



## Asset Management Policy

2019

Version 4

## Foreword

The highways infrastructure is one of the highest value assets that the Essex County Council owns, with current estimates valuing it at £10 billion (excluding land value). 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 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 highway network at a level that supports our ambition, whilst meeting public expectation, is becoming unsustainable. In order to deliver a sustainable, well-managed highway network we must build on our recent work to implement a more strategic, long-term approach.

The highways service is delivered through a long term collaborative partnership contract between Essex County Council and its strategic partner, Ringway Jacobs. This is an industry-leading model and one that is unique to Essex – currently standing as the largest highway services partnership in the UK.

To help us to deliver our ambition, we must maximise the commercial and strategic opportunities that are available to us through this partnership. From contract commencement in 2012, the service and investment into the highway asset grew at an astonishing rate. In spite of the financial challenges faced by Essex County Council this investment will continue to be significant to reflect the scale and need of the highway assets.

This strong focus on asset management within the partnership will continue to place people at the heart of what we do, so that we are well placed to deliver the best possible service and value for residents, businesses and the travelling public in Essex.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Bentley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Kevin Bentley: Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

## Embedding this 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, including its infrastructure, is fundamental in supporting the Essex County Council Strategic Outcomes for being a County where innovation brings prosperity, and in contributing to its Strategic Priorities

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Cook'.

Andrew Cook: Director for Highways and Transportation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Butt'.

Simon Butt: Operation Director, Essex Highways

## Highways and Transportation Asset Management Policy

Essex County Council has developed a number of Corporate Priorities to take into account stakeholder expectations, and are also supported by the Essex County Council Organisation Strategy 2017-21 and the Local Transport Plan.

- Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills
- Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries
- Target economic development to areas of opportunity
- Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential
- Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care
- Improve the health of people in Essex
- Help to secure stronger, safer and more neighbourly communities
- Help secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes
- Limit cost and drive growth in revenue
- Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people
- Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world

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, as well as how people wish to travel: either by walking, cycling, driving or by public transport. The highway network, including public rights of way, also affords opportunities for exercise and wellbeing through walking, cycling and horse riding, as well as access to the countryside and other open spaces.

To support these corporate priorities 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, and placing people at the heart of what we do by taking into account the safety, needs, views and expectations of the travelling public and residents of Essex.

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 Outcome Objectives of the Essex County Council Asset Management Strategy are:

## **Enable Inclusive Economic Growth**

The County Council supports the commercial needs and economic growth desired in the County through ensuring its Highway assets are safe, accessible and serviceable. This provides access to key national and international destinations, thereby creating the right environment to attract employers to the area.

## **Help People Get the Best Start and Age Well**

An accessible and serviceable highway network supports quality of life expectations through ensuring all users have access to key services such as, healthcare, education, employment and social services. It also enables opportunities for cycling, walking and horse riding, as well as providing access to sports, leisure and entertainment facilities.

## **Help Create Great Places to Grow Up, Live and Work**

An accessible and serviceable highway network promotes a safer environment through access to emergency services such as the fire, police and ambulance services. It also enables people choice in mode of travel, providing opportunities for reducing carbon footprint. It encourages economic growth, which provides opportunities for work, training and development. It also supports a safer environment by providing access to waste collection services and recycling centres.

## **Transform the Council to Achieve More With Less**

The County Council strives for continual improvement and innovation in the use of technologies, processes and materials in the maintenance of its Highway assets. This is aimed at reducing costs and environmental impact as well as to enable adaption to climate change. 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 available.

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

Next review date January 2020