HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2025-30

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Contents

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1. Purpose of this strategy

The purpose of the Highway Asset Management Strategy refresh is to set out, at a high-level, how highway infrastructure asset management will continue to be delivered in Slough to meet the long-term corporate goals and objectives of the Council. The strategy is also aligned to the Code of Practice 'Well-managed highway infrastructure'.

The refresh strategy covers the same principles set out in the first document but has been brought up to date with recent developments and changes to the borough. Added to this strategy are also targets for spend and performance of the highway network to ensure that the assets we manage are resilient for the future.

The new strategy enables Slough to:

- Demonstrate the continuous commitment to adopting the principles of highway infrastructure asset management by senior decision makers.
- Document the principles, concepts and approach, adopted in delivering highway infrastructure asset management at a high level.
- Link with the Council's policies and strategic objectives and demonstrate the contribution of the highway service in meeting these.
- Set out the desired levels of service from implementing asset management.
- Facilitate communication with stakeholders of the approach adopted to managing highway infrastructure assets.
- To provide annual updates through the Council's website on preventative and reactive maintenance
- Set improvement targets for the highway network

HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-30

2. Foreword

I have great pleasure in introducing the Council's refreshed Highway Asset Management Strategy, which sets out our plans for maintenance and the operation of Slough's Road Network for the next five years. This strategy recognises the importance highway infrastructure plays in improvements for our neighbourhoods, securing economic growth and place shaping for the borough.

Our highway asset management strategy continues to demonstrate the responsible custodianship of the council's most valuable asset and will provide us with the tools to make the best possible use of available funding. Our continued move away from reactive to preventive maintenance will provide value for money and a reduction in claims and complaints, it also means less disruption for all users of the highway. Our strategy follows the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure and endorses the direction set by the Department for Transport and the recent National Audit Office report on the condition and maintenance of local roads in England. This in turn will contribute to further funding opportunities for Slough. In line with the DfT's requirements Slough has published its Annual report on maintenance and this is now on the Council's website. The report sets out how the council has spent its revenue and capital funds specifically around maintenance including areas of resurfacing, potholes and surveys. The continuous improvement is necessary for the council and our residents and businesses who rely on the road network on a daily basis.

Over the next five years we will be striving to provide better public realm areas for all, address long standing issues with flooding, replace and/or upgrade ageing infrastructure and provide more infrastructure that supports sustainable and active travel. This strategic approach to highways asset management will continue to build on the previous five years and enable us to move away from a position where we are forced to repair potholes and other infrastructure problems on a reactive basis. Due to the recent financial constraints, it is important that we demonstrate a strong grip on finance but also provide services that are expected from our residents.

There are some significant work programmes that will be delivered in the next 2-3 years that will help improve the look and feel of the town. These works will help to address some of the congestion on our roads, help improve air quality and provide a town which we can all be proud to live and work in.

Cllr Paul Kelly
Lead Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport

HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025-30

3. Introduction

3.1 Introduction to asset management

The road network in Slough is the most valuable asset the council owns, valued at around £2.88 billion, and plays a vital role in supporting the community and economy of the borough.

Our road network is made up of many different types of assets including:

- Roads, footways and drainage,
- cycle routes,
- Streetlights,
- bridges and underpasses
- signs and signals,
- highway trees and landscaping.

Each of these assets have different needs for management and maintenance to ensure that they deliver the quality of service that our residents and businesses expect.

Slough has adopted a risk-based asset management approach in line with Best Practice, this ensures value for money by the best balance of spending, quality of service and risk to road users for the short, medium and long term.

Asset Management helps us to predict when each asset will deteriorate, and to identify when to intervene with lower-cost, preventative maintenance that will reduce lifetime costs or alternatively when to replace the asset. This document sets out our highway asset management strategy over the next five years and reinforces the commitment to good asset management we make in our Asset Management Policy. It defines our objectives for the management of our highway network and identifies how this will promote the council's aims for Slough.

3.2 Asset management principles and objectives

3.21 Asset management principles

Our overall policy for highway asset management in Slough is founded on the following principles that form the basis for our asset management strategy:

1. The Council will develop and operate a formalised, information driven asset management approach to ensure the optimal use of the Council's resources in maintaining the highway infrastructure and assets for the benefit of current and future users.
2. The Council will adopt a whole life cost approach to maintaining the highway infrastructure that, as far as practicable within available budgets, reflects both the structural need of the assets, the strategic importance of the route and the local priorities.
3. The Council will prioritise available resources for maintenance interventions and treatment choices using a risk-based approach, taking account of the safety and needs of different groups of users, network hierarchy and levels of use, network condition, customer expectations, environmental impact, and the implications of approved and anticipated developments.

3.22 Asset management objectives

Slough Borough Council, as the Highway Authority, is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of all carriageway, footway, verges, trees, structures (with the exception of structures or embankments maintained by third parties e.g. Network Rail or National Highways), traffic signals, drainage, signs and lines within Slough, excluding motorways and trunk roads.

Slough is committed to making the best use

of our budgets and we have adopted an asset management approach for the maintenance of the highway network, to help deliver the best long-term outcomes for local communities.

A well-maintained highway network is key to the future economic prosperity and the quality of life of its residents, as stated in our Corporate Plan “A fresh start” 2023-2027 that there will be “Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces” that “can encourage greater levels of physical and social activity, boosting people’s physical and mental health”.

These Asset Management objectives support our Corporate Plan and contribute to the council’s Improvement Plan for the road to recovery.

Slough will look to deliver:

A cleaner, healthier and more prosperous Slough

- Improving air quality, promoting active travel and sustainable forms of transport, and taking action to prevent or minimise the impact of climate change.
- Providing clean, quality public spaces and working with developers to deliver a modern town centre for future generations.
- Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can encourage greater levels of physical and social activity, boosting people's physical and mental health. Environmental quality and the built environment determine 10% of a person's health outcome.

Furthermore, this asset management strategy supports the Council's Improvement Plan to deliver the financial road to recovery, which aims to ensure that we will:

- Be an efficient council that optimises customer service.
- Use technology to drive improvements to services and our ways of working.
- Work as One Council and with our partners to deliver better outcomes.
- Pursue commercial and other funding opportunities to maximise benefits for Slough.

3.3 Statutory obligations and national good practice

Slough Borough Council has a number of legal obligations and powers that govern the way that it manages the road network. The **Highways Act 1980** sets out the main statutory duties for the council, which include a duty to maintain roads in safe condition. The **Traffic Management Act 2004** also gives the council the duty to keep the traffic moving on the road network, while the **Flood and Water Management Act 2010** covers the management of flood risk associated with extreme weather.

In addition to legal duties, there are a number of sources of good national practice guidance including the UK Roads Liaison Group's **Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Guidance** document and its **Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice**. Slough has adopted these guidance documents to ensure that the services we provide are consistent with those provided by other authorities and enables us to demonstrate that we are following national good practice when bidding for central government funding. Non-compliance could lead to further impacts on the grants associated with the annual maintenance grants received by the Highway Authority.

3.4 What is asset management?

Highways asset management is a well-established approach to the maintenance and operation of the road network that considers the whole life of the asset to enable better informed decisions on how, where and when to carry out work in order that makes best use of the funding available, to the benefit of the community. The main features of highways asset management are described overleaf:

Slough Councils Asset Management Objectives are to:

1. Optimise the use of resources over the whole life of the asset and take a risk-based and intelligence-led approach to decision-making.
2. Encourage and adopt innovation to enable better asset management.
3. Maintain effective communication with residents, businesses and other stakeholders and consider the needs and priorities of all stakeholders when making decisions.
4. Ensure our asset management activities are aligned with and support the values and priority outcomes set out in the Council'sCorporate Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan.

Strategic approach	Asset management promotes a business-like approach to managing maintenance and operations on the highway network. Our aim is to minimise costs and risks while, at the same time, providing the best possible condition and performance of the network that extends the life of the asset.
Lifecycle planning	Asset management planning moves away from a short-term, reactive approach, which is inefficient, does not provide a permanent cure and is more costly in the long term. By considering the whole life cycle of an asset, maintenance can be planned in advance at the most appropriate time to prevent more costly future repairs.
Risk management	Our approach to highways asset management is the management of risk; this does not only mean safety risk, although this is an important aspect, but also financial risks and risks to satisfaction of the users of our network. The asset management plan provides the evidence to allow us to assess risk and to prioritise spending to reduce risk.
Asset information	A vital element of good asset management planning is good quality information about what assets make up the road network, however old they are, how long they are designed to last, what condition they are in and how they are performing. By using this information, we can make better decisions on where, when and how to carry out works on the network. This enables us to provide evidence to justify investment in the road network and to assess the benefits of that investment as well as the future risks.
Service targets	Good asset management is founded on an evidence-based understanding of the quality of service that we can afford to provide. We will determine service objectives, which we will measure through a number of performance measures and will set targets for our performance, that are affordable to ensure that we do not expose ourselves, and the users of the network, to an unacceptable level of risk. The aim of our asset management plan is continuous improvement of the management of the highway and assets for our users to enjoy.


XAIS-PTS

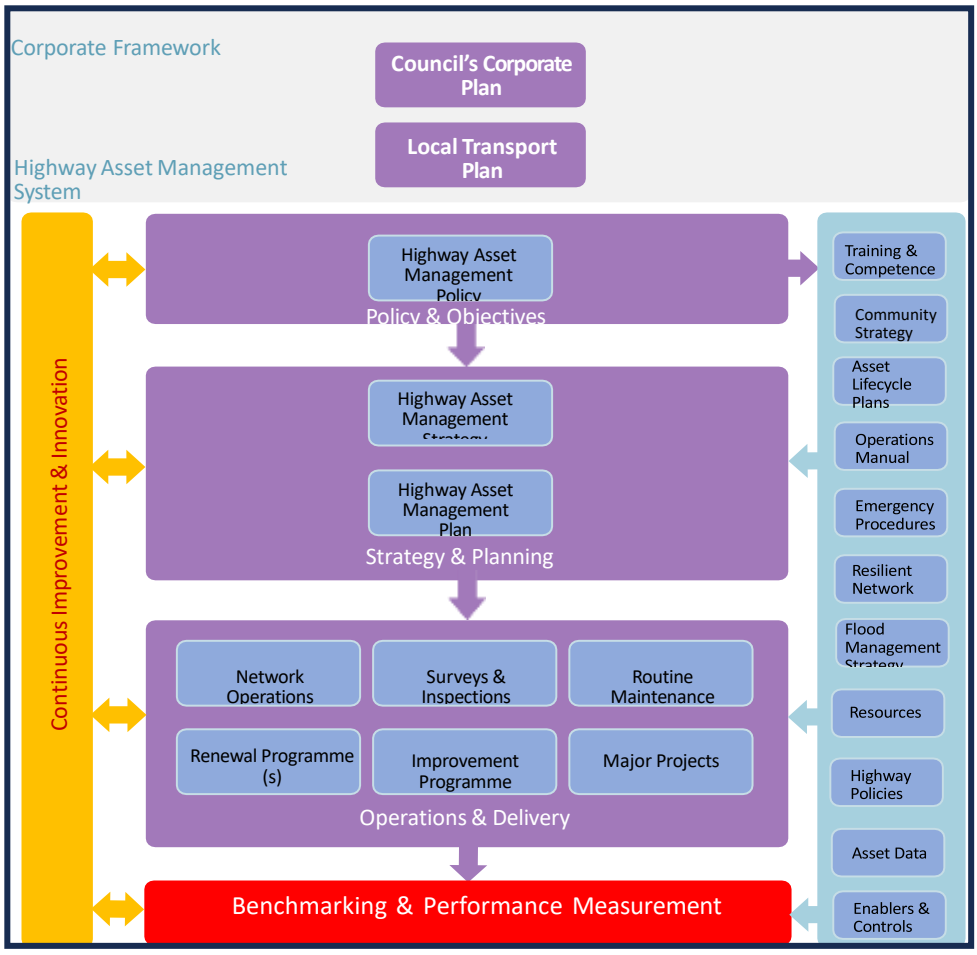
3.41 Benefits of asset management planning

Asset management planning is a well-established technique, both in the UK roads sector and internationally, producing clear benefits to councils and communities, including:

- Cost savings, with expected savings of at least 5% through long term lifecycle management of assets
- Making the best use of limited funds
- Improved risk management
- Ensuring resources and investment are targeted to have the greatest impact
- Providing evidence to justify investment in highway maintenance
- Better roads and service for road users, leading to increased customer satisfaction
- Improved transparency and communication with communities and businesses leading to a better understanding and alignment between desired service levels and maintenance priorities
- Improved performance leading to economic benefits for local businesses and residents
- Improved ability to plan for increased traffic demand and the effects of climate change
- Increased resilience to incidents and unplanned events that disrupt the network

3.5 Our asset management framework

Our overall framework for asset management is illustrated in the diagram below.



4. Context

4.1 About Slough

Located in the Southeast of England with a population of 158,500, Slough is over ten times more densely population than the average for England. Slough is an important commercial center and includes Slough Trading Estate, which contains 500 businesses employing 20,000 people. Its location and access to fast communication links are a key factor in the town's commercial success.

Slough is integrated into the heart of the UK transport and communications network. It is located between the M4, M40 and M25. Slough is a short step away from Heathrow Airport either by public transport or by cycling or car. Slough also has three Elizabeth Line stations at Burnham, Slough and Langley.

The 324km road network is made up of:

- A Roads – 34.8 km
- B & C Roads – 8.6 km
- Unclassified Roads (Residential) – 268.8 km

The highway asset also includes:

- 647 km of footway
- 70 km of cycleway
- 318,000 m2 of green space including highway verge, planting, trees and the Town Centre public realm including high quality paving, lighting and street furniture
- 56 structures which include footbridges, culverts, railway bridges and retaining walls
- 11,369 lighting columns,
- 1850 illuminated signs &. Bollards
- 130 traffic signals
- 17,366 drainage gullies

As an authority, we are continuing to make progress in line with the objectives in the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP) and a revised LTP 4 will be completed later in 2026

For example:

- Investment in new footways and other rights of way, better maintenance, cleaning and security means that residents that our rights of way are easy to use.

- Council investment in new bus stops, priority measures and information, as well as investment in new buses by operators, resulted in a steady increase in bus journeys in Slough but as a result of Covid/Lockdowns the numbers reduced significantly and have in the past 18 months started to get back to pre-Covid levels.
- Most schools in the borough now have Travel Action Plans
- The number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI's) on Slough's roads has continued to fall.
- The Slough-Heathrow bus services promoted by Slough Borough Council, First and Heathrow Airport Ltd have continued to provide excellent accessibility and connectivity to the airport and have improved access to jobs and training. Over three-quarters of Slough's residents can now reach Heathrow Airport by public transport in under 45 minutes in the morning peak. The number of residents employed at the airport at its peak was over 6,000 and is now creeping back to that level following Covid and the delay to expansion.

Though the Council previously won and was also a finalist for the APSE Award for 'Best Performer' in the category of roads, highways and winter maintenance there are still areas where we are not delivering the level of improvement we would like. We are concerned over trends in:

- Bus punctuality and journey time
- Growth in traffic levels which, across Slough as a whole, continue to rise

despite efforts to improve alternatives.

- Slow growth in walking and cycling
- The rise in short journeys of half a mile or less by the private car.

This will slowly improve with new Active Travel projects being rolled out over the next 12-18 months. These projects will include a new off-road cycleway on the A4 and A355 together with Safety Cameras, public realm and improvements to bus services.

Generally, the condition of the road network in Slough is good compared to our neighbouring authorities and has a relatively low number of potholes, as the strategy of preventive maintenance is working well. Due to this approach, there are a lower number of claims against the council as a result of maintenance and safety on the roads. Though the council still has financial constraints the approach from the service is to provide residents and users of the highway with a safe and reliable highway network.

4.2 Future opportunities and demands

Slough's vision for the future development of the Town and its infrastructure has led to the authority being overstretched. However, the Council is now facilitating discussions with many of the larger developers, including the new owners of the shopping areas in the High Street. This development is now expected to start after many years of waiting and will lead to more housing and a higher quality of retail but reduced in size.

4.21 Heathrow Airport expansion

As a result of the legal challenge on the planned Heathrow Airport third runway and the impacts of Covid, the expansion did not proceed. However, since overturning the decision on appeal and post Lockdowns, passenger numbers have steadily increased with Heathrow posting that passengers flying from Heathrow have now surpassed pre-Covid levels.

The new government has recently announced that it supports the expansion of the airport as part of its economic growth strategy so in the next control period for aviation it is expected that there will be announcements relating to a new Development Consent Order process starting.

Slough was one of only a few authorities that directly supported expansion with the emphasis on growth for the town. Any new expansions for Heathrow will lead to significant investment in the surrounding highway infrastructure, including in and around Slough. The airport expansion will lead to an increase in jobs and visitors to Slough which will have an economic benefit to the Town but at the same time, will increase demands for housing and transport infrastructure as well as increasing the number of assets that we are responsible for managing going forward.

4.22 Town centre regeneration

Slough is expecting to see significant regeneration in the town centre as developers such Homes England/Muse and Berkeley Homes continue with planned redevelopment in the Heart of Slough. The scale of the regeneration is substantial and may include radical changes to the highway network.

The regeneration will lead to significant renewal of highway assets in the town centre and may also provide increased revenue through business rates or commuted sums to allow for the on-going maintenance of the publicly owned assets to a suitably high standard.

The regeneration of the town centre will impact on travel demand in Slough and it is expected when developments are completed demand for public transport will increase. It is hoped that this increase will help keep fares low but also increase services and investment in the use of "green" and electric buses in and around the

town. This in turn will help reduce the borough's CO2 and NOx emissions and generally improve air quality in the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

4.23 Local Plan

Slough is continuing to develop a new Local Plan and will need to meet the new housing targets set by MHCLG. This target needs to be met to avoid penalties to Slough. With the extra growth from Heathrow, it is expected that areas of the "Green Belt" and "Strategic Gap" will need to be reviewed in the context of runway as well as the ancillary developments. A review of Transport and Highway strategies will need to be undertaken, including new strategic models which are then embedded in any local plan to ensure it stands up to scrutiny from the Planning Inspectorate. Therefore, it is important to gather necessary and robust evidence such as the status of the highways in preparation for any challenge.

4.24 Infrastructure developments within Slough

There are also a number of infrastructure projects that are now concluding since the last strategy:

- City Fibre/Open Reach: rollout of fibre optic cables to provide Ultra-fast broadband connectivity to residents and businesses.
- Small Cell technology: continuation of small cell devices to increase Wi-Fi connectivity.
- Completion of the Slough Heat and Power (CHP) plant and Thames Water upgrades to meet future housing growth.
- Rollout of new EV charging units in residential areas as well as Rapid chargers in prominent locations. This will be managed by the council's own team with EV partners/contractors.
- New Capital projects:
  - The Council has been successful in securing funds from the DfT to implement a new segregated cycleway and improvements to road safety on the A4 totaling £12m.
  - A further £10.6m will be invested to improve access to businesses and improve the public realm on the A355/Farnham Road as part of an MHCLG award.

These new projects will contribute to highway improvements by upgrading the carriageway, traffic signals and providing a better public realm for all users.

4.25 Innovation

Slough is one of the six Berkshire local authorities involved in the Digital Infrastructure Group (DIG) that focusses on digital innovation.

There are various projects on-going and having completed 100% connectivity to our residents for superfast broadband, the focus is to now provide residents with Ultra-fast connectivity. This type of connectivity and the use of innovative technology is being developed to support cheaper connectivity for maintaining traffic signals using an advanced Mesh system.

The Council has also completed the planting of over 2,000 standard trees and over 6,500 whips as part of the Urban Tree Challenge. This project will continue to help Slough manage the pollution and contribute to reducing flooding in localised areas created by soil erosion blocking drainage systems. The project was rolled out with new technology from 4 universities to measure carbon capture using Pmfc powered phenology sensors.

4.26 Challenges and opportunities

The future of Slough has somewhat changed since Covid with a further downturn in the High St, Heathrow expansion not proceeding and the council's own financial position under intervention. This has resulted in reduced improvements due to a

lack of building development and service provision as the council's own revenue and capital funds have not been available. That said, the council has sold several of its key development sites to well-established developers and is now working with them to facilitate new homes and a long-awaited new High Street. Heathrow expansion will soon be back on the agenda and this will encourage new families and professionals to move to Slough to take up jobs and new homes. The Elizabeth Line has already been very successful for commuters and visitors and will add to the attraction of living and working in Slough.

With the new opportunities there will also be challenges and the council's highways and transport service will be integral in the delivery of sustainable development and travel. The wide range of developments within the borough will impact on travel demand and create assets to maintain. With expansion it will be necessary that new roads and bus services are provided with appropriate contributions for the maintenance and the continuance of the infrastructure. With developments in Slough, it will be important to ensure as much sustainable transport is provided and that traffic growth is limited to avoid deterioration in the highway network. However, with new growth, additional revenues are expected and this will lessen the burden on the local highway authority.

Regeneration of Slough will also encourage innovation in data, technology and asset management practices that will provide an opportunity for Slough's highway infrastructure to improve year on year.

A further challenge is the coordination of various programmes of work on the network to minimise traffic disruption and to avoid repeat visits.

4.3 Highway funding

The highway service in Slough is funded from two sources:

Revenue – expenditure that relates to the day-to-day maintenance or repair of our existing assets (e.g. pothole and other defect repairs, signs, verge and winter maintenance, gully emptying, grass cutting).

Capital – funding is used to replace or extend the life of our existing assets (e.g. structural maintenance and major bridge works) or funding to create new and/or improved assets (i.e. road safety or new highway schemes).

There are specific requirements from the DfT to breakdown the expenditure into "preventive" or "reactive" maintenance. Therefore, joint sealing and minor repairs, though revenue, would be classified as preventive maintenance as it helps to extend the life of the asset without a need for full or partial replacement. This approach is an invest to save model but does require annual monitoring to ensure that repairs are performing well.

The capital and revenue budgets that fund operational service delivery are drawn from a number of sources:

Revenue	▪ Annual 'running cost' funding from central government i.e. Highway Maintenance Block funding. ▪ Ad-hoc central government grants (e.g. pothole and severe weather grants to address specific issues) and incentive funds. ▪ Income (funding that is generated from activities such as the New Roads and Street Works Act section 74 fines, permit to work and associated enforcement, civil enforcement and contributions from developers as part of the planning process)

Capital	▪ Government grants to support the annual structural maintenance programmes. ▪ Government grants for improvement schemes (e.g. Cycleway and Bridge improvement funding to support national and local agendas) ▪ Developer contributions ▪ Other third-party funding

4.31 Central Government Funding

Like other local highway authorities, the majority of our highway maintenance funding comes from the Department for Transport (DfT). There are several elements to this funding; some are based on the length of highway network within an authority, others may require formal bidding processes to fund major maintenance projects or network improvements. The Local Highways Maintenance Incentive fund is based on self-assessment and encourages local highway authorities to follow an asset management approach and adopt efficiency and best practice principles for local highway maintenance.

Once the central government funding has been allocated, the council can determine the final highway maintenance budgets based on priorities across the full range of council services.

Slough has been successful in securing Challenge funding for streetlighting LED conversions as well as bridge improvements in recent years. The council will continue to keep good records of its assets so that if future opportunities on funding arise, the council will be in a position to submit a good bid for financial support.

Funding also from government departments such as MHCLG and the DfT, have made it possible for the Council to submit Public Realm and Active Travel bids. This source of funding is proving to be essential in supporting the highway service to improve and retain a road network that is fit for purpose but also enhancing the service that is currently provided to road users with minimal impact on finances.

4.32 Internal Revenue funding

Revenue funding comes from council tax, business rates, grants and income generation. The revenue budgets were originally built up based on an assessment of the costs to provide a service and opportunities to raise income. Each year an assessment is made to ensure that this position is realistic. Where costs are increasing due to policy changes or factors outside our control, budgets are increased with inflation. Where service or policy changes are made to reduce costs, reductions are made to the service budget accordingly. The end result aims to be a financial envelope for each service that is affordable to the council overall and one which allows the service to meet its statutory and policy objectives.

4.33 Historic funding levels

As with many services across the council, revenue budgets have reduced significantly over the past decade with further savings required to be made in coming years with the future very uncertain. With the recent financial issues at the council this has put further emphasis on preventive maintenance as this is the most effective and efficient way to use the limited resources.

Capital budgets have generally decreased less than revenue over the same period but with specific regard to Slough's financial position, the over-borrowing and now the asset sales will mean for the foreseeable future capital borrowing will not be viable.

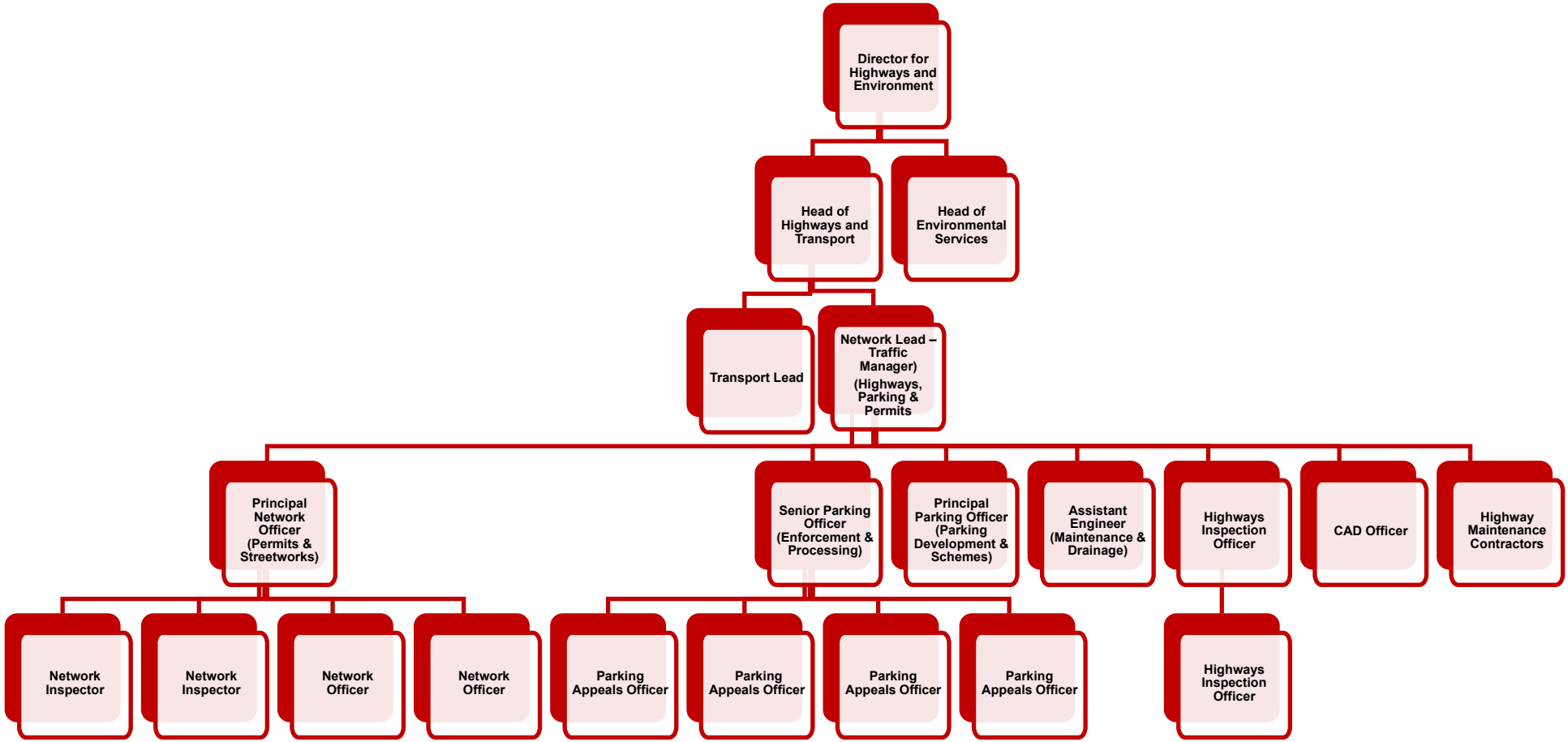
This does have a knock-on effect with regard to asset management specifically regarding capital maintenance. This could

lead to more revenue spend, for example, worn roads are not renewed but instead further pothole attention is needed. The capital budget we receive annually from the DfT is based on the last Local Transport Plan and is split between the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) funding. The HMB allocation is used for carriageway resurfacing and footway reconfiguration and where possible some funds are allocated to structures and streetlighting.

New maintenance contracts are now including value for money options such as surface dressing and bitumen sealing to help prolong assets but also provide a road network that continues to perform.

The Council has also introduced new policies for borough-wide controlled parking zones (CPZ) and this is expected to help reduce damage to footways and other assets where inconsiderate parking takes place. Revenue generated from new powers such moving traffic enforcement and CPZ's could see improvements to maintenance budgets to address some of the structures and streets that are in need of repair or replacement.

4.4 Our Organisation



4.5 Skills & training

Slough will increase the training and skills of our workforce by implementing the **UKRLC Competencies Framework**. Complying with the UKRLG competencies framework will allow Slough to identify where our skill gaps are and identify the training needed to fill those gaps.

We recognise that skills and resources represent a challenge for the delivery of asset management going forward and we are committed to seeking to develop our staff through initiatives such as the South Thames College apprenticeship programme, which makes use of the Government's apprenticeship levy.

Slough Council is also recruiting new staff with the skills needed to meet the future asset management challenges and will continue to engage with local universities to recruit suitable graduates. There is a severe shortage of skilled engineers that are available outside of London and therefore local authorities like Slough need to form alliances with neighbouring authorities to share this important resource.

4.6 Service delivery

Slough's environmental Service is no longer providing highway maintenance for the authority with regard to pothole and resurfacing. Environmental services does, however, continue to provide gulley cleaning, minor maintenance and winter maintenance for the authority's road network. Highway maintenance is now managed through external contractors who deliver resurfacing, pothole repairs and minor improvement schemes. The contract for Highways Maintenance and Minor Works will be procured and will be the method for engaging works on the highway in the future.

4.7 Engaging with stakeholders

We will implement our Highways Communication Strategy to ensure that our stakeholders are informed about our asset management activities and performance and that we consider the views of residents, business and other stakeholders when we set service levels and prioritise maintenance works.

We are keen to employ new technology to change the way we interact with the public. We will be looking for the best platforms to allow customers to submit complaints or report defects as well as track the response and receive feedback on the resolution. The Council's website currently has a JADU platform that enables tracking of information however, the intention is to have a more dynamic way that residents can communicate to the highways service on maintenance matters.

We will undertake regular customer surveys to make sure we understand the priorities of our customers and consider these in our maintenance planning process.

4.8 Managing risk

One of our asset management objectives is to take a risk-based approach to managing our assets so we are in the process of reviewing the current inspection regime as part of the recommendations in Well Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice. This will include a number of specific actions:

- We have developed a resilient network which includes the most important parts of the road network that we will keep open in a range of circumstances and that the resilient network is considered as part of any prioritisation. The resilient network will be updated annually.
- We are reviewing our maintenance hierarchies so that they reflect current functional use and need. We will use these to establish appropriate risk-based inspection and maintenance regimes which are published in our new **Operations Manual**.
- We plan to create a wider understanding of the long-term risk to our infrastructure

assets. We will analyse the risk of future maintenance needs for our infrastructure.

- We will continue to improve our understanding of asset failures and the funding required to maintain our assets. By having this understanding of risk, we will aim to make a more coordinated works programme and minimise our future funding in a more strategic way to reduce the risk on the network.
- We continue to ensure that a risk-based approach is embedded within our culture and our overall approach to asset management and will make sure that lessons learned from our successes and failures are incorporated within our risk management process.

4.9 Considering the environment

4.91 Environmental impact

We take our responsibility to the environment very seriously. In line with our Environment Strategy, we will continue to take account of the environmental and biodiversity impact of our maintenance treatments and services and wherever feasible, either reduce or mitigate these impacts. Works will be undertaken to ensure that, where reasonably practicable, all highway materials are recycled, or innovative materials will be used to assist with the authority's wider recycling targets.

We will also, wherever possible, work with the council's planning service to consider the character of local areas and any heritage or conservation requirements in carrying out our maintenance and management of highway assets.

4.92 Climate change and flood risk management

With the recent uncertainty over the UK meeting its Net Zero target of 2050 and the council adopting a Climate Change strategy and the Air Quality Action Plan 2024-28, it is proposed to continue to implement changes that will take the authority closer to its own target date of 2040. The authority will continue to work with partners across the region to deliver this goal through all relevant strategies, including our highway asset management strategy. Since the last strategy the council has implemented more solar panels in schools and buildings that it is responsible for and commenced the rollout of more EV charging stations.

Moreover, as a consequence of the increasing impact of climate change, we are expecting to experience a greater frequency of severe weather events, particularly flooding, which causes major disruption and damage to the highway network. To minimise this effect, it is a priority for our drainage systems to operate effectively. Our Flood Management Strategy and our annual capital drainage programme continues to work effectively on the risk-based approach, utilising the recommendations of the 2012 HMEP guidance on the **Management of Highway Drainage Assets**.

4.93 Environmental monitoring

The council's Environmental Monitoring Team continues to carry out air quality and noise monitoring at several key locations in the borough. These locations are primarily within the AQMA sites but also those areas where air quality is getting worse. This team also has overseen the adaptive street lighting programme and has secured funding for trickle and rapid charging units. This service will continue to support and guide the maintenance service to reduce the carbon footprint and seek to improve air quality from the necessary activities.

5. Our asset management process

5.1 Asset management process

The overall objectives and priorities for asset management are determined from the Council's overall priorities and from the results of our stakeholder engagement. We will continue to undertake a range of asset management planning activities in support

of these including:

- Planning for investment
- Inspecting and monitoring the condition and performance of assets
- Planning maintenance interventions over the whole life of assets
- Managing risks
- Asset value accounting
- Developing forward work programmes

5.2 Investment planning

Our overall aim is to extend the operational life of highway infrastructure through the use of appropriately timed preventive and restorative treatments to maintain safety and serviceability, whilst minimising reactive repairs, environmental impact and delays to highway users. We will continue to develop long-term investment plans to support the funding profile needed to achieve the required outcomes and to help make a case for investment.

In planning for investment and in allocating funds for investment programmes, our long-term aim is to reach a steady state where we are meeting our service objectives and performance targets, and the deterioration on an annual basis is matched by annual funding.

5.21 Asset information and data

Slough is continuing to collect up to date and consistent information about the assets we own. The age and condition of our assets is vital to enable effective decision making and allow us to decide which type of maintenance is required and where and when it is needed. We have continued our approach set out in the original strategy to collect data from:

- Regular inspections to determine the condition and performance of our assets, including specialist surveys, for example testing the strength of structures and machine-based surveys of roads to determine surface condition.
- Reports of defects and requests for service from members of the public and businesses, as well as information from our own inspections who look for urgent defects, such as potholes.
- General asset information about the age of an asset that allows us to determine when an asset is reaching the end of useful life.

Wherever we can, we will make use of the latest developments in data collection technology and decision-support tools, including automatic reporting from 'intelligent' assets and sensors, as well as 'crowd sourced' information from users and vehicles.

5.22 Lifecycle modelling

To assist us in the planning process, we will continue to develop lifecycle models for all key assets to forecast the consequences of maintenance strategies on budget, network condition (both short and long-term) and environmental impact. We will use these models to inform our decisions about treatment strategy, budget requirements and priorities.

5.3 Planning maintenance

In order to make sure that our road network is safe and providing a good quality of service to all highway users, we carry out different types of maintenance:

Reactive	Small scale works in response to reports from the public or from our own inspectors, to keep the network in a safe condition and to minimise risk to road users. Examples include emergency filling of potholes, repairing streetlights that are not working or replacing signs that have been

	knocked down.
Routine	Work carried out on a regular basis to keep the network tidy and in good condition, such as cutting grass, emptying gullies, sweeping streets, and cleaning signs.
Planned	Larger-scale maintenance to ensure the network is in good condition, or to extend the life of an asset. Examples of this would be replacing the surface of the road or footway, replacing the lighting columns in a street where they have reached the end of their useful life and major repairs to a bridge.

Because we have limited funding for maintenance and due to the financial constraints in Slough, we are not able to carry out all of the work that we would like to, except where safety is a factor. We will therefore proceed on a risk basis, where works are most urgent due to safety, or which will save the most money in the longer term by reducing the need for more costly future maintenance.

5.31 Network hierarchy

As well as the Resilient Network described earlier, we categorise our network and assets based on their importance to users and will use this 'maintenance hierarchy' to decide where to carry out maintenance works.

The maintenance hierarchy will be reviewed on the basis of risk to make sure it continues to reflect current functional use and need, for example including whether or not they include bus routes, cycleways and commuter routes.

5.32 Whole life costs

In line with our asset management principles, we will continue to review the costs over the whole life of an asset from when it is built or installed through to when it is replaced, when deciding priorities for works or choosing a solution. As an example, we might resurface a specific road in preference to works on other roads that are in worse condition, because this would prevent the need for more costly work in future or the road is a highly trafficked route.

5.33 Cross-asset prioritisation

Another feature of our approach to highways asset management is that when deciding priorities for spending we will consider all the different assets that make up our road network. For example, we might redirect funding from carriageways to footways, if the priority is greater or if there is greater benefit in terms of reducing whole life cost. Additionally, we seek to undertake collaborative planning where possible to ensure that when working on one asset we will ascertain what other works can potentially be delivered on adjacent assets at the same time.

5.4 Developing work programmes

Forward programmes of planned work will continue to be set, on a short (2-year) and medium (5-year) basis. To assess whether work is required, when they are required and what works are required. We will assess the:

- Condition of the asset, measured by surveys and inspections
- Risk to safety, serviceability and sustainability of the asset
- Age of the asset

- Public reports of defects or numbers of third-party claims
- Relative importance of the location, including factors such as contribution to air quality, encouraging active & healthy travel
- Availability of funding
- Works and if it saves money by preventing the need for more costly work in future
- Opportunities of joint working across different asset groups, across different funding streams
- Alignment with planned development works

The factors that are used will vary between different asset types; for example, whereas the decisions on works to structures and carriageways are more likely to be based on condition, for streetlights the age of the column is more likely to be a factor.

We will assess a number of different options when deciding the best maintenance treatment with the aim of achieving the best balance of cost, improvement and risk over the whole life of the asset.

The longer-term works programme will allow suppliers to also plan for a longer term. This will encourage the suppliers and contractors to get into longer programmes which possibly involve lower costs. This is due to the fact there will be more certainty of work for the suppliers, which will encourage them to invest in better technology to increase productivity, quality and reduce the costs in the long term.

5.5 Asset improvement

As well as maintenance works to repair and restore the condition of assets, there will be occasions where we need to carry out work to improve and enhance assets (e.g. improving the capacity of a bridge, widening the road, changing the type of surface material or improving the street lighting). In addition, there will be new assets such as new signs and lighting columns and new types of assets that may need to be installed (e.g. electric charging points and cycleway). In carrying out these types of works, we will always consider the need for asset management through the whole life of these assets, including any additional funding and maintenance requirements.

5.6 Performance management

5.61 Benchmarking and efficiency

In common with other Local Highway Authorities, we must provide information to the Department for Transport each year on the condition of the road network in Slough which will enable us to compare our performance with other local authorities on an objective national basis.

Moreover, so that we can demonstrate that we are providing good value for money in managing our network and to identify how we might do things better, we will continue to benchmark our performance with that of comparable local authorities and to track improvements over time. Slough has signed up to a Memorandum of Understanding with the other Berkshire authorities to undertake technical surveys on an annual basis to support the returns to the DfT.

5.62 Collaboration with other local authorities

As mentioned above Slough is collaborating with the other Berkshire LA's and where possible, Slough will continue to collaborate with other local authorities both to the west and east of the borough in order to:

- Benchmark performance and share good practice
- Jointly deliver services (e.g. Winter Maintenance monitoring etc.)
- Procure asset surveys and other specialist services (e.g. Berkshire Survey Contract)
- Jointly procure maintenance contracts

5.7 Continuous improvement

We are committed to continuous improvement in the way we deliver the highways asset management service, in the quality of service provided by the road network and in our efficiency gains. Regular performance reports will be submitted to senior managers and cabinet members to enable the service to be monitored and improved. quality of service provided by the road network and in our efficiency gains. Regular performance reports will be submitted to senior managers and cabinet members to enable the service to be monitored and improved.

5.71 Management reviews

Our regular management reviews of our asset management processes will continue to be our focus to make sure it is effective and being followed. The reviews will identify lessons learned and instigate corrective actions where necessary as well as identifying opportunities for improvement.

We will identify an action plan that identifies short, medium and long-term priorities as part of a programme of improvements to our asset management approach. We will seek out opportunities to improve the way that we deliver services and works on our network, through co-operation with other authorities and through collaboration with our service providers.

5.72 Service process reviews

Service Process Reviews will be undertaken at regular intervals to help identify efficiencies and improvements in our asset management processes. Our Corporate Improvement team will provide a focus on our activities to provide analysis on the trends to better inform how we make efficient use of the available funds.

5.8 Service priorities

Our performance framework allows us to link levels of funding with the asset condition and performance and monitor performance against those standards. We will establish service priorities based on consultation with our elected members, road users and other stakeholders and will define performance measures and targets that set out the standard of service that we aim to provide.

5.9 Spend and future targets

Our approach to future targets is to allocate more funding to preventive maintenance. The split in spend for previous 5 years has been broadly the same as per the following table:

Year	Funds allocated by DfT (£000s)	Capital spend (£000s)	Revenue spend (£000s)	Preventive maintenance (£000's)	Preventive maintenance %	Reactive maintenance (£000's)	Reactive maintenance %
2024/25	£1,129	£261	£868	677	60%	452	40%
2023/24	£1,129	£261	£868	677	60%	452	40%
2022/23	£1,129	£261	£868	677	60%	452	40%
2021/22	£979	£479	£500	587	60%	392	40%
2020/21	£878	£378	£500	528	60%	350	40%

The planned approach for the council's highway service is to distribute more of the allocated funds to preventive maintenance that leads to less future spend, better efficiency on the road network, less disruption to users and general improvements to our reduction on carbon emissions.

The following table indicates how the council will seek to apply funding for the next 5-year period.

Year	Funds allocated by DfT (£000s)	Capital spend (£000s)	Revenue spend (£000s)	Preventive maintenance (£000's)	Preventive maintenance %	Reactive maintenance (£000's)	Reactive maintenance %
2025/26	£1,888	£1,024	£864	1,227	65%	661	35%
2026/27	£1,888	£1,024	£864	1,227	65%	661	35%
2027/28	£1,888	£1,024	£864	1,284	68%	604	37%
2028/29	£1,888	£1,024	£864	1,284	68%	604	37%
2029/30	£1,888	£1,024	£864	1,322	70%	566	30%

Surveys recorded in the table below for Category A, B, C and unclassified roads indicate that parts of the road network will need to have increased investment to bring them to an acceptable condition. The funding profile indicated above sets out how the council will move the “Amber and Red” roads into the “Green” condition column and hence provide a more resilient network.

The preventive approach is not in all cases more costly but provides value for money in the medium and long terms to realise a long asset life.

6. Survey History

6.1 Technical Surveys (Highway)

The Council has been in a Berkshire framework contract to undertake technical surveys on the public highway. The status of the roads in Slough has been moving in the wrong direction primarily due to financial problems at the council however, the proposed plan to increase preventive spend and lower cost options to maintain the life span of the network will in the next period see an improvement to all roads.

Category “A” and “B” mapped surveys

6.11 Category “A” Roads RAG status

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	3 %	21 %	76 %
2021	2 %	23 %	75 %
2022 *	N/A %	N/A %	N/A %
2023	7 %	28 %	65 %
2024	7 %	28 %	65 %

S114 issued in July 21 – revenue and capital spend restricted to emergencies only

6.12 Category "C" and Unclassified mapped surveys

6.13 Category "B" and "C" Roads RAG status

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	3 %	22 %	75 %
2021	5 %	21 %	73 %
2022*	N/A %	N/A %	N/A %
2023	8 %	43 %	49 %
2024	8 %	26 %	66 %

6.14 Unclassified Roads RAG status

Year	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
2020	16 %
2021	12 %
2022*	N/A %
2023	25 %

2024	**22 %**

S114 issued in July 21 – revenue and capital spend restricted to emergencies only

6.2 Bridge Condition surveys

In addition to road maintenance, funds will also be increased to improve our bridge and other structures. The map below indicates all the major and minor structures that are managed by the highway authority. Some structures will need immediate attention as part of the preventive approach to avoid major costs in the future, these will be treated during the planned period of this strategy. The cost for bridge upgrades is difficult to quantify as some structures are classified as requiring investment and will require major investigations to determine the scale of work required. Other structures may need bearing replacement though this is still significantly cheaper, it would be classified as preventive maintenance.

Slough has the Great Western Railway and Elizabeth Line running through the centre of the borough with 11 over/under bridges it is vitally important that these structures are maintained. Any closure of the mainline would be detrimental not just to the borough but to the national economy. This strategy recommends a steady increase in funding as part of an invest to save approach.

Drainage structures and general drainage systems have been on-going to minimise flooding and comply with the flooding policy. This funding will also need to increase to keep properties and businesses in the borough safe.

6.3 Traffic Signal condition surveys

The Council surveys its traffic signal stock every few years to update and highlight infrastructure that is nearing the end of life point. The service currently manages 114 pedestrian and traffic signal junctions across the borough including vehicle activated signs (VAS). For infrastructure above ground each site has an approximate asset life of 20 years and below ground around 10-15 years. Improvements in manufacturing are now extending the estimated asset life to 40 years, meaning that the council can better plan replacement in future years. This type of asset has a finite life due to corrosion and deterioration of cables. These can be replaced but eventually it is uneconomical to continue with old failing stock. Technology in this field is also rapidly moving, including the use of ultra-low voltage controllers, LED lights and new software.

The council has been successful over the past 5 years in securing funds to upgrade some of the ageing infrastructure and has replaced/upgraded 20 signal junctions and pedestrian crossings. However, due to the ageing stock, around 50 further sites in 2025 will need upgrading or replacement, which for any council is not viable. Approximately 20 of these sites will be replaced as part of the major schemes over the next 2 years but it will be necessary to increase investment for the remaining infrastructure to avoid major failure on the highway. The table below shows the current value of replacement for all controlled sites.

To manage stock, it is proposed to spread the replacement cost over the next five years to have a more even distribution. This will impact on existing revenue funds as sites that are at the end of their life will need to be prolonged providing parts are still available. An on-going review of sites will need to also continue to determine whether some sites can be decommissioned and replaced with either zebra crossings or other pedestrian/cycling facilities.

In the short-term it is important that new developments fund through the planning process, not only new junction costs but also replacement of existing traffic signals as a result of densification.