INTRODUCTION

The Council shares the following vision for Plymouth with its 2020 partners:

“To be one of Europe’s finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.”

This vision has been embraced in the development of the Service’s Local Transport Plan which goes on to set out the following Local Transport Objectives, supporting delivery of this vision and the Council’s four shared objectives:

- Link communities together
- High quality transport standards for a vibrant city
- Make walking, cycling and public transport the desirable choice
- Maximise the transport contribution to Plymouth’s carbon reduction target
- Use transport to drive the local economy

The provision, maintenance and management of public infrastructure such as highways, bridges, Public Rights of Way (PROW), car parks and coastal and maritime assets are key delivery vehicles for the successful delivery of these objectives.

Taken together, the infrastructure management by the Transport and Highways partnership forms the largest and most valuable public asset within the Council’s control, with a gross value in excess of £2 billion. The management of such a valuable and vital asset needs to be undertaken in a systematic, considered manner which takes account of the Council’s objectives, service user’s aspirations, maintenance needs and the available financial resources. This then needs to be balanced against the risk of service failure and the likely future demand for services. The effective management of these diverse and complex issues can only be adequately addressed within a strategic framework that balances the demands and aspirations with the reality of the current and projected financial situation.

The purpose of this Strategy is to outline how the Transport and Highways partnership will approach the task of managing this, our most valuable and important portfolio of public infrastructure.
SECTION 1: WHY ASSET MANAGEMENT?

1.1 Background

The adoption of an asset management approach has long been recognised as an effective way in which to manage complex infrastructure with all the attendant demands, aspirations and responsibilities. Such an approach enables the most efficient and effective deployment of resources, whilst fulfilling legal obligations, stakeholder needs and safeguarding the engineering integrity of the network.

Prior to 2009/10, the Council relied on various disparate paper records and limited electronic information to manage its highway assets, very much on a reactive basis and with little consideration of any implications over the long-term. The Service's initial Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) was developed in 2009/10 with the intention of collating this information and producing a plan for implementing asset management principles across the Service. This document continued to be developed over 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13, delivering in some areas but never really realising its full intention or potential. Some of the notable achievements include:

- Completing a review of the Safety Inspection process in response to increasing numbers of red claims
- Implementing electronic systems for Safety Inspections and repair of defects using hand-held technologies
- Adoption of GIS as the primary asset database, collating and developing inventory and condition information for several asset groups
- Development of Engineering Standards for Carriageway and Footway assets

As part of its ongoing Highway Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP), the Department for Transport (DfT), in conjunction with the UK Roads Liaison Group (UKRLG), has recently released further guidance on asset management in the highways sector in its guidance document: *Highways Infrastructure Asset Management*, superseding the 2004 CSS Framework for Highway Asset Management. This guidance offers a structure for local authorities to work to and enable them to capitalise on the benefits of effective asset management.

1.2 Strategic Framework

This Strategy, along with its partnering Policy, sits within a wider framework for asset management and forms a link between the Council's Corporate Plan, key strategies such as the LTP, relevant guidance and legislation and operational activities.

The responsibility for delivery of this framework sits with the Living Streets and Network Management Team, part of the council's Street Services, and its Highways Services Partner, Amey. Their aim is to provide the strategic lead for the successful adoption and implementation of this strategy, and to raise the level of awareness, effectiveness and implementation of asset management principles across the Service.

The diagram overleaf illustrates our strategic framework for asset management:
The benefits of such an approach are:

- A clear understanding of the extent and condition of the infrastructure
- A clear methodology for linking high level goals and objectives with levels of service
- A better ability to predict demand for services and funding required to deliver the defined levels of service and to better quantify the impact of funding constraints
- A better understanding of risk and how it can be mitigated
- A consistent approach, which assists in managing the expectations and experience of service users
- The ability to incorporate good practice and lessons learnt in a particular area across the wider portfolio of assets and activities

The core elements of this approach are set out in Section 2 of this document and encompass:

- Inventory and Data Management
- Levels of Service
- Lifecycle Planning, Budget Projection and Valuation
- Risk Management
SECTION 2: THE ASSET MANAGEMENT APPROACH

2.1 Inventory and Data Management

Sound knowledge and understanding of the assets for which the Service is responsible, the quantum, location and condition, is the foundation of any asset management system. It is only with a coherent knowledge of the extent of assets, their component parts and their condition that an overall view can be formed and a consistent approach applied.

The Service has sought to consolidate many of its historic inventory systems into a single GIS based platform. Whilst this system continues to be developed, it is reasonably well developed for most major asset groups. The quality and completeness for some assets is more variable and efforts continue to develop this further.

Currently, this system covers the following highway assets, which have been grouped in line with the CIPFA reporting framework:

- Carriageways, including associated road markings and drainage infrastructure
- Footways and Cycleways
- Structures
- Street lighting and illuminated signs
- Street Furniture, including signs, benches, bollards and other small value items
- Traffic Management Systems, including traffic signals, monitoring and enforcement cameras

The Service is also responsible for the following other transport assets not currently included within this system:

- Surface level and multi-storey car parks
- On street pay and display infrastructure
- Public transport infrastructure; bus stops, shelters, flags and poles
- Park and Ride facilities

In order to maximise the effectiveness of our data management and provide a robust and consistent approach across the Service, it is proposed that all transport assets should be consolidated into a single asset inventory.

We have comprehensive inspection and survey regimes for highway assets, tailored to suit the needs of specific assets groups and in line with national guidance and statutory requirement, where appropriate, which provide us with good quality information and informs effective risk management and decision making.

2.2 Levels of Service

Levels of Service are defined by the 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 Plans (see below) for each asset group, providing a 'line of sight' between the high level objectives of this plan and works carried out on the ground.

In developing it's TAMP, Plymouth Transport and Highways has identified the following Levels of Service:
• 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 highway asset to a level and quality commensurate with its use and purpose

2.3 Lifecycle Planning, Budget Projection and Valuation

Lifecycle planning is a technique used to relate the levels of service, current condition and future maintenance and budget requirements for an asset or group of assets. A detailed lifecycle maintenance plan will chart an asset’s life from creation to expiration, setting out the best options for maintaining it over the course of its life.

When considered alongside defined outcomes, lifecycle planning enables the development of investment strategic to deliver a defined level of performance or, where funding is constrained, to quantify the effect of funding scenarios on the levels of service that can be delivered.

Effective lifecycle planning has also been seen to assist Authorities in moving away from the traditional “worst first” approach, instead targeting investment at assets which represent the greatest risk or where treatment represents optimum benefit in terms of an assets “whole life” cost. This approach allows a clear and logical allocation of resources to the areas which will contribute greatest return in terms of the Councils overall objectives, and allows for any residual risks to be quantified and assessed.

Detailed Lifecycle Maintenance Plans have already been developed for Plymouth’s carriageway and footway assets, and it is intended to develop those for the remaining asset groups over the course of 2013/14.

2.4 Risk Management

At its most basic level, the adoption of an asset management approach can be seen as an exercise of risk management. Optimally, the transport network would be operated at the lowest level of risk, but as the financial demands of maintaining the network to that standard normally exceed the available budget, it is important to understand to what risks Plymouth City Council is exposed when making decisions on investment strategies, setting levels of service and defining Engineering Standards.

The Council’s Risk Management Strategy defines the approach to managing risk across the Authority and has been adopted in developing the TAMP. The essence of the strategy is to define and record significant risks in Risk Registers which detail what mitigating actions are needed to minimise the risk exposure those hazards present to a level which is “as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP). By knowing what mitigating actions are required it is possible to identify how that risk will increase if a lower operational (or engineering) standard is used. This quantification of risk, whether this is in terms of service delivery, third party liability or loss of value/integrity of public infrastructure, can then be considered and acknowledged as part of the decision making process, ensuring that wherever possible any increase in risk exposure remains acceptable, as defined by the governing Strategy.
Risk registers have, and will continue to be, developed for specific assets as part of their overall Lifecycle Maintenance Plans.
SECTION 3: REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 Consultation and Engagement
In drafting this strategy we have taken note of public perception surveys and feedback drawn from relevant consultation.
This strategy will be made available on the Council's website as part of the suite of documents available to all interested parties.

3.2 Breaches and Non-Compliance
Non-compliance with this strategy may leave the Council in a position where it is not able to discharge its statutory duty to maintain and lead to a deterioration of the value and condition of publicly owned infrastructure.

3.3 Information and Training
Further information concerning this strategy may be obtained from Plymouth Transport and Highways’ Watchman Team: plymouth.watchman@amey.co.uk.

3.4 Evaluation and Review
The effectiveness and application of this strategy will be regularly monitored as part of the ongoing management of the Transport and Highways Service and will be formally reviewed as part of the Street Services Business Plan.
This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.