

# **Oldham Highway Asset Management, Policy, Framework and Strategy**

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## 1. Introduction

Oldham Council 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.

The Highway 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. Oldham Council has been working on implementing asset management principles for a number of years in its programme delivery which has helped develop and optimise the current strategy.

The strategy covers the connectivity for local business and communities. This includes integrating the extensive public transport network including ongoing integration of Manchester Metrolink.

This document presents the Council's Strategy for the management of the Council's highway assets as reviewed on January 2019 and allows planning for the longer term.

The strategy will include alignment to the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) objectives including the incorporation of the Manchester Key Route Network (KRN) and Major Road Network (MRN) strategies within the Oldham highway asset management maintenance programmes.

It has been produced following the assessment of customer needs, local priorities and asset condition, taking into account agreed service levels depending on factors such as route, asset type, corporate and political objectives. It also ensures that both short and long term asset needs are appropriately considered, whilst delivering a minimum whole life cost approach to our highway assets.

This strategy covers all highway maintenance activities funded by revenue and capital streams. It does not directly relate to capital improvements but where linkages exist these are identified. The strategy will be used to inform the Highway Maintenance Schemes that are to be implemented within Oldham Council's rolling 3 year Transport Capital Programme and how overall maintenance of all highways assets is identified, risk managed, and prioritised.

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

## 2. Asset Management Framework

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance published by UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG) sets out a framework which describes all asset management activities and processes that are necessary to develop, document, implement and continually improve asset management practices. These activities and the approach to their delivery should be clearly documented and accessible to relevant stakeholders, but the guidance recognises that individual authorities need to be flexible in the application of the framework to accommodate their own requirements.

The guidance recommends that the framework is developed by individual highway authorities to meet their needs, aspirations and their current position along the **asset management journey**.

The Asset Management Framework illustrated below can be used to understand the context of asset management practices in Oldham.

Context	<u>National Transport Policy</u>	<u>Local Transport Policy</u> <u>GMLTP - Oldham LTP Capital Settlement</u>	<u>Corporate Vision</u> <u>Oldham Council Corporate Plan 2017-2020</u>
	<u>Stakeholder Expectations</u> <u>NHT Customer Surveys</u> <u>CQC Benchmarking</u>	<u>Political Commitment</u> <u>Recognised effective alignment with Key Members (incl Leader) and Senior Officers</u>	<u>Financial</u> <u>CIPFA Guidelines</u> <u>Challenge Fund</u> <u>Incentive Funding</u> <u>GM GD3 funding</u> <u>Mayors Cycling &amp; Walking Challenge Fund</u>

Asset Management planning	<b>Strategic Asset Management Planning</b>
	<p>Asset Management Policy: Incorporating principles and vision</p> <p>Asset Management Strategy: Long-term approach, objectives, outcomes</p> <p>Performance / Service Levels</p>
Asset Management planning	<b>Tactical Asset Management Planning</b>
	<p>Asset Hierarchy: a road hierarchy specific to Oldham's needs is currently in use, but may need to be amended to better reflect Oldham's current requirements.</p> <p>Asset Data &amp; Information: routine data collection for all assets, including a rolling programme of carriageway, drainage, footways, structures and other key asset types such as street lighting and road furniture</p> <p>Lifecycle Planning: carried out analysis and secured additional funding for major asset types (e.g. Carriageways, Footways, Structures)</p> <p>Levels of service: setting performance levels will be a priority for Oldham</p> <p>Works Programmes: developing work programmes based on prioritization process and balance of preventative, planned and reactive maintenance</p>

Enablers	<b>Asset Management Enablers</b>
	<p>Leadership &amp; Commitment</p> <p>Asset Management Information Systems</p> <p>Performance Monitoring – Benchmarking, Performance Review &amp; Continuous Improvement</p> <p>Resourcing &amp; Supply Chain Management</p> <p>Risk Assessment &amp; Management</p> <p>Collaboration &amp; Communication including Stakeholder Engagement</p>

Delivery	<b>Operations &amp; Service Delivery</b>
	<p>Routine &amp; Cyclic, Reactive and Planned Maintenance</p> <p>Delivery of Projects – Capital Programme Delivery</p> <p>Safety &amp; Serviceability Inspections</p> <p>Asset Management Improvement Action Plans</p> <p>Winter Service Plan</p>

### 3. Asset Management Policy

Oldham Council is committed to delivering its asset management approach for the borough highway network in order to support the Council's vision:

#### **“Working for a co-operative borough”**

The Council places a high significance on its transport network, its most valuable asset. The network is vital to the economic wellbeing of our residents and businesses. The comfort and safety provided by our roads and streets is important to the quality of life in Oldham.

As a highway authority, Oldham Council has a statutory duty to maintain, operate and improve the highway network on behalf of all its residents. We aim to do this through providing high value services in a legally and environmentally compliant and sustainable manner, without compromising the health and safety of our employees or residents.

Our focus will be on achieving the following outcomes:

#### **A safe network**

- complying with our obligations to maintain safety
- helping users to feel safe

#### **A serviceable network**

- ensuring the highways network remains available for users
- achieving and maintaining desired degree of integrity as per network hierarchy
- maintaining appropriate levels of reliability and journey times
- achieving and maintaining a target level of service for all major assets

#### **A sustainable network**

- optimising efficiencies and value for money through strategic asset management
- maximising value to the community through sustainable economic development
- maximising environmental contribution
- efficient use of natural resources

We will achieve these by developing strategies, plans and processes that will:

- define desired levels of service for highway assets, in consultation with key stakeholders.
- adopt a life-cycle approach to planning asset investment and management decisions
- balance competing needs across the highway network and select options that best meet desired outcomes
- monitor, evaluate and, where required, improve service delivery
- manage the risks of asset ownership and operation to ensure continuity of service

- provide for present needs whilst sustaining natural resources for future generations
- adopt a continuous improvement approach to asset management policies and practices
- empower and motivate the entire workforce involved in the operation and maintenance of the highway network
- adopting collaborative and joint working initiatives to deliver effective and efficient services and share best practice opportunities

This policy will be kept under review and subject to change in the light of external or organisational drivers and developments in applicable fields, such as technology, operational tactics or asset care techniques and updates of approved codes of practice.

Oldham Council operates an Environmental Management System which is externally accredited to ISO14001 standard. This EMS already meets a number of the objectives listed above.

## 4. Alignment to Oldham's Corporate Plan

This strategy sets out how our medium and longer term objectives for managing the highway infrastructure asset will be met via various processes depending on the particular asset, its ongoing condition and the required level of service. It is aligned with Oldham Council's Corporate Plan 2017 – 2020, the objectives of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 3, and the Greater Manchester Growth Fund (GD2/GD3). It will link to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and for example TfGM's "Streets for All" initiative.

As set out in The Corporate Plan – working for a co-operative borough, the 3 key corporate objectives are:

- **An Inclusive Economy** where people and enterprise thrive
- **Thriving Communities** where everyone is empowered to do their bit
- **Co-operative Services** with people and social value at their heart

Within the first key objective for example, there is the stated outcome of:

*"Open for business – to make Oldham a place to invest and do business"*

It is further stated *"maintain and continue to invest in our highways and transport infrastructure to enable the movement of people and goods, in, around and out of the borough. For example secure additional funding for highways maintenance and development...."*

This highlights the integration of highways asset management within the council's investment and regeneration agenda.

### **The Wider Transport Assets**

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) is the public body responsible for co-ordinating public transport services throughout Greater Manchester. The strategies and policies of Transport for Greater Manchester are set by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and its Transport for Greater Manchester Committee.

Transport for Greater Manchester is responsible for investments in improving transport services and facilities, and supporting the largest regional economy outside London. It is the executive arm of the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee, which funds and makes policies for TfGM. The authority is made up of 33 councillors appointed from the ten Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan).



On the day of its inauguration TfGM became the second most powerful and influential transport organisation in England, after Transport for London, because it unites previously disparate governance over transport policy in the boroughs under one body. It elects its own Chair and Vice-Chair and assumes the functions previously performed by Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority as well as the newly devolved transport powers and responsibilities from Government and the 10 Metropolitan Councils that make up Greater Manchester. The 33 councillors have voting rights on most transport issues despite not being members of the GMCA, though major decisions still require approval by the GMCA. The functions that are referred (but not delegated) to the TfGMC include making recommendations in relation to:

- The budget and transport levy
- Borrowing limit
- Major and strategic transport policies
- The local transport plan (GMLTP)
- Operation of Greater Manchester Transport Fund and approval of new schemes
- Appointment of Director General/Chief Executive of TfGM

In addition, two functions are delegated solely to the TfGMC without requiring GMCA approval, namely road safety under Section 39, Road Traffic Act 1988 and traffic management under Sections 16-17, Traffic Management Act 2004.

### **GM Key Route Network (KRN)**

An outline proposal for the definition and management of the GM Key Route Network (KRN) was approved by GMCA on 27 February 2015. The report established the Strategic Case for the integrated management of the KRN, defined the proposed network and included initial proposals for the governance and operating model. A series of next steps were identified in order to take the proposal forward.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on behalf of GMCA takes the lead role and responsibility for the KRN, including preparing capital budgets for network development and structural maintenance programmes. In-addition they prepare for example external DfT bids for funding, identify scheme options for prioritising projects and undertake feasibility work, whilst the LAs would integrate their more local and condition led approaches into TfGM's strategic targets and design and implement the resulting agreed schemes.

In Oldham the KRN is effectively the A class routes and some selected other classified routes, currently entitled the Gateway Corridor Routes and some of the Secondary Corridor routes.

Oldham Council continues to proactively engage with TfGM at the highest levels to ensure that the delivery of Oldham's current and ongoing objectives as regards its Gateway Corridor approach are maintained and align with TfGM's KRN objectives, and optimise where Oldham can continue to provide appropriate highways asset management and delivery expertise.

### **DfT Major Road Network (MRN)**

As part of the Government's Transport Investment Strategy published in 2017, it committed to creating a Major Road Network (MRN) across England. The Government then consulted on its proposals for this network seeking views on matters including its core principles and the definition / extent of the network.

In creating this network, the Government has 5 central policy objectives:

- Reduce congestion
- Support economic growth and rebalancing
- Supporting housing delivery
- Support all road users
- Support the Strategic Road Network (SRN)

Potential government funding on this newly created MRN network should target significant interventions which offer transformative solutions to the most economically important local authority A class roads, for example bypasses, major renewal work, major junction improvements, use of technology and the widening of existing MRN roads.

Whilst investing funding will need to support the long-term strategic needs of the MRN and so Ministers will be the ultimate decision-makers, the Government will look to local and regional bodies to work together to develop and prioritise packages of interventions for consideration.

## 5. The Existing Highways Asset

The following table outlines the asset groups within the Council network and the quantity where available:

ASSET GROUP	ASSET ELEMENTS	Quantity
Carriageways	Carriageways, road markings and street cleaning	829km Carriageway
Footways and Cycleways	Footways, Cycleways (dedicated and shared use), hard paved verges, footway gullies and street cleaning	1099km footway 11.2km cycle track
Lighting	Columns, lamps, cabling, feeder pillars, illuminated signs, subway lights, illuminated bollards, high mast lighting columns, footbridge lighting	28,930 street lights and illuminated street furniture
Signs, Barriers and Street Furniture	Advance direction signs, direction signs, warning signs, information signs, sign posts, street name plates, non-illuminated bollards, seats, highway fences, pedestrian barriers, safety barriers, and other street furniture	Street Signs:6046 Traffic Signs: 38737
Bridges & Other Highway Structures	Bridges, subways, culverts, retaining walls, tunnels, steps, river walls & revetments	62km culverts 146 highways bridges 90 foot bridges 31 km retaining walls
Drainage	highway drainage – gully pits, manholes, etc.	46,300 road gullies
Winter Maintenance	Salt Storage areas and grit bins	600+ grit bins

### Asset Condition

Customer and Council preferences indicate that managing the condition of the carriageway assets is a priority, as it is perceived as being the asset with most need for improvement and in more need of attention. This has been acknowledged in creating this strategy for each asset as outlined below.

The current condition of the network is summarised in the table below:

ASSET GROUP	CONDITION
Carriageways	Asset condition is average considering the network as a whole; the network condition indicators are comparable with neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities.

Footways and Cycleways	Mostly existing in urban areas and largely bituminous. Approximately 35% of footways could be considered for maintenance - condition information is being completely updated currently within highways asset system
Lighting	A substantial Street Lighting replacement programme is ongoing to replace the existing ageing stock. The programme started in September 2011 and was completed in July 2016 when 80% of the street lighting and illuminated signs had been replaced. The PFI contractor will continue to maintain the asset for the remaining period of the 25 year arrangement.
Signs, Barriers and Street Furniture	Asset condition is average considering the network as a whole; however condition information is being updated currently.
Bridges & Other Highway Structures	Bridges and major structures maintained under a 'steady state' approach with risk-based inspections, mainly regular cyclical maintenance and reactive works as necessary. Significant capital works on major KRN bridge structures match funded via TfGM Challenge Fund have just been completed.
Drainage	Generally average condition, undergoing significant systematic improvement, for example via an ongoing EA funded flood alleviation programme.
Winter Maintenance	Grit Bins generally good condition

In the application of the strategy it is important to recognise that the unavailability of certain routes and infrastructure would have a greater impact on Oldham's economy and communities than others. Developing a Resilient Network helps to identify critical highway infrastructure which forms a crucial part of the highway network, and whose management may need to be prioritised over that of other routes where the impact of non-availability is significantly lower. Revising the asset hierarchy can help address this issue, and ensure the needs, priorities and actual use of each road in the network is considered when developing a maintenance strategy.

Following the introduction of the new UKRLG "Well - Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice", the network hierarchy was reviewed. Please refer to Oldham Council's "Highway Safety Inspections – Hierarchy Review and Risk Assessments document".

## 6. Strategies for Main Asset Groups

Oldham's road network provides the backbone of its economy and that the maintenance of its highways in an appropriate condition is paramount. One of the primary roles for highways network is to provide connectivity for communities across the borough. Management of improvements and maintenance of the highways network is influenced by both condition as well as use of the assets.

An underlying principle of sound asset management practice adopted by Oldham Council is the use of preventative maintenance measures, in particular the use of specific and as appropriate cost-efficient surfacing treatments on the network. These approaches are set out in the asset-specific strategies following.

For each asset, a brief description of the condition of the asset is provided, followed by a statement of the desired outcome this strategy seeks to achieve (which is aligned to the overall objectives). The maintenance approach required to deliver each outcome is then described.

At the time of writing, asset specific strategies for Signs, Barriers and Road Furniture are under further development, and Street Lighting is currently covered under the Oldham & Rochdale PFI contract.

### 6.1 CARRIAGEWAYS

Carriageways form the majority of the highway asset; these range from busy dual A class roads to minor rural lanes. The structure of some of these assets has been evolved rather than specifically designed; consequently the construction is not consistent even when some knowledge of the pavement exists.

#### **Current Challenges:**

Asset condition is average considering the network as a whole; the network condition indicators are comparable with other GM authorities.

However there are concerns about the condition of some minor roads. These minor roads, typically consisting of little pavement structure, are at most risk of rapid deterioration due to the ingress of water and overloading. Investment in these roads is more challenging to justify with the other demands on more strategically important routes, however these roads remain crucial links for our communities.

#### **Desired Outcome:**

Carriageway condition is maintained with minimum whole life cost supported by steady state investment.

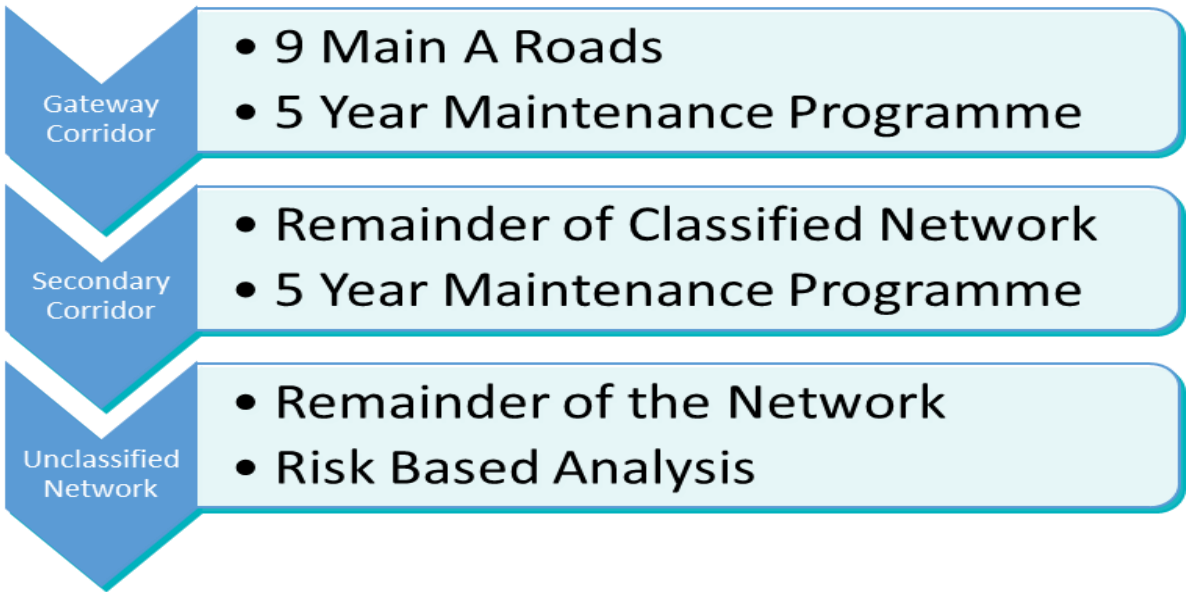
**Current Asset Strategy:**

Lifecycle Planning has been adopted to establish a baseline funding requirement for the network. Having undertaken initial analysis of carriageway condition across the network, levels of deterioration and required investment were identified over a 20 year period. This has been followed up with a comprehensive condition survey to further inform more accurately prioritisation of capital programmes. As a result, investment shall be targeted where the money will return greatest whole life cost benefit, (e.g. maximising residual life for minimal investment)

A preventative approach to maintenance has been adopted, 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 these assets' whole life by arresting/delaying deterioration by suitable intervention methods.

It is recognised that the transition to a preventative strategy is well under way continuing to be supported by Council investment of £18m over period of 2018/22.

In line with the Well – Managed Highway Infrastructure network hierarchy, shown below is a table that has been developed to show the methodology used for development of programmes during the current periods of significant Council investment.



A 5 year rolling capital maintenance programme on the Gateway Corridor (KRN) has been in place since 2012-13.

A 5 year rolling capital maintenance programme on the Secondary Corridor (Category 3b and 4a roads) commenced during 2014-15 to further work to ease the burden on the revenue budget.

Following the successful delivery of these programmes, and further to the recent complete condition survey, Oldham Council are in a position to expand and implement this approach across the wider network including the unclassified network (Category 4a & 4b) within the current additional £18m Council investment.

## **6.2 FOOTWAYS & CYCLEWAYS**

Although the majority of footways are in urban areas, there are many rural footways within villages and providing links between villages. The majority of our footways are bituminous, although there are significant lengths of flagged footways and a small amount of modular footways mostly in the town centres. While carriageways provide the main component of the highway, footways are essential for all users to connect homes and businesses. For many vulnerable road users, footways are their only link to travel and access public transport.

### **Current Challenges:**

The condition of footways had not been routinely measured for many years. It was estimated that around 35% of main footways required maintenance. Following the very recent full inspection of all footways (AEI & FNS), this figure is 22% of all footways requiring structural maintenance.

### **Desired Outcome:**

Footway condition is maintained with minimum whole life cost supported by steady state investment.

### **Proposed Asset Strategy:**

The Council will establish a baseline funding requirement for the network using life cycle planning techniques. Increased levels of survey and data collection programmed are now complete to help inform this baseline.

Work is prioritised according to asset condition, location and user need. An updated prioritised process for footway maintenance and improvement is currently underway.

In terms of programming maintenance and improvement works, schemes will be considered in localities to minimise the impact on communities. On the bituminous footway network, the Council will establish a cyclical approach to surface treatment which is preventative in order to protect against water ingress and extend residual life. For example the Council is to commence an initial preventative treatment regime within the current programme.

**6.3 STRUCTURES**

The Council is responsible for bridges and structures as indicated in the table below.

BRIDGES AND OTHER STRUCTURES	
Principal Roads	30
Road Bridges	63
Retaining Walls (adopted highway)	1152 (31km)
Footbridges (incl. public rights of way)	101
Culverts	310
Subways	9
Gantry	1
<b>Total No of Structures</b>	<b>3,092</b>

**Current Challenges:**

Detailed asset data exists for all types of highway structures. General and Principal inspection regimes (as per government codes of practice and guidance) are in place for bridges, and currently a General inspection regime for retaining walls. A risk based approach is used to manage the retaining wall stock due to the current financial climate. Oldham has more than 16,000 highway retaining walls in total which include private walls and public owned retaining structures whose retained height is less than 1.35m.

**Desired Outcome:**

Our aim is to maintain the highway bridges and structures stock condition score in a steady state of repair by adopting a preventative strategy with the appropriate interventions which will deliver value for money against a backdrop of reducing capital and revenue budgets.

We intend to meet statutory duties and maintain Oldham Council’s bridge stock in a safe and serviceable condition by undertaking annual routine maintenance and continuing with the present 3-year strengthening / replacement forward programme of works.

**Proposed Asset Strategy:**

Following the Council’s extensive use and adoption of the well-established principles set out in the Management of Highway Structures: A Code of Practice (September 2005, updated 2013) to prioritise our inspections, ongoing monitoring of substandard and weak structures and development of works programmes, “Well - Managed



Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice, is being adopted, further developing the risk based approach.

The existing prioritised maintenance work schedules and strengthening programmes are based on works priority, cost and other strategically weighted factors such as network resilience and critical infrastructure, road hierarchy, obstacle crossed, heritage status and length of structure. This bespoke toolkit will continue to be used to demonstrate the desired outcomes are being delivered in the most cost-effective manner with the funding available.

Together with all other GM authorities the specialist “Pontis” structures asset management system has been adopted allowing use of CIPFA’s Structures Asset Management Planning Toolkit (Structures Toolkit) to develop lifecycle planning and prioritisation needs; to assist with asset valuations and financial planning; and identify the appropriate level of funding required for future maintenance and strengthening.

## **6.4 DRAINAGE**

This encompasses a wide range of assets, varying from piped systems to open watercourses, which assist in the Council’s duty to safely drain the highway and provide opportunities for the Council to meet its obligations under the Water Framework Directive. In addition, the Council has the duty to act as the Lead Local Flood Authority which includes identifying existing Local Authority assets which have a significant effect on flooding, identifying flooding mitigation schemes and seeking funding from the Environment Agency & DEFRA, and ensuring responsible parties maintain their systems.

### **Current Challenges:**

Whilst GPS and condition asset data exists for the majority of highway gullies, information on the associated outfall systems into which they discharge is very limited. Collecting this data comes with high costs and as such a data collection exercise for all the assets cannot be justified. A risk based approach to the collection of highway drainage asset data is therefore taken.

### **Desired Outcome:**

Our aim is to meet statutory duties and maintain a safe public highway by continuing to assess and prioritise high risk flooding areas and deal with them accordingly. Opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations and to deliver other benefits, such as those required by the Water Framework Directive, will also be sought.

- Highway drainage schemes which can deliver the highest outcome measure scores will receive the highest priority when it comes to the programming of their design and construction.

- Construction of highway drainage schemes will result in the delivery of the following outcome measures
  - Fewer residential and business properties being at risk of flooding (measured as the number of residential or business properties protected)
  - Fewer flooding related highway safety concerns (measured as the distance of highway better protected from flooding)
  - Reduced pollution of watercourses through the transport of pollutants through highway drainage systems.

Ongoing close liaison and working with partners such as UU and the EA is successfully resulting in additional funding to deliver key prioritised flood alleviation schemes.

## **6.5 STREET LIGHTING**

The Council entered into a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract in July 2011 with Community Lighting Partnership (CLP) to replace the majority of the lighting assets in a five year Core Investment Period (CIP) and to maintain the assets for the remainder of the 25 year contract.

CLP appointed Eon Energy as their operational Sub-contractor to deliver the physical works on their behalf.

### **Current Challenges:**

Prior to service commencement, Oldham Council undertook an assessment of its lighting assets based on age and condition and provided CLP with details of what was considered to be in need of replacement within the CIP programme. These assets constituted 80% of the Council's lighting stock with the remaining 20% considered to be good structural condition.

CLP undertook its own due diligence using the information provided by Oldham Council, and then produced a five year fast track replacement programme.

### **Desired Outcome:**

The CIP programme started in September 2011 and was completed in July 2016. At this point 80% of the existing lighting infrastructure has been replaced with new energy efficient lighting and illuminated signs and bollards.

### **Proposed Asset Strategy:**

CLP has put in place a method for risk assessing, monitoring and certifying the structural integrity of all the assets (both new and existing) for the full duration of the PFI period (until July 2036) in accordance with the requirements of the Institution of Lighting Professionals; Technical Report No.22 'Managing a Vital Asset: Lighting Supports'. At the end of the PFI contract, CLP are to hand back the lighting assets with a residual life of no less than five years.

## **6.6 TRAFFIC SIGNALS**

TfGM Urban Traffic Control (UTC) provides the traffic signal control service to the ten district councils of Greater Manchester, and Highways England.

Made up of more than 2,400 installations - the largest number in the UK, outside London - the existing traffic signal network is operated and controlled through the UTC Traffic Control Centre using a range of technologies. This includes specialist experience on the design, installation, operation and control of signals, which includes both junctions and pedestrian crossings. UTC also provide a comprehensive maintenance function for the region's traffic signal network.

TfGM UTC also maintain and operate associated traffic control equipment for the Districts, including variable message signs (VMS), car park signs, rising bollards and automatic traffic count sites.

### **Urban Traffic Control manages:**

- The Greater Manchester Traffic control centre
- 2,400 sets of signals
- 985 pedestrian crossings (Puffins, Pelicans, Toucans and Pegasus)
- Junctions and crossings controlled by SCOOT and MOVA technology.

## 7. Highways Communications Strategy

The highway network is often of significant interest to members of the public and the media. This interest is likely to continue since in recent years the public expectations of how the network should function have increased. In addition, the climate around Oldham means that the borough is particularly susceptible to adverse weather conditions which can cause considerable damage to the highway network.

A wet summer in 2017, followed by the cold winter 2017/18 led to severe deterioration of the highway network, which in turn led to a significant increase in the number of enquiries, complaints and negative local and national media coverage about the highway service.

In addition it is a requirement of the DfT's Self-Assessment process that an authority should have an appropriately responsive and robust communications strategy allowing for regular review and enabling a lessons learnt approach.

Consequently a stand-alone "Highways Communication Strategy" is now on the Oldham Council Roads, streets and pavements homepage at:

[www.oldham.gov.uk](http://www.oldham.gov.uk)

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201054/roads\\_streets\\_and\\_pavements](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201054/roads_streets_and_pavements)

This strategy sets out the highways service's vision of how it wishes to communicate with stakeholders. It aims to raise awareness and understanding of the Council's approach to highway maintenance. This includes the work that goes into maintaining and improving the borough's roads, pavements, structures and street lighting, ensuring that all communications are timely, positive, informative and accessible.

The highways service will work towards achieving the aims and objectives of the Highways Communication Strategy by developing appropriate plans, processes and working practices.

Relevant stakeholders are clearly identified in the strategy, along with an outline of how and what the highways service will communicate with them.

Oldham Council has a variety of communication processes and methods within this strategy in place to provide transparency in the planned & reactive maintenance approach using a range of channels to reach as many audiences as possible.

All policies can be viewed and downloaded from here including status of current major works programmes e.g. Highways Improvement Programme 2018 (£6m of ongoing £18m investment)

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201054/roads\\_streets\\_and\\_pavements/2044/highways\\_improvement\\_programme\\_2018](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201054/roads_streets_and_pavements/2044/highways_improvement_programme_2018)

Site visitors can choose to ‘Report a problem on a road or pavement’ and are taken through a simple step-by-step process online.

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201087/report\\_a\\_problem\\_on\\_a\\_road\\_or\\_pavement](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/201087/report_a_problem_on_a_road_or_pavement)

For example the “Report a pothole” option includes an explanation of the repair policy, what issues there might be about who owns the highway (adopted, unadopted or owned by an organisation like a supermarket), a number to call if the pothole represents an immediate threat to safety, and an explanation of what is an ‘acceptable defect’ to be repaired. This is integrated into the Council’s recently implemented Confirm asset management system.

Oldham is committed to developing a co-operative future; one where citizens, partners and staff work together to improve the borough and create a confident and ambitious place to live, work and play. We want all members of the community to be able to play an active part in building our co-operative borough.

To this end, the Highway Safety Inspection Policy (HSIP) is available on Oldham Council’s Roads, streets and pavements (Highway policies and strategies).

[https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_policies/1373/highway\\_policies\\_and\\_strategies](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200146/strategies_plans_and_policies/1373/highway_policies_and_strategies)

Regular PR updates are also issued to attain media publicity and raise awareness about highways work – such as announcements of new Government funding or details of large programmes of work.

<https://www.oldham.gov.uk/news>

The Council Leader, Cllr Sean Fielding, also has a regular vlog which – given the salience of these issues with the public - regularly refers to highways issues. An example can be seen at specifically referring to both the recent £6m investment recently completed and the next £12m over the next two years:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVxIGU6VapZNHZL3Yn643bw>

All communications via the Council’s website are under constant update and review to optimise the access and information available for our residents.

## 8. Data and Information Management

Knowledge of the asset is used to describe the asset and its performance, and is essential to providing informed decision making and delivering an effective long term asset management approach. Accurate and reliable data enables asset managers to understand the asset better and to help drive continuous improvement.

Oldham Council carries out routine collection of data to understand the condition of the network and support the development of maintenance programmes. A set percentage of the road network is surveyed every year using SCANNER and SCRIM for example, achieving complete network coverage and allowing data to be collected and analysed for deterioration. In addition, borough-wide footway and drainage condition surveys are undertaken, together with appropriate General and Principal Inspections of bridges and highways structures.

Considerable recent investment and effort over the last 3 years has gone into the implementation of our two completely new asset management systems, Confirm, and Pontis as a joint GM wide structures system. Parallel investment has seen a number of additional comprehensive surveys of the asset to ensure accurate and efficient asset management analysis, prioritisation and risk analysis to inform works programmes.

## 9. Knowledge Sharing and Good Practice

Oldham Council is committed to developing and implementing best practice and will make best use of the following forums where appropriate:

- Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)
- Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP)
- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)
- Highways Asset Management Financial Information Group (HAMFIG)
- UK Roads Board
- ADEPT Asset Management Working Group
- National and regional conferences
- Professional Institution engagement (e.g. CIHT, ICE, IHE)
- Competency training

Our highways service works collaboratively with our supply chain partners and neighbouring authorities where applicable, to identify and share good practice and improvements. Where appropriate, we will continue and formalise collaborative working agreements with other local authorities and key suppliers. Very recent and particularly pertinent current collaboration initiatives include Oldham Council Highways & Engineering working very closely with a number of the adjacent GM authorities through TfGM and directly in groups and clusters to better inform our DfT Self-Assessment processes, and in bids for funding from TfGM, DfT and DEFRA.

## 10. Performance Monitoring

As a key element of this strategy, a performance management framework has been developed and refined that defines key performance areas of the highways service and asset, prescribes targets and measures actual performance against the agreed targets on a regular basis.

Monitoring the performance involves regular review and checking that identified improvements are being implemented effectively, and ultimately that these improvements are contributing to the achievement of asset management objectives. Reporting of progress against these performance areas allows assessments to be made on progress and demonstrate continuous improvement.

This performance management framework forms a key element of our asset management framework implementation.

## 11. Strategy Review

The strategy is reviewed regularly to allow informed decisions to be made in order to accommodate any changes in funding and priorities within the longer term forecasts, including changes to standards, codes of practice, systems and technologies.

The strategy is based irrespective of exact funding levels, therefore, significant changes to the strategy will not need to be made if changes in available budget occur from year to year.