Network Management Strategy
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Introduction

Common Law defines that a highway is a route which all persons can use to pass and repass along as often and whenever they wish without hindrance and without charge. This definition relates back to the Highways Act of 1773, which was introduced as a result of increasing numbers of horse-drawn carriages, formalised in the Highways Bill of 1835.

Since the invention of the motor vehicle, this common law right has created challenges as a consequence of the rapid increase in motor vehicle ownership. It is also important to acknowledge that the highway is a lawful conduit for essential utility infrastructure.

The building of new roads is not often an appropriate solution, economically or environmentally, to deal with capacity issues. Therefore, managing the effective operation, and thereby utilising the capacity of the existing infrastructure, is essential. The Government acknowledged this when it enacted the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA).

The Council has a duty to secure the expeditious movement of traffic (all modes) on its own highway network and to facilitate the same on the highway network for which another authority is the traffic authority. This duty is to be achieved by using all available powers whether or not they are conferred on them as a traffic authority.

This document provides a clear strategy for the delivery of the Council’s Network Management Duty. It is designed to achieve the following:

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Policy: National, Sub-regional and Bracknell Forest

National Policy

Every highway authority in England has a Traffic Manager providing the focal point of the Network Management Duty of the 2004 Traffic Management Act.

There are three documents fundamental to the performance of the Duty: The Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004; Network Management Duty Guidance (NMDG) and Traffic Management Guidance on Intervention Criteria. All Local Traffic Authorities (LTA) in England are now performing the Duty. The distinctions between the LTA, the Local Highway Authority and the Street Authority are technical ones and relate to the powers made available to an authority to carry out certain functions under the different legislation, as follows:

- Local Traffic Authority: Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 121A
- Local Highway Authority: Highways Act 1980 Section 1
- Street Authority: New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 Section 49

The TMA describes the Duty as managing the road network with the aim of securing the expeditious movement of traffic on an authority’s road network and facilitating this on other authorities’ road networks (TMA, Section 16, Part 1). The objective of the Duty is the efficient operation of the road network as a whole. The UK has one road network and the goal of the Duty is for seamless operation of that network across the 149 LTAs.

This is further, although separately, complemented by Highways England (HE) which is responsible for the motorway and trunk road network. While the Duty has not been applied to Highways England through the TMA, the Secretary of State has given the HA an equivalent remit and the Route Performance Manager in each of its regions has been named as the equivalent of the Traffic Manager.

The TMA allows an authority to take any action which will contribute to more efficient use of the network or reduction of road congestion and other disruption to the movement of traffic. The duty does not stop at an authority’s borders and there is an important requirement for work with neighbouring authorities to achieve the Duty Objectives.

The Traffic Manager

The role of the Traffic Manager is ‘to perform such tasks as the authority considers will assist it to perform the network management duty’. Bracknell Forest’s Traffic Manager sits within the Transport Development Section, as part of the Environment, Culture and Communities Department.

Regional Policy

Bracknell Forest is one of six unitary authorities in the county of Berkshire, adjacent to The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham, with Reading and West
Berkshire to the West, and Slough to the North. Bracknell also borders Hampshire to the South-West, and Surrey to the South-East.

Bracknell Forest is part of the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is a strategic body made up of businesses, local authorities, communities and the education sector, set up to drive the local economy. The region was recently identified as the UK's most productive sub-region. The Council is also represented on the South East Traffic Managers Forum, and South East Highway Authority and Utilities Committee.

All of Bracknell's neighbouring authorities have their own respective Network Management Strategies, and Traffic Managers, and broadly operate similar works permitting schemes, whereby any party intending to carry out works within the highway must first apply for a permit.

Any works or activities in close proximity to the boundary with neighbouring authorities may have “cross border” implications and it is important that arrangements are in place to identify potential areas of conflict and to mitigate the impact of any conflicting works or activities.

A map of the Bracknell Forest highway network is provided on the following page, showing key routes, residential sites and commercial areas.

**Bracknell Forest Policy**

Given the requirements placed on all Local Authorities by the Traffic Management Act, Bracknell Forest's own Highway Network Management function broadly follows those policies and principles, including a dedicated Traffic Manager.

A street works permitting scheme began in 2014, which gives the council more control over where and when highway works can take place, which in turn provides benefits in terms of traffic efficiency and management, reduced congestion and delay. This Highway Network Management Strategy adds more over-arching detail and structure to the requirements of the Traffic Management Act.

The focus for Local Transport Plan Policy TP18 will be for the Borough to continue to regulate traffic, where necessary, through:

- Co-ordinate street and road works
- Licence activities on the highway network
- Monitor the safety of street and road works
- Co-ordinate the response to congestion issues
- Co-ordinate the development of Intelligent Transport Systems
- Monitor the reinstatement of street works
- Influence the actions of all stakeholders to ensure the Network Management Duty is achieved
- Pro-actively communicate highway network issues
- Deliver, develop and regularly review Network Management Plans

These commitments form our priority objectives which we will explore further in the next section of this strategy.

Policy TP18 also complements other policies within the Local Transport Plan, specifically falling within the broader Traffic Management Strategy.
Challenges

Meeting the LTP targets and overall vision will require significant challenges to be overcome, and an understanding of the existing situation and trends has highlighted a number of weaknesses and threats which are shown and considered in greater detail in the table and discussion that follows.

Weighing up the situation – SWOT analysis of the Highway Network in Bracknell Forest

<table>
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<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Relatively modern highway network</td>
<td>- High resident and commuter car use</td>
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<td>- Intelligent Transport Systems increasingly being deployed to improve efficiency</td>
<td>- A number of network constraints or ‘bottlenecks’ resulting in delays and congestion at peak times</td>
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<td>- Street works permitting and joint-working system</td>
<td>- Traffic sensitivity of many routes can pose challenges in minimising disruption</td>
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<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<td>- New development</td>
<td>- Continued increase in car use and traffic</td>
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<td>- Advance of technology (ITS)</td>
<td>- Emergency road works</td>
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<td>- Street Works Permitting</td>
<td>- Sub-contractor working and delegated responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Quality of works (or lack of) affecting structure of street and apparatus</td>
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<td>- Availability of future funding to deliver this strategy</td>
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By considering this broad range of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats alongside the LTP Vision for Bracknell Forest, we are able to identify three specific challenges, and a range of corresponding opportunities which will aim to address them.

Challenge 1 – Minimising disruption

Challenge 2 – Ensuring safety of the public and road workers

Challenge 3 – Protecting the structure of the street and the integrity of the apparatus in it

These challenges and opportunities then inform our six main objectives for Highway Network Management in Bracknell Forest, which are set out in the corresponding Highway Network Management Strategy.
Challenge 1 – Minimising disruption

Bracknell Forest’s road network often experiences congestion, particularly at peak times on key strategic routes. As road traffic continues to grow nationally and new residential and commercial developments increase the demand for road space, congestion could reach unacceptable levels. This is exacerbated by increasing volumes of work and other activities on our roads and so it is essential that effective measures are put in place to control and manage the degree of congestion to reduce the inconvenience and disruption that inevitably results. This will benefit residents, the travelling public, communities and businesses in the Borough.

Prolonged periods of congestion, if not tackled, will seriously restrict the economic growth and prosperity of the borough by:

- undermining the competitiveness of existing local businesses, affecting deliveries and business travel;

- compromising the feasibility of some new developments, reducing the accessibility of sites and reducing their economic viability; and

- lengthening the time taken for development to happen.

The Traffic Management Act places a duty on every local traffic authority to manage its road network to “secure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and to facilitate traffic movement on other traffic authorities’ road networks”.

The duty reflects the national importance placed on making the best use of the existing highway network with the overriding aim being to ensure that the network operates efficiently, without unnecessary delays to any highway users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, as well as motorists.

The duty is not limited to actions as a local traffic authority and there is a need to consider the duty when exercising any power that can affect the highway network. It therefore extends the use of the authority’s powers as a highway authority, a street authority and any other power used to regulate or coordinate the uses made of any highway. However, it is also recognised that network management forms only one element of the Council’s transport strategy and that, whilst it is the Authority’s aim to see an improvement in the efficient use of the network, it should not be to the detriment of those with a need to use or work on the network. Bracknell Forest Council’s approach to network management takes account of these needs and the fact that network capacity will be affected, but through proactive coordination delays and disruption will be kept to a minimum.
Challenge 2 – Ensuring the safety of the public and road workers

Whilst steps are continually taken to reduce the risks, the average fatality rate for road workers continues to be one of the highest for employment sectors reported by the Health and Safety executive. The safety of other road users and members of the public can also be compromised if road works are not carried out in a satisfactory manner.

The Highway Network Management team ensure compliance with the Safety at Street Works & Road Works Code of Practice (Safety Code) through continually monitoring a sample of highway authority and utility works in progress. They have the power to stop works and suspend a works licence if it is deemed that safe working practices are not being observed.

Challenge 3 – Protecting the structure of the street and the integrity of the apparatus in it

The structure and condition of the highway network is of paramount importance, and it is one of the council’s core duties to ensure that the road surface is of a high enough standard to facilitate the safe, efficient movement of all traffic. The council is responsible for resurfacing of carriageways, which is usually determined through condition surveys and timescales, and patching work is also carried out where necessary.

Where contractors carry out works on the highway, they are trusted to reinstate any aspect of the street which is excavated or removed to the same high standards used by the council. Works which have been carried out to an unsatisfactory standard can result in premature failure of the road surface (pot holes, cracks, subsidence), which incurs costs, time, and sometimes damage to vehicles. Particular challenges can arise where small private contractors are carrying out works on behalf of a larger company, as they may not have the skills or experience that is necessary or expected to ensure a quality reinstatement.

The Highway Asset Management team routinely inspect the highway for signs of wear and tear and react accordingly. The Highway Inspector monitors a sample of utility reinstatements to ensure compliance with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in the Highway (SROH).

‘Under section 71 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) an undertaker executing street works must when reinstating the street comply with whatever specification may be prescribed for materials to be used and standards of workmanship to be observed. The undertaker must also ensure that the reinstatement conforms to prescribed performance standards – in the case of a permanent reinstatement, for the prescribed period after completion of the reinstatement’.
Opportunities and Objectives

By delivering on the nine LTP3 Network Management objectives, we will address the three key challenges identified previously.

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Co-ordinate street and road works

Bracknell Forest Council has a duty under Section 59 of the New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) to co-ordinate works of all kinds. In addition, Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act (TMA) requires BFC to manage the road network, with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to its other obligations, policies and objectives, the following overriding objectives:

a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority’s road network; and
b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority

Street and road works can take various forms, and the extent of their impact generally depends on the scale of works, and the amount of traffic on the road which is affected. Common works are utilities repair or installation – gas, water, electricity, communications (phone lines and internet); carriageway repairs or resurfacing; or temporary carriageway obstructions – such as skips. That said, any works which affect the highway network, whether directly or indirectly, require the permission of the council as the responsible highway authority.

The degree to which traffic management is required is judged by both the applicant and the council’s streetworks team through the permitting process, which is considered in more detail under the next heading. Co-ordination of activities through the Permit Scheme enables differences between those competing for space or time in the street, including traffic, to be resolved in a positive and constructive way. If there are opportunities for joint working, for example gas pipe renewal at the same time as water main repairs, the council will look to work with both utility companies to co-ordinate works. This is not to say that both contractors would work at the same time, but there may be opportunity for one to work after another, meaning the road does not need to be excavated again at a later date.

Effective co-ordination and management by the highway authority is essential to minimise traffic disruption whilst allowing promoters the necessary time and space to complete their activities. Bracknell Forest Council is committed to reducing congestion and managing the network more efficiently to secure the expeditious movement of traffic. We recognise that the long-term solution lies in using the network more efficiently.

**Key actions**

Ensure periodic reviews of the traffic sensitivity street designations in accordance with the criteria set out in the associated regulations and Code of Practice.

Co-ordinating all works as far in advance and as cost effectively as possible
Licence activities on the highway network

The Council licences any activity on the highway that causes, or has the potential to cause an obstruction, congestion or disruption to the public. The powers to licence such activities are laid down in primary legislation, and this is generally dealt with through permitting.

Permitting
The aim of the permit scheme is to improve the management of the road network through better planning, scheduling and management of activities so as not to cause avoidable traffic disruption to any road user.

Co-ordination of activities through the Permit Scheme enables differences between those competing for space or time in the street, including traffic, to be resolved in a positive and constructive way.

The specific objectives for the Permit Scheme are to;
- Reduce occupation of the highway to benefit all highway users
- Improve safety of all highway users at road and street activities
- Enhance the reliability of journey times
- Enhance the journey experience
- Gain greater control of all activities on the public highway
- Minimise, avoid or manage delays to all highway users
- Improve public perception of managing highway activities
- Reinforce co-ordination of all activities on the highway
- Reduce long term damage to the highway asset
- Encourage collaborative working between all activity promoters
- Achieve an improvement in air quality
- Demonstrate parity for all activity promoters
- Strengthen cross-boundary co-operation

The actual benefits and real-world impact of the Bracknell Forest permit scheme will be analysed through annual evaluation reports, which consider fee arrangements (these differ according to the type and scale of works proposed), income, performance (number of permits granted or refused), the number, type and duration of application and the number of days disruption saved through collaborative works etc.

Where issues or opportunities are identified, the council will explore ways to improve the permit scheme in further detail, learning from others as and where appropriate. Consideration will be given to a ‘lane rental’ scheme for use on major strategic routes, although at present new legislation and trials are ongoing. The Highway Network Management team will monitor the results and investigate and implement if such a scheme is likely to benefit the borough.
**Street Works Licensing**

Street works licences are issued under section 50 of the NRSWA and afford a private company the same rights and responsibilities as that of a statutory undertaker. They are only issued for the placing of apparatus in or under the street and cannot be used for works for roads purposes. Set conditions apply to every application; additional conditions may be placed by the street authority at their discretion. Street works licensees are liable to charges for unreasonable occupation of the highway and for fixed penalty notices which discharge liability for any offence committed under schedule 4A of NRSWA. With the further deregulation of Gas and Water industries comes greater reliance on street works noticing by non statutory undertakers who tender for gas and water connection works. Ensuring street works licences are successfully and promptly processed ensures economic sustainability of smaller businesses and greater competition which benefits consumers.

**Other Miscellaneous Licences**

The Council is able to permit a large variety of activities on, in, over or in connection with the public highway under licence provisions enabled by various acts of parliament. Often a decision of the council not to permit an activity is challengeable through the courts. It is therefore essential to have processes in place to ensure the robust consideration of applications. Examples include:

- Crane oversail
- Mobile Crane or Machinery
- Street Cafes
- Advertising signs and merchandise
- Placing materials
- Making excavations
- Scaffolding
- Planting licence
- Skips

The Council will control Street Trading through the use of Street Trading Consents for all highways within the Borough. No Street Trading consent will be granted without a consultation process being undertaken which includes contact with staff from Highways, Development Control and Environmental Health and also includes local Ward Members and Thames Valley Police. When consent is first issued it will only be permitted for a period of one month to establish the impact. Compliance with conditions attached to the consent will be conducted by inspections and intelligence gained from complaints.

**Key actions**

Monitor the effectiveness of the BFC Permit Scheme and other licensing activities, and work to quickly resolve any operational issues to ensure they are efficient, cost-effective, and generate outcomes which are in the interests of the travelling public

Monitor the number of street works licence and permit applications alongside the Council’s fees and charges to ensure the Council’s costs are adequately recovered

Challenge unreasonable work durations and use powers to direct the timing of works to minimise disruption.
Monitor the safety of street and road works

Road works can be dangerous, to both workers and the public. They can involve heavy machinery, deep excavations, exposure to hazards, loud noises and vibration, dust and dirt. It is therefore of paramount importance that the council stipulate the highest standards of health and safety practice are adhered to by those working on the highway.

The Highway Network Management team ensure compliance with the Safety at Street Works & Road Works Code of Practice (Safety Code) through continually monitoring a sample of highway authority and utility works in progress. They have the power to stop works and suspend a works licence if it is deemed that safe working practices are not being observed, or issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) where permit conditions are not being met (breach of permit). Serious breaches of health and safety statutory legislation may be subject to legal proceedings, as is the case where the structural integrity of the highway is compromised by substandard reinstatement. Where street or road works are unreasonably prolonged a charge will be levied under section 74 of the NRSWA.

Income received through fixed penalty notices (FPNs), charges relating to unreasonable occupation of the highway (s74 charges) or other related revenue will firstly be used to support the costs of administering and improving the efficiency of the street works function. Any surplus will be used for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities to, from and within the area.

The team’s dedicated Highway Network Inspector aims to inspect 10% of works in progress, 10% of works after 3-6 months (to ensure reinstatement is up to standard), and 10% at the end of a 2-3 year guarantee period. If findings are unsatisfactory, compromising the safety or structure of the highway, a contractor can be asked to return and rectify the work.

Key actions

Issue Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches of permit or health and safety conditions, and continue to use income generated to reinvest in the highway network management function.
Co-ordinate the response to congestion issues

Whilst Bracknell’s relatively modern highway network is generally more resilient than some of the borough’s neighbours in handling traffic, congestion does still occur. This can be caused by day-to-day traffic volume, street works reducing capacity, or obstructions in the road.

The Highway Network Management team identifies the areas of the network that are affected by congestion through constant network management, which is carried out by staff on site, a network of cctv monitoring cameras, and live traffic data analysis. The council will also respond to concerns raised by members of the public, and investigate solutions where there is found to be an issue.

Where day-to-day traffic volume is causing regular congestion and delays, the council will investigate what is causing the problem, and explore the solutions (if any) that are available to address the issue. Examples may include road / junction redesigns; installation of traffic signal control; change of priorities, or installation of new lane capacity.

The permitting system aims to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, delays are minimised by timing or co-ordinating works to avoid busy periods or traffic sensitive routes. However, where street works are causing unacceptable delay, the Highway Network Management team will firstly ensure that all work conditions are being adhered to, and consider opportunities or options which may rectify, or at least reduce the severity of the issue.

Incidents or accidents on the highway are generally out of the council’s control, however there may be a need to implement emergency diversions or road closures, in co-ordination with the emergency services.

Traffic sensitivity

Under section 64 of the New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) a street authority may designate certain streets as traffic sensitive if they meet certain criteria. This designation highlights that activities in these streets are likely to be particularly disruptive during the times allocated to the designation.

Once a designation is made, street or road works should be planned to avoid or add mitigation to respond to the impact that they will have in that street at the traffic sensitive times, unless there is no alternative.

A number of principal roads pass through Bracknell Forest, including the A321, A322, A329, A330, A332, and A3095. The A322/A329 is designated by the DfT as part of the National Primary Route Network and experiences considerable volumes of through traffic, particularly commuter traffic in peak periods, as well as being a primary means of access to local destinations. These key routes, along with a number of other strategic local routes are designated as being ‘traffic sensitive’.
Key actions

Monitor congestion and traffic flow on the highway network through the dedicated traffic CCTV monitoring systems, and proactively respond to major network incidents

Investigate causes of regular congestion or disruption, and explore any measures available to address them in partnership with Council Departments, Members and contractors

Co-ordinate the development of Intelligent Transport Systems

Intelligent Transport Systems help keep the highway network running effectively and efficiently. These are often implemented in response to congestion or efficiency problems identified on the network. The range of ITS options available to local authorities has developed significantly over the past twenty years, and includes;

- Traffic signal control (UTC and MOVA)
- Bus Priority
- Car Park Variable Message Signing (CPVMS)
- Strategic Variable Message Signing (SVMS)
- Real Time Passenger information (RTPI) for buses
- Real Time Travel and Street Works Information
- Air Quality Monitoring (AQM) action plans
- Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and Closed Circuit Television CCTV

It is the role of the Highway Network Management team to implement, monitor and maintain ITS measures in partnership with various system providers. During the course of LTP3, the council is investing significantly in new ITS measures in response to the increase in traffic likely to be generated by the town centre redevelopment and the addition of 10,000 new houses. Many of the measures will be installed to complement major junction redesigns, particularly on key strategic routes such as the A322/A329 and A3095.

Key actions

Work with neighbouring boroughs to ensure any opportunities for cross-boundary partnership working are fully explored

Ensure close cross-team co-ordination on projects involving Intelligent Transport Systems, to achieve the best outcomes
Monitor the reinstatement of street works

The Council has a duty to ensure that the Highway Network is fit for purpose, and fulfils its own maintenance requirements by carrying out periodic resurfacing of roads. Any qualified utility company or sub-contractor can get permission to dig up the highway, provided that it is reinstated in a like-for-like manner.

The Highway Network Management team’s dedicated Highway Network Inspector monitors street works whilst they are taking place, and after reinstatement, aiming to inspect 10% of works in progress, 10% of works after 3-6 months (to ensure reinstatement is up to standard), and 10% at the end of a 2-3 year guarantee period. If findings are unsatisfactory, compromising the safety or structure of the highway, a contractor can be asked to return and rectify the work.

Key actions

Aim to inspect at least 10% of works in progress, 10% of works after 3-6 months (to ensure reinstatement is up to standard), and 10% at the end of a 2-3 year guarantee period

Influence the actions of all stakeholders to ensure the Network Management Duty is achieved

There are a wide range of stakeholders who work on the highway network. The frequency of their need for access varies depending on the type of work being carried out. For example, utility companies effectively work at locations on the network throughout the year, dealing with problems, renewals or new installations. On the other hand, contractors installing or repairing traffic signals may only require access every few years, or one-off permission may be sought by building contractors for individual property builds. Nevertheless, all stakeholders must have regard to the council’s Highway Network Management Duty.

Through permitting and inspection, highway contractors are influenced and expected to adhere to the Council's works conditions, which are set out as part of its Highway Network Management Duty. As considered previously, permits stipulate that works must be carried out in a safe and considerate manner, and reinstated to a high standard.

Broadly speaking, the main highway network stakeholders are as follows:

- Utilities (water, gas, electricity, communications – phone and internet)
- Builders, companies and contractors
- Neighbouring councils (particularly important where major works are scheduled to take place which have the potential to affect a neighbouring highway network)
- Skip companies
- Events organisers (where they highway will be used or impacted for example sporting events or music concerts)
- Any sub-contractor working on behalf of the above
Parity

Although much of the council’s highway works are carried out by a contractor, the council carries out a significant quantity of road works each year, and is important that the same rules are applied to the council’s highway workers as others. The Network Management Duty Guidance issued by the Department for Transport under powers conveyed by section 18 of the TMA states that “Parity is an important principle in exercising the duty. Authorities must lead by example applying the same standards and approaches to their own activities as to those of others”.

The Highway Network Management team are separated from those highway authority functions responsible for promoting works to ensure parity of treatment of all works promoters. All works promoters are expected to comply fully with the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), TMA and all relevant associated regulations and codes of practice.

Key actions

Apply the principles of the Highway Network Management Action Plan equally to all works promoters including Bracknell Forest Council

Pro-actively communicate highway network issues

Traditionally, local news and radio have provided information on problems with the road network for commuters. However, the internet now allows the Council to inform locals and commuters of issues, delays and major road works, through social media and the council’s roadworks finder on the website. This map-based tool provides live information about road closures, roadworks, obstructions, events and other information for road users in Bracknell Forest and further afield.

In addition, and complementing the council’s efforts to communicate highway network issues, sat-nav systems are an increasingly popular and effective means of providing live travel information, offering re-routing suggestions to avoid problems and delays. As an example, the Council uses data which is available through Google to monitor the road network, which anyone with a smartphone or modern navigation device has access to.

The ability to access information about problems on the network is central to journey planning. A travel web-site is an essential means of fulfilling the obligation to inform upon on travel and emerging technology is now enabling a variety of information to be presented on dedicated travel web-pages - such as road works information, average journey times, real time passenger information, car park occupancy and general transport network information.

Road user’s access to reliable multi-modal travel and network information within Bracknell Forest will be key to enabling informed decisions both before and during journeys. Broader knowledge and visibility of network performance will also enable the co-ordination of street works to be conducted with evidence based knowledge of traffic patterns at key locations. This will aid in the assessment of likely disruption and enable appropriate directions to be placed upon works promoters.
Key actions

Promote and raise awareness of the live travel and roadworks information through council media channels – website, social media

Ensure Variable Message Signing is accurate and provides up-to-date information to maximise network efficiency

Deliver, develop and regularly review Network Management Plans

The Network Management Plan sits beneath this Strategy, and provides a more specific, short term statement on how the council will manage the Highway Network, with specific corresponding actions developed and reviewed accordingly.

A significant change during the LTP3 period has been the introduction of the permitting system, in place of the previous notification system. This has had implications and led to changes across all of the objectives of this strategy. The permit scheme is being closely monitored, and comprehensive evaluation reports will be published for the first three years of the scheme. Where problems or issues are identified, the council will investigate and review any appropriate actions which may be necessary to rectify them.

It is important that the Highway Network Management Plan is regularly reviewed so that the document remains current, and at the forefront of consideration both within the Council and for stakeholders undertaking works.

Key actions

Annually review the Highway Network Management Plan and its corresponding Action Plan
Delivering Change

Implementation

The implementation of this strategy will require a partnership approach bringing together colleagues with responsibility for data collection, modelling, design and supervision, whilst also working closely with the Highways term contractor and all parties who carry out works on the road.

In some cases, there may also be a need to consult a range of stakeholders including local Members, Parish Councils, neighbourhood groups, and residents.

Funding

The Council’s highway works permit scheme generates income, as each permit is chargeable. The costs depend on the nature of works, and the type of road the work is being carried out on (major / minor). The aim is that the scheme will fund the cost base of the Highway Network Management team, related to the exercise of the scheme in regard to utilities and licences, which includes overheads of staff, accommodation and hardware. Should significant shortfalls become apparent, the fee structure matrix will be re-evaluated.

Monitoring

Monitoring progress will be an important part of ensuring that the objectives of the strategy are being met. There are a range of publically available data sources and data routinely collected by the Council which will be used to provide a measure of our progress. This data is used to inform Key indicators, annual progress reports, DfT returns, evidence in reports etc

More specifically, the success of the council’s permit scheme will be monitored by considering the number of permit applications received, the number refused, days of occupancy, duration of works and completions on time, in addition to DfT KPIs and Highways Authority and Utilities Committee (HAUC) performance indicators. Successes can be drawn from the number of days of disruption saved (through duration challenges), or the number of collaborative works achieved.

Day-to-day inspections also provide an effective way of monitoring the highway network, and the effects that works may be having on it.