

Committee: **Council**
 Date of Meeting: **21st September, 2023**
 Report Subject: **Adoption of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028**
 Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Helen Cunningham Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member – Place & Environment**
 Report Submitted by: **David Watkins – Team Manager – Street Scene**

| Reporting Pathway | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------|----------|----------------------|
| Directorate Management Team | Corporate Leadership Team | Portfolio Holder / Chair | Governance and Audit Committee | Democratic Services Committee | Scrutiny Committee | Cabinet | Council | Other (please state) |
| 06/06/23 | 08/06/23 | | | | 20/06/23 | | 21/09/23 | |

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To formally adopt Blaenau Gwent’s Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028

2. Scope and Background

2.1 The Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) describes how the Council will maintain the road network under its control. It details the procedures used to plan and execute all works and functions associated with the management, operation and maintenance of the highway asset including how the activities are monitored to ensure compliance with council policies.

2.2 The HAMP (appendix 1) outline the methods and specifications for the recording and maintenance of all highway assets and has been divided into the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction/Policy

Section 2: Highways Asset Management Strategy for the Adopted Highway

Section 3: Highways Data Management Plan for the Adopted Highway

Section 4: Highways Asset Maintenance Plan for the Adopted Highway

Section 5: Risk Based Approach Methodology for the Adopted Highway

Section 6: Highways Drainage Cleansing Service for the Adopted Highway

Section 7: Skid Resistance Policy for the Adopted Highway

2.3 The HAMP will guide Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acting as the Highway Authority, in the management of the adopted highway network to ensure that:

- All assets continue to deliver a service to the community and highway users at an agreed level.
- There is clear direction for Elected members and Council staff to make informed decisions regarding the adopted highway network.
- Legislative requirements are satisfied.
- Exposure to safety risk is mitigated to agreed and acceptable levels.
- Asset purchases, increases or construction are only approved after whole life costs and benefits are assessed and agreed.
- Clear and transparent allocation of responsibilities for the management of individual assets is recorded.

2.4 The HAMP will assist Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in meeting its legal duties and to support this the following National Guidance has been used. The methods adopted in the HAMP are based upon the contents of the following:

- “Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, UK Roads Liaison Group, 2016”
- “Risk Based Approach: Method”, 2018, County Surveyor Society (WALES) CSSW, 2018
- “Highway Inspection Defect Recording Manual”, CSSW, 2018

2.5 As of February 2023, the Council, in its role as Highway Authority, have assets made up of the following major groups:

- 518 Km of carriageway.
- 52 road bridges & 35-foot bridges.
- 232 retaining walls.
- 11 subways.
- 188 storm water culverts of which 73 are classed as “critical”
- 68 large culverts >0.90m
- 12,936 streetlights, of which 12,936 are lit between the hours of dusk and midnight and then 05:00 a.m. and dawn and 190 are not currently illuminated,
- 40 sets of traffic signals, (including Pelican, Puffin and Toucan crossings),
- 1,798 Illuminated traffic signs and bollards,
- 13,500 road gullies,
- 21,867m of safety barrier
- 464m Pedestrian barrier
- 1 tunnel (Cwm Bypass)

- 2.6 The HAMP relates only to the Council's obligations as a Highway Authority and therefore only includes those assets on the publicly adopted highway. Private streets and roads transferred to social landlords are not included.
- 2.7 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council as a landowner is responsible for assets that are not classed as "adopted highway", such as Council owned streets and footways, and will maintain these in a safe state, as required by legislation or judicial precedent, however, this may be below the level of service afforded to the adopted highway network.
- 2.8 The HAMP for the adopted highways 2023-2028 records the methods used to manage the road assets, specifically it records how and when the Authority:
- Inspects
 - Categorises and prioritises reactive repairs
 - Assesses condition
 - Identifies and prioritises sites or assets for replacement or strengthening.
 - Prepares works programmes
 - Procures and manages works
 - Records and reports Costs
 - Records and responds to customer contacts
- 2.9 A presentation has recently been given to Members around Highway Maintenance and the importance of the Highway Asset Maintenance Plan in defining how the Highways will be inspected and maintained and the significance this has in defending Insurance claims in Court.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

- 3.1 This report was considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee on 20th June, 2023. Members recommended Option 1 - that Council adopt the Highways Asset Management Plan 2023-28.

Scrutiny Committee members also asked that Cabinet / Corporate Leadership Team seek to identify appropriate funds to implement a future Capital Works Programme.

- 3.2 **Option 1 [preferred]** – Members provide comment and support the adoption of the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan (HAMP) 2023-2028.

Option 2 – Members do not support the adoption of the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan (HAMP) and offer comments to this effect.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 This proposal supports the amendments made to the Outcome Statements within the Corporate Plan 2022/27 Outcome Statements:

- Protect and enhance our environment and infrastructure to benefit our communities
- Support a fairer sustainable economy and community
- To enable people to maximise their independence, develop solutions and take an active role in their communities
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place

4.2 This report supports the Blaenau Gwent Wellbeing Plan 2018-2023 by ensuring that having a “Street Scene and Landscape” that is well maintained enhances the perception of the area and can contribute to Blaenau Gwent being a better place to live, visit, invest in and work.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)***

5.1.1 **Cost Implications Option 1**

5.1.1.1 There are no cost implications associated with this report, however, highways maintenance does come at a price and funding will need to be identified in 2023/24 and future years to meet the maintenance needs of the highway’s assets and infrastructure.

5.1.1.2 The HAMP identifies some priority highway infrastructure works (Appendix F) estimated at £1.2m that needs to be considered in the short term.

5.1.1.3 The estimated value of the highway assets is over £1,044,000,000 (One £Billion+). The current annual revenue maintenance budget for 2023/24 associated with highways assets (including street lighting) is £2,669,520, this represents 0.26% of the value of the assets.

5.1.2 **Cost Implications Option 2**

2.1.2.1 The cost implications would remain even if option 2 was the preferred option.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There are a range of risks to the Council and to the Community if the HAMP is not adopted, including:

- There being no strategic plan for dealing with highways maintenance matters.
- Insurance claims will be difficult to defend.
- Highway maintenance will be difficult to plan and schedule.
- Risk based maintenance intervention levels will not be documented and adopted by Council.
- A consistency approach to highways maintenance across several local authorities will not be in place.

5.3 **Legal**

5.3.1 As the Highway Authority the Council has a duty to meet the requirement of the following legislation:

- **The Highways Act 1980:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to maintain highways, adopted and maintainable at public expense, and to keep them safe for public use
- **New Roads and Street Works Act 1991:** This places a duty upon Highway Authorities to co-ordinate all works in the highway for the purposes of ensuring safety, minimising inconvenience to highway users, and protecting the highway and apparatus in it.
- **The Traffic Management Act 2004:** This places a duty on Highway Authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and networks of surrounding authorities.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Performance Information and Data**

6.1.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council will collate data to report on several national and local suites of performance indicators. Whilst this data does not form part of the HAMP it does provide results which are required to be included in performance reports.

6.1.2 A list of performance indicators (PI's) has been established through working with CSSW and can be found in appendix H of the HAMP, these will be explored in more detail with the intention to report upon an annual basis.

6.2 **Expected outcome for the public**

6.2.1 The council providing a well-maintained highways infrastructure that is safe to use.

6.3 **Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)**

6.3.1 As part of the highway asset management process, BGCBC will consult the public and partners on general highway related matters via the Council's website. It is proposed that this is carried out bi-annually from

2023/24. The survey will ask the same questions so that customer trends and satisfaction rates can be assessed.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

6.4.1 The HAMP sets out a strategy for dealing with highways maintenance in the short, medium, and long term.

6.4.2 Investment in the residential highway network in Blaenau Gwent is identified to ensure sustainability for the future, bringing our roads up to a good standard and improving our highway infrastructure to meet the service requirements of the future.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 The HAMP sets out a strategy to preventing incidents on the highway networks through identifying detailed adopted maintenance intervention levels for all highways assets.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

6.6.1 The HAMP has been developed through partnership working with neighbouring authorities and professional working groups at local and national level, working closely with utility companies to plan future works through a collaborated approach.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

6.7.1 The highways maintenance team works closely with a number of services in the delivery of maintenance programmes including Education, Regeneration and the Council's Engineering section.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

6.8.1 It is essential that the highway is maintained to acceptable levels to allow for traffic to flow without obstruction. A well-maintained highways infrastructure will reduce the need for unprogrammed and unnecessary road maintenance works and thus extending the life of the asset.

6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The HAMP will be monitored through team and management meetings together with reporting through the Council's democratic process, through Scrutiny and other Council meetings.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

Appendix 2 – IIA HAMP