

January 2017

Highways and Transportation Asset Management Policy

Version 2.0

Essex County Council

Foreword

The highways infrastructure is one of the highest value assets that the Essex County Council owns, with current estimates valuing it at over £10 billion. This represents a significant maintenance commitment for the county and requires us to take a robust approach to the management of this asset.

Our ambition is to maintain and develop a highway network that supports economic growth, keeps users safe and continues to achieve our statutory responsibilities. However, like all councils, Essex County Council is not alone in facing significant budgetary challenges. The cost of maintaining our highways at a level that supports our ambition, whilst meeting public expectation, is becoming unsustainable.

These ambitions require a fundamental shift in the way services are delivered and funded: we must build on recent work and take a more strategic, long-term view of our assets.

The highways and transportation service is delivered through a long term collaborative partnership contract between Essex County Council and its provider, Ringway Jacobs. To help us to deliver this vision, we must maximise the commercial and strategic opportunities that are available to us through this partnership. Since contract commencement in 2012, the service and investment into the highway asset has grown staggeringly. This is an industry-leading model and unique one that is unique to Essex – currently standing as the largest highway services partnership in the UK.

This strong focus on asset management within the partnership will ensure that we are well placed to deliver the best possible service for residents, businesses and the travelling public in Essex.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Eddie Johnson,
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Rowe', written in a cursive style.

Mark Rowe,
Service Director, Ringway Jacobs Ltd

Highways and Transportation Asset Management Policy

Essex County Council recognises the vital role that its highway network plays in the lives of residents, as well as the travelling public and local businesses. Effective asset management of the highway network and its infrastructure is fundamental in supporting the Council's Vision of Essex being a county where innovation brings prosperity, and in contributing to the Council's Corporate Outcomes:

- **Children in Essex get the best start in life**
- **People have aspirations and achieve their ambitions through education, training and lifelong learning**
- **People in Essex can live independently and exercise choice and control over their lives**
- **People in Essex enjoy good health and wellbeing**
- **People in Essex live in safe communities and are protected from harm**
- **Sustainable economic growth for Essex communities and businesses**
- **People in Essex experience a high quality and sustainable environment**

These Corporate Objectives take into account stakeholder expectations, and are also supported by the County Council's Economic Plan for Essex and the Local Transport Plan.

Effective asset management leads to a safe, accessible, serviceable and sustainable highway network which is vital for providing access to key services such as employment, healthcare, education, social services, sports and leisure facilities. It is also vital for providing access across the County for the police, ambulance, fire and other emergency response services.

The County's priority route network provides the main arteries for the flow of commerce, goods and people, and therefore carries high volumes of traffic through and around the County. Sustaining this network in good condition promotes reliable access and journey times, and makes Essex an attractive place for employers to invest in thereby encouraging desired economic growth in the County.

A balanced approach to asset investment promotes choice as to where people wish to travel to, and how people wish to travel either by walking, cycling, driving or by public transport. The highway and public rights of way network also affords opportunities for exercise and wellbeing through walking, cycling, horse riding and access to the countryside.

To support the achievement of these corporate outcomes the Council has developed a Highways and Transportation Asset Management Strategy which sets out how the highway infrastructure is managed and maintained effectively in Essex. Central to this strategy is the balancing of competing demands for investment across all asset groups, prioritising investment needs on sound data and evidence, taking into account the needs of the travelling public and residents of Essex, as well as their views and expectations.

The Asset Management Strategy explains how available funds and resources are utilised to maximise the benefits of the investment in the highway network for all users of Essex highways. The key objectives of the Council's Asset Management Strategy are:

Meet Customer Needs

The County Council supports the needs and expectations of the travelling public and residents of Essex, and the commercial needs and economic growth desired in the County. This is achieved by maintaining its Highways and Transportation assets to a safe and serviceable standard, and by ensuring that the assets are capable of providing all users access to key services such as healthcare, education and employment, and that they support quality of life expectations;

Obtain Value for Money

The County Council deploys sound asset management processes based on national best practice guidance. This is delivered through evidence based, robust asset management planning across all Highway asset groups. This facilitates the best strategic, value for money solutions within the overall funding availability;

Promote Improvement and Innovation

The County Council strives for continual improvement and innovation in the use of technologies, processes and materials in the maintenance of its Highway assets, with particular regard to reducing costs, environmental impact and adapting to climate change;

Achieve Corporate Outcomes

The County Council implements methods to monitor, evaluate and review the performance of its Highway assets, to ensure that the effectiveness of strategies are sustained and aligned to its Corporate Outcomes.

Next review date January 2018