

Introduction

Kent County Council maintains 8,700km (5,400 miles) of highway network and associated “assets”.

Our roads, footways, street lights, street furniture, traffic signals, gullies and drains, trees, grass verges, signs, road markings, bridges and other structures are all different types of highway asset. These assets help to ensure that journeys around and through the County are safe and reliable.

The County Council has statutory obligations under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway in a safe condition and appropriately safe and functioning state. In addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 requires us to facilitate and secure the efficient movement of traffic on our highway network. Furthermore, the Climate Change Act 2008 obliges us reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare to adapt to longer term climate change.

If our highway assets are not maintained effectively they will deteriorate making sections of the highway network dangerous and journeys unreliable. If this happens a decision will have to be made, do we invest in our assets or do we close roads?

“Asset Management” describes a common sense approach to the maintenance and future investment decisions for all the parts (or what we call “assets”) that make up our highway.

This short guide outlines how we use asset management principles to support and achieve the County Council’s priorities.

Our Vision

The County Council has a five year strategic statement called “Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes” and this sets out the following vision:

Our focus is on improving lives by ensuring every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent’s residents, communities and businesses

Effective Highway Asset Management is a key factor in upholding the County Council’s vision. Highway Asset Management is about spending the right amount of money at the right time to keep our highway network safe and our assets working properly to meet the needs of Kent’s people, businesses and visitors now and in the future. It is important that the decisions we make about maintenance priorities, levels of service and investment are shaped by an understanding of the current and future requirements of the County’s residents, communities and businesses.

Our Strategic Outcomes

The County Council is committed to achieving its vision through three strategic outcomes which provide a simple and effective focus for everything we do.

Effective highway asset management is vital in supporting the delivery of the County Council's three strategic outcomes:

Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

A safe and resilient highway network enabling reliable journeys will provide Kent's young people with access to work, education and training opportunities, supporting them to achieve their potential through academic and vocational education.

The requirements of Kent's children and young people now and in the future will inform the decisions we make about levels of service and maintenance priorities. Furthermore our long term view will enable us to maximise the benefits of the highway network for their future prosperity.

Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality life

Our highways play a vital role in Kent's economic prosperity. They provide safe and reliable access to shops, jobs, schools, friends, family and other opportunities. As well as connecting the County's towns and villages, Kent highways also provide a key strategic link between the Capital and ferry, air and rail services to mainland Europe.

Taking a long term view will enable us to deliver greater value for money. By making the right investment decisions we will be better able to maximise the benefits for future affluence and quality of life in Kent.

Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.

Safe and reliable highways provide valuable access to services, amenities and social activities for older and vulnerable people supporting them to live with greater independence.

The demands of an aging population and the potential barriers to independent living will be recognised and inform decisions we make about levels of service and maintenance priorities.

Implementing Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways

Details of how the County Council intends to use asset management principles to deliver highway maintenance will be outlined in "Implementing our approach to asset management in highways".