



Knowsley Council

HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2025-30



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FOREWORD

Knowsley Council's Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy Framework and Strategy for 2025 to 2030, sets out the overarching approach for managing the highway infrastructure in Knowsley.

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

Knowsley's highway network includes footways, carriageways, drainage, street lighting, vehicle restraint barriers, traffic signals, variable message signs, structures, and land. It is our most valuable corporate asset, currently valued at around £1.8 billion and is fundamental to the economic and social wellbeing of Knowsley, supporting daily life for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Our Strategy sets out how we will meet the Council's key priorities through a commitment to national best practice, customer needs, asset condition, and the efficient use of resources. It also strengthens our ability to secure future

funding by demonstrating value for money and effective service delivery, in line with Government expectations. It is imperative that we consider the whole life of the asset, allowing for advance planning to secure greater efficiency, collaborative working, and value for money.

We are dedicated to embedding asset management principles to maintain a safe, reliable, and sustainable highway network. Annual reviews of the Strategy and Policy will ensure they remain responsive to evolving needs, and we will continue to work in partnership with stakeholders, elected Members, and the community to drive continuous improvement.



Cllr Tony Brennan
Councillor Tony Brennan
Cabinet Member
Regeneration and Economic Development



HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

Knowsley Council recognises the importance of its highway infrastructure and how an effectively maintained and managed network contributes to the achievement of its corporate goals.

Knowsley is currently undergoing an economic resurgence and is ideally placed to benefit from the economic opportunities offered by the Liverpool City Region and the Northern Powerhouse. Its superb motorway and rail connections place it just 15 minutes from Liverpool City Centre and 30 minutes from Manchester. Home to more than 3,700 businesses including major brands including Jaguar Land Rover, QVC and Matalan, the Borough makes significant contribution to the City Region's economic growth ambitions through key growth sectors such as freight and logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

There are more than 71,000 households in the Borough with an additional 3,150 new homes to be delivered between now and 2030. This new housing will help to rebalance the local housing offer to meet the needs of existing residents and attract new residents to Knowsley.

Knowsley Council is committed to adopting an asset management approach for its highway network to support the Council's vision that states:

Knowsley places a high significance on its transport infrastructure. The highway network is the Council's most valuable corporate asset, currently valued at approximately £1.8bn. Ensuring that people can get from A to B using a well-connected and well-maintained highway infrastructure is vital to the economic wellbeing of residents and businesses across the City Region.

The Council is committed to managing its highway network on behalf of those who live, work, and invest in the Borough, providing high value services in a legally and environmentally compliant and sustainable manner, without compromising the health and safety of employees, contractors, or customers.

The following definition of Highway Asset Management has been adopted:

“SYSTEMATIC AND COORDINATED ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES THROUGH WHICH THE COUNCIL OPTIMALLY AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGES ITS ASSETS AND ASSET SYSTEMS, THEIR ASSOCIATED PERFORMANCE, RISKS AND EXPENDITURES OVER THEIR LIFE CYCLES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING ITS ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN.”

The focus will be on achieving the following outcomes:

A Safe Network

- complying with statutory obligations
- meeting users' needs for safety

A Serviceable Network

- ensuring target level of availability
- achieving and maintaining desired degree of integrity
- maintaining target level of reliability
- achieving and maintaining target condition of all assets

Network Sustainability

- minimising cost over time
- maximising value to the community
- maximising environmental contribution
- efficient use of natural resources

Following the publication of national guidance in October 2016 (Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice) a greater emphasis is placed on the promotion of an integrated approach to manage the network based upon the establishment of local levels of service through risk-based assessment.

The Highways Asset Management Strategy sets out how this Policy will be achieved in Knowsley between 2025 and 2030. The Asset Management Framework is a series of documents that describe all activities and processes to effectively manage the highway network.

The framework will help Knowsley make clear and fair decisions about the level of service it can provide, especially as financial resources are reduced. It supports the Council's goal of delivering a high-quality and reliable service by ensuring roads are appropriately maintained. It also helps achieve the goal of supporting inclusive growth by keeping roads in good condition, as this means there is more consistent journey times and fewer unexpected road closures for emergency repairs.

The policy, strategy and framework documents will be kept under review and subject to change in the light of significant external or internal organisational changes.

The Asset Management Framework documents cover the following topics to ensure the highway network is maintained in an effective manner.

ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT:
National and Local Policy and Guidance
Customer Expectations
Political Commitment and Leadership
Financial and Investment Opportunities

ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY:
Highways Asset Management Policy
Highways Asset Management Strategy and Objectives
Service Levels
Asset-specific strategies

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANNING:

Asset Management Plan Overview and Lifecycle Plans
Scheme Prioritisation and Works Programme Development
Risk Management/Contingency Plans
Winter Maintenance/Adverse Weather Plans/Resilient Network

ASSET MONITORING AND WORKS DELIVERY:

Condition, Safety and Serviceability Inspections – Asset Performance Monitoring
Routine and Cyclic Maintenance Programmes Delivery – Reactive Maintenance and Repair
Planned Maintenance Programmes and Works Delivery
Highways Asset Management Improvement Works

ASSET MANAGEMENT ENABLERS:

Leadership and Commitment
Customer and Stakeholder Management and Satisfaction
Internal Capability and Supply Chain Management
Performance Management/Asset Information Management/ Process Improvement



STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

There are a number of legal obligations and powers that govern the way Knowsley Council manages the network and highway assets.

The Highways Act 1980 sets out the mandates including a duty to maintain roads in a safe condition. There is a duty under The Traffic Management Act 2004 to keep the traffic moving on the road network.



KNOWSLEY COUNCIL STRATEGY AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Knowsley's initial Asset Management Policy and Strategy was developed to align with the Local Transport Plan Merseyside (LTP3) Implementation Plan for Knowsley, which ran from 2011-2015.

In 2015 a new integrated plan for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) was produced, titled the Transport Plan for Growth (TPfG) which was in place until 2024 (2026 for Halton Council).

This sets out a Joint Strategic Transport Framework for the LCR CA, together with a 6-year Investment Plan. This document emphasises how important transport is to the region and as a key growth enabler, plays a key role in achieving economic growth across the Combined Authority. LCR CA are currently working on a new Local Transport Plan which is anticipated to be published in 2025 or 2026.

The creation of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in April 2014 brought strategic transport powers within the remit of a single body. This was intended to better

co-ordinate transport across the city region, by bringing together the separate transport planning regimes covering Merseyside and Knowsley.

The Key Route Network (KRN) is a network of strategically important highway routes within the City Region, for which the Combined Authority would have a range of defined highway and traffic powers and responsibilities as 'Highway Authority'. These powers are devolved back to the respective Councils in the immediate term whilst the CA evolves and develops.

Knowsley's highways asset management approach will directly contribute towards achieving the national shared priorities for transport identified in the Local Transport Plan (LTP). In particular, the Plan will help the Council to deliver accessibility, tackle congestion, provide sustainable travel options, provide safer roads, and contribute towards improvements in air quality to address the climate change emergency declared by the Council in 2020.

KNOWSLEY'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR 2025 TO 2030

The Council expects to be the custodian of its highway assets into the future; it understands that the way it manages and maintains those assets today will affect the way they are managed and maintained in the future. The Council will make use of best practice whole life cost analysis when making engineering decisions for repair and treatment options.

The Council's approach to managing and maintaining its highway assets will always consider how the repair and maintenance of one particular asset or asset group impacts on other assets. The Council also understands that the way it carries out reactive repairs and routine cyclic maintenance to assets influences their ultimate service life. The Council will always look to optimise this relationship.

The Council will regularly review the computer systems and databases used to aid asset management. Where shortcomings are identified, or new technology becomes available, the Council will adopt a business case approach to ensure that any financial investment will provide a proper return.

STAKEHOLDERS

Knowsley's Highway Asset Management Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy acknowledges that effective engagement and communication with key stakeholders, including residents, businesses, and other organisations, is essential.

The strategy details those key stakeholders and the various engagement and communications methods.

RESOURCES

The Government's approach to Council funding falls short of covering the full impact of price and wage inflation and the increasing demand for Council services – particularly in Children's Social Care. The Council is also having to manage the impact of the deep cuts in Government funding over the last 13 years which hit Knowsley harder than anywhere else in the country. Instead of providing the Council with the funding that it needs, the Government has shifted the burden of funding onto local Council Taxpayers. Knowsley Council opposes this policy, but if the Council did not

increase Council Tax in the way the Government requires it to, then we would lose £3.2m of funding every year and would be even more likely to have to cut services and jobs in the future.

Knowsley Council recognises that its highway service must be managed and delivered within financial constraints. Highway maintenance is currently funded from several sources.

1. Day to day, reactive and routine maintenance is supported by revenue funding, which comprises funds provided by central government through the formula grant and additional revenue raised locally.
2. The Council also submits bids for funding for highways maintenance via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
3. Structural maintenance, which enhances the value of the asset, is in the main funded by capital allocations from central government.

Central government revenue allocations are not 'ring-fenced' for highway purposes. In terms of capital, the allocation from Government is made to LCRCA as the Integrated Transport

Authority. The highway maintenance element of its capital funding is currently pass-ported directly to the Merseyide districts based on submissions made to the LCRCA as part of the five-year City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement between 2022 and 2027, with a similar situation anticipated with the Transport for City Region funding from 2027 to 2032. There are potentially other capital funding mechanisms available, for example the use of local capital receipts, Prudential Borrowing, or private/public partnership initiatives.

Central government also establishes funding pots for various specific highway-related purposes, for example the Single Growth Fund, Local Pinch Point Fund, Transforming Cities Fund and Levelling up Funding. The Council can compete with other authorities to secure an allocation via a competitive bid.

With the development of an asset management approach the Council will be better able to support longer-term commitment of budgets. It will allow it to estimate the funding required to deliver the required level of service and to provide the tools and processes to ensure efficient and effective use of available resources.

MANAGING RISK

Knowsley Council has adopted a policy for highway safety inspections that incorporates a risk assessment approach to the categorisation of highway defects. This aligns with the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice.

The Council acknowledges the benefits of a systematic approach to managing risks; therefore, risk management will be included in all parts of its asset management process.

For the Council as a whole, the effective management of risk is an essential part of business planning and performance management.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND BENCHMARKING

The council will set levels of service for individual assets and for the network as a whole and will collect, process and report performance data so that all stakeholders can see whether targets are being met.

Knowsley Council has set out a Performance Management Framework (PMF) to define specific service levels and performance measures required to achieve this objective and these will be reported annually, although some measures will be undertaken more frequently and reported in line with existing performance reporting requirements. Targets and frequencies will be set out in the PMF. The Council will, where practicable, look to benchmark its performance against other highway asset owners in the local region and nationally to identify all opportunities for improvements in service delivery.



KNOWSLEY'S HIGHWAYS ASSETS

Knowsley's public highway network is currently valued at approximately £1.8bn and includes:

- 591 km of carriageways
- 967 km of footways
- 151 bridges and other structures (culverts, subways, footbridges, retaining walls, gantries)
- 20,584 street lighting columns
- 32,883 road drains
- 23,753 metres of drainage channels
- 140 signalised junctions and pedestrian crossings
- 4 variable message signs

As well as road signs, bollards, kerbs and safety barriers and guardrails, road markings and other street furniture.



APPROACH TO ASSET MANAGEMENT

As a proactive member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Knowsley recognises the strategic role that a strong, robust, and good condition highways network can play in strengthening our region's economy and residents' well-being. As such, our overall highways strategy is to continue to work with the other LCRCA members to improve our Key Route Network as well as balancing the needs of our local highways to ensure we provide our residents and road users with a high-performance network. We undertake prioritisation of all our asset groups and ensure that we recognise impacts across asset groups to integrate as much as possible. We are adopting a preventive maintenance strategy to minimise expenditure yet extend the life of our assets.

We carry out different types of maintenance:

Reactive Maintenance – small-scale works including pothole repairs, traffic signal and street lighting outages to keep the network in a safe condition.

Routine Maintenance – regular works to keep the network in good condition and working well, such as gully cleansing, sweeping streets and cutting grass.

Planned Maintenance – large scale maintenance to ensure the network is in a good condition and to extend life expectancy of an asset. This includes road resurfacing, preventative maintenance, and bridge repairs.

The Council has limited funding and is not able to carry out all the works that are required across the network. The programme of works each year is based on those that are most urgent and those which will save money by preventing costly future maintenance. We consider the following sources of information:

- Safety inspections to determine condition and performance of an asset
- Specialist surveys using machine and visual inspections
- Reports of defects from residents, elected members and other stakeholders
- Age profile of the asset
- Hierarchy of importance based on their importance to users
- Third Party Insurance Claims

HIGHWAY ASSET HIERARCHIES

Developing an asset hierarchy 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. Developing and applying an 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.

It is worth noting road classification should not be used as the sole basis for developing a hierarchy, as there may be differences between the classification of the road and its function or its criticality.

KEY ROUTE NETWORK (KRN) FOR THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

Knowsley Council has joined with neighbouring Merseyside authorities including Merseytravel, to form a Combined Authority (CA). The six authorities, Knowsley, Halton, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, and Wirral have combined with the intention to better co-ordinate transport across the city region, by bringing together the separate transport planning regimes covering Merseyside and Knowsley.

It is likely that there will be changes in responsibility for the management and maintenance of certain parts of this network. These will result from the devolution of highway, traffic, and street authority powers to the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and the associated designation of a Key Route Network (KRN).

The KRN is a network of strategically important highway routes within the City Region, for which the Combined Authority would have a range of defined highway and traffic powers and responsibilities as Highway Authority. These powers are currently devolved back to the respective Councils in the immediate term whilst the CA evolves and develops. A number of management groups have been established involving Knowsley Council; Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the other Merseyside Local Authorities to co-ordinate the maintenance and operation of the KRN.

RESILIENT NETWORK

Maintaining a network which is resilient to disruption is a critical function of a local highway authority. Knowsley aims to develop and maintain a core highway network which is reliable in operation and resilient to disruption, maintaining access for people and resources wherever possible.

It is essential that Knowsley build resilience considerations into the decision-making process for major schemes and routine maintenance activities for four key reasons:

- Economic growth – a resilient and reliable transport network is essential to support the local economy and encourage future growth
- Cost saving – money can be saved by reducing the need for expensive future maintenance
- Reputation – maintain or enhance the Council's reputation and avoid adverse publicity through infrastructure failure; and
- Duty – the Local Transport Act 2008 placed a duty on Local Transport Authorities to have regard to the Government's adaptation policies in their Local Transport Plans

Knowsley's Network Resilience Plan can be found [here](#).





ASSET SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

Specific challenges and proposed approaches are set out below:

CARRIAGEWAYS

Roads represent the largest element of the highway asset and account for an estimated 70% of the total asset value. Maintaining their condition and preserving their value is vital to the success of the Council's maintenance strategy.

Carriageways in the Borough are generally in a good to mid-life condition, our biggest challenge is to maintain this level of condition and performance within an environment of reducing budgets, increased costs, and less available, skilled resources.

The desired outcomes for the most effective management of our carriageway asset are:

- Maintain carriageway network in a safe condition
- Maintain carriageway network with minimum whole life cost
- Maintain steady state
- Carry out more planned preventative maintenance
- Look at alternative products and treatments to reduce the carbon footprint of the highway maintenance activities
- Meet statutory duties

Our maintenance strategy will align with the overall KRN requirements (from Knowsley's perspective) and accommodate the maximum level of funding available to undertake both structural and preventive maintenance activities on the prioritised network.

The future approach is to undertake more preventative maintenance treatments on carriageways at the 'mid-life' condition. This will reduce the whole life cost of the carriageways as we will be eliminating lengths which would otherwise have deteriorated requiring more expensive treatments to remain in service.

FOOTWAYS

The maintenance of our extensive footway network is a critical activity if we are to achieve our strategic asset management objectives to provide a safe, serviceable, and sustainable network across the Borough.

Over the last decade, Knowsley has implemented a maintenance strategy to increase the percentage of bituminous type footway surfaces, thereby reducing our long-term maintenance burden and reducing considerable risk events due to slips and trips, leading to a reduction in insurance claims over the long term.

Knowsley Council maintains approximately 960km of footways and following significant increases in bituminous surfacing footway types across the borough, we are now faced with minimal funding availability to carry out anything other than preventive surfacing treatments on the footway.

Our proposed strategy is to continue or possibly increase the level of preventative works on the footways, only undertaking structural maintenance and reconstruction where condition is too poor that it presents a significant risk to members of the public or safety and integrity of the network. This will extend the life of the footway sections whilst keeping expenditure to a minimum, in line with current and future budget estimates.

The desired outcomes for the most effective management of our footway asset are:

- Continued level of bituminous footway areas, with increases over time to reduce future maintenance costs
- Continue to maintain footway network in safe condition
- Manage a steady state level of performance across the whole footway network
- Look at alternative products and treatments to reduce the carbon footprint of the highway maintenance activities
- Meet statutory duties
- For it to become standard practice for any new footways as part of a development to be constructed from a bituminous material

We also recognise that we require more timely and accurate asset data on our footway network and will include sufficient funding to continue our survey processes to ensure that are making the most informed decisions about works and maintenance treatments based on up-to-date asset information.

BRIDGES

Bridges are an important asset to Knowsley and those carrying public roads have a high value.

With 147 structures to be maintained, the desired outcomes for the most effective management of our bridges and structures assets are:

- Meet statutory duties
- Maintain bridge stock in safe/serviceable condition to required standards
- Look at alternative products and treatments to reduce the carbon footprint of the highway maintenance activities

In the short/medium term, Knowsley will continue to provide a consistent level of funding to maintain structures generally to a 'steady state'. Knowsley will continue to seek additional Capital Investment Funding for carrying out reconstruction or Major Improvement works.

The approach to management of the Knowsley structures asset will be to carry out longer term planning and development of Lifecycle Plans for the structures stock. This lifecycle approach to structures will align with the overall Highways Asset Management Framework being developed.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Knowsley Council (under a Service Level Agreement with the Liverpool City Region joint Traffic Signals contract with Yunex Traffic), maintains approximately 140 traffic signal installations including, traffic signal junctions, pelican crossings, puffin, and toucan crossings. In addition, the Council operates a number of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to support the operation of traffic signals.

The desired outcomes for the most effective management of our traffic management systems are:

- Meet statutory duties
- Maintain equipment in serviceable condition
- Operate effectively to reduce traffic congestion

The employment of low energy controllers and LED lighting undertaken aims to reduce energy costs and in the case of LED technology will reduce the demand for reactive maintenance given the greater reliability associated with it.

STREET LIGHTING AND TRAFFIC SIGNS

Street lighting and traffic signs across Knowsley are maintained through a Private Finance Initiative project with Enerveo, which will run until 2036. Enerveo are responsible for inspections and maintenance of all street lighting and traffic sign infrastructure across Knowsley.

The desired outcomes for the most effective management of our street lighting and traffic sign infrastructure is to ensure that the highways are illuminated to the appropriate standard at all times, as well as ensuring that traffic signing is in a good condition.

The further employment of LED lighting will reduce energy costs and in the case of LED technology this will reduce the demand for reactive maintenance given the greater reliability associated with it.



HOW IS THE SERVICE DELIVERED

In February 2025, Knowsley Council entered into a seven-year Term Service Contract with 'Tarmac Trading Limited' with options to extend for up to three further years up to January 2035.

The partnership with Tarmac encourages an asset management approach to achieve maximum life from treatments and to minimise costs wherever possible. The partnership has brought about new technology and survey techniques to help improve management of the road network.

Quality is a key priority and robust monitoring and assurance measures are in place. This includes routine site inspections and audits of the work carried out by both the contractor and their sub-contractors. Where work fails to meet the required standards, it is re-done by the contractor at no additional cost.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Knowsley Council takes its responsibility to the environment very seriously. This is demonstrated through:

- Use of low noise surfacing materials whenever possible
- Use of warm mix asphalt on resurfacing schemes
- Recycling and reusing carriageway materials wherever possible
- Use environmentally friendly treatments and techniques wherever possible
- Continue to look at alternative products, treatments, and trial innovative solutions to reduce the carbon footprint of the highway maintenance activities
- Including active travel improvements as part of planned maintenance works
- Using Air Quality Sensors at Traffic Signal Sites
- Including a number of environmental Key Performance Indicators within the construction term services contract, including percentage of sustainable materials used, percentage reduction in carbon emission, number of new technologies trialled and number of engagements for green initiatives

STRATEGY REVIEW

The strategy will be reviewed in 2030. However, if there are significant changes in legislation in the interim amendments to this document will be considered.

The strategy is based irrelevant of funding levels, and therefore, significant changes to the strategy will not need to be made if major changes in available budget occur.



