DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

September 2024

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY DOCUMENT CONTROL	
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Darlington Borough Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1. Darlington Borough Council (DBC) recognises the importance of its highway infrastructure and how an effectively maintained and managed network contributes to the achievement of its corporate goals. It understands that effective Asset Management is a platform to deliver clarity around standards and levels of service, and to make best use of its available resources.

1.2. The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy sets out how the Council will best manage the Highway Network taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities, asset condition and best use of available resources.

1.3. It has been produced following the assessment of customer needs, local priorities and asset condition. It also ensures that both short and long term needs are appropriately considered, whilst delivering a minimum whole life cost approach to our Highway Assets.

1.4. The Strategy will be used to inform the highway maintenance schemes that are to be implemented within Darlington Borough Council's three year Highway Delivery plan.

1.5. This Strategy covers all highway maintenance activities funded by revenue and capital streams. The Strategy does not directly relate to capital improvements but where linkages exist these are identified.

1.6. The Asset Management Strategy will be used to inform priorities in the business planning process and will support the continuous improvement of highway asset management.

2. Asset Management Policy and Framework

2.1. The Asset Management Strategy sets out how the Asset Management Policy will be achieved. The Policy is a high level document that confirms the Council's commitment to Highway Asset Management and demonstrates how an Asset Management approach aligns with the authority's corporate vision, strategic/LTP and national guidance.

2.2. The Asset Management Strategy is one of the key strategic documents relating to the Council's Highway Services. The Asset Management Framework below encompasses these key documents and illustrates the local and national influences and dependencies that are in place to deliver these services.

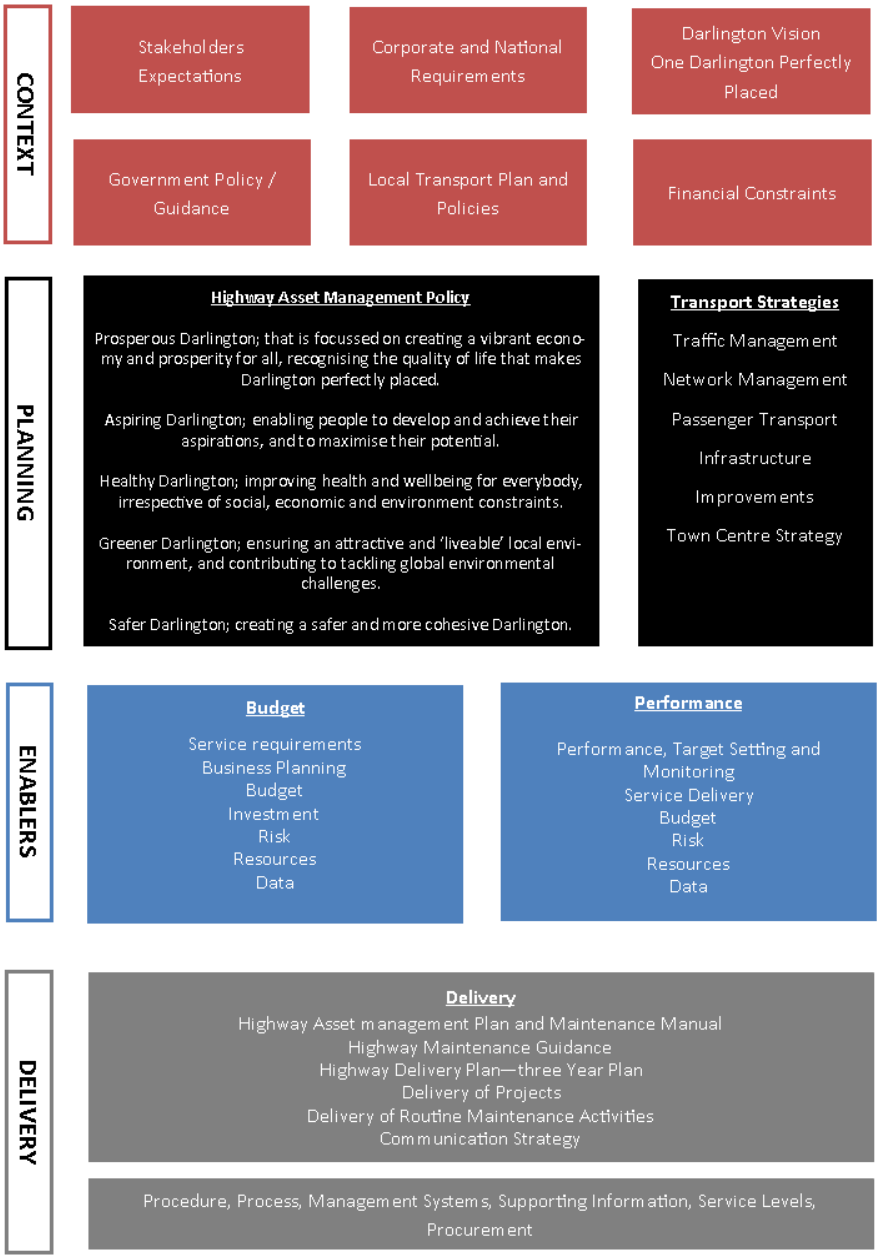

Fig 1 – Darlington Borough Council Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Framework

2.3. A key element of the Asset Management Framework is the Council's Highway Asset Management Plan. This plan will contain approved policies and guidance, service standards and interventions in respect to the Council's legal requirements and its service provision.

2.4. This document reflects the guidance provided by Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme, (HMEP) document 'Highway Infrastructure Asset Management' and the National Code of Practice 'Well-maintained Highways'.

2.5. Fig 2. sets out the organisational structure within the Council for the maintenance, management and improvement of the highway asset.

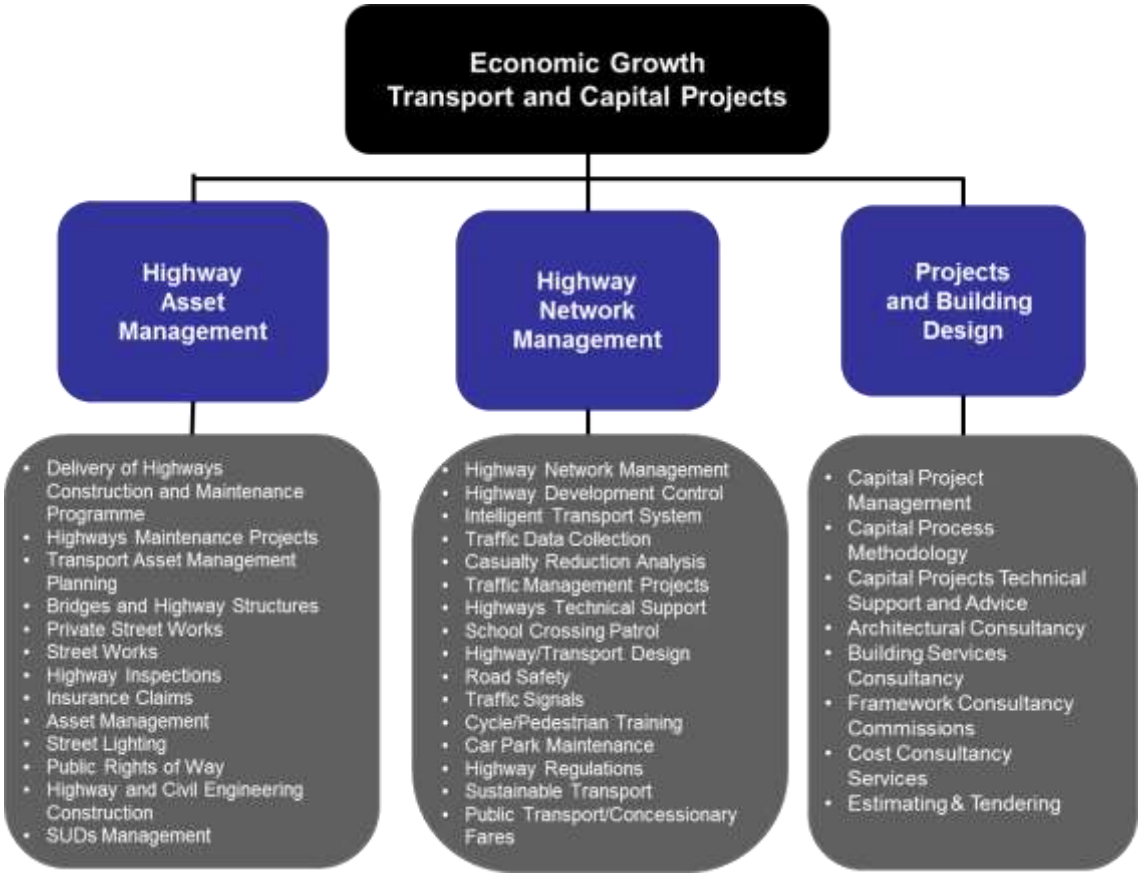

Fig 2 – Darlington Borough Council Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Framework

2.6. The Highway Asset Management Team is responsible for the overall management of the highways maintenance service. It produces and reviews the Council's Highway Asset Management policies, strategies and plans. The team provides intelligence to support delivery of the Asset Management objectives, and monitors the collection of network condition data.

2.7. The Highway Asset Management Team is the first point of contact for the highways services. Handling routine maintenance, responding to customers/ members and organising activities though the Councils Highway Direct Labour Organisation.

2.8. Major capital maintenance schemes are delivered in conjunction with the capital projects team, sharing specialist resources as required e.g. major structural maintenance schemes.

2.9. Programme and budget management are coordinated across Highway Asset Management and Highway Network Management.

3. Strategies for Individual Assets

3.1. As part of the asset management framework and in accordance with other national guidance, the highway asset has been divided into asset groups. Each group is then broken down into asset components and activities. The asset groups and components are described in Section 5.

3.2. A key function of the asset management process is to understand the investment required for each asset group, component and activity against performance, aims and objectives. This means understanding what levels of funding are required to meet:

- The corporate aims and objectives set out in the Darlington Transport Pan 2022-2030 and other strategies including The Council Plan 2024-2027
- How these will be delivered - Delivery Planning
- Measuring progress and performance against targets

3.3. Intrinsic to this process is a need to understand the influence of budget decisions on customer satisfaction and delivery of the corporate priorities. Furthermore, the impact that investing on one asset component may have on the overall performance of other asset components, as well as the whole asset, is examined.

3.4. For example ……Recent results for the borough, from the National Highways and Transportation (NHT) customer survey (2022 results), show that the condition of roads is the item that is "most important to users" with 90% stating it as "very important" and 55% saying the Council should 'Spend a lot more' on the 'Highway Condition.

3.5. For the delivery of the DBC's highway service, the Operational Term Maintenance team and the Asset Management team operate alongside each other from a central depot/office to cover all routine and operational functions to enable efficient delivery of maintenance programmes.

3.6. In line with national guidance and good practice, DBC is developing a lifecycle approach to managing its highway maintenance activities. (See Table1: Lifecycle Planning Concept). Understanding how long specific maintenance treatments last, the relative cost of these treatments and the Levels of Service (LoS) provided are essential pre-requisites to good asset management. DBC's goal is to improve public satisfaction with its highway service whilst maintaining value for money and continuing to provide a safe highway network, in line with corporate priorities.

Table 1: Life cycle planning concept

3.7. This approach allows for budgets to be split at a strategic level based on a common set of criteria. Successful implementation of this approach relies on good understanding of the asset, its current and future performance, expenditure and customer feedback, as well as an understanding of the various service levels that may be achieved for the different funding options. This understanding can only be achieved through reliable, current and robust data.

3.8. DBC has data and information strategies, which prioritise its data collection needs, data management requirements and the IT infrastructure necessary to process and present this information. Plans are in place to develop some of these systems further (see section 6)

4. Inventory Management and Data Collection

4.1. A sound knowledge of the scope of the asset is the foundation of any asset management system. It is only with a coherent knowledge of the extent of an asset, its component parts and their condition that an overall view can be formed and a consistent management approach initiated.

4.2. The Highway inventory is well developed with all major asset types recorded and logged in an Insight/GIS based platform. There are no significant gaps in this inventory except for the highway drainage infrastructure which is being completed as shown in section 5.8

4.3. Currently these systems encompass the following asset types:

- Highways
- Structures
- Street Lighting
- Traffic Management Systems/Signals
- Highway Drainage Systems
- Public Rights of Way
- Drainage and Water Courses

4.4. We have comprehensive inspection and survey schedules, tailored to specific assets. We survey in line with, or surpassing, national guidance and statutory requirements, and provide good quality data that enables effective risk management and decision making.

4.5. These regimes are documented in the relevant maintenance manuals covering the various asset types.

4.6. Condition Surveys: are primarily intended to identify deficiencies in the highway infrastructure which, if untreated, are likely to adversely affect its long term performance and serviceability.

4.6.1. There are a number of different types of surveys, each provides information from a different perspective, and when combined can provide a comprehensive picture of the condition of the asset. They provide information on the nature and severity of deterioration, which in turn is used to determine appropriate maintenance treatments in line with asset management objectives.

4.6.2. Specialist equipment and surveys are utilised to measure the condition of the carriageways, footways and cycleways, in order to provide assessments of overall performance, maintenance requirements and relevant data for national performance indicators.

4.6.3. DBC have recently (July 2023) purchased standalone analytical software from XIAS that will allow us to capture, manage, integrate and analyse all condition information in one place. It will be based on locally defined treatments rather than typical UKPMS treatments

4.7. Condition Surveys involve a diverse range of surveying and investigatory techniques including:

4.7.1. SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment of the National Network of Roads): surveys are carried out by commercial survey companies, using equipment which has passed an acceptance test and has an accreditation certificate. The vehicles record longitudinal and transverse profile, rut depth, texture depth, gradient, crossfall and radius of curvature and the extent of surface cracking. The data is used in the calculation of the National Indicators 130-01 and130-02.

4.7.2. CVI (Course visual Surveys): Certified and experienced surveyors use software and vehicles specifically designed to collect visual data, without the need for walked surveys. There is no condition correlation between the differing types of road surveys, therefore DBC have been using CVI survey the whole of its network regardless of hierarchy for comparison parity.

4.7.3. SCRIM (Sideways force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine): Measures wet road skidding resistance, which can then be compared to investigatory levels. It should be noted that there is no value at which a surface passes from being safe to unsafe; however some sites due to geometric or other constraints often require higher levels of skidding resistance to reduce accident risks. This data is a prime factor in determining maintenance requirements on the Principal Road Network.

4.7.4. AEI (Annual Engineering Inspections): The Annual Engineer's Inspection has been introduced recently as an alternative to existing UKPMS visual surveys. Although the AEI is not a current UKPMS affiliated survey, the survey is popular amongst Local Authorities. This is due to the ease in which maintenance schemes and treatments are identified and summarised following an assessment on site. The survey has been designed with engineering judgement in mind and not surveyor driven. AEI focuses on treatment selection as opposed to raw defect identification. Treatment length can be defined in accordance with DBC local rules in mind. In turn this supports lifecycle analysis and wider asset management.

4.7.5. DBC will be replacing the SCANNER and CVI with AEI starting from August 2023

4.8. Condition Assessment:

4.8.1. The purpose of Condition Assessment is to address the key objective of Network Sustainability and to ensure that value for money is achieved when undertaking structural repairs.

4.8.2. By following asset management principles and providing information on the nature and severity of the condition, the timing and nature of appropriate

treatments can be determined.

4.8.3. Data from these surveys are also used in the production of National Indicators and repeatable condition surveys allow for analysis of trends within the network.

5. Asset Groups and Components

Asset Group	Asset Sub-Group	Quantity
Roads	carriageways, drainage	**557km**
Footways and cycle routes	footways and cycle routes (dedicated and shared use) and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings	**631km**
Highway Lighting	columns, lamps, high masts, feeder pillars, illuminated signs, bollards and beacons and subway lights	**16352 No**
Bridges and other highway structures	bridges, subways, culverts and retaining walls	**315 No**
Traffic Control and Information Systems	junction controls, detector loops, UTC, controlled pedestrian crossings, Intelligent Transport Systems	**67 No**
Street furniture: Signs (unlit) and other	Signs (unlit): regulatory, advisory, directional and information. Street furniture (i.e.Safety fencing, name plates, bollards, bus stops, safety fences, pedestrian barriers etc)	**16533 No**

5.1. DBC's highway asset has been divided into key assets groups and components, as described in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Asset Groups and Components

5.2. This approach has been adopted to allow a clear understanding of budget allocation across the different asset components, facilitating the recording of where money is invested, hence linking expenditure to activities. Identifying where money is invested, allows the Council to monitor performance against service delivery and thus allows the implementation of a continuous improvement process, within the constraints of available funds.

5.3. Dividing the Asset into component parts and identifying the relative costs and demand for planned, routine and reactive maintenance activities is seen as an essential process upon which risk and life cycle planning can be developed.

5.4. Carriageways

5.4.1. Carriageways (roads) are the asset group with the largest need for attention and the desired outcome of this Strategy is to improve their overall condition. The Strategy targets increased investment in them in order to arrest the progressive deterioration that was occurring prior to 2011/12.

5.4.2. **Desired Outcome**: to deliver a sustainable improvement in overall condition.

- Priority Investment: a preventative Strategy will be adopted as this will deliver the best value for money, preventative works will be given budget priority.
- Investment will recognise the differences in condition and treatments between of various road hierarchies.
- Investment in drainage maintenance and improvements.

5.4.3. Preventative Approach: A preventative approach will be adopted. This means investing a greater proportion of the available budget to treat roads in the early stages of deterioration. A preventative approach targets assets that are not currently in need of full structural renewal and proposes to extend the assets whole life by arresting/delaying deterioration. The previous approach followed a mainly reactive approach that focused on assets at end of their life and involved carrying out more costly treatments, which was unsustainable. This Strategy is the roads equivalent of painting wooden window frames rather than waiting for them to rot and need expensive replacement. (See Table 1: Life cycle planning concept)

5.4.4. It is recognised that the transition to a preventative Strategy may lead to a short term position in which the perceived network condition is worse.

5.4.5. **Predicted Condition**: The condition profiles assume that the small element of revenue funded works contributes to the overall condition e.g. where significant areas of patching are undertaken.

5.4.6. **Reactive and Routine Repair Costs:** A review of reactive repair standards has formed part of this Strategy. The review has examined the investigation and intervention levels and has determined how a more cost effective way of delivering an acceptable standard of repair to safety defects and other minor defects can be achieved.

5.4.7. The Strategy is designed to allow better management of customer expectations. By providing specified target standards, by improving planning of works and providing a more consistent condition it is expected that users will have greater clarity of what can be expected. Improved communication with customers using this information should improve customer perception and satisfaction.

5.4.8. **Summary:**

- Sustainable improvement of measured condition is possible.
- Predicted decrease in quantities of minor defects (pot holes and the like) in the longer term.
- Increasing customer satisfaction as a result of decreasing reactive repairs and more stable condition.

5.5. Footways

5.5.1. **Desired outcome:** to improve condition of high use footways (referred to as Cat 1 and 1a) and maintain other footways in no worse than current condition.

- Priority Investment: the investment required to improve the condition of heavily used footways
- Footway investment on the remaining footways shall be maintained based upon targeting a “no worse than at present condition”.
- A preventative Strategy will be adopted using surface treatments where appropriate.

5.5.2. High use footways represent 3% of the Council’s footway network making it possible to create a significant change in their condition for relatively small investment. However, the existing condition of Cat 1/1a footways is good due the previous investment of the “Pedestrian Heart” scheme and we aim to maintain this standard.

5.5.3. Remaining funding is predicted to enable progressive improvement in overall condition of other footways by maximising the use of preventative treatments where possible.

5.5.4. Where possible, concrete flagged footways will be renewed with bituminous materials to eliminate 3rd party claims from tripping hazards caused by damaged / broken flags or tree root heave. Flags will continue to be maintained in high use and gateway areas.

5.5.5. **Prevention**: A Large proportions (46%) of the Councils footways are bituminous. A regime of preventative treatments such as slurry sealing offers the opportunity to delivered improved condition at a lower cost. A programme of preventative treatment will form part of this Strategy and will be incorporated into future transport delivery plans.

5.5.6. **Reliability of Predictions:** Predictions of deterioration are based upon engineering judgement and have not been able to be corroborated. The development of a regime of robust condition surveys to enable more robust predictions to be provided is an action within the Asset Management Plan.

5.6. Highway Structures (Bridges)

5.6.1. **Desired outcome:** to maintain a safe structures stock whilst making progress in addressing structural defects on a routine planned maintenance basis.

- Priority investment: in statutory duties and a small number of priority structures.
- Strengthening programme; strengthening of structures will be undertaken progressively using a prioritisation of those structures where strengthening provides the greatest benefit to users.
- Maintain the safety of the structures stock.

5.6.2. **Statutory Duties:** The Council will continue to meet its statutory duties as the owner of highway structures via a regime of inspections and management of abnormal loads and bridge use.

5.6.3. **Bridge Inspections**: The council will inspect highway structures (including Bridges) to at least the minimum regime set out in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) CS 450 Inspections of Highway Structures to ascertain its Condition Index.

- Principal Inspections: all structures at six yearly intervals.
- General Inspections: all structures at two yearly intervals.
- Special Inspections: On an as needs basis.

5.6.4. **Bridge Programme of Works:** The council has identified a programme of works utilising Bridge Condition Indicators (from the above inspections), bridge element defects, Hierarchy and strategic location as determinant factors. The remaining structures will be managed utilising a regime of inspection/monitoring.

5.6.5. **Current Stock Condition:** The Average Bridge Stock Condition Indicator (BSCIAve) is the numerical value of the bridge stock condition as a whole. Darlington's BSCIAve currently (2023) stands at 74. (See Table 3 for condition ranges).

Score	Average Stock Condition	Critical Stock Condition	Additional Comments
100 to 95: Very Good	The structure stock is in a very good condition. Very few bridges may be in a moderate to severe condition.	Very few critical load bearing elements may be in a moderate to severe condition. Represents very low risk to public safety.	If it is a relatively new stock of structures then an appropriate maintenance funding level needs to be identified through Asset Management and Best Value. If it is a mature stock then continuing with the same level of funding is likely to sustain a high condition score and an effective preventative maintenance regime.
94 to 90: Good	Structure stock is in a good condition. A few bridges may be in a severe condition.	A few critical load bearing elements may be in a severe condition. Represents a low risk to public safety.	Historical maintenance funding levels have been at an appropriate level to maintain a good stock condition. These levels of funding should be continued to ensure condition is maintained and resources are concentrated on preventative maintenance activities.
89 to 80: Fair	Structure stock is in a fair condition.	Some critical load bearing elements may be in a severe condition. Some structures	Historical maintenance work may be underfunded anc' structures may not be managed in accordance

	Some structures may be in a severe condition.	may represent a moderate risk to public safety unless mitigation measures are in place	with Best Value principles, implementation of Asset Management is essential. Potential for rapid decrease in condition if sufficient maintenance funding is not provided. Moderate to significant backlog of maintenance work.
79 to 65: Poor	Structure stock is in a poor condition. A significant number of structures may be in a severe condition.	A significant number of critical load bearing elements may be in a severe condition. Some structures may represent a significant risk to public safety unless mitigation measures are in place.	Historical maintenance work underfunded and structures not managed in accordance with Best Value principles and Asset management. It is essential to implement Asset Management practices to ensure work is adequately funded and prioritised and risks assessed and managed. Significant to large backlog of maintenance work, essential work dominates spending.
64 to 40: Very Poor	Structure stock is in a very poor condition. Many structures may be in a severe condition.	Many critical load bearing elements may be unserviceable or close to it and are in a dangerous condition. Some structures may represent a high risk to public safety unless mitigation measures are in place.	Historical maintenance work significantly underfunded and a large to very large maintenance backlog. An Asset Management regime is essential. Re-active approach to maintenance that has been unable to contain deterioration A significant number of structures likely to be closed, have temporary measures in place or other risk mitigation measures. Essential work dominates spending.
39 to 0: Severe	Structure stock is in a severe condition. Many structures may be unserviceable or close to it.	Majority of critical load bearing elements unserviceable or close to it and are in a dangerous condition. Some structures may represent a very high risk to public safety unless mitigation measures are in place.	Historical maintenance work grossly underfunded and a very large maintenance backlog Re-active approach to maintenance that has been unable to prevent deterioration, only essential maintenance work performed, Asset Management is essential. Many structures likely to be closed, have temporary measures in place or other risk mitigation measures. All spend likely to be on essential maintenance.

Table 3: Average Stock Condition based on BSCIAve ranges (As Addendum to CSS Guidance note on - Bridge Condition Indicators. Vol 3: Evaluation of Bridge Condition Indicators, August 2004)

5.7. Traffic Signals

5.7.1. Darlington Borough Council's traffic signal equipment is managed and maintained by Middlesbrough Borough Council Traffic Signal Team through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The traffic signal team keep a register of the traffic signal asset with information including the manufacturer, age and location.

5.7.2. This asset register will be assessed for residual value and a maintenance strategy will be developed to ensure that the asset is replaced in time in order to optimise the reliability of the equipment and limit its whole life cost.

5.7.3. The condition of the asset is assessed as part of an annual inspection programme. This identifies any repairs that are required as well as identifying equipment that is nearing the end of its useful life. Options to remove traffic signal equipment and replace with cheaper network management schemes should be considered.

5.7.4. There is an annual budget to pay for the general maintenance and management of the equipment with an element of funding provided for upgrade of stock. Whenever any improvements are carried out to any junctions the condition and age of the equipment is considered and is replaced if nearing the end of its life.

5.8. Highway Drainage

5.8.1. **Desired outcome:** to maintain a serviceable and blockage free asset whilst making progress in addressing inadequate drainage.

- Priority investment: High priority strategic routes and problematic locations
- Maintenance programme: on-going replacement on a needs basis

5.8.2. Flooding events are a reminder of the risks posed by flooding, not only to private residential and commercial properties, but also to the strategic infrastructure managed by local highway authorities. Malfunctioning or inadequate drainage systems also impact on other aspects such as road condition. This is because where drainage is inadequate or requires maintenance it can cause structural damage to the foundations of a road, especially during heavy rainfall and particularly through the winter months. This contributes to the costly nature of reconstructing carriageways.

5.8.3. Most drainage assets are hidden underground, and historically were never recorded. If historical plans did exist, a lot of them are no longer available for one reason or another. This appears to be a common problem throughout the UK due to the age of some of the assets.

5.8.4. To allow the Council to manage the flood risk, plan routine maintenance, plan asset improvements and limit liability investigations we must first gain knowledge of the individual assets. To this end the Highway Asset Management team has analysed the available information. This has included:

- Existing paper plans
- Inventory data collection from independent site surveys of all highway assets in 2005 (drainage element predominantly gully locations)
- Highway Inspector Information/knowledge
- Maintenance records
- Historical problematic locations
- Onsite investigation prior to highway resurfacing schemes

5.8.5. This analysis has identified that there is a significant lack of asset data for the drainage systems in terms of both the location and condition of the assets.

5.8.6. We have started to collate what data information we already have into one easily accessible location, which is our Pavement Management System known as Insight/Symology.

5.8.7. We have risk assessed and prioritised the remaining data gaps using:

- Highway Classification (Starting with ‘A’ roads)
- Problematic locations

5.8.8. To date (Sept 2024) data collection of our 'A' roads drainage assets are 96% complete, we are currently working on completing this and reviewing other drainage plans held on file, of which 38% of the Urban unclassified network are complete. The remainder will be reviewed over a substantial period of time due to the sheer volume of work required to gather this information.

5.8.9. Once we have a clearer representation of the size and condition of this asset we will be able to improve our long term plans to maintain and improve the drainage assets in-line with the flood risk management as set out by the requirements of the HMEP Guidance on the Management of Highway drainage Assets.

5.9. Street Lighting

5.9.1. **Desired Outcome:** To improve the condition and maintain a street lighting stock that, is efficient, protects the environment and maintains a safe highway network for all to use:

- Priority Investment: the investment required to replace the ageing stock across the borough, thus improving the overall condition
- Minimising the use of energy and reducing our carbon footprint
- Refurbishment Programme; on-going replacement needs driven by age of columns, obsolescence of equipment and deterioration of condition/reliability.

5.9.2. To improve the condition and maintain a street lighting stock that is efficient.

5.9.3. Following DBC's successful Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund bid 2015. The Council was successful in securing this central Government funding to carryout works to upgrade the existing street lighting stock to LED lights resulting in a saving of £365,000 per year on its electricity cost and reduced the Councils carbon footprint by 1,938 tonnes a year. DBC have upgraded all Lighting Units (12000+) to LED and replaced over 4000 lighting columns.

5.9.4. Due to the renewal of all stock, we are now in a regime of routine maintenance and testing. This is a renewal of 120 columns as they approach 40 years of age along with a programme of electrical and strength safety testing per annum.

5.9.5. During 2021 - 2022 some 700 Traffic Sign lanterns still using a low-pressure mercury tube light source will be replaced with more economical LED sign lanterns. The works should achieve annual savings of 100000 kWh, 25 tonnes of carbon, £14000.00 in energy costs and £2000 in material costs.

5.9.6. **Minimising the use of energy:** To ensure that the amount of energy used in total is no more than is needed, taking into account the aims and

objectives of an appropriate lighting system for each location and to source as much energy as possible from sustainable sources. This will include:

- The use of alternative technology such as replacing street lights will LED lanterns as mentioned in 5.9.3.
- Ensuring replacement schemes are correctly designed with optimum spacing.
- Adjusting the time when street lights are operational. This will involve some lights being trimmed and / or dimmed. Being part night lit or switched off completely has been considered but deemed unsuitable for the council's network.

5.10. Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS)

5.10.1. **Desired Outcome:** To improve the condition and maintain a VRS stock that is efficient and maintains a safe highway network for all to use:

- Priority Investment: the investment required to improve the condition of the ageing stock across the borough.
- Refurbishment Programme; on-going replacement needs driven by age of site, obsolescence of equipment.

5.10.2. We have detailed information on safety fence location and condition and inspect the asset based on the inspection frequency set out in BS7669-3: 1994.

From the above inspections we have a programme of works prioritised on:

- Condition – corrosion etc
- Out of specification systems – Height too high/low
- Obsolete systems: Wooden posts etc.

5.10.3. The above works are considered to be RED (on a RAG rating) and have been completed.

5.10.4. We are now programming Ambers (on a RAG Rating) to be completed by the end of FY2024.

5.11. Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

5.11.1. **Desired Outcome**: adequately signposted, maintained and free from obstruction:

5.11.2. The Government intends that Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and Local Transport Plans (LTP) should be progressively integrated in recognition of the role that PROW play in achieving shared transport priorities and quality of life objectives. DBC achieved this in its Second Local transport plan and subsequent Plan in 2011.

5.11.3. From April 2008 the Best Value Performance Indicators, were discontinued by the Government, including *BVPI 178: Percentage of total length of footpath and rights of way that are easy to use by the general public.* However, the council continued to collect data in the form of Local Indicators to the same standard to provide consistency in assessing and benchmarking national and individual performance.

5.11.4. Routine Safety / Condition Inspections are carried out once every 3 years on each route with approximately one third of the stock yearly. Allowing:

- Local indicators LI2718 (% of rights of way open and available for use - urban fringe leisure routes) and LI2719 (percentage of rights of way open and available for use - more remote paths) to be produced
- Enforcement issues to be dealt with – i.e. overhanging vegetation / obstructions, illegal diversions etc
- Maintenance issues: Signposts, styles, or gate renewals
- Vegetation Management: targeted at higher usage PRoWs

5.11.5. All PRoWs have an assigned hierarchy to which an appropriate inspection regime is assigned. E.G Promoted long distance routes are considered high use and get inspected once a year.(i.e Teesdale Way)

6. Data Management and Information Systems

6.1. The Council's Highway Asset Management Strategy and Plans are supported by robust and reliable data.

6.2. The data we hold on our assets are stored in our asset registers by each asset owner. These records need to be accurate, consistent and up to date, useful and maintained well. Without this essential information, we will not be able to monitor current condition, demonstrate current performance or predict future performance.

6.3. Without robust data we would not be able to determine the value of the assets for reporting back to central government for Whole of Government Accounting purposes and realise the potential benefits that improving these assets could achieve.

6.4. The following systems are currently in operation by the Authority to manage its Highway Data:

- XAIS XA & Explorer – a dedicated standalone PMS
- Symology Insight – UK Pavement Management System (UKPMS)
- GIS (Esri/Arcview)

6.5. Our UKPMS is part of Symology Insight managed service on an annual service contract with Symology which ensures the system is always up to date with current legislation and is functionally maintained at all times with upgrades. For example, in 2016 DBC implemented mobile working by directly interfacing Symology live via hand held tablet thus enabling greater efficiencies of resource

for it highways functions. This has recently been extended to further areas Eg works gangs, gully cleansers etc. We are also in the process of installing a bolt on works management system to allow further automation between client and DLO Contractor.

7. Resources

7.1.

We need to ensure that members of staff are sufficiently trained and skilled to continue to deliver these services. The Institute for Asset Management has published a guidance document for this purpose: The Competence Framework version 2. Some staff have already been trained to understand the requirements of asset management, and these skills are now being shared amongst other North East Councils and our internal asset owners by carrying out workshops and meetings.

8. Good Practice

8.1. Darlington Borough Council is committed to developing and implementing best practice and will make best use of the following forums where appropriate:

- Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP). Now defunct but still driving progress.
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Highways Asset Management Planning Framework
- Highways Asset Management Financial Information Group (HAMFIG)
- UK Roads Board
- North East Highway Alliance (NEHA)
- Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Group (HIAMG)
- Customer Quality Cost (CQC) Efficiency Network
- Measure to Improve (M2i)
- ADEPT Asset Management Working Group
- National and regional conference
- Professional Institution engagement
- Competency training

9. Review Process Monitoring and Performance Reporting

9.1. The Strategy will be reviewed regularly to allow informed decisions to be made in order to accommodate any changes in funding and priorities within the longer term forecasts.

9.2. The long term strategy will be reviewed in line with any changes to the Local transport plan and other corporate strategies; and it may be necessary to review

it as Darlington moves to become a Combined Authority with the other Tees valley local authorities.

9.3. Changes in levels of funding will be accommodated through robust asset management principles and prioritisation.

9.4. Progress in delivering the Strategy will be reported annually at the Annual Strategy and Performance Review.