



Highways Asset Management Annual Report Report 2021/22



Traffic & Highways

Highways Asset Management Report 2021/22

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Purpose of the Annual Report	4
3. Covid-19: Easing of Restrictions	4
4. Capital Investment Activities	5
5. The Asset	6
Asset Groups and Components	7
6. Service Performance	9
Levels of Service	9
7. Maintenance Activity	10
Our Activity for 2021/22	10
8. Key Successes	12
Financial	12
Service Development	13
Staff Development	13
9. Looking Forward	13
Highways Improvements	13
Highways Enforcement	14
Utilising Technology	14
10. Public Satisfaction	14
11. Reporting and Requests	15

1. Introduction

Southend-on-Sea City Council's shared ambition to transform the city by 2050 is aligned to five themes, with related desired outcomes: -

- **Pride & joy** - By 2050 South Enders are fiercely proud of, and go out of their way, to champion what our city has to offer;
- **Safe & well** - By 2050 people in Southend-on-Sea feel safe in all aspects of their lives and are well enough to live fulfilling lives;
- **Active & involved** - By 2050 we have a thriving, active, and involved community that feel invested in our city;
- **Opportunity & prosperity** - By 2050 Southend-on-Sea is a successful city and we share our prosperity amongst all of our people;
- **Connected & smart** - By 2050 people can easily get in, out, and around our city and we have world class digital infrastructure.

This report supports the more specific desired outcomes for each theme, including: -

- Our streets and public spaces are valued and support the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors. People in all parts of the city always feel safe and secure.
- A range of initiatives help increase the capacity for communities to come together to enhance their neighbourhood and environment.
- We are leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean and green.

To help achieve these goals, investing in our highway asset is essential to the long-term prosperity of the Southend-on-Sea city as a safer, cleaner greener place to live together and a better place for business.

The Highways Asset Management report is an annual summary on the health of our highway infrastructure, how we are performing and our aims.

2. Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this report is to provide all stakeholders with an update on the implementation of our highway asset management approach to managing the City's highway infrastructure, to: -

- review the performance of our highway services over the last twelve months;
- identify areas of success;
- assess lessons learned; and,
- to raise awareness of some of the key issues that we will face going forward.

This report also forms, in part, our response to the Government's national approach through the Department for Transport (DfT), in that local authorities adopt a highway asset management approach to managing its highway infrastructure. The Council's Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy were reviewed by the Places Scrutiny Committee in March 2015, and subsequently approved by Cabinet in April 2015. This is due for an update in 2023. This report forms a part of our communications plan as per recommendation 2 of the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance for Communications, which states:

'Relevant information associated with asset management should be actively communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders in setting requirements, making decisions and reporting performance.'

The above recommendation is also included within the new Well Managed Highway Infrastructure:

A Code of Practice recommendation 4.

Also, it will be used to support our DfT self-assessment question 2:

'Has your local authority communicated its approach to highway infrastructure asset management?'

Furthermore, the Band 3 performance self-assessment requires Councils to have a 'communication strategy is in place, its implementation is monitored, and lessons learnt are incorporated. Stakeholder consultation information is used to develop levels of service. There is a transparent process for decision-making available to the public'. Southend-on-Sea City Council has been a band 3 authority for the last 3 years.

3. Covid-19: Easing of Restrictions

We shall continue to always work in a safe and professional manner, even at this stage as restrictions have been lifted there remains an on-going concern, with covid figures fluctuating and with new variants emerging, keeping the workforce safe/well along with their safety is of paramount importance to ensure we continue in keeping the highway network operational with minimum disruption.

4. Capital Investment Activities

The Council secured £10m investment for 2021/22 to support its highway improvement programme (specifically for carriageway & footways) to ensure that we continue to deliver an improved asset condition, performance/resilience, and value for money, while delivering in a risk-based approach. The other key investment activities for 2021/22 comprised of:

- £773k DfT Pothole Action Fund to carry out planned preventative maintenance works or the repairing potholes.
- £797k from the LTP Maintenance fund, which will be used for the delivery of various roads schemes.
- £193k DfT Highways capital maintenance allocation (Needs Based, Incentive Element) to undertake the delivery of the annual highway infrastructure programme of planned maintenance works.

Programme:

These investments are making a significant difference in ensuring we are able to adopt a maintenance strategy based on the longer-term view and consider the whole life cycle planning of assets. In particular:

- Highway Improvements programme – improvements in the process were utilised to ensure that the increased investment delivered not just new schemes, but a whole street scene improvement, rather than purely focussing on resurfacing. It is envisaged that further improvements this year will enhance the schemes further e.g. the replacement of kerbing.
- Highway Maintenance – adoption of a prevention is better than cure approach to carriageways and footways;
- Street Lighting – Sustainability for the future by reducing our carbon footprint and elimination the need for bulk lamp replacement. – 14 roads were completed on the infill programme with a total of 66 additional columns installed including Roads: Bailey Road, Barnard Road, Burlescoombe Road, Cheltenham Drive, Dawlish Drive, Greyhound Way, Poynings Avenue, Recreation Avenue, Richmond Avenue, Stanfield Road, Sunningdale Avenue, Sydney Road, Symons Avenue & Tudor Gardens – due to shortage of Materials caused by the pandemic these were the only schemes that took place.
- Drainage – The Civil Engineering Team undertakes the flooding responsibilities Southend City Council has as Lead Local Flood Authority. These include the responsibility to manage ‘local flood risk’, defined as flooding from ordinary watercourses (ditches and streams), groundwater (springs) and surface water (mostly flooding following heavy rainfall). This primarily involves producing strategic plans and policies, undertaking inspections, and providing advice, but also involves the delivery of capital schemes. These range from both large-scale flood alleviation works to smaller, more localised highway drainage improvement schemes. We were fortunate to secure a small budget to allow the delivery of highway drainage improvement works in 2022/23.

The works include the delivery of newer, more innovative measures such as Supergullies and HydroRocks including locations: Progress Road/ Glenwood Avenue/ Rayleigh Road/ Mayfield Avenue/ Leigh Hall Road & Highlands Boulevard. Following the implementation of the measures all sites will be monitored to measure effectiveness so that learning can be gained to allow other sites to receive similar measures and for the systems to be incorporated into wider highways schemes, where appropriate.

- Junction Protection – improving the safety and sightlines for motorists and pedestrians
- Vehicle Restraint Improvement Programme– all current VRS that is out of specification have been replaced and now a full condition survey is looking to utilise further safety improvements.
- Zebra Crossing improvement programme - to replace poor crossings and assess any requirements for new ones, an implementation plan is being developed.
- Car Park Resurfacing Programme – Alexandra Street Carparks 1&2, Clarence Road Carpark, Warrior Square Carpark and Southchurch Park East were all resurfaced in 2020/21, with additional infrastructure added for current and future EV charging points.
- Fairheads Green Carpark has been programmed in for this financial year (22/23)– Drainage team and Parks teams will be working collaboratively together
- Small Works schemes – utilising a patching programme to encompass works not covered by the Find and Fix programme

5. The Asset

To effectively and efficiently manage the Council's highway network asset, there needs to be an appreciation of the size and condition of it. A managed inventory of highway network assets is therefore fundamental. Southend-on-Sea City Council's highway network comprises mostly of an urban network, either classified as A, B, C roads or unclassified local roads and the Council holds a significant amount of data on its assets.

The Council, as the Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to maintain the highway network in a condition to enable the safe passage of the travelling public and users. The Council's highway network comprises of many diverse assets; this report shows how our asset management is applied to all highway infrastructure assets that are the responsibility of the Council.

Asset Groups and Components

The Council's highway infrastructure has been divided into key asset groups in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) reporting framework:

Asset Group	Asset Component
Carriageway	Carriageway
Footways and cycle tracks	Footways, cycleways and shared surfaces
Structures	Bridges, culverts, retaining structures etc.
Signage	Illuminated traffic signs and bollards
Traffic management	Traffic signals, information signs, VMS and control equipment
Drainage	Road gullies, carrier drains, manholes, pump stations and chambers
Street Furniture	Grit bins, public transport infrastructure, on street parking infrastructure

Currently the length of the Council's inventory includes:

Asset	Length	Overall Percentage
Carriageway	494km	35%
Footways	874km	60%
Cycle Track	59km	5%

Carriageway Condition 2021:

Condition Description	Overall Percentage
New	19%
Good	3%
Average	48%
Poor	16%
Very Poor	14%

Footway Condition 2021:

Condition Description	Overall Percentage
New	10%
Good	5%
Average	75%
Poor	9%
Very Poor	1%

Current inventory of structures and drainage includes:

Asset	Quantity
Bridges	109
Subways and Underpasses	14
Retaining Walls	22
Large Culverts	15
Gullies	22,334

Current inventory of signage includes:

Asset	Quantity
Illuminated signs	1776
Illuminated bollards	1057
Non-illuminated signs	11074
Non-illuminated bollards	9830

Current inventory of traffic management includes:

Asset	Quantity
Traffic Signal Junctions	111
Controlled Pedestrian Crossings	482
Variable Message Signs	14
Vehicle Activated Warning Signs	44

Current inventory of street furniture includes:

Asset	Quantity
Disabled Parking Bays	456
Pedestrian Guardrail Length	18.8km

Asset Growth:

Asset	Quantity
Length of new carriageway adopted (m)	0
Length of new footways adopted (m)	0
Number of new gullies	0

This approach has been adopted to allow a clear understanding of budget allocation across different asset components and facilitating the recording of where money is invested linked to expenditure on activities.

Identifying where money is invested, allows the Council to monitor performance against service delivery and the implementation of a continuous improvements process, within the constraints of available funds.

6. Service Performance

By adopting the principles of asset management, the Council will be able to maintain its highway infrastructure so that it is fit to serve current and future highway user's needs; and provide levels of service that can meet stakeholder's expectations for a given budget allocation.

Our strategy outlines that our highway maintenance services are organised into three distinct approaches, comprising of **Reactive**, **Planned** and **Preventative** maintenance activities.

Reactive maintenance – maintain public safety

Planning maintenance – replace or enhance

Preventative maintenance – arrest deterioration, prolong lifecycle

Levels of Service

Levels of Service are defined by the County Surveyors Society (CSS) Framework for Highway Asset Management as “the quality of the service for the asset for the benefit of the customers”.

As a form of asset management objective, 'Levels of Service' are a series of public facing high level statements which outline how this plan aims to deliver on corporate, engineering and stakeholder objectives. They are linked to completed works through the Lifecycle Management for each asset group, providing a “line of sight” between the high-level objectives of this plan and works carried out on the ground.

The following highways objectives have been established:

- keeping our city moving
- to ensure that our customers feel safe, and are confident about personal safety, when they use the highway asset
- to provide our customers with a reasonable level of confidence that their journey on the highway asset, by any mode of transport, will be predictable and timely
- to ensure that the highway network is available and accessible, as far as possible
- to reduce the environmental impact of the highway asset to the benefit of our customers and the locality
- to maintain the condition of the Strategic Routes and the Local Resilient Network at an agreed level
- to maintain the remaining highway asset at an agreed level and quality commensurate with its use and purpose
- to respond to the repair of highway defects within the timescales defined in the Highway Safety Inspection Manual
- to minimise highway flooding by enhanced maintenance of the highway drainage assets

Targets and Performance Measures to monitor whether the Council is meeting the objectives are considered in more detail in the asset Lifecycle Plan at the tactical and operational level, and have the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

Objective	KPI Description	Criteria	Target
To ensure that our customers feel safe, and are confident about personal safety, when they use the highway asset	To confirm compliance with Policy for category 1 defects made safe within time	% Response to defects within Policy timescales	90%
To ensure that our customers feel safe, and are confident about personal safety, when they use the footway asset	To confirm compliance with Policy for category 1 defects made safe within time	% Response to defects within Policy timescales	90%
To provide our customers with a reasonable level of confidence that their journey on the highway and footway assets, by any mode of transport, will be predictable and timely	To monitor compliance with safety inspections. (The KPI also acts as an indicator of effective programme planning and responsiveness)	The % of inspections completed within Policy timescales	90%

7. Maintenance Activity

Our Activity for 2021/22

We had the following highway ad-hoc maintenance works orders for 2021/22:

	Number to treat
Bus Stops	335
Carriageways	1895
Coastal Works	66
Drainage	147
Footways and cycle tracks	3149
Lighting	296
Street Furniture	462
Structures	137
Traffic management	322

The breakdown of the highways ad-hoc maintenance works orders for 2021/22 are as follows:

Asset	Number of Works Carried out
Bus Stops	
Bus Stops	335
Carriageway	
Carriageways	1895
Inspection Covers	6
Potholes	918
Coastal Works	
Beach Steps	2
Coastal Defences	5
Flood Gates	6
Groynes	37
Jetties/Platforms	1
Outfalls	0
Paddling Pool	3
Sea Defences	6
Drainage	
Drainage Connections	13
FW Drainage SBC	8
Gullies	137
Main Drains	1
Footways and Cycle tracks	
Crossovers	325
Cycle Tracks	2
Footways	3147
Kerbing	166
Verges	53
Lighting	
Streetlights	296
Street Furniture	
Pedestrian Guardrails	43
Safety Fences	4
Street Furniture	462

Asset	Number of Works Carried out
Structures	
Bridges	137
Retaining walls	2
Traffic Management	
Bollards	117
Bus Stops	335
Detect Loops	43
Hazzard markers	5
Road Markings	175
Signage	193
Traffic Islands	0
Traffic Signals	12

The highways work schemes in 2021/22:

Asset Group	Number of schemes
Carriageway Resurfacing	45
Zebra Crossing Resurfacing	10
Footway Resurfacing	43

8. Key Successes

One of the key outcomes of this report is to recognise the areas of success, so that we learn and develop from good practises and use this learning to further improve areas that may not have performed as well as planned. In broad terms our successes are outlined in the following categories:

Financial

Despite the challenges presented by Covid-19, we have been able to deliver 100% of our planned capital investment on highways maintenance for the year. The overall capital expenditure for highways and infrastructure was £15m in 2020/21, compared with £10m 2019/20 and in 2021/22 the investment was £29m which equates to 32% of the overall Council Budget. We will continue to invest year on year on renewing our network to ensure that our structures and road surfaces are well maintained and operating safely.

Service Development

We are always continuing to improve the way that we work and taking forward policies and procedures in line with the Highways Code of Practice and working more efficiently with our term contractors.

For example: our find and fix programme of works to repair potholes and reduce safety issues, has reduced customer complaints by 50% on carriageways and brings a cost saving to the repair of potholes, this programme delivered them for approximately £50 each, whereas the national average is over £70.

Risk based approach - we have adopted a risk-based process for all the works we do, how we select schemes and how we prioritise works. This aligns with Codes of Practice requirements and ensures we deliver works where the greatest need and risk is required. This system has now been embedded in our Asset Management system and will form the basis of all Highway Improvement work.

Staff Development

Southend's Highways team underwent a restructure of the service in late 2020; this was implemented in April / May 2021 with staff being supported and empowered to undertake their statutory duties. We created a career graded matrix to support those officers who aspire to learn and undertake more varied tasks within the service. One of the functions of staff development is to help the workforce to practise new skills and values in a safe setting.

9. Looking Forward

In the coming 12 months the Council will continue to manage in maintaining its highway infrastructure, as Covid-19 measures are slowly eased, becoming a city is something special, we can build on lessons learned during the pandemic and move forward as a community. Together we can make the City of Southend-on-Sea great, and we can build a brighter future.

Also, by the end of the 2022/23 financial year, we will have a suite of documents / policy that will support the delivery of the service in an efficient and timely manner.

Highways Improvements

We are hoping to develop this process further to not only deliver carriageway & footway resurfacing but to bring improvements to all assets as part of a whole street scene approach. It is led by a clear policy and then the required process and criteria for each area, to ensure all works are assessed for suitability, prioritised, and undertaken within available budgets. It will ensure that all required works are logged, reviewed, and undertaken where budgets allow. It will also enable long term programmes to be developed for all assets, integrated programme of works to be established (close once, fix many, approach) and accurate budget requests for annual and long-term funding. We are hoping to deliver a 5-year programme during 2022 for the main assets (carriageway & footway) with the other elements to follow or be incorporated into these works to bring key cost benefits.

Highways Enforcement

The Highways Enforcement team was introduced to the City of Southend-on-Sea in March 2021, the team was implemented to combat damage being caused to the Council assets (Highways) and to preserve what is currently existing. The Enforcement team work closely alongside the authorities Highway Inspectors and there are on average ninety first stage enforcement letters sent each month.

The team quickly took up the role of assisting colleagues from Planning by means of visiting the locations of pre-approved applications and assessing for any pre-existing damage at the locations specified, these also average one hundred pre-planning site inspections completed per month. The team carry out three inspections of each location and photograph/document the condition of the highway before, during and after any building works. If damage is identified as being the result of said planning works Southend City Council Highways Enforcement team will seek to recover the costs either from the developer or owner of the properties that have commissioned the work (if no details will be given). The Highways Enforcement Team is also assisting colleagues from Waste by taking over the responsibilities of any Highway offence apart from dedicated waste related issues. The team are now able to follow up these works as they have been given Delegated Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for certain issues and if necessary, prosecute those responsible.

The team consists of one team leader, one supervisor and four Enforcement Officer posts (one currently vacant) that are responsible for the seventeen wards across the city.

Utilising Technology

We live in a world where technology is developing at a rapid rate, to keep up with change we are in the process of improving all our systems to ensure they link together so decisions can be made effectively and make costs efficient. Aurora will be replacing our current system Insight which will be implemented during 2023 – this provides map-based technology meaning Southend City Council can deliver an even better service, also ensuring residents and members have transparency on what we are trying to achieve and how.

10. Public Satisfaction

The highway infrastructure is accessed daily by residents, businesses, and visitors. As such we recognise the importance of engaging with the public to understand their levels of satisfaction and obtain their views on the condition of our highway infrastructure, service standards and levels of performance. The Council participates and utilises the information supplied annually to the National Highways and Transportation Network (NHT) Survey which serves to provide details on levels of customer satisfaction with local authority services and practices. Southend-on-Sea City Council, as part of the Easter Highways Alliance, was detailed as the best improving authority in the eastern region for 2021 but there is still much work to be done, especially around the public's perception of Highways.

This helps target and publish information clearly and effectively to ensure members of the public and other highway stakeholders are as fully informed as possible about the current performance of the Council's services. It drives the Council's performance, identifying public perceived gaps, helps us analyse the public's understanding and will inform the communications approach. Details of the results of the surveys are available at <https://www.nhtnetwork.co.uk/>.

The public can report issues, request services and actions direct from the My Southend portal: <https://my.southend.gov.uk/portal>

Once registered a user can access a variety of useful information, buy services direct, report issues, amongst many more services on this online asset, you will find the Report It section for reporting issues.

Southend are the only authority who continued to provide a 24-hour response time on all roads, regardless of its class.

Additionally, many of our service policies, standards and annual programmes are now accessible directly by the public via the Councils website: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/>

11. Reporting and Requests

Highway Records Searches, service requests for the Traffic and Highways department are received via the MySouthend online system. The table below sets out the number of requests per quarter by the type of request received.

The year-on-year comparison shows an increase in requests for 2021/22 of more than 8%, demonstrating that the online system remains popular amongst the residents of the city and the department continues to respond to high demand.

Highways Service Requests 2021/22	<u>Apr - Jun</u>	<u>Jul - Sep</u>	<u>Oct - Dec</u>	<u>Jan - Mar</u>
Report a Highway Obstruction	160	195	124	241
Request for Road Markings (H Bar)	3	5	2	4
Disabled Parking Bay	12	9	15	13
Highways Records Searches	162	154	163	159
Public Rights of Way - General Enquiry	8	9	0	4
Street Naming and Numbering	28	17	17	17
Abandoned and Untaxed Vehicle	154	173	138	134
Report an Issue on our Highway Network (General)	1165	1135	1127	1360
Totals	1692	1697	1586	1932

Comparison of My Southend Reporting and Requests for Traffic & Highways

Qtr	Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Apr - Jun		1325	926 ↓	1692 ↑
Jul - Sep		1679	1629 ↓	1697 ↑
Oct - Dec		1609	1702 ↑	1586 ↓
Jan - Mar		2004	2113 ↑	1932 ↓
Total Requests		6617	6370 ↓	6907 ↑
Percentage Change			-3.73	8.43

