



Title	Highway Maintenance Asset Management Update Report
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Sam Shean, Highways & Traffic Services Manager
Lead Councillor	Karen Rowland, Environmental Services & Community Safety
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the approved 2022/2023 Annual Status Options Reports (ASOR) for carriageways, pavements and structures be endorsed.2. That the proposed inspection regime for the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) be endorsed.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To provide the Committee with the approved 2022/2023 Annual Status Options Reports (ASOR) for carriageways, pavements and structures.
- 1.2. To update and inform the Committee of the proposed inspection regime for the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in Reading.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 2.2. To make travel more secure, safe and comfortable for all users of the public highway.
- 2.3. To provide a public highway network as safe as reasonably practical having due regard to financial constraints and statutory duties.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The Highway Asset Management (HAM) Board met on the 14th December 2022, reviewed and approved the 2022/2023 Annual Status Options Reports (ASOR) for structures, carriageways and pavements/footways.
- 3.2. The ASORs are an Asset Management tool that is used by the Council to report on the condition, the asset value and future funding requirements of public highway maintainable structures, carriageways and pavement assets.
- 3.3. The ASORs are reviewed annually to provide an up-to-date measure of the current condition status of our Highway Assets.
- 3.4. The ASORs include the historical investment in maintaining these strategic highway assets and are used to calculate future funding requirements to ensure that the assets are maintained in a reasonable and serviceable condition (steady state).
- 3.5. The ASORs assist the Council by targeting available funding to assets in greatest need, thereby extending the life of the asset before it becomes necessary to carry out more expensive reconstruction.

- 3.6. The approved ASORs are attached in the following Appendices for information and publishing:

Appendix 1 - Carriageways
Appendix 2 – Pavements/footways
Appendix 3 - Structures

- 3.7. The ASORs show the current and proposed status of Reading's Highway Assets as follows:

Carriageways ASOR (Appendix 1 refers):

- 3.7.1 The Residential Unclassified Carriageway ASOR shows a significant improvement in the residential roads condition indicator, where the Council has now achieved 80 % good condition (green) following the £9M Council funded Residential Roads & Pavements 3-year investment programme (2020/23), an improvement from 35% good condition (green) prior to this investment.
- 3.7.2 The remaining 20% (56km) Residential Unclassified Roads are in a condition where treatment is desirable (amber). There are no poor (red) condition residential roads in Reading.
- 3.7.3 There has been a significant reduction in reactive repair of carriageway defects in the last 3-years. This can be attributed to the substantial amount of resurfacing carried out under the additional investment the council has made in Residential Unclassified Road maintenance.
- 3.7.4 Condition survey results indicate that Classified (Main) Roads have improved slightly in the last 13 years.
- 3.7.5 The projection shows an overall reduction of poor and deteriorating roads after the additional investment. It is predicted part of these benefits will be lost if a steady state level of investment is not able to be provided in the following years.
- 3.7.6 Residents' satisfaction levels have been improving with 'Overall Average' results clearly showing that Reading's results against all 111 local authorities, which participated in the National Highways & Transportation (MORI) 2022 residents survey, showing that (all but one) is above the national average and improving
- 3.7.7 With regard to Customer Contacts relating to potholes, 543 public enquiries relating to the carriageway were received in 2022/23. These have reduced by 44% over the last 3-years. Public contact at this level, is a significant generator of work in terms of both inspection and subsequent repair of defects that warrant repair/meet investigatory levels.
- 3.7.8 The improvement in the carriageway results, especially between 2021 and 2022, demonstrates the positive impact of the road surfacing programme is having on the public in Reading.
- 3.7.9 It is noted that the level of inflation has been higher than normal over the last year due to various economic and outside factors, which has led to a significant increase in costs, making the improvement in condition more impressive.

3.8. Pavements / Footways ASORs (Appendix 2 refers):

- 3.8.1 2022/23 was the third year of the Investment programme into Residential Pavements / Footways using the Council's additional investment. An additional £625k was invested in the year improving Reading's pavements / footways.
- 3.8.2 The Council's Highways & Drainage in-house team have delivered this programme and targeted those pavements that were the highest risk, many damaged by vehicle parking in areas of high footfall. The programme will shift in the coming years to an asphalt preservation (thin layer of slurry sealing) type solution, which is more cost effective, rejuvenates 'tired' pavements that are showing signs of deterioration while preserving the tarmac / asphalt surface, which is still structurally sound.

3.8.3 The annual Public/Customer Satisfaction (NHT Satisfaction Survey (MORI)) for 2022 indicated that the level of satisfaction with pavements / footways in Reading has reduced slightly in the last year, however, Reading remains within the top quartile for all footway condition and maintenance indicators compared with the 111 Locals Councils that participate in the annual data collection exercise. The future programme of preservation being more cost effective will accelerate the amount of pavements / footways that the Council can improve, and we expect to see an improving satisfaction result for this area in the coming years.

3.8.4 Minor defect quantities within pavements / footways (safety and maintenance defects) were similar to the previous year, which is encouraging.

3.8.5 No visual assessment condition results are available for 2022/23, however, it is expected the investment will have made a minor improvement in footway condition and will be confirmed in subsequent years.

3.9. **Structures ASORs (Appendix 3 refers):**

3.9.1 The current structures condition inspection results show that out of a stock of 275 highway structures, 10 No. structures are currently rated to be in a 'very poor' condition and a further 31 No. in a 'poor' condition.

3.9.2 It should be noted that 'very poor' & 'poor' condition structures are monitored and not in a dangerous condition, rather the detailed assessment results show which structures need to be prioritised for maintenance works. For example, an element of a structure may need replacing rather than the whole structure, resulting in a 'very poor' or 'poor' rating, and by carrying out regular monitoring & testing for any signs of further deterioration, reduces the risk to the Council allowing us to programme the works in around available budgets. These structures are still safe to use with the Council using a range of tools to keep them safe including increased inspection frequency, minor remedial works, reducing road lanes to implementing weight limits, for example, as we have on the Berkeley Avenue Bridge over the A33.

3.9.3 The proposed investment over the next 5 years of £14.1M is to be invested in structures maintenance, which will enable 7 No. 'very poor' and 9 No. 'poor' structures to be refurbished. This investment will address over 20 structures in total and reduce the current structures backlog significantly.

3.9.4 The table below shows the proposed investment programme and funding source:

Financial Year	DfT Funding	Council Investment	S106 funding	Total
2023/2024	£650,000	£3,650,000 **	£205,000****	£4,505,000
2024/2025	£650,000	£3,000,000 ***		£3,650,000
2025/2026	£650,000*	£4,000,000 ***		£4,650,000
2026/2027	£650,000*	£0 tbc		£650,000
2027/2028	£650,000*	£0 tbc		£650,000
Total	£3,250,000	£ 10,650,000		£14,105,000

* Denotes assumed future years funding from annual Department of Transport (DfT)

** This is remaining funding from the 2-year Council £4M Investment in structures for 2022/23 to 2023/24

*** Denotes part of £7M Council funding for the IDR and Berkeley Ave Bridge Bearing Replacement scheme

**** Denotes S106 funding for Station Subway

- 3.9.5 Maintaining a 'Steady State': It is estimated that on average approximately £1.3m pa is required to counteract ongoing deterioration, in addition to any investment made in refurbishing structures in a deteriorated ('very poor' or 'poor' state).
- 3.9.6 It is noted that this substantial structural investment and works will have an impact on strategic routes within Reading and liaison with statutory utility company undertakers, as well as other Council Departments who manage their own large Transport and Infrastructure projects, are being engaged to minimise the disruption as far as reasonably practicable. A comprehensive programme covering all project schemes is being developed, as well as a detailed communications plan in consultation with our Marketing & Public Relations team to ensure residents, businesses and all users of Reading's public highway are well informed in advance and kept up to date during these essential maintenance works and strategic projects.
- 3.9.7 Tackling the Backlog: The estimate cost of repairing all the defects identified on the structures "total backlog/ workbank" is £21M. Within this there is £9.4M worth of works required to structures that are in a "very poor" or "poor" condition. It should be noted that the Council, as with all council's, is not required to eliminate the full backlog, as that would be uneconomical and unnecessary, rather it a measure we use to grade structures and prioritise works accordingly to achieve a 'steady state'.
- 3.9.8 Additional DfT Investment: from time to time the department of Transport release funds that the Council can bid for structures works and the Council will continue to bid for those when they are available.

4. Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 4.1 The Council, as the Local Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 legislation to ensure that access is maintained to all PRoWs and to ensure that they are kept clear and unobstructed.
- 4.2 Reading Borough Council Highways are the responsible team for ensuring that the PROWs are inspected on a cyclical basis and to action maintenance to the surface to the appropriate standard and to ensure that any obstruction is removed / cleared including arranging for overhanging vegetation to be pruned back by the adjacent landowner.
- 4.3 The public highway network is inspected on a cyclical basis the frequency of which is determined by the hierarchical status of each road. Some PRoW routes are located on the public highway and are currently included within the highway inspections, however, the majority of PRoWs are on land owned by the Council or on land owned privately.
- 4.4 The proposal for PRoW inspection will be actioned along a similar line to that used for the public highway inspections, and to be carried out by the Highway Inspectors.
- 4.5 It is proposed to carry out an initial inspection of all PRoWs following this Committee meeting which will set a baseline for determining the hierarchical status of each PRoW based on their similarities / difference (e.g. a PRoW on a tarmac highway compared to a gravel track through a remote PROW using a risk-based inspection criteria.
- 4.6 Currently a tarmac PRoW on the public highway will receive an inspection based on the class of road, which could be every 3 months up to 18 months.
- 4.7 Once this initial assessment of all PRoWs has completed, those sites needing more frequent inspection will be included as appropriate and those already on the public highway network will align with the Highway inspection frequency for the class of road they are on.
- 4.8 It is proposed to bring back the results to a future Committee meeting to set out the hierarchical status of PRoWs and the proposed future inspection regime.
- 4.9 A list of all PRoWs are shown in Appendix 4.

5. Contribution to Strategic Aims

5.1. Reading Borough Council's vision is:

To help Reading realise its potential – and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.

5.2. The Highway Asset Management Policy, the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice and the Annual Status Option Reports for Carriageways, Pavements & Structures will contribute towards Year-2 (2023/24) of the Council's 3-Year Corporate Plan - 2022/25 objectives of:

- Healthy Environment - Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Thriving Communities - Enabling the infrastructure to continue to support the economy
- Inclusive Economy - Remaining financially sustainable and to ensure everyone has an equal chance to use the public highway

5.3. TEAM Reading values:

Together – Collaborative working approach between the Council, consultant, contractors and the public

Efficiency – Continue to explore efficiency savings within the Highway Asset Management Plan

Ambitious – Investing into the public highway

Make a Difference – Providing a safe inclusive public highway for all users

6. Environmental and Climate Implications

6.1. The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting in February 2019 and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions. A climate impact assessment of this decision has been conducted which suggests a 'net low negative' impact. Highway maintenance is an energy intensive activity and some carbon emissions from the process are inevitable, but a number of steps are being taken to mitigate these impacts as far as possible as set out below.

6.2. The Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. As a result, all relevant construction contracts will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.

6.3. Tenders for any subsequent contracts that are necessary will be invited to submit Environmental Implications proposals which will form part of the quality element of the tender evaluation. A social value quality submission will also be required to be submitted with tenders and evaluation.

6.4. Tenders also needed to include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within tender returns. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials, lower temperature bitumens, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, use of electric vehicles and plant, use of cold applied materials with lower carbon emission, as well as how they will achieve their carbon reduction targets.

6.5. The Council is committed to a tree planting programme to increase canopy cover, improve biodiversity and reduce localised flooding. The Council is committing up to 1% of the value of the road resurfacing programmes towards this initiative.

6.6. The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change. The Council will regularly

review design standards for roads, in conjunction with industry bodies, to take into account the extreme weather events (both extreme heat and extreme cold) to ensure sustainability of the public highway network.

7. Community Engagement

- 7.1. The public can report highway defects to the Council, including road and structures condition concerns, which are assessed and included within the annual review of the highway assets that inform the 'Annual Status Option Reports' (ASOR) with the proposed high priority schemes brought to Committee for consideration and approval should they meet the assessment criteria.
- 7.2. The Highway Asset Management Policy includes managing community expectations about how the Council manages its Highway Assets. As progress is made on implementation of Asset Management new policies and standards will be made available on the Council's website once approved by the Highway Asset Management Board and this Committee.
- 7.3. The Highway Asset Management Policy and Prow Inspection Regime will be available on the Council's website.

8. Equality Implications

- 8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2. The Highway Asset Management Policy and Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice are part of procedures to maintain the Council's existing public highway network. The formal, cyclical maintenance of PRoWs will result in improving access for all users of the public highway. There is no overall reduction to service delivery at this time only how those service requirements are met. Should any future updates/amendments be required, which result in service delivery changes, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. None.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. The Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty under the Highways Act 1980 to carry out highway maintenance and maintain public highway structures.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. The maintenance of the PRoWs will be fully funded by the Council's existing Highways & Traffic Services Revenue Budgets.
- 11.2. The Highway Maintenance programme 2023/2024 to 2027/2028 will be fully funded by the following:
 - The Council's £8M 5-year (2023/2024 to 2027/2028) Capital Residential Roads & Pavement Investment.
 - Year-2 of the Council's £4M 2-year (2022/23 to 2023/24) Capital Bridges & Structures Investment of £3.65M.

- The Council's £7M 2-year (2024/2025 to 2025/2026) Capital investment for the IDR and Berkeley Avenue Bearing Replacement scheme.
- The Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) annual settlement for 2023/2024 & 2024/2025 (confirmed financial years award at this time).

12. Timetable for Implementation

12.1. Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

13.1. There are none.

Appendices:

1. Appendix 1: Reading Carriageway Annual Status Options Report 2022-2023
2. Appendix 2: Reading Pavement Annual Status Options Report 2022-2023
3. Appendix 3: Reading Structures Annual Status Options Report 2022-2023
4. Appendix 4: Reading Public Right of Way Register