Utility Activity

Activity by Statutory Undertakers and other Utilities can have a major effect on the maintenance and management of road assets. This can generally be detrimental to the life cycle of the asset.

All statutory undertakers are responsible for carrying out their own reinstatements, although they must be to Department of Transport standards (see *New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 – Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in the highway*).

At present NPT, in line with Department of Transport standards, enforces a 2-year maintenance period on all reinstatements and 3 years on any excavation greater than 1.5 metres.

Neath Port Talbot CBC as part of its statutory duties inspects a random sample of 30% of utility works during the following three stages:-

- The process of excavation.
- Within 6 months following interim or permanent reinstatement of the works.

- Within the three months prior to the end of the maintenance period.

Any remedial works required during the maintenance period are completed by the utility company, thereby reducing any potential future deterioration of the highway assets and unnecessary costs to the Authority.

NPT is committed to improving standards of utility reinstatements and has introduced a Random Sample Coring Programme (RSCP), via an outside contractor, in order to check both utility company and internal contractor works in the highway. Over 500 coring extractions have been taken since its introduction. The results of the checks undertaken from the 'Specification of the reinstatement of openings in highways' (SROH) has resulted in an 80% failure of completed reinstatements which need to be improved to avoid further deterioration of the highway asset. With this in mind, the Authority has arranged for underperforming utilities/contractors to attend "Improvement Meetings" during which representatives are able to explain the measures to be put in place to improve reinstatements, thus ensuring the life and structural stability of the highway asset in the future. NPT will continue to undertake appropriate enforcement action for non-compliance and, where necessary, to offer support to encourage continuous improvement in compliance levels.

NPT also attend Highway Authority and utilities meetings on a quarterly basis. The coordination of authorities' and all statutory undertakers'

planned works are discussed in an effort to improve forward planning and help extend asset life cycles.

Co-ordination and monitoring is important, not only to minimise delays to the travelling public, but also because the Council is often criticised for traffic management delays caused by utility company repairs and reinstatement works.

4.5 Climate Change

It is very difficult to forecast changes in climate but there has been an acceptance that general weather patterns are changing. The noticeable changes in the past few decades have seen a number of severe winters and increased rainfall. Some winters have brought long periods of sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfalls. As a consequence of this, the Authority made the decision to provide a salt barn which provides additional capacity and has increased the resilience of salt stocks in an effort to ensure the Strategic Network remains accessible during severe weather conditions.

Increased rainfall has resulted in short heavy downfalls, producing localised flooding. Prolonged periods of lighter longer lasting rainfall have resulted in land becoming saturated and flooding due to excessive surface water run-off. Furthermore, it is envisaged that, with the increasing severity of weather conditions, flooding will become more prevalent, testing the existing highway and drainage infrastructure and providing increased infrastructure budget pressures.

NPT's DARE Strategy

On 30th April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency. The announcement drew attention in Wales to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence on climate change. NPT responded to such challenges with the DARE (Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy) strategy.

NPT aims to deliver DARE by:

- Reducing the carbon emissions, resulting from delivering the council's work programme. Lessening energy consumption and switching to energy sources that are less harmful to the environment.
- Overcoming barriers to renewable energy and encouraging the use of sustainable and renewable resources.
- Managing our natural resources so that carbon sequestration is maximised, and carbon release is minimised.
- Working with partners and business, sharing good practice, assets and resources.
- Promoting the benefits of cleaner energy and emission reduction to council employees and the people of Neath Port Talbot.
- Attracting additional funding from Welsh Government and other relevant sources.

Since 2010, there have been numerous UK and Welsh Government plans and acts which set the strategic and legislative context for DARE. Perhaps the most notable of which is the Well-being of Future

Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This ensures public bodies take account of the issues around health, resource consumption, and the environment for future generations.

Action on climate change and decarbonisation are crucial to achieving the objectives of the Act. Within the Swansea Bay City Region (SBCR), the Re-Energising Wales Project (Regen) sets out a vision for climate action up to 2035. It requires a step change in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. It also calls for a decarbonisation of heat, a transport revolution, greater local energy generation and ownership, and a switch to smart energy.

A focus on achieving these objectives as part of a wider economic vision for SBCR has been made possible by the Swansea Bay City Deal strategic programme. This is a collaboration between the Welsh Government, the four local authorities, universities, and the private sector in the city region. The City Deal investment programme will transform the regional economy by improving skills, commercialising new technologies and ideas, and building expertise in digital technologies, life science and wellbeing, energy and advanced manufacturing.

Neath Port Talbot Council are leading on two City Deal projects which integrate with DARE:

- Homes as Power Stations (HAPS)
- Supporting Innovation and Low Carbon Growth, a programme of seven inter-related projects which together are designed to

deliver low carbon, sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the region.

Improving air quality is also important for people's health and wellbeing. The council's Air Quality Strategy: 'Airwise - Clean Air for Everyone', has already resulted in improvements, but more work is needed and this, too, is an important aspect of DARE.

Nature Emergency

On June 30th 2021, the Welsh Government declared a nature emergency, in recognition of the dramatic human-induced declines in biodiversity. The motion also recognised that there should be parity between actions taken to tackle climate change and those taken to tackle biodiversity loss.

The NPT Biodiversity Duty Plan outlines how it intends to achieve against S6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and how it may respond to the nature emergency.

The highway network can impact on biodiversity and the natural environment in a number of ways, including creating roadkill hotspots and offering opportunities for increasing the wildflower habitat in grassy areas.

It is important that network improvements, e.g. bridge maintenance, and new road schemes, are planned to ensure that projects maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The HAMP acknowledges the need to ensure that we respond to the nature emergency accordingly.

4.6 Changes in Legislation

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 came into force on 1st April 2016 and has had an impact on decisions relating to the maintenance and management of highway assets and on the way in which services are delivered. The requirement to react and adapt quickly to new changes in legislation often leads to an increase in expenditure for the Council in the maintenance of assets. Examples include:

- In 2009 and 2010, the Flood Risk Regulations and the Flood and Water Management Act came into force in the UK. In response, the Council produced a Flood Risk Management Strategy and Flood Risk Management Plan which, amongst other outcomes, have primarily identified the critical drainage infrastructure that will, when operating effectively, reduce the risk of flooding.

New National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems became statutory on 7th January 2019, implementing Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act in Wales. The new standards have seen a significant shift from traditional drainage systems to sustainable drainage, which has brought new and challenging maintenance demands to the Authority.

As a result of the actions undertaken in line with the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP), the Authority has identified a number of Critical Flood Risk Assets (CFRA's), many of which convey ordinary watercourses which require significant remedial works. It is envisaged that, over the coming years, many more highway culverts and highway surface water drains will be identified that will require significant remedial and upgrading works to ensure they are fit for purpose. The council currently inspect and maintain 90 CFRA's, all of which require annual investment to ensure communities are kept safe from flooding.

- Underpinned by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Welsh Government's vision for electric vehicle charging in Wales reflects their 'commitment to inclusivity' and supports their aspiration to end Wales' contribution to climate change by 2050, thereby improving the quality of the air that we breathe. A ban on the sales of new petrol and diesel only cars and vans, to be introduced in 2030, places greater emphasis on the urgency in meeting the challenge of providing sufficient electric vehicle charging - a vital component in the transport revolution for Wales.

NPT will be required to deliver this major infrastructure project and subsequently fund the maintenance of the associated assets to fulfil Welsh Government's commitment.

- In July 2022, Welsh Government approved the Statutory Instrument (SI) to reduce the speed limit on restricted roads. When the SI comes into force on 17th September 2023, the general speed limit for restricted roads will reduce from 30 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour in Wales.

The scheme aims to reduce injuries on the road network, encourage a shift to active travel modes and to improve the environment and economy of local communities by reducing the negative externalities associated with vehicle use.

NPT are required to deliver this major scheme and to subsequently maintain the associated signage and road marking assets which will put further pressure on future highway maintenance budgets.

- The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on Local Authorities to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel within designated localities. These designated localities are specified by Welsh Government and derived from the Office for National Statistics' Built-Up Areas.

Settlements within designated localities in Neath Port Talbot include: Neath, Port Talbot, Pontardawe, Croeserw, Cymmer, Brynamman, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Blaengwrach, Glynneath, Cwmafan, Seven Sisters and Resolven.

The assignment of designated localities, does not limit an authority's ability to develop network maps for other localities, where there is demand for active travel routes and a high potential for their use. Crynant received a large number of consultation responses during the Active Travel Network Map (ATNM) consultations in 2021, which showed a demand for routes in this locality. As a result, future routes were added in Crynant during the revision of the Councils ATNM in 2021.

The Act requires local authorities to prepare, publish and keep under review an ATNM which comprises of:

Existing routes – informs the public of the existing routes in the County Borough that the Council considers suitable for active travel meeting Welsh Government standards; and

Future routes – Future Routes are either routes that do not yet exist, or routes that fall short of the threshold to be classified as an existing route and require improvement.

The current version of the Council's ATNM was approved by Ministers on 3rd August 2022 and can be viewed at

<https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/active-travel-network-maps/>

5 Levels of Service

5.1 Establishment of Levels of Service

Levels of Service are *“the defined service quality (service standards) in respect of particular asset components against which performance can be measured for the benefit of users”*.

Levels of Service are composite indicators that reflect the social, economic and environmental goals of the community and may relate to safety, availability, accessibility, condition, environmental impact, customer service and financial performance (cost). Ideally, levels of service should create visible linkages between user needs, corporate objectives and any works undertaken on the asset.

The connection between customer expectations and what can, in practice, be delivered needs to be understood and communicated to stakeholders. It is also important that everyone involved in the process is aware that decisions which impact on service delivery need to align with the overall policies and objectives of the Council.

Defined levels of service are the realistic aspirations that a Highway Authority strives to meet reflecting statutory obligations, corporate goals and customer expectations in delivering highway services. Levels of service need to consider the preservation and physical integrity of the asset as well as meet the demands of safety, availability and accessibility.

Key requirements affecting the development of levels of service are:

- **Legislative requirements:** It is a requirement that levels of service comply with the legal obligations and statutory duties incumbent on a Highway Authority. Additionally, the adoption of recognised codes of practice will provide the necessary guidance to align service delivery with national best practice.
- **Policy and objectives:** NPT sets out its policies and corporate objectives in documents such as the adopted Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales and Highway Maintenance Plan. Levels of service are not only determined by local objectives as there also -needs to be an acknowledgment of the wider national targets set out by the Government. As a consequence, the budget and asset planning process is designed to enable strategic choices and decisions to be made in an informed manner so that the council can manage its budgets and services with due regard for prudence, stability, investment and efficiency.
- **Customer expectations:** The expectations of all road users, the community and local businesses need to be recognised as a factor in the service level decision-making process. The provision of better information will enable consultation with customers on a more informed level.
- **Best practice guidelines:** A number of best practice guidelines exist that directly influence levels of service. While these best

practice guidelines are not always statutory requirements, they represent a description of accepted good practice. This can be particularly important in ensuring that assets are protected against public liability claims. The most significant best practice guidance document relevant to this Plan is the Code of Practice for 'Well-managed highway infrastructure'.

- **Affordability:** Service options set out to consider the most economically efficient way of delivering an acceptable level of service over the long term. Pressures on council funding and increasing demands on the highway network mean it is not always possible to secure the required funding to deliver the desired solution and budgets influence what can realistically be achieved. Affordability must therefore be recognised and acknowledged when setting deliverable levels of service.
- **Availability of resources:** The availability of suitably skilled resources throughout the construction industry is limited and targets can sometimes be difficult to achieve.

5.2 Measurement and Reporting of Levels of Service

An Asset Management approach provides existing and projected data to support the decision making process. In practical terms, this provides the necessary information to make informed choices regarding the identification and assessment of service needs.

Once the requirements driving an asset group's service level have been determined, it is necessary to develop service options to evaluate them. This process should clearly identify the service options applicable to the particular asset group.

As noted previously, service delivery can be influenced by a number of factors such as legislation, best practice guidelines, Health and Safety requirements, corporate goals, political influences, customer expectations and financial constraints. The aim is to improve service provision through developing or altering current practices, as part of developing NPT's HAMP, via a process of continued monitoring and review.

In setting its own standards for asset groups, NPT has considered the following set of generic service levels:

- **Statutory Minimum:** Meeting statutory or legislative requirements and notes for guidance only.
- **Existing:** The impact on the asset if current funding levels are maintained.
- **Steady State:** To arrest deterioration of the asset and maintain current condition, performance and value.
- **Prescribed Service:** An enhanced standard based on customer expectations and/or political aspirations.

- **Optimum Service:** An optimum level of service based on long term economic lifecycle planning.
- **Attainable Service:** A reinterpretation of the Optimum Service in light of available resources representing the best long-term return for available shorter-term funding.

Ultimately, the chosen option must be a result of a combination of cost, benefit and risk. Depending on the asset category, the option's evaluation criteria include:

- Programmes and planning
- Safety implications and requirements
- Availability of service or asset
- Accessibility to service or asset
- Condition of the asset
- Environmental impact of providing and maintaining the asset
- Customer service, expectations and perceptions
- Risk and benefits
- Finance
- Performance targets

In respect of adopted and specified service standards, the asset management process will monitor, review and report on progress and performance. As such, where possible, levels of service will need to be measurable and realistic, having performance targets that can be set out and measured using appropriate indicators. Such indicators include:

- Single Data List (superseded the National Indicator Set measures (NIS's) in 2011)
- Local Performance Indicators (LPI's)
- Recording of Response Times
- Customer Complaints Monitoring Procedures
- Condition Surveys

To inform the monitoring process, the tables on the following pages give examples of asset inspection regimes, maintenance criteria, and response standards. These, along with other information, are detailed within the Council's Highway Maintenance Plan.

Table 5.2.1 Highway Network Inspection Regime – Frequency

Classification		Safety Inspection	Technical Surveys
Carriageways			
A Road	Strategic Route, Main Distributor, Secondary Distributor	Safety inspection regime in place	Annual SCRIM (100%), SCANNER (50%)
B Road			
C Road	Link Roads/Local Access roads		Annual SCRIM (100%), SCANNER (25%)
Unclassified	Local access roads		Annual visual survey

Table 5.2.1 Highway Network Inspection Regime – Frequency

(cont.)

Classification	Safety Inspection	Technical Surveys
Footways		
Prestige and Primary Routes	Safety inspection regime in place	Biennial visual survey
Secondary walking routes		
Link and local access footways		
Industrial estates and other footways		
Cycleways		
Adopted as part of Carriageway/footway	Safety inspection regime in place for all cycleways, except for cycle trails	Visual survey
Remote from Carriageway/Footway		Visual survey
Cycle trails		Not undertaken
Safety Barriers		
Safety Barrier	Safety inspection regime in place	Condition survey carried out every 3 years. Principal condition survey every 6 years.

Table 5.2.2 Criteria for consideration of Maintenance

Planned Maintenance – Carriageways		
Survey Criteria	Investigation Options	Action options (*)
SCRIM: Area has considerable negative SCRIM difference (ILs based on CS228) and evidence of skid related accidents	visual site assessment / accident data / pendulum / sand patch test / GripTester	resurface / monitor / survey following year
Deflectograph: Area of low residual life (less than 15 years)	visual site assessment / core / trial pit	resurface / reconstruct / monitor
SCANNER: Analysis of individual parameters in accordance with PMS guidelines	visual site assessment core / trial pit	resurface / preventative treatment
Visual Inspection: Analysis of 1-4 ratings to create scheme assessment lengths	visual site assessment	resurface / preventative treatment
Planned Maintenance - Footways		
Main Shopping Areas / Busy Urban (flexible) / Other Urban Areas / Rural Footways	Trips > 20mm Depressions > 25mm Coarse cracking Coarse crazing	Localised Repair or Restore Surface
Busy Urban Areas (Rigid)	Trips > 20mm Depressions > 25mm Cracks/gaps > 20mm Rocking Flags	

Table 5.2.2 Criteria for consideration of Maintenance (cont)

Category	Defect	Treatment
Planned Maintenance - Kerbing		
All Footways	Severe deterioration	Localised repair or restore upstand
Busy Urban Areas	Up-stand / kerb height 75mm or less Kerb deterioration	
Other Urban Areas / Rural Footways	Up- stand / kerb height 30mm or less Kerb deterioration	

Note: Prioritisation is subsequently undertaken on the basis of greatest risk.

Table 5.2.3 Inspection Regime for Highways

Reactive Response Standards	
Defect	Response Time
Road pothole or footway trip hazard > 20mm	1 – 35 Days(*) (Normally 2hr, 24hr, or 35 days)
Surface depressions which exceed the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) intervention requirements.	As above (*)
'Knocked Out' Kerb	As above (*)
Hazardous debris or obstruction in the carriageway, missing covers	2 Hours
Flooding or surcharging highway drainage system	2 Hours

(*) Response time prescribed, at Inspectors discretion based on risk

Table 5.2.4 Inspection Regime for Structures

Bridges, Culverts, Retaining walls and Cattle Grids	
Inspection Category	Frequency
General	2 Years
Principal	6 Years
Special	As Required (*)

(*) Special Inspections can be conducted following a collision or flooding or where an abnormal load is to pass.

Other Highway Structures, Culverts, Retaining walls etc	
Inspection Category	Frequency
General	2 Years or receipt of report/complaint

More frequent inspections are identified in the 'Structures Database

Table 5.2.5 Cyclic Maintenance Frequencies

Activity	Frequency
Gully Cleansing General	Annually
Culvert Inlet & Outlet Cleansing Critical and High priority	Proactive scheduled maintenance Additional proactive maintenance prior to forecast heavy rainfall.
Grass Cutting and Hedge Trimming Adopted R'bouts & Islands Grassed Verges Highway Flail Cutting Sites Safety Cutting	As per detailed schedule but typically(*): Minimum 4 cuts per year Minimum 4 cuts per year Minimum 1 cut per year Additional cuts where unusual growth has created a hazard. <i>(*) or as otherwise agreed as part of Biodiversity / Bee Friendly sites.</i>

Table 5.2.5 Cyclic Maintenance Frequencies (cont.)

Activity	Frequency
Verge Maintenance Weed Spraying (footways) Application of Retarders Noxious Weed Removal	Programme of spraying twice per year in Summer Not Used Ragwort – As and when required (pulled up) Japanese Knotweed – Selected areas per year (sprayed)
Siding General	Where vegetation encroaches by 300 mm as identified by Inspectors
Cleansing General	Litter pick –Minimum - 4 times / year - max daily Sweeping –Minimum - 4 times / year -max weekly

Table 5.2.6 Maintenance of ‘Aids to Movement’

Activity	Frequency
Traffic Signal Maintenance* Fault Attendance	Urgent fault - 2 hours (repair within 8 hours) Non - urgent – 24 hours (repair within 72 hours)
Sign Cleaning Class I, Class II, Class III & Unclassified Roads	As required to preserve safety
Road Marking Reinstatement** Class I, Class II, Class III & Unclassified Roads	As required to preserve safety
Reflective Stud Replacement All Classes	As required to preserve safety

* Bulk changes may only be undertaken at certain times during the week at specified locations.

** Road markings affected by maintenance works or surface dressing are reinstated within 14 days of the works being completed.

Table 5.2.7 Maintenance of Street Lighting and Illuminated Signs

Repair of Faults	
Category of Fault	Minimum Attendance and Assessment Time*
Outages	
Illuminated 'Aids to Movement'	5 working days
Lighting unit	5 working days
Section of Lighting	Same day when the fault is on an NPT circuit i.e., not on a WPD circuit
Emergency	
To make safe potential electric danger Associated with public lighting infrastructure.	Within 2 hours

Cleaning and Servicing

Installation	Frequency
Signs and Bollards	Every site visit
Lighting Units	On lamp repair

Fault Detection

Approximately 98% of the Council stock (lighting columns) are controlled by a Central Management System (CMS) which allows automatic nightly fault reporting.

5.3 Performance Review

Alongside measurement and reporting of service level performance and the production of periodic Status and Options reports, actual performance can, as appropriate, be compared from time to time with the predicted or targeted performance at the time of establishing the management and investment strategies for a given asset. In any event, a summary performance report will be presented periodically to the Council's Capital Programme Steering Group and Directorate Management Team in consideration of which, if any, amendments to levels of service and investment will be considered alongside the business planning process for individual service areas.

5.4 Periods of Additional Funding and Existing Level of Service

Annual capital investment into Highways and Engineering by the Council has remained effectively constant over the last decade, although the amount allocated to carriageways has fluctuated year on year depending on the availability of roads grant funding and priorities that have arisen within other highway asset groups such as footways, structures, drainage and road safety.

Welsh Government funding, in the form of the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) and Highways Refurbishment Grant (HRG), has led to temporary improvements in the condition of the highway network over the last decade. Without this additional funding, historical capital investment levels are considerably less than that required to maintain a steady state scenario and so the network condition will

inevitably deteriorate. A summary of asset performance against the existing level of service is given in Table 5.4.1.

Table 5.4.1 – Performance Against Existing Level of Service

Level of Service Subcategory	Existing Level of Service
Carriageways - classified	
Condition	SCANNeR surveys show the condition of the Classified network within NPTCBC to be better than that of the Welsh national average.
Investment	A cut in the level of investment would see deterioration in the highway asset and the value would decline. Reactive maintenance costs would increase as a result.
Safety implications	In the absence of increasing reactive maintenance requirements, deterioration would increase the safety risks to road users.
Carriageways - unclassified	
Condition	The in-house visual condition survey results show a steady improvement in the condition of the Unclassified network between 2010 and 2022. The improvement can be attributed to additional investment, such as that from the Council’s Urban Streets Initiative (USI), Welsh Government Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) and the Road/Highway Refurbishment Grants (RRG/HRG). Also, the carriageway works programme has had a period of greater priority following previous investment in dealing with sub-standard footways.

Table 5.4.1 – Performance Against Existing Level of Service

(cont.)

Level of Service Subcategory	Existing Level of Service
Carriageways – unclassified (cont.)	
Investment	Continuing at base budget levels, without additional funding, would see deterioration in the highway asset and in the asset value.
Safety implications	A decrease in reactive maintenance budgets would bring about an increase in carriageway network deterioration, leading to an increase in the risks to road user safety.
Footways	
Condition	The in-house visual condition survey results show a steady improvement in the condition of footways between 2009 and 2022.
Investment	A rise is anticipated in claim related costs if investment is reduced.
Safety implications	A decrease in reactive maintenance budgets would bring about an increase in footway network deterioration, leading to an increase in the risks to pedestrian safety.
Structures	
Condition	Bridge Condition Index indicates average condition as 88.7 (good). However, 19 sub-standard bridges currently remain in service and are monitored in accordance with CS470.
Investment	Funding limited to historical budget. 70% of the 2,290 structures have maintenance or repair works identified in Structures Work Pool.

Table 5.4.1 – Performance Against Existing Level of Service

(cont.)

Level of Service Subcategory	Existing Level of Service
Structures (cont.)	
Safety implications	Sub-standard bridges require monitoring as a requirement of Management of Highway Structures
Street Lighting	
Condition	The majority is relatively “new stock”.
Investment	Major £21 million infrastructure renewal project funded from Council resources complete (2016). Salix LED upgrade project undertaken 2020-22 replaced 6000+ older lanterns with new energy efficient LED lanterns.
Safety implications	Risk of column and electrical cabling failure has now significantly declined.
Highway Signs	
Condition	‘Reasonable’, with the life of 363 signs expired (out of 12,669).
Investment	Essential renewals currently ongoing.
Safety implications	Any missing mandatory signs in particular are a safety concern.
Traffic Signals	
Condition	‘Reasonable’, with some equipment life expired.
Investment	Essential renewals currently ongoing.
Safety implications	Fault repair system operated.

Table 5.4.1 – Performance Against Existing Level of Service

(cont.)

Level of Service Subcategory	Existing Level of Service
Safety Barriers	
Condition	Some repairs and upgrades were carried out following a 2018 Principal inspection (Report received 2019). Any concerns due to further deterioration will be considered and priority repairs will be arranged as necessary within available resources.
Investment	Annual Works Programme.
Safety implications	Specific locations where the road edge requires engineering works before the barrier can be renewed will need special consideration. A reduction in investment increases risk to the road user.
Drainage	
Condition	Ongoing surveys have highlighted that the drainage infrastructure is an ageing asset, and some locations are in urgent need of repair.
Investment	Both proactive and reactive maintenance undertaken. It is very likely that additional investment will be required as condition surveys progress.
Safety implications	In addition to the obvious safety implications associated with surface water and freezing water on the highway during winter months, there are safety issues surrounding the sudden collapse of embankments, culverts and indeed the pavement structure itself.

5.5 Target Levels of Service

Initial target levels of service are given below. However, these may need to be revised once the Council's latest Forward Financial Plan has been finalised and its full impact evaluated.

Table 5.5.1 – Initial Target Level of Service

Main Asset Groups	Initial Target Level of Service
Carriageways - Classified	Steady State – with aspirations to move to a prescribed service level of no more than 3% of individual road classification requiring reconstruction/partial reconstruction very soon.
Carriageways - Unclassified	Steady State – with aspirations to move to a prescribed service level of no more than 1.5% requiring reconstruction/partial reconstruction very soon.
Footways	Steady State – with aspirations to move to a requested service level of no more than 0.3% of the footway network requiring reconstruction/partial reconstruction very soon.
Structures	Steady State.
Street Lighting	Steady State.
Highway Signs	Steady State – with aspiration to move to a requested service level where less than 2% of signs are missing or badly damaged.
Traffic Signals	Steady State.
Drainage	Steady State.
Safety Barriers	Steady State.

6 Lifecycle Planning

6.1 Purpose and Importance of Lifecycle Planning

As part of this plan's development, we will create lifecycle plans to consider each of the main asset groups. Each lifecycle plan will consider:-

- Inventory (amount of asset)
- Condition and trends
- Maintenance options / Service levels / Risk Management and Minimum requirement
- Establishing maintenance strategies / service standards

6.2 Output from Lifecycle Planning

The output from the lifecycle planning process should provide 20 year financial and other projections linked to target levels of service, to inform the Council's highway maintenance proposals.

Lifecycle plans are important to Highway Asset Management Planning to provide the long-term context within which to consider asset management practices, investment, performance, and risk management consistently across all asset groups.

6.3 Lifecycle Plan Contents

Lifecycle plans are intended to be working documents, updated periodically as information is gathered and analysed on each asset group. When fully populated, each Lifecycle Plan will contain the following information:-

Section	Answers	Contains
The Asset	What assets do the Council maintain?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory details (number, type, size, etc) • Asset growth statistics
Service Expectations	What is each asset group required to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer expectations • Council objectives for transport • Specific user requirements • Safety considerations • 3rd party use • Environmental requirements • Network availability • Amenity considerations
Management Practices	How is this asset group managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies • Inspection Regime • Condition Assessment • Asset Acquisition standards • Routine Maintenance standards • Operational/Cyclic Maintenance • Planned Maintenance standards • Disposal standards
Investment	How much is being spent and should be spent over the longer term on this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Investment • Output from historical investment • Forecast Financial Needs • Valuation: GRC, DRC & ADC
Strategies	What strategies are there for the future management of this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Strategy Information SOR, HAMP, FRMP

Section	Answers	Contains
Service Improvement actions	What improvement would enhance council management of this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset specific improvement actions
Works Programme	How are works programmed for this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing forward works programme Works programme coordination Option Appraisal: treatment selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at a project level - at a budget category level? Public input/consultation via Members Surgeries
Risk	What are the risks associated with this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk identification Major asset risks
Works and Service Delivery	How are works delivered or procured on this asset group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved processes
Performance Measurement	How is the performance of this asset group measured and managed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance indicators Current performance figures Target performance figures

6.4 Status of Lifecycle Plans

Periodic updating of the lifecycle plans will enable the latest datasets to be utilised in a timely manner.

6.5 Status and Options Report (for Major Asset Groups)

Status and Options Reports will be produced for each of the major asset groups and updated at the frequency noted in the table below:-

Asset Group	Frequency
Carriageways	Every 2 years
Footways	Every 5 years
Bridges and other highway structures	Periodic
Street Lighting	Periodic
Drainage	Every 3 years
Traffic Signals	Every 3 years
Highway Signs	Periodic
Safety Barriers	Every 3 years

Status and Options Reports will provide an update on the relationship between existing / future budget options and the predicted condition of the asset over a 20-year cycle. Monitoring this relationship will provide data to make more informed decisions going forward.

7 Financial Summary

7.1 Sources of Funding and Budget Allocation

Investment in the Highway Asset is derived from the following funding streams:-

Revenue: Revenue funding is dependent on Council expenditure priorities in the context of available income which is derived from Welsh Government Revenue Support Grant, non-domestic rates, Council Tax and any other specific Grants. The majority of funding is therefore derived from Welsh Government and the total budget allocated to Road Maintenance is split between a number of service headings based, in part, on historical precedence.

Where additional funds are made available to assist with ongoing maintenance and management of road assets, such as Road Maintenance Grants, individual cases are put forward internally within funding guidelines for consideration, following which allocations are made in accordance with Member priorities.

Capital: Capital Investment is generally funded by Welsh Government (WG) who provide a supported borrowing element, which forms the Authority's base capital budget. WG also include an element within the Revenue Support Grant to cover the debt charge repayments on this borrowing.

The capital base budget allocation is further supplemented by:-

- Unsupported borrowing (prudential borrowing)
- Capital Grants & Contributions
- Capital Receipts
- Direct Revenue Financing

Capital Investment Plans are reviewed by relevant Management Teams and approved by relevant Committees within the Council.

Should there be a requirement to fund additional specific projects from Prudential Borrowing, a full Options Appraisal exercise must be undertaken for all major projects. The Appraisal usually considers, amongst other issues, the objectives of the Council, alternative options and the affordability of loan repayments from existing revenue resources.

Grants: The Council submits annual bids for additional funding to the Welsh Government in respect of Transport Grant and Safe Routes to Communities, including Road Safety Schemes and regional transport packages. In addition, the council does, from time to time, receive additional Grants such as Special Road Maintenance Grant which is distributed to local authorities based on road Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) and is governed by strict criteria.

As far as Revenue is concerned, any virement of funds between Service Headings are dealt with at Head of Service level within the Environment & Regeneration Directorate, whilst the corporate Capital Programme Steering Group (CPSG) makes recommendations regarding Capital transfers. Any virement between service headings in excess of £100k is dealt with at Corporate Director level.

8.0 Risk Management

8.1 Corporate Risk Management Policy

The Council is committed to the management of risk in order to:

- Support the delivery of the council's vision, purpose and priorities;
- Ensure statutory obligations are met;
- Ensure effective stewardship of public funds, efficient deployment and use of resources and securing value for money for the public purse;
- Safeguard all stakeholders to whom the council has a duty of care;
- Protect physical and information assets and identify and manage potential liabilities;
- Learn from previous threats, opportunities, successes and failures;
- Preserve promote and protect the reputation of the council; and
- Build a workforce where improvement, innovation and a responsible approach to risk taking is part of its culture.

For the purpose of this policy, strategic risk is defined as:

"...the threat that an event, action or inaction will adversely affect the Council's ability to successfully achieve its vision, purpose and priorities"

Effective risk management is also promoted through:

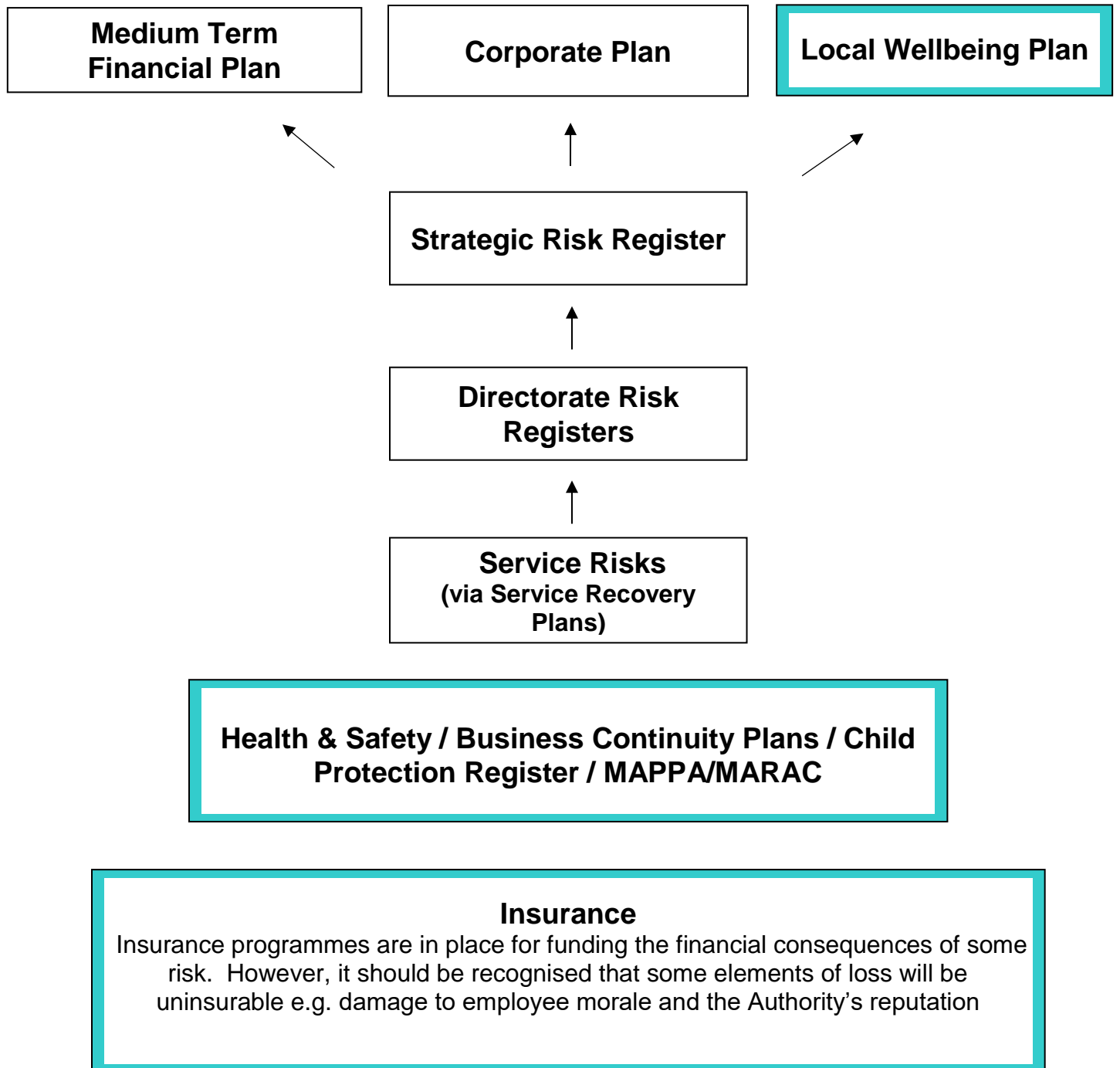
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Guidance – In 2012, CIPFA published an addendum to its report “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Governance: Framework*” which urged local authorities to prepare a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code of governance on an annual basis. This should include how the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year have been monitored and evaluated whilst also setting out any planned changes in the next period. The governance statement includes the Council’s risk management policy, processes and their effectiveness.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - Statutory guidance emphasises the importance of considering long term risks that will affect the delivery of the Council’s services and outcomes for our communities. The sustainable development principle should be used to frame the risks that we have identified in the short, medium and long term and, through the defined steps we intend to implement in order to meet our well-being objectives, we should demonstrate that risks are well managed.

The Council’s Corporate Risk Management Framework (figure 8.1.1) sets out in this policy is designed to ensure risk management is effective. The framework overleaf illustrates how risk will be managed at different levels and how that information will be used to influence the

council's priorities (Corporate Plan), the allocation of resources (Medium Term Financial Plan) along with sharing of relevant risks with partners (Local Well-being Plan).

Figure 8.1.1 The Corporate Risk Management Framework



8.2 The Corporate Risk Management Process

Step 1 - Risk Identification

The council's established key risk management processes for identifying risk are as follows:

i) The Council's Wellbeing Objectives

Corporate Directors Group actively identify risks associated with the delivery of the vision, purpose, well-being objectives and associated priorities as set out in the council's Corporate Plan. Those risks will be recorded on the Strategic Risk Register.

ii) The Council's wider business

At the Directorate level, a Directorate risk register will be populated by Senior Management Teams with the risks identified via the service recovery planning process and any additional risks requiring inclusion on the Directorate risk register.

Corporate Directors will present their Directorate Risk Registers to Corporate Directors Group (on a six monthly basis – at a minimum) highlighting those risks that have been identified for escalation to the Strategic Risk Register and also to provide assurance to Corporate Directors Group that Directorate and significant service risks are being managed, monitored and reviewed appropriately.

ii) Service Delivery

At the service level, Accountable Managers identify service risks and manage, monitor and review them in their respective Service Recovery Plans. The format of the service level risk register is contained within the Service Recovery Plan template.

iii) Operational Risk Management

In addition to the above there are a number of service / operational risk systems e.g. Child Protection Register / MAPP/MARAC which should inform the Strategic Risk Register and Directorate Risk Registers.

iv) Business Continuity

Business continuity management is a process which analyses the impact on a business which directly affects the services provided by the council. Its purpose is to identify critical activities and functions that have to continue at a minimum during a disruption of service delivery or when responding to an emergency.

v) Health & Safety

Processes for evaluating the risk arising from a hazard(s), taking into account the adequacy of any existing controls, and deciding whether or not the risk(s) is acceptable, are now well-embedded across the council. External quality assurance of the council's risk management arrangements is in place and there is clear evidence of risk being prioritised, resourced and evaluated at operational, service and corporate levels.

Step 2 – Risk Assessment

i) Assessment

This involves an assessment of the likelihood and impact of the risks that have been identified. This assessment is undertaken utilising the following 5x5 risk evaluation matrix.

Figure 8.2.1 - 5 x 5 Risk Matrix

Key								
Likelihood	Impact*							
1. Very Unlikely 2. Unlikely 3. Likely 4. Very Likely 5. Certainty	1. Low 2. Low/ Medium 3. Medium 4. Medium / High 5. High	Likelihood	5					
			4					
			3					
			2					
			1					
			0					
			1	2	3	4	5	
			Impact					



Low Risk



Medium Risk



High Risk

*The impact of the risk should be assessed on the basis of:

- Reputation
- Finances
- Significant service / operational change

Step 3 – Monitoring, Reviewing and Escalation of Risks

a) Service level risks – Service Recovery Plan

For those risks at the service level Accountable Managers are responsible for managing, monitoring and reviewing those risks. Significant risks should be escalated to Senior Management Teams

for consideration for inclusion on the relevant Directorate Risk Register.

b) Directorate Risk Register

For those risks on the Directorate Risk Register the process of managing, monitoring and reviewing those risks remains the responsibility of Senior Management Teams.

Directorate risk registers should be regularly reviewed and monitored on a quarterly basis (at a minimum).

Reviews shall include evidence so as to accurately determine and measure the Directorate's performance in mitigating / controlling the identified risks.

Typical inputs include the following although this list must not be considered exhaustive:

- the extent to which the risk being controlled / mitigated
- follow-up actions from previous Senior Management Team reviews of the Directorate Risk Register.

Information shall be collated by the Senior Management Team in advance of each review to enable the Team to address the need, if appropriate, for changes to the way in which the Directorate risks are being controlled / mitigated, the resources allocated, whether any risks require escalation to the Strategic Risk

Register, if any risks can be removed from the Register or new risks have been identified to be added to the Register.

Directorate Risk Registers will be reported to Corporate Directors Group on a six monthly basis (at a minimum) to provide assurance to Corporate Directors Group that Directorate Risks and significant service risks are being effectively managed and mitigated and will provide the opportunity for the identification of significant Directorate Risks to be escalated to the Strategic Risk Register.

b) Strategic Risk Register

Once Corporate Directors Group have agreed which risks are to be included on the Strategic Risk Register the process of managing, monitoring and reviewing those risks will be at the corporate level.

The Strategic Risk Register will be reviewed and monitored quarterly (at a minimum) by Corporate Directors Group. The review shall include the production of evidence so as to accurately determine and measure performance in managing the strategic Risk Register. Typical inputs include the following although this list must not be considered exhaustive:

- the extent to which the risk is being controlled / mitigated
- follow – up actions from previous reviews

Information shall be collated by Corporate Directors in advance of each review to enable the Group to address the need, if appropriate for changes to the way in which the strategic risk is being controlled / mitigated, the resources allocated, whether any risks can be removed or given back to the appropriate Directorate Risk Register for monitoring and review or new risks have been identified to be added to the Register.

The Strategic Risk Register will be reported to Cabinet on a 6 monthly basis (at a minimum).

8.3 Major Asset Risks

Table 8.3.1 below gives an indication of what have been/are considered to be NPT’s Major Asset Risks:-

Risk	Current Controls in Place
Carriageways	
Previous Carriageway Lifecycle Plan and Status and Options Reports indicates that, if current expenditure levels are maintained, the condition of the highway asset will deteriorate.	Regular condition surveys (SCANNeR and SCRIM for classified and visual for both classified and unclassified) keep engineers informed. The introduction of preventative treatments into the forward works programme, whilst not stopping deterioration, could help slow it down.

Table 8.3.1 – Major Asset Risks (cont.)

Risk	Current Controls in Place
Safety Fencing	
Condition of barriers throughout the County Borough.	Survey identified main risks throughout the County Borough which were dealt with via a 3-year renewal programme, other than those sites associated with edge deterioration that require special funding which are ongoing.
Structures	
<p>Cymmer Bridge</p> <p>Deficiency in Principal Bridge Inspections.</p> <p>Newbridge Road Bridge</p>	<p>Weight restriction and signal controlled one way working in place. Diversionary route being designed.</p> <p>New regime implemented resulting in a full cycle of principal bridge inspections being undertaken which may identify unplanned maintenance issues.</p> <p>The grade II listed structure has been closed to all users due to the condition of the structure.</p>
Drainage	
<p>Any significant requirements that may arise from the Flood Risk Management Plan.</p> <p>Gap in knowledge on gully carrier drains.</p>	<p>Mitigating factors identified as part of the Plan.</p> <p>Inventory currently being undertaken.</p>
Street Lighting	
Column collapse and electrical system failure.	Problems identified in the 2006/07 Lifecycle Plan led to an options appraisal being undertaken, which resulted in a major infrastructure renewal programme being completed.

9.0 Improvement Plan

9.1 Milestones

Improvement action plans for each asset group are included in the relevant lifecycle plan. Table 9.1.1 indicates improvements to date, together with key milestones identified for implementation as part of this Plan.

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
General		
Working practice	Transition to new Code of Practice Complete gap analysis of working practices vs new Codes of Practice	Some areas reviewed and completed – analysis ongoing
Carriageways		
Surface condition data gap	Extended carriageway visual condition surveys to all thoroughfares on both the classified and unclassified network	Complete
	Utilise Survey Team to identify condition on scale 1 to 4	Complete
	Update condition survey	Ongoing.
Review management of carriageway with respect to skid resistance.	Review approach and further develop strategy as necessary, making appropriate amendments to the HAMP and Highway Maintenance Plan as required.	Ongoing.

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan (cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Carriageways (cont.)		
Improved methods required for targeting of roads for preventative maintenance	Work nationally to develop 'deterioration modelling' to assist with works programming – since previous HAMP, condition data surveys have provided improved means to inform forward work programmes.	2022 - 2025 Ongoing works in line with the CSSW national asset management framework contract.
Risk assessment and pavement management	Continue to explore potential benefits of the application of risk exposure indices in works programming.	Ongoing
Integrated computerised maintenance system for improved efficiencies	Development of in-house 'system' using GIS.	Ongoing
Detailed overview of potential road schemes with costs, measurements and inventories	Development of a preparation pool to assist with maintenance planning and prioritisation.	Ongoing

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan
(cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Carriageways (cont.)		
Insufficient coordination with utilities for Forward Works Programme	Develop forward works programme to be coordinated where necessary with utilities using Data Map Wales.	Data Map Wales will soon hold most of the utilities' forward works. Works conflicts will then be identified easily.
Further use of innovative, preventative maintenance techniques.	Development of 'fit for purpose' preventative maintenance solutions as cheaper, sustainable and more environmentally friendly alternatives.	Trial areas identified through condition survey and incorporated into HAMP.
Insufficient method of addressing poor surface condition at stress points, such as junctions and reinstatements.	Procurement of 'JCB Pothole Pro' machine.	'JCB Pothole Pro' purchased. Programme of works being created.
Footways		
Update condition of footway network	Utilise Survey Team to identify condition on scale 1 to 4 condition data used in preparation of annual works programme.	Most recent survey completed in 2021. New survey to be completed by August 2023.
Improvement in coordination with utilities for Forward Works Programme	Develop forward works programme to be coordinated where necessary with utilities using Data Map Wales.	Data Map Wales will soon hold most of the utilities' forward works. Works conflicts will then be identified easily.

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan (cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Footways (cont.)		
Risk assessment and works programme management	Continue to explore potential benefits of the application of risk exposure indices in works programming.	Ongoing.
Reduce expensive maintenance costs.	Development of preventative maintenance regime and use of new treatments as cheaper, sustainable and more environmentally friendly alternatives.	Ongoing
Implement Inventory Population Strategy.	Gather bridge element data through biennial general inspection programme.	Ongoing
Structures		
Incomplete Bridge Detail Drawings/ Records	Transfer Survey and Microfilm details into AutoCAD Drawings	Ongoing
Bridge Key performance indicators	Extend KPI register to include for BCI, Availability, Reliability & Work bank	Ongoing

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan
(cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Structures (cont.)		
Retaining wall gaps	Complete survey of retaining walls	Ongoing
Principal inspections on major structures	Principal inspections programmed (52 No.)	Ongoing
Compliance with the UK Bridges Boards Code of Practice for Highway structures	Implementation of the code's recommendations	Ongoing
Formal maintenance selection process	Prioritisation system to be applied to work bank	Ongoing
Drainage		
Planned drainage maintenance on roads with a speed limit of 40mph and over	Implementation of a thorough survey and cleanse of the drainage infrastructure on all roads within this category	Ongoing
Lack of detail for connecting drains forming part of gulley / highway drainage systems.	Instigate inventory of connecting drains forming part of gulley / highway drainage systems.	Ongoing

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan
(Cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Lighting		
Address aged lighting stock	Implement Lighting Renewal Project for street lighting (excludes illuminated signs)	Complete
Gap in data of underground cabling	Complete inventory of authority owned underground cable	Ongoing
Gap in data of controlled crossing infrastructure	Complete inventory & condition survey of controlled crossing infrastructure	Complete
No long-term controller replacement investment profile	Identify investment profile for controller replacement to end of plan period	Complete
No long-term Signal refurbishment investment profile	Identify signal refurbishment investment profile to end of plan period	Complete
Highway Signs		
Signs missing, requiring replacement or needing attention.	Recent GAIST survey identified signs that require replacement/attention. Sign replacement programme being created. Neighbourhood Services to fix signs that need attention.	Ongoing.

Table 9.1.1: Summary of Performance Gaps and Action Plan
(cont.)

Performance Gap	Milestone / Actions	Target Date
Highway Signs (cont.)		
Cleaning Backlog.	Neighbourhood Services to complete cleaning backlog and thereafter continue with cyclical cleaning in accordance with HAMP.	Routine maintenance on-going.
No live updates of inventory.	GAIST survey to be kept live – made particularly important by the major changes occurring due to the 20mph National Rollout.	Continuous inspection/replacement regime in place.
Crash Barriers		
95% of safety barriers data held in inventory. Updated condition survey required.	Procure new condition survey. Complete inventory survey to 100%.	4 th condition survey to be undertaken in 2023/24.
Other Assets		
No maintenance programme for other assets.	Establish maintenance programme e.g., street furniture.	Existing survey data to be rationalised. Development of programme for collection of required asset inventories – ongoing.

10.0 Management & Control of the Plan

10.1 Responsibility for Delivery

The following people are charged with the delivery of this Highway Asset Management Plan. Their roles are as follows:

Post / Position	Name	Role
Directorate Mgt Team	Not applicable	Draft approval of the HAMP
Cabinet Board	Not applicable	Approval of the HAMP
Capital Programme Steering Group	Not applicable	Monitoring of capital financial information relating to the HAMP
Head of Streetcare Services	Mike Roberts	Allocate and prioritise resources to facilitate implementation of asset management strategies and provide a link to corporate strategies in consultation with other sections as necessary.
Highways and Drainage Services Manager	Steve Owen	
Neighbourhood Services Manager	James Davies	
Lighting Services Manager	Dan Rees	
Asset / Traffic & Programme Manager	Aled Jones	Co-ordinate asset management, development and updating of the HAMP and associated documents, monitoring and implementation of various improvement actions.
Highways Asset Management Officer	Warren Hudson	
Senior Assistant (Network Analysis)	Mike Thomas	Holder of the asset inventory and condition data.

Post / Position	Name	Role
Departmental Finance	Sian Davies	Provision of any financial information required in relation to the HAMP.
Network & Programme Manager	Aled Jones	Implement / support development of the HAMP and asset management strategy.
Engineering Manager	Hasan Hasan	Input to updates of HAMP documents and production of integrated works programmes and reactive highway maintenance.
Lighting Services Manager	Dan Rees	
Drainage Manager	Richard Colman	
Street-Scene Manager	Colette Powney	

10.2 Review and Update

The HAMP document will be reviewed on a three-year cycle and the appendices updated periodically as required.

Position	Frequency	Date of Next Update
HAMP	3 yearly	April 2026
Appendices	As required	Not applicable