

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 16 September 2019

Report Title

Strategic Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Council has a statutory duty to maintain its highways through Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

This report describes how Rotherham's highways are strategically managed and maintained in accordance with the Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP).

The report reviews the current strategy for the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highway and the impact the increased investment 'Roads 2020' has had on the highway network.

The report describes the current performance both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's highways, and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services.

Recommendations

1. That the strategic approach to the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways be endorsed.

2. That the impact of the additional Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council capital investment to improve the local (unclassified) road network be noted.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment – Initial Screening
- Appendix 2 Indicative Highway Works Programme 2019/20
- Appendix 3 Highway Performance Monitoring - Quarter 1 2019-2020
- Appendix 4 Benchmarking Information

Background Papers

Highways Report – Council Meeting October 2015

<https://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=491&MId=13477&Ver=4>

Highway Policy, Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan

https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200083/roads_highways_and_pavements/1048/highways_asset_management

Well managed Highway Infrastructure October 2016

<http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=5C49F48E-1CE0-477F-933ACBFA169AF8CB>

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document May 2013

<http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=4F93BA10-D3B0-4222-827A8C48401B26AC>

Highways Communication Strategy

https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3674/rotherham_highways_communication_strategy

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Strategic Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways

1. Background

1.1 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) is responsible for 1,188 kilometres of roads, 2,105 kilometres of footpaths and public rights of way, and associated street lighting, road markings, road signs, safety barriers, traffic management systems, drainage systems and bridges.

Table 1.2 describes the highway network that RMBC are responsible for:

Table 1.2 RMBC Maintained Highway Network

Road Type	Carriageway Length (km)	Footway Length (km)	PROW Length (km)
Principal – A Roads	136.6	134.3	0
Non-Principal – B Roads	96.9	110.1	0
Non-Principal – C Roads	183.8	162.9	0
Unclassified – U Roads	770.6	1271.7	0
Public Rights of Way (PROW)	-	-	425.9
Total	1187.9	1679	425.9

1.2 The Council's approach to highway maintenance is based on the following principles:

- To maintain Rotherham's roads and footways in a safe condition to nationally recognised standards; and
- To carry out programmed maintenance as cost-effectively as possible.

1.3 The Council has a statutory duty to maintain its highways through Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. This report describes how Rotherham's highways are strategically managed and maintained in accordance with the Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) to achieve the above principles.

1.4 As part of management and maintenance of the highway the Council has adopted an associated "Code of Practice for Highway Inspection and Assessment" (CoP), which sets out the criteria through which the Council will undertake planned and reactive maintenance works on the highway within agreed time frames. The CoP has been developed with reference to national guidance documents ("Well managed Highway Infrastructure (October 2016)" and "Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance Document (May 2013)") and takes account of advice from the Council's insurers and legal advisors.

- 1.5 The HAMP is reviewed annually to set the forward works programme for the year and to also include information relating to the “Code of Practice for Highway Inspection and Assessment” (CoP).
- 1.6 A team of Highway Inspectors undertake Safety Highway Inspections to identify record and prioritise the repair of defects which present an immediate danger or significant inconvenience to either users of the highway, to the structural condition of the highway or the assets contained within the highway boundary. All inspectors are professionally certified through the UK Roads Board and are included on the National Register of Highway Inspectors.
- 1.7 The Highways Service has a robust information system to support the management of cyclic and ad hoc inspections. The system records all inspections, reports and works carried out on the highway and ensures that repairs are managed within the CoP.
- 1.8 The Council recognised that a greater investment was required, in order to narrow the gap between the condition of the estate roads and the national average, by awarding a capital budget of £10m over three years from 2017/18, which is now in its final year.
- 1.9 This additional investment in Rotherham’s roads is making a real improvement to the highway network, evidenced through reductions in the number of highway defect repairs (potholes) and in the number of highway claims against the Council.
- 1.10 In 2018/19 the Council repaired 201 roads equating to 43.85 miles and an area of nearly 527,000 square metres.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Current Highways Maintenance Budget

2.1.1 Identified below are the main funding streams available to Highways. These are utilised to best deliver a strategic and prioritised approach to service delivery:

- Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Plan (LTP) annual capital budget allocations
- DfT Grants, Challenge Funding, Incentive Funding, Pothole Funding
- Rotherham Council annual revenue funding
- Rotherham Council Capital investment

The total Highway Works budget available in 2019 / 20 is detailed below and totals £9.592m.

Table: 2.1.1 Highways Funding 2019/20

Year	DfT LTP Highway Maintenance and Incentive Allocation	DfT Pot Hole Fund	RMBC Capital 2020 Roads Programme	RMBC Revenue	RMBC Capital Other
2019/20	£3.110m	£0.217m	£3.018m	£0.791m	£0.800m
2018/19 Slippage		£0.006m			£1.650m
Total	£3.110m	£0.223m	£3.018m	£0.791m	£2.450m

- 2.1.2 The Highways Service has completed the DfT Incentive Assessment since 2015 /16. The DfT developed the assessment to be able to determine the level of performance at which Local Authority Highway Services are operating. Since 2017/18 the Highways Service has achieved the highest band possible (Band 3), placing it in the top performing Councils. This is important as it enables the Council to receive the maximum allocation possible from the DfT LTP; incentive based funding of £0.624m in 2019/20.
- 2.1.3 As an example, Local Authorities in Band 2 would only receive 50% of their incentive based funding, with Local Authorities in Band 1 only receiving 10% of their incentive based funding allocation.
- 2.1.4 It is estimated that investment of £7m per year is required to maintain Rotherham's roads in their current condition. Of this £4m is required to solely maintain the condition of estate roads at the current standard.
- 2.1.5 The next step for developing a further phase in investment will be to develop a Strategic Outline Programme for consideration for 2020 onwards as part of the budget setting process.

2.2 Works Prioritisation and Indicative Works Programme

- 2.2.1 The roads and footways included in the 'Indicative Highway Works Programme 2019/20' (Appendix 2) are determined by a scoring matrix, detailed in the Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP).
- 2.2.2 The aim of this process is to prioritise sections of the highway for inclusion in the works programme that provide value for money, by repairing as much of the road network as possible, whilst taking a number of factors into consideration, as listed below.
- 2.2.3 The criteria includes:
- The condition of the road(s);
 - Ward Member and Parish/Town Council priorities;
 - The number of complaints received;
 - The number of actionable defects (Potholes) identified;
 - Input from highway inspections;
 - The overall condition of the Ward's highways.

2.2.4 An Indicative Highway Works Programme is formulated using the above adopted criteria. The proposed works locations are indicative as they could be affected by a number of factors including:

- Engineering difficulties;
- Changes to funding levels;
- Opportunities to coordinate with other Council Projects;
- Unforeseeable essential statutory undertaker works;
- The weather.

2.2.5 Regular officer implementation meetings are held to coordinate works across the network and to keep any changes to the works programme to a minimum.

2.2.6 The indicative Highway Works Programme shows that during 2019/20 the Council aims to repair 241 roads with a total length of 81.50km (50.94 miles) covering an area of 546,842sqm.

Table: 2.2.6 Number of Roads to be repaired 2019/20

Road Type	Number of Roads	Value
A	24	£1,446,000
B & C	42	£2,992,000
Unclassified	175	£4,436,000
TOTAL ROADS	241	£8,874,000
Footways	65	£588,000

2.3 Service Performance

2.3.1 On a quarterly basis Highway Services publishes a suite of performance indicators on the Council website (see Appendix 3).

The various indicators cover all aspects of service provision:

- Condition of the Highway Network
- Pothole Repair Times
- Quality of Pothole Repairs
- Highway Safety Inspections
- Making safe dangerous overhanging trees on highway land
- Customer Questionnaire Results
- Make safe missing cover e.g. public and private sewers, gas, water or BT apparatus

2.4 Condition of the Road Network

2.4.1 The current level of investment in the highway network has achieved a slightly better than national average standard for the classified network (A, B and C class roads).

2.4.2 This investment, in conjunction with DfT funding, has seen the level of deterioration on the unclassified network halted, and remain at around 23%. The condition of unclassified roads is not as good as the national average, however the additional capital investment RMBC has made, has halted the year on year deterioration of these roads and therefore customer satisfaction is expected to improve going forward.

2.4.3 Based on the latest information available from the Department for Transport national data set (2017/18), the table below shows the Condition of Rotherham's road network compared to the national average (lower is better) as of the March 2019.

Table 2.4.1 Condition of Rotherham's Roads

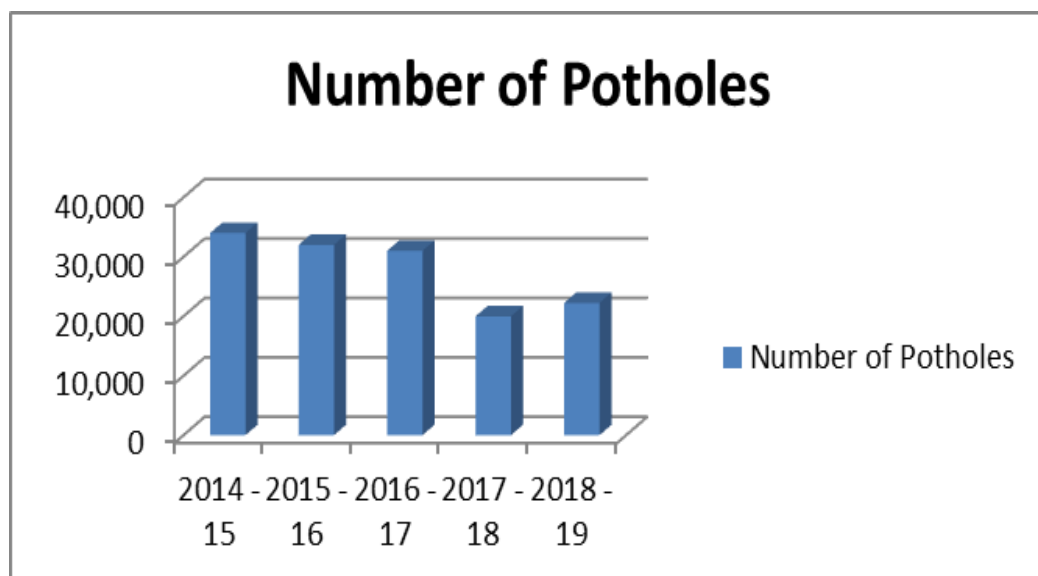
Year	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19		
Road Type	A	B/C	U*	A	B/C	U*	A	B/C	U*	A	B/C	U*
RMBC (%)	3	6	24	3	7	23	2	5	23	2	4	23
National Average (%)	3	6	17	3	6	17	3	6	17	Not yet available		

* U - Unclassified Road Network (Estate type roads)

2.5 Urgent Defects (Pothole Repairs)

2.5.1 The table below shows a significant reduction of actionable defects repaired across the network from 34,000 in 2014/15 to 22,252 in 2018/19. So far this year only 3,466 potholes have required repair (which if projected forward would see a further reduction of pothole repairs.)

Table 2.5.1 Pothole Repairs



Roads with a high number of potholes are considered in the works prioritisation process, for inclusion in the Highway Works Programme for resurfacing, and as a consequence the number of potholes requiring repair has reduced significantly. It should also be noted that prolonged cold winters can and do impact on the highway network, potentially causing the number of potholes to increase through freeze/thaw action. This in turn can increase the number of claims received.

2.6 Highway Claims

2.6.1 The process outlined in section 1.5 for managing the adopted highway provides a robust method to evidence that the Council is carrying out its statutory duties, and provides information to enable the Council to consider any claims for damage received from road users.

2.6.2 Between January 2011 and December 2014 the Council received 1,410 highway claims. This compares to 1,196 highway claims received between January 2015 and December 2018; a reduction of around 15%. In January 2019, the Council received 23 highway claims, the joint lowest number of claims received for any January on record.

2.6.3 The table below shows the number of claims received and the amount of costs paid to claimants. The table below describes the excellent performance of the Highway Service in reducing highways claims, since 2011/12.

Table 2.6.3 Highways Liability Claims Performance 2011/12 to 2019/20

Highways Liability Claims Performance 2011/12 to 2019/20							
Incident Year	Claims Rec'd	Number On-going	Number Closed	Number Repudiated	Percentage Repudiated	No: Paid	Total Paid (inc. costs)
2011/12	173	0	173	153	88%	20	£206,614
2012/13	275	0	275	248	90%	27	£298,742
2013/14	233	0	233	204	88%	29	£225,182
2014/15	277	0	277	252	91%	25	£141,438
2015/16	262	4	258	236	91%	22	£107,487
2016/17	121	3	118	108	92%	10	£33,750
2017/18	196	8	188	181	96%	7	£7,286
2018/19	204	68	136	136	100%	0	£0
2019/20	15	15	0	0	0%	0	£0

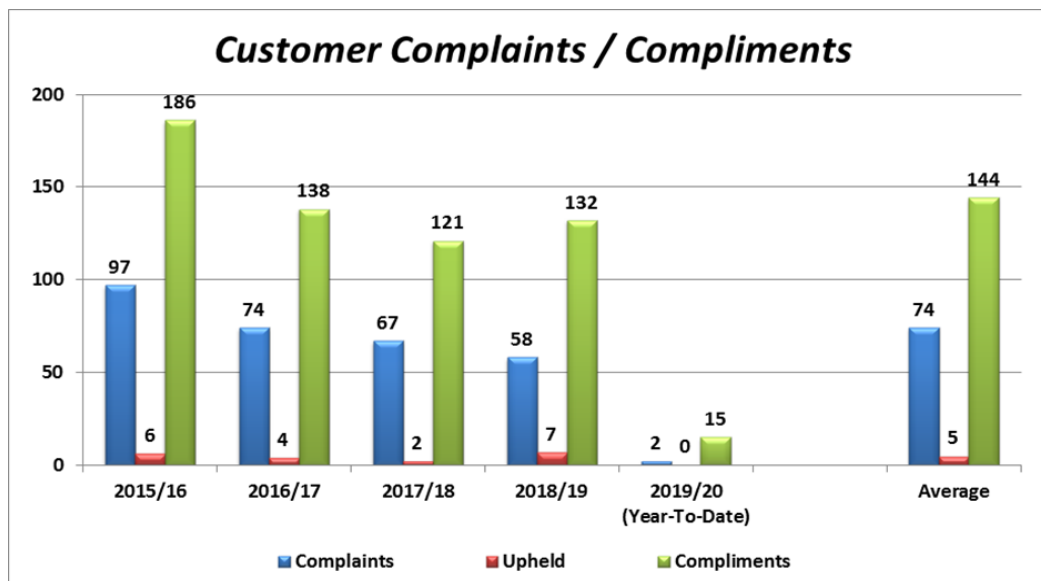
2.6.4 The Council's Insurance and Risk Manager has confirmed that the Highways Service is maintaining an extremely high claim repudiation rate, whilst continuing to drive down the overall cost of claims. Highways repudiation rates have consistently been acknowledged as being amongst the best in the country, by both the Council's insurers and their appointed claims handlers (Gallagher Bassett).

2.7 Customer Feedback – Complaints/Compliments/Questionnaires

2.7.1 Highway Services receives a number of complaints and reports throughout the year from residents, businesses and visitors relating to the highway network. The Highways team provides a written reply to all customers where appropriate.

2.7.2 Figure 2.7.2 below shows the number of complaints received and the number of complaints that were upheld. The table also shows how many compliments the team has received. These are recorded and monitored by the Council's Complaints Team. This provides a good indication of how residents feel Highway Services are being delivered in Rotherham.

Figure 2.7.2 - Highways Customer Complaints and Compliments



2.7.3 Post-construction surveys are delivered to properties affected by highway repair works. The questionnaire asks residents who have been directly affected by the delivery of a highway scheme their opinion on all aspects of the work.

2.7.4 The questionnaire includes a range of questions;

- How well residents and businesses were informed about the works before they started
- Did the works start on time
- Quality of the Works
- Was the site left clean and tidy
- Professionalism of staff carrying out the works

2.7.5 The survey results for 2018/19 show very high satisfaction with the Services performance, with all eleven questions achieving a score in excess of 90% and most greater than 97%.

2.7.6 The Highway Service participates in the National Highways and Transportation Annual Survey, where Rotherham residents are asked their views on satisfaction with the condition of the roads and footways in Rotherham. The information from this survey indicates that residents are still dissatisfied with the general condition of Rotherham's Roads.

- 2.7.7 Although customer satisfaction with the general condition of Rotherham's roads is low, the actual condition of Rotherham's main roads (A, B and C's) which carry around 80% of the traffic is better than the national average.
- 2.7.8 To try and address satisfaction levels and raise the profile of the works being carried out, the Service engages with residents and visitors through a number of initiatives:
- To raise the profile of the works being carried out by the Council, large on-site signage is attached to street lights during the works, advertising the Rotherham 2020 Roads Programme.
 - The Council's Corporate Communication Team also promote highway works with social media updates, press releases and through the Council
 - On the completion of major resurfacing works, photo opportunities are arranged with Ward Members to enable them to further raise the profile of the works being carried out in their Ward.

2.8 Benchmarking

- 2.8.1 Rotherham is a member of the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), which enables benchmarking of services for similar Authorities (family groups) through Performance Networks.
- 2.8.2 The Service has been recognised by APSE in various disciplines with several honours awarded to Highway Services;
- National Finalist 2015 - Performance Networks Award: Highways, Winter Maintenance & Street Lighting
 - National Finalist 2016 - Performance Networks Award: Best Performer in Street Lighting
- 2.8.3 Appendix 4 gives details of the Council's performance against other local authorities within the family group. The Highways Service is consistently performing better than the family group average.
- 2.8.4 More recently at the GeoPlace Exemplar Awards, Highway Services were awarded a Gold Achievement for Street data - Winner 2019.

2.9 Communications and Engagement

- 2.9.1 Communications and engagement with residents, and Elected Members is important to ensure the Highway Service is operating in an efficient, effective and accountable way.
- 2.9.2 Highway Services has an approved Communication Strategy, providing guidance on how the Service communicates and engages with key stakeholders on managing highway assets and decision making process.

- 2.9.3 One of the key elements of highway asset management is ensuring a holistic approach to the delivery of services, promoting integration of processes, information and systems. This is supported by cross service weekly meetings to review programming of works to ensure effective delivery.
- 2.9.4 Good communication with stakeholders is an essential part of the process for the delivery of highway works:-
- Proposed works details are shared with appropriate managers within Council
 - Letters are delivered to all residents and businesses fronting the works prior to scheme design completion. The letter informs them of start dates, contact details and a request to undertake a satisfaction survey on completion of the works
 - Ward Members are consulted when the proposed designs are circulated to the residents and their feedback is considered in the final design
 - Other stakeholders such as South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and bus operators are consulted during the design process to minimise disruption to bus services
 - Prior to the start of a road or footway repair, pre-start signage is positioned on the roadside, providing road users with information relating to details of the highway works. The signage will confirm the proposed start date and detail any if traffic lights or road closures will be used to deliver the works.
 - Proposed works are also posted on the Roadworks.org website
- 2.9.5 In addition, any major projects that could cause disruption to road users are detailed on the Councils website for customers to access with the link to the content included on the prestart signage.
- 2.9.6 This process enables local residents, businesses and Members to inform the scheme design and the method of delivery e.g. night time or weekend working to minimise disruption and/or inconvenience.

2.10 Member Engagement

- 2.10.1 Highway Services delivers a seminar to all Ward Members on an annual basis (October). The seminar is aimed at raising Ward Members awareness of Highways Service and the challenges faced by the service. The seminar includes an explanation of the Councils Highway Management principles focussing on “Whole Lifecycle Planning” to maximise the available budget.
- 2.10.2 The seminar also provides Members with an understanding of the criteria used to develop the Indicative Works Programme.
- 2.10.3 Members are then invited to provide their suggestions regarding which unclassified roads in their Wards they would like to see repaired. These suggestions are assessed for suitability and, if they meet the criteria, the suggested street is included in the Indicative Highway Repair Programme.

- 2.10.4 The seminar also provides Ward Members with a review of the works delivered in the previous 12 months.
- 2.10.5 The Members seminar also gives an opportunity for Highway Services to provide information on customer feedback and discuss any key issues for the next 12 months.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 The consequence of a poorly maintained highway network impacts directly on all road users, has a detrimental impact on the local economy and on user's perceptions of the Borough. Poor roads mean increased vehicle operating costs, delays and less safe roads, and as a result may influence investment decisions.
- 3.2 Highway lifecycle planning is used to develop a sustainable maintenance strategy over the life of the highway asset from construction to disposal. This provides the ability to predict the future performance of the asset for different levels of investment and assists to mitigate the risk of failure by allocating funds to where they will be most beneficial. This form of allocation moves away from a more traditional "worst first" approach and targets work programmes at those parts of the infrastructure which present the greatest risk and where timely treatment can achieve the most beneficial whole of life cost.
- 3.3 The Council could adopt a worst first approach, which would see some short term improvements to some roads, however, this approach would see an increase over time of the number of roads that deteriorate to a very poor condition. This would likely lead to an increase in the number of highway claims and customer complaints the Council receives.
- 3.4 Through improving capture and analysis of information about the maintenance of the highway assets, services can be delivered more efficiently. Highway budgets can be focused on preventing deterioration and in so doing ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from available resources.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Highway Services have developed an effective Communication Strategy which is adhered to from the drafting of the programme of works through to implementation of the schemes, as detailed above.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The Head of Highway Services is accountable for the development of the Highway Policy, Strategy and Plan and for ensuring the delivery of the indicative Highway Works Programme 2019/20. The Highway Asset and Drainage Manager lead the operational coordination of actions to deliver the indicative Highway Works Programme 2019/20.

- 5.2 The additional Council investment, focussed on the unclassified network, ends on the 31st March 2020. This has delivered real benefits to the highway network. Further continued investment would however be required to ensure that the maximum benefit is gained from this previous investment and that the current arrest in the deterioration of the unclassified network (estate roads) continues, and potentially moves to a reduction in the percentage of the unclassified roads that require repair.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 Section 2.1.1 provides information on the 2019/20 capital and revenue funding for Highways. 2019/20 is the final year of the 3 year £10m capital investment in unclassified roads, the 2020 roads programme.
- 6.2 Further capital investment in the highways network will be considered as part of the Capital Programme budget setting process for 2020/21 and beyond.
- 6.4 There are no direct procurement implications associated with this report. However, all goods, works and services required to maintain the Highway are procured in line with the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules and the UK Public Contract Regulations 2015, as well as other relevant EU/UK legislation governing procurement practice.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Council is under a statutory duty to maintain its highways pursuant to Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 None

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 An Initial Equality Screening has been undertaken.
- 10.2 The highway network is available for all residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough. The Council make positive changes to the highway network to provide any disadvantaged groups with equal opportunity to access all aspects of the network. The indicative Highway Works Programme includes a substantial schedule of works to improve access to the footway network. These measures provide visually impaired and wheel chairs user's equal access to the network.

- 10.3 All residents, businesses, local Councillors and relevant stakeholders are consulted prior to the delivery of schemes detailed in the indicative Highway Works Programme. All queries relating to access to properties or businesses are considered in the provision of the works. All additional requirements required to meet any specific needs of a group or individual during the delivery of our works will be accommodated to encourage the continued access to the highway network.
- 10.4 The delivery of works that affect access to schools or places of worship are scheduled at a time to minimise disruption to all user groups. Often works near to or affecting access to a school are carried out during the Summer school holidays or at nights.
- 10.5 The Highways Communication Strategy details how the Council will liaise with the various media outlets and social media portals, including the Council website, to make the wider community aware of the proposed works, provide a method for interested parties to influence works and allow regular updates during the progress of the schemes.
- 10.6 The Communication Strategy includes the action to hand deliver a note to all properties affected by the proposed works in the week prior to the commencement. The note contains the details and contact information for the onsite works supervisor.
- 10.7 The onsite works supervisor is available to answer queries relating to the delivery of the scheme and also any access issues. The supervisor will make arrangements during the construction of our works to allow vehicle access for ambulances / taxis to allow residents to keep hospital appointments etc. or special requirements relating to weddings, funerals or other exceptional occurrences.
- 10.8 Good highway asset management enables the most efficient use of resources and minimises the disruption to all road users of the highway.

11. Implications for Partners

- 11.1 None

12. Risks and Mitigation

- 12.1 The highway network is the most valuable asset that the Council is responsible for with a gross replacement value of £1.33 billion.
- 12.2 The highway network is accessed by residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough and the condition of the network influences resident's opinion of Rotherham and the confidence of businesses to invest in the Borough.
- 12.3 To prevent deterioration in the condition of the highway network, continued investment is required in Rotherham's roads. As, if the condition of the roads deteriorates, funding would be required to be targeted at responsive repairs (potholes) to keep road users safe rather than the wider, programmed and more cost effective works.

12.4 This could potentially see an increase in the number of customer complaints, accidents and highway claims that the Council receives. This could damage the Council's reputation and see an increase in the payments made to injured parties.

13. Accountable Officers

Colin Knight, Head of Highway Services

Richard Jackson, Highway Asset & Drainage Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	02/09/19
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	22/08/19
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Bal Nahal	27/08/19

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