

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**EQUALITY ANALYSIS/IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)****Directorate:**

Growth, Environment & Transport

Name of policy, procedure, project or service:

Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways

What is being assessed?

The impact of the current approach to Highways Asset Management strategy, this taking into account significant developments in our approach such as implementing lifecycle planning for all major asset groups.

Responsible Owner/Senior Officer:

Andrew Loosemore, Head of Service, Highways Asset Management – Highways, Transportation & Waste

Date of Initial Screening:

13th December 2017, Revised 14 Dec 2019

Date of Full EqIA:

NA

Version	Author	Date	Comment
1.0	Alan Casson	13 th December 2017	Draft
2.0	Alan Casson	14 th December 2018	Revised

Equality Analysis/Impact Assessment

Growth Environment & Transport

Road and Footway Assets – Lifecycle Cost Planning

Responsible Owner: Andrew Loosemore

Version: 2.0

Date: 14^h December 2018

Part 1: Initial Screening

Proportionality

Based on the answers in the screening grid at Appendix A what weighting would you ascribe to this function – see Risk Matrix.

Low	Low relevance or insufficient information/ evidence to make a judgement	Medium	Medium relevance or insufficient information/ evidence to make a judgement	High	High relevance to equality or likely to have an adverse impact on a protected group
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Based on the individual assessments the overall assessment is **High**.

Context

The County Council is responsible for the maintenance of 8,700km of roads and 5,400km of footway. We have legal obligations to maintain the public highway in a safe condition and facilitate the movement of traffic around the County. We also have duties under the Equality Act 2010. Our highway assets are estimated to be worth £12bn (excluding land value). Our highway assets are 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.
- **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. It provides 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.
- **Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.**
Safe and reliable roads provide valuable access to services, amenities and social activities for older and vulnerable people supporting them to live with greater independence.

Our highways enable safe and reliable journeys and in doing so support social and economic prosperity. They also facilitate the transport of services essential to health and wellbeing, including emergency services, medical services, food transportation etc.

Like most local authorities, Kent is facing significant challenges in maintaining a safe and reliable highway network during a time of diminishing resource, deteriorating condition and increasing public expectation. The rate at which local roads and footways in England are deteriorating far exceeds the rate of investment from central government. This is a national issue but arguably affects Kent more significantly given the scale of our highway network and proximity to London, the Dartford crossings and continental Europe.

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The majority of capital investment in our highways is funded through DfT grants. However, in 2015 the Government changed the way in which it allocates funding to encourage the full use of asset management methodology into Local Authorities' management of highway maintenance and prioritisation of investment.

In February 2017, Kent County Council published two key documents. The first, ***Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways***, outlines how asset management principles can enable us to meet with our statutory obligations and in doing so, support the County Council's vision of "improving lives by ensuring every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses".

The second, ***Implementing Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways***, outlined in more detail how we will embed asset management principles in the way that we deliver highway services and measure our success to ensure continuous improvement and a focus on the County Council's Strategic Outcomes. Over the last few years, we have implemented a range of measures to improve our knowledge of our highways asset and carry out lifecycle cost analyses, in order to make informed decisions about how we maintain our highway assets.

In February 2018, Kent adopted and published a third document, ***Developing Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways***, essentially a development of the above documents which uses more robust lifecycle cost data, processes and modelling, and outlines the current condition of highway assets and forecasts future condition and levels of service. It also included areas that we want to develop in future to further enhance service delivery and ensure continuous improvement. Publishing this document denable Kent to evidence a Band 3 rating for Incentive Fund purposes and avoid a further reduction in government funding allocated to Kent.

In ***Implementing Our Approach to Asset Management in Highways*** we explained that most local authorities are facing significant challenges in maintaining a safe and reliable highway network during a time of ageing assets, diminishing resource, deteriorating condition and increasing public expectation. The rate at which local roads in England are deteriorating far exceeds the rate of investment from central government, and this is a constant theme of published reports.

Most commentators will accept that capital investment in existing local roads throughout the country has been insufficient for decades. That has been further exacerbated by reduced funding from central government in recent years as the Government seeks to reduce public spending.

The position in Kent is similar to most other authorities. Our forecast for most highway asset groups based on current levels of funding continuing is challenging. In most asset groups, it is clear from detailed modelling and analysis that our highway assets will continue to deteriorate, in some cases very significantly.

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Whilst all highway asset groups have their respective challenges going forward, this proposed new strategy document include two important but difficult conclusions about our largest and most valuable asset groups – roads and footways.

- Our road assets are in poor condition and will deteriorate significantly if current funding levels are maintained. If that occurs on the scale modelled over ten years, towards the end of that period it will become increasingly challenging to fulfil our Highways Act duties to maintain a safe network.
- Our footway assets are also in poor condition and will deteriorate significantly over the next ten years. If that happens as modelled, we will have significantly more uneven footway network towards the end of the forecast period.

This Equality Impact Screening has been completed to consider whether the proposed developed strategy document that is based on more robust lifecycle cost analysis has the potential to disproportionately affect protected groups under the Equality Act. It concludes that continued footway asset deterioration of the scale modelled would disproportionately affect a number of vulnerable groups protected by the Equality Act, namely the elderly and disabled.

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Aims and Objective

See above.

Information and Data

None, save asset condition and modelling data, which is not specific to protected groups.

Involvement and Engagement

None at this stage.

Potential impact

A deteriorating road and footway network may affect older people and people with disabilities more than others.

Adverse Impact

If we do not resource road and footway asset management and maintain a steady state condition, the condition of our road and footway assets will deteriorate. Whilst that may be mitigated by statutory and ad-hoc inspections in terms of safety critical defects, it is reasonable to conclude that footway surfaces will deteriorate and be more uneven than at present. The extent to which that might occur will depend on the extent of any funding shortfall.

Positive Impact

Informed asset management decision making.

Part 2: Judgement

Option 1 – Sufficient Screening

Yes

No

Justification: The project does not affect any particular protected group

Option 2 – Internal Action Required

Yes

No

Details of the internal action plan and mechanisms for monitoring and review can be found at Appendix A

Option 3 – Full Impact Assessment Required

Yes

No

A Full Impact Assessment is required for the following reasons:

- Modelling data and our understanding of funding availability points to road and footway asset deterioration over the next ten years. That will likely lead to more uneven footway in particular and that may affect older people and people with disabilities more than others, given the potential for increased trip hazards.

Action Plan

NA

Monitoring & Review

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NA

Equality & Diversity Team Comments

NA

Part 3: Sign Off

I have noted the content of the equality impact assessment and agree the actions to mitigate the adverse impact (s) that have been identified

Signed: Andrew Loosemore

Job Title: Head of Service, Highways Asset Management

Date: December 2018

DRAFT

Equality Analysis/Impact Assessment

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Appendix A – Screening Grid

Proportionality

Low	Low relevance or insufficient information/ evidence to make a judgement	Medium	Medium relevance or insufficient information/ evidence to make a judgement	High	High relevance to equality or likely to have an adverse impact on a protected group
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Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service or any proposed changes to if affect this group less favourably than others in Kent?	Assessment of the potential impact: High/Medium/Low/Unknown		Provide details Is internal information required? If yes what? Is further assessment required? If yes, why? Internal action plan must be included	Could this policy, procedure, project or service or any proposed changes promote equal opportunities of this group? Yes/ No – explain how good practice and promote equal opportunities If yes, detail must be provided
		Positive	Negative		
Age	Yes, this has the potential to affect this group less favourably	Low	High	A full Impact Assessment is required	No
Disability	Yes, this has the potential to affect this group less favourably	Low	High	A full Impact Assessment is required	No
Gender	No – this project does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Gender Identity	No – this project does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Race	No – this project does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Religion or Belief	No – this project does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Sexual Orientation	No – this project does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Pregnancy & Maternity	No – this policy does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No – this policy does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No
Carers Responsibilities	No – this policy does not affect this group less favourably	Low	Low	No internal action or further assessment required. If any issues currently unknown are revealed then this will be revisited.	No