Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

Strategy for Highways Asset Management

September 2026



Revisions Table

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Related document: Portsmouth City Council Highways Asset Management Policy 2026 (Policy for Highways Asset Management - September 2026)

1.1

Foreword

I am pleased to endorse Portsmouth City Council's Highways Asset Management Strategy 2026. This Strategy sets out our long-term approach to looking after the highway infrastructure that is so important to the everyday life of our city.

Portsmouth's highway network is one of our most important public assets. Our roads, footways, cycleways, structures, drainage systems and other highway infrastructure help people get to work, education and essential services, support businesses and public transport and enable people to move safely and efficiently around the city. Looking after these assets well is therefore fundamental to keeping Portsmouth connected, accessible and resilient.

Considerable investment has been made in Portsmouth's highway network through the Highways PFI contract. As we approach the expiry of that contract in March 2030, it is important that we plan carefully for the future. The coming years will require a strong focus on the condition of our assets, effective handback arrangements and ensuring that the Council is ready for whatever future service arrangements are put in place.

There are also wider challenges to address. Our infrastructure is ageing, while climate change, flooding and coastal risk, increasing maintenance demands and continuing financial pressures all influence the way we need to manage our highway assets. This Strategy provides a clear framework for making informed decisions, using good evidence and taking a long-term view of investment, risk and whole-life cost.

Portsmouth's unique coastal location makes resilience particularly important. We need to ensure our highway network can respond to the effects of severe weather, flooding and a changing climate, while continuing to support sustainable travel and opportunities to improve biodiversity and reduce carbon where appropriate.

As with all public services, we must make the best possible use of the resources available to us. Good asset management means making the right interventions at the right time, protecting the value of our existing infrastructure and considering the future maintenance implications of the new infrastructure we create.

I look forward to seeing this Strategy guide our approach over the coming years and support our ambition for a safe, resilient, accessible, sustainable and well-maintained highway network that continues to serve Portsmouth's residents, businesses and visitors now and into the future.



Councillor
Peter Candlish
Cabinet Member
for Transport

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Part 1: Strategic Direction

1.1
Executive Summary

Portsmouth City Council's Highway Asset Management Strategy sets out how the Council will manage, maintain, renew and improve the city's highway and related infrastructure assets to 2030 and beyond. It responds to evolving national guidance, increasing financial pressures, climate and coastal risks, changing service expectations and the need to prepare for the expiry of the Highways Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract. Its purpose is to provide a clear, evidence-led framework for protecting asset value, meeting statutory duties and directing available resources to the areas of greatest need and long-term benefit.

The Strategy applies to assets that support the safe, efficient, resilient and sustainable operation of Portsmouth's highway and transport network. This includes assets within the adopted highway and PFI project network; assets retained and managed directly by the Council; coastal, drainage and flood defence infrastructure; public realm and other non-highway infrastructure that affects network performance; and relevant assets owned or managed by third parties. It recognises that ownership, funding, maintenance, operational accountability and risk may rest with the Council, delivery partners, other organisations or a combination of these.

The Strategy's vision is for a structurally sound, safe, resilient, reliable, sustainable and well-maintained highway network that protects users, supports an accessible city, enables growth, promotes healthy communities, contributes to environmental improvement and maximises value from public investment. Delivery will be based on whole-life planning, proportionate risk management, robust asset information, defined levels of service and transparent prioritisation of investment.

The principal strategic challenges include ageing infrastructure, increasing maintenance demand, constrained funding, climate change and severe weather, coastal and flood risk, data and asset information gaps, the maintainability of new infrastructure, Local Government Reorganisation, and the transition from the current PFI arrangements to a future service model. The Strategy provides continuity through these changes by establishing a clear evidence base for asset condition, risk, investment need and expected service outcomes.

Portsmouth's 25-year Highways Maintenance PFI contract expires in March 2030. Preparing for expiry is therefore a central priority. The Council must secure robust evidence of asset inventory, ownership, condition, maintained standards, lifecycle liabilities and future maintenance need; complete handback assurance and data transfer; maintain business-as-usual performance; and develop the post-2030 operating model, client capability, procurement, funding, systems, governance and performance arrangements. This work will be overseen through the PFI Expiry Programme

Board and coordinated with the Network Board and wider corporate governance.

The Strategy will be translated into delivery through a suite of daughter documents, including asset management and asset group plans, lifecycle plans, the Strategic Development Plan for asset management capabilities, risk registers, the highways performance framework and KPI dashboard, the PFI Handback Plan and an annual State of the Highway report. These documents will define responsibilities, named leads, milestones, review dates, performance measures, risk controls and escalation routes, creating a clear and time-bound framework for accountability and continuous improvement.

Governance and accountability are clearly defined. Portsmouth City Council is the policy owner; the Assistant Director for Infrastructure is the responsible lead officer and Senior Responsible Officer; and the Head of Highways and Coastal Maintenance is the Strategy and Asset Management Lead. The Network Board provides oversight of PFI contract performance and associated asset management matters, while the PFI Expiry Programme Board oversees handback, transition and future service readiness. Strategic risks and decisions will be escalated through corporate and Member governance routes as appropriate.

Key priorities are to strengthen asset data and client-side intelligence; improve lifecycle and investment planning; embed maintainability, commuted sums and whole-life cost principles in new infrastructure; manage biodiversity, carbon and environmental opportunities without creating unfunded liabilities; increase resilience to climate change, flooding, coastal risk and severe weather; and develop clearer performance and transparency reporting. Progress will be monitored through technical, customer, financial, carbon, resilience, risk and data-quality measures, supported by public-facing reporting. Together, these arrangements will help the Council maintain safe and reliable services, demonstrate value for money and make well-informed decisions before and after 2030.

1.2
Scope

This Strategy applies to the management of Portsmouth City Council's highway assets and related infrastructure that support the safe, efficient, resilient and sustainable operation of the transport network. It provides the strategic framework for the stewardship, maintenance, renewal, improvement, performance monitoring and future service planning of assets for which the Council has ownership, maintenance or operational responsibilities, statutory duties, or a significant management interest.

For clarity, assets and responsibilities within the scope of this Strategy are grouped into the following categories:

- assets within the adopted highway;
- assets included within the Highways PFI network;
- highway assets retained and managed directly by Portsmouth City Council;
- non-highway infrastructure that influences the operation, safety, resilience, accessibility or performance of the highway and transport network;
- coastal, drainage and flood defence assets for which the Council has ownership, management, operational or coordinating responsibilities;
- assets owned and maintained by third parties that have a direct impact on the operation of the highway network; and
- assets for which Portsmouth City Council has only partial, operational, regulatory or coordinating responsibilities.

The Strategy recognises that the Council's responsibilities vary across these asset groups. Ownership, funding, maintenance, operational accountability, risk ownership and performance reporting may rest wholly with Portsmouth City Council, be shared with other organisations, or sit entirely with third parties. Detailed daughter documents, including asset management plans, lifecycle plans, risk registers, KPI dashboards, PFI handback plans and annual reporting documents, will define the responsibilities, governance arrangements, review dates, reporting requirements and levels of service applicable to each asset category.

The scope also includes the Council's strategic responsibilities for PFI expiry, handback readiness and future service readiness to 2030 and beyond. This includes ensuring that asset condition, inventory, lifecycle needs, data quality, maintainability requirements, risks, contractual obligations, governance arrangements and future funding implications are properly understood and reflected in transition planning.

The Strategy also provides the scope for performance monitoring and transparency reporting, including the use of KPIs and other measures relating to asset condition, service performance, customer outcomes, resilience, carbon, risk, investment delivery and data quality. These measures will support reporting through the Network Board, PFI Expiry Programme Board, Corporate Projects

Board and Member reporting arrangements, as appropriate.

This Strategy does not seek to manage assets that have no material influence on the operation, safety, resilience or performance of Portsmouth's transport and highway network. Rather, it focuses on the assets, infrastructure systems, responsibilities and evidence needed to support the delivery of the Council's highways, transport, coastal and flood risk management, asset management and future service objectives.

Portsmouth City Council – Asset Management Strategy 2026–2030

1.3

Vision, aims, objectives and outcomes

Portsmouth City Council's vision is to provide a structurally sound, safe, resilient, reliable, sustainable and well-maintained highway network that protects users, supports an accessible city, enables growth, promotes healthy communities, contributes to environmental improvement and maximises value from public investment.

We are committed to the effective management of highways infrastructure, both now and in the future. This Strategy will ensure that standards are met in line with relevant guidance and legislation. It will be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in assets, technological advances and standards.

This Strategy brings together Portsmouth's key objectives for implementing an asset management approach and enables progress against them to be monitored. It adopts the objectives already set out in the Highways Asset Management Policy, Local Transport Plan, Tertiary Road Network Strategy and PFI contract, as outlined below.

1.4 Strategic and policy context

1.4.1 Highways asset management policy

The separate Highways Asset Management Policy sets out how highway asset management supports the Council's priorities and the aims of the Transport, Environment and Business Support Directorate.

1.4.2 Local transport plan

This Strategy supports Portsmouth's wider transport policy framework, including the **Portsmouth Transport Strategy 2021–2038**[1], **Portsmouth Local Transport Plan 4 Implementation Plan 2026**[2] and its daughter strategies. Effective highway asset management is essential to the delivery of LTP4 because it enables people and goods to move safely, efficiently and reliably across the city, supports active travel and public transport, and helps protect the highway network as a key public asset. These assets are proactively managed to achieve this at the lowest net cost over their lifecycle.

LTP4 recognises the importance of supporting business, protecting assets, improving accessibility, reducing transport-related impacts and enabling a resilient transport network.

Highway maintenance and asset management provide the foundation for these outcomes by ensuring that roads, footways, cycleways, structures, drainage, lighting, signs, street furniture and associated assets remain safe, serviceable, resilient and fit for purpose.

Network hierarchy, including principal, secondary, tertiary and local access routes, will continue to inform inspection regimes, levels of service, risk assessment, lifecycle planning and investment prioritisation. This ensures that maintenance decisions reflect the role each part of the network plays in supporting movement, access, public transport, emergency response, active travel, regeneration and local communities.

1.4.3 Tertiary road network

The Tertiary Road Network Strategy aims to meet:

- today's need for safe passage, in order to meet statutory requirements; and
- tomorrow's needs through efficient, affordable and sustainable asset management policies.

The Council and the service company apply the principle of best-value asset management when establishing policies for maintaining all aspects of the highway infrastructure.

1 media.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/local-transport-plan4-update2021_final_accessible.pdf
2 media.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/local-transport-plan-4-implementation-2026-update-june-2026-aa-accessible.pdf

Part 2: Framework and Governance

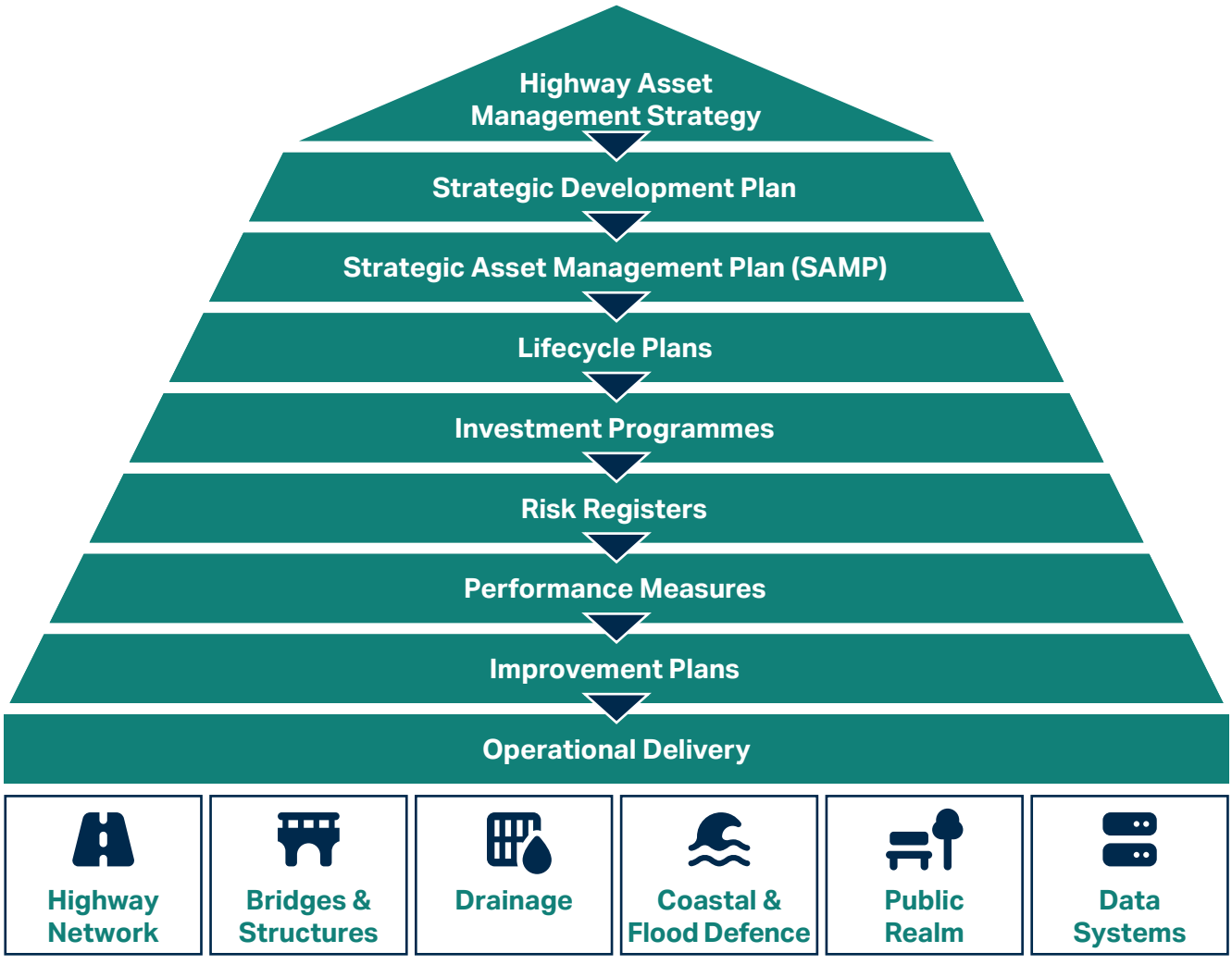
2.1

Asset management framework in Portsmouth

This Strategy sits at the apex of Portsmouth City Council's highway asset management framework. It establishes the strategic direction and principles that underpin the development of more detailed asset management plans, lifecycle plans, investment programmes, risk registers, performance measures and improvement plans.

Together, these supporting documents translate the Strategy into operational delivery and provide the link between corporate priorities, national guidance, asset information, levels of service, lifecycle planning, risk management, funding, performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

Strategy hierachy



The asset management framework supports a structured and evidence-led approach to decision-making. It is guided by agreed performance goals, long-term planning horizons, engineering judgement, economic appraisal, whole-life cost principles and the need to balance service outcomes with affordability. It considers the highway network as a connected system, recognising that investment decisions for individual asset groups must be assessed in terms of their wider impact on safety, accessibility, resilience, customer experience, network availability and public value.

Asset management enables the Council to assess maintenance and investment options in a consistent and transparent way. This includes considering the trade-off between levels of service, risk and cost, so that available public funds are targeted where they deliver the greatest long-term benefit. The Highways PFI contract was developed around these principles and, as the Council prepares for contract expiry in 2030, the framework will also support handback assurance, future service design and long-term investment planning.

The Highways Maintenance PFI contract is due to expire in March 2030. The final years of the contract and the associated handback process will be critical in ensuring a smooth transition to future service arrangements, maintaining asset performance, protecting service continuity and supporting the Council's longer-term ambitions, including those arising from devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

The Strategy will support continuity of statutory highway authority duties during any period of organisational change. It will also provide a clear evidence base for future decision-makers by setting out the condition of the asset base, the risks being managed, the investment required and the service outcomes expected. Where Local Government Reorganisation leads to changes in governance, funding routes, regional collaboration or operational delivery, the Strategy will be reviewed and updated to ensure that highway assets remain safe, resilient, affordable and effectively managed.

This Strategy is supported by a suite of daughter documents that provide the detailed arrangements for delivery. These documents set out specific asset group responsibilities, named leads, delivery timescales, review dates, performance measures, risk controls and reporting requirements. Together, they ensure that the strategic objectives in this Strategy are translated into clear, accountable and time-bound actions.

Strategy responsibility matrix

Daughter document	Purpose	Responsibility	Review / delivery date
Highways Asset Management Policy	Sets out the Council's policy position, principles and commitment to asset management.	Head of Highways and Coastal Maintenance	Reviewed every 2 years, or earlier if national guidance or local governance changes
Strategic Development Plan for AM capabilities	Defines clear decision-making, risk management and lifecycle approaches for assets, prioritising investment. Identifies the resources and contingencies needed. Promotes continual improvement through stronger asset management maturity, data governance and system review.	Head of Highways and Coastal Maintenance	Annual review, with full refresh aligned to strategy review cycle
Asset Management Plans / Asset Group Plans	Define responsibilities, lifecycle needs, levels of service, risks and investment requirements for each asset group.	Relevant asset owners / technical leads	Annual review, with full refresh aligned to strategy review cycle
Lifecycle Plans	Set out planned maintenance, renewal needs, intervention options and long-term investment requirements.	Asset managers / PFI contract leads	Annual update as part of programme and budget planning
Risk Register	Identifies strategic and operational asset risks, risk owners, mitigations and escalation routes.	PCC client team / relevant risk owners	Quarterly review, aligned with governance and performance reporting
Performance Framework / KPI Dashboard	Tracks delivery against levels of service, condition, customer, financial, carbon, resilience and contract performance measures.	PCC client team / performance lead	Monthly or quarterly reporting
PFI Handback Plan	Sets out responsibilities, evidence requirements, inspection dates, condition surveys, data transfer and transition actions ahead of 2030.	PCC client team, Ensign Highways and Colas, as appropriate	Regular review through to contract expiry in 2030
Annual State of the Highway Report	Provides a public-facing summary of asset condition, investment, performance, risks, actions and future priorities.	Head of Highways and Coastal Maintenance / Asset Management Lead	Annual publication

2.2
Benefits of asset management

Asset management enables organisations to achieve their outcomes through the effective and efficient management of assets.

The benefits of asset management include, but are not limited to, supporting organisational improvement in the following areas:

- Risk management
- Effectiveness and efficiency
- Financial performance
- Investment decision-making
- Services and outcomes
- Demonstration of social responsibility
- Continuous improvement
- Compliance
- Organisational stability
- Enhanced reputation
- Best-value endeavours

2.3
Governance and accountability

Effective governance is essential to ensure that this Strategy is implemented, monitored and kept under review. The Strategy will be governed through Portsmouth City Council's existing highways, infrastructure and corporate governance arrangements, with clear responsibility assigned for strategic ownership, asset management leadership, contract oversight, performance reporting and Member engagement.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this Strategy is the Assistant Director for Infrastructure. The SRO is responsible for providing strategic oversight, ensuring that the Strategy remains aligned with corporate priorities, statutory duties, future service planning, Local Transport Plan objectives, financial planning and wider infrastructure governance.

The Asset Management Lead is the Head of Highways and Coastal Maintenance and Client Representative under the PFI contract. This role is responsible for leading the implementation of the Strategy, maintaining the asset management framework, coordinating supporting daughter documents, overseeing asset data and lifecycle planning, monitoring performance and risks, and ensuring that asset management requirements are reflected in PFI handback and future service readiness planning.

The Network Board provides the principal governance forum for the Highways PFI contract and associated asset management matters. It reviews contract performance, lifecycle planning, risk, service delivery, investment priorities, improvement actions, handback readiness and issues requiring escalation. The Network Board also supports strategic decision-making between Portsmouth City Council, the service company and delivery partners, and provides a route for resolving matters under the contract governance arrangements.

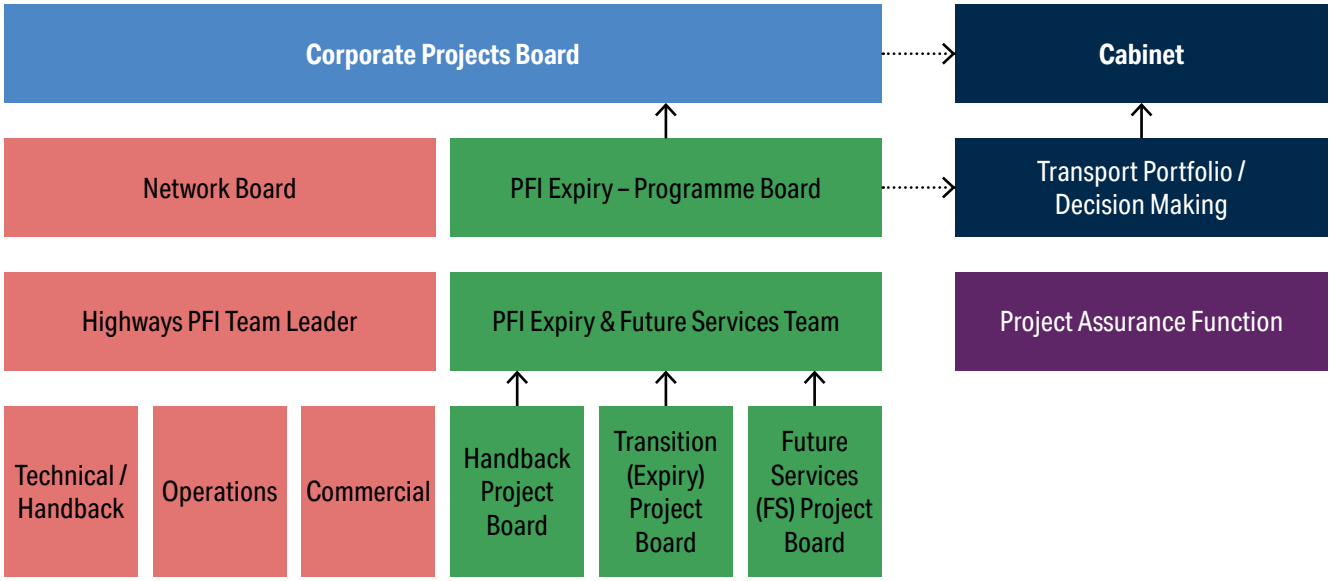
Alongside the Network Board, the PFI Expiry Programme Board provides the dedicated governance forum for planning and overseeing the transition from the current Highways PFI contract to future service arrangements. The Programme Board oversees handback readiness, future operating model development, data and asset intelligence, contractual milestones, procurement and commissioning activity, financial planning, risk management, stakeholder engagement and Member assurance. It ensures that PFI expiry planning is coordinated across highways, finance, legal, procurement, corporate programmes and relevant service areas.

Progress against this Strategy is reported through the relevant corporate and political governance routes. Asset management performance, operational delivery and contract matters will continue to be reported through the Network Board. PFI expiry, handback readiness and future service transition matters

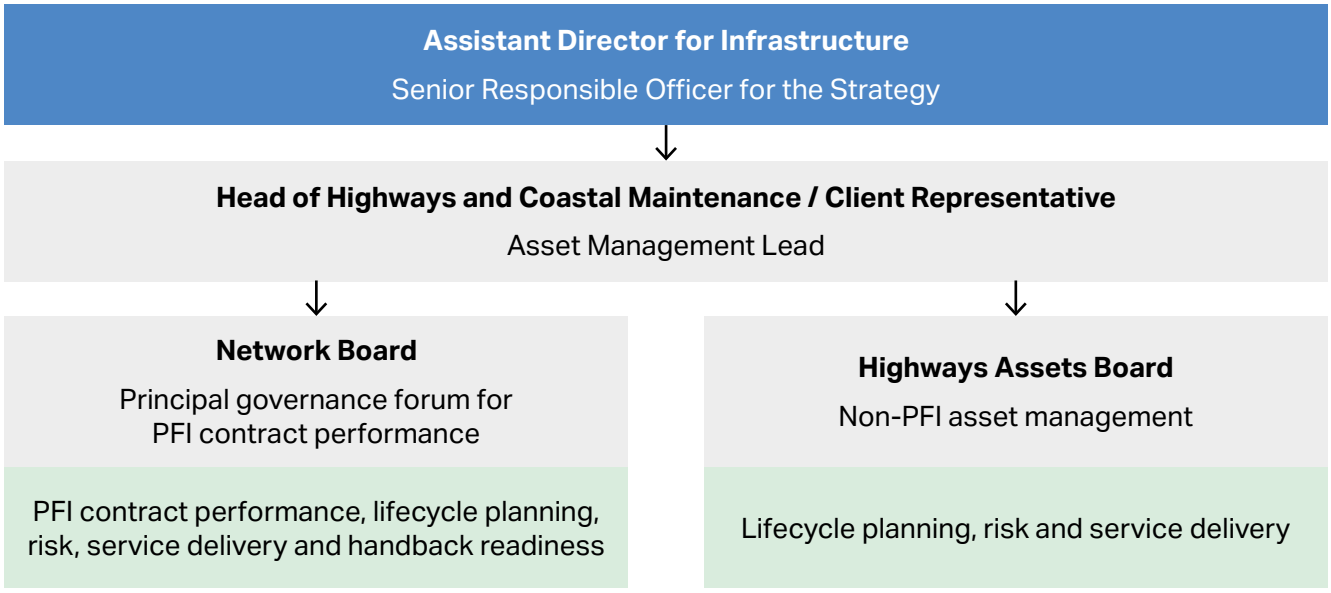
are reported through the PFI Expiry Programme Board, with strategic risks, dependencies and decisions escalated to the Corporate Projects Board where required. Updates are also provided to Members through appropriate briefing, portfolio reporting and decision-making arrangements where matters require Member awareness, endorsement or approval.

Supporting daughter documents, including asset management plans, lifecycle plans, risk registers, performance dashboards, PFI handback plans and annual reporting documents, identify specific responsibilities, named leads, delivery milestones, review dates and escalation routes. These documents provide the detailed accountability framework needed to translate this Strategy into deliverable actions and demonstrate progress over time.

Governance Diagram: PFI Expiry Programme Governance



Governance Diagram: Operational Asset Management Governance



2.4

Implementing effective asset management

The application of asset management provides assurance that service-level outcome targets can be consistently sustained over time. Asset management builds on existing processes and tools to form a continuous improvement framework by using levels of service to define needs and expectations, monitor performance against them and identify the most cost-effective ways of closing performance gaps.

This process has been embedded in the PFI contract. The service company works in accordance with the ISO 55001 standard for asset management, implementing and maintaining best practice to achieve the required outcomes.

The figure below outlines the key aspects of Portsmouth's asset management approach.

Asset Management Effects approach

Strategic	Taking a long-term view
Systematic	Looking at processes in a more systematic way
Holistic	Taking a 'service-wide' view covering all assets on the highway
Optimal	Trading off competing demands
Focus on 'Outcomes'	Explicitly considering customer needs and expectations
Management operation	Taking a 'whole life' and 'life cycle' approach
Needs based	Explicitly identifying and documenting needs
Informed decision making	Allocating resources based on assessed need

Part 3: Assets and service delivery

3.1

Asset groups and components

The PFI contract is based on a fence-to-fence principle. Figure 5 outlines the key areas of responsibility for Ensign Highways to maintain through the PFI contract, in accordance with the Project Agreement service performance requirements.

Other key areas of responsibility are designated as PCC responsibilities; however, other contracts may be in place, for example, for bus shelter maintenance.

The assets listed are not exhaustive, and those under PCC responsibility are maintained appropriately.

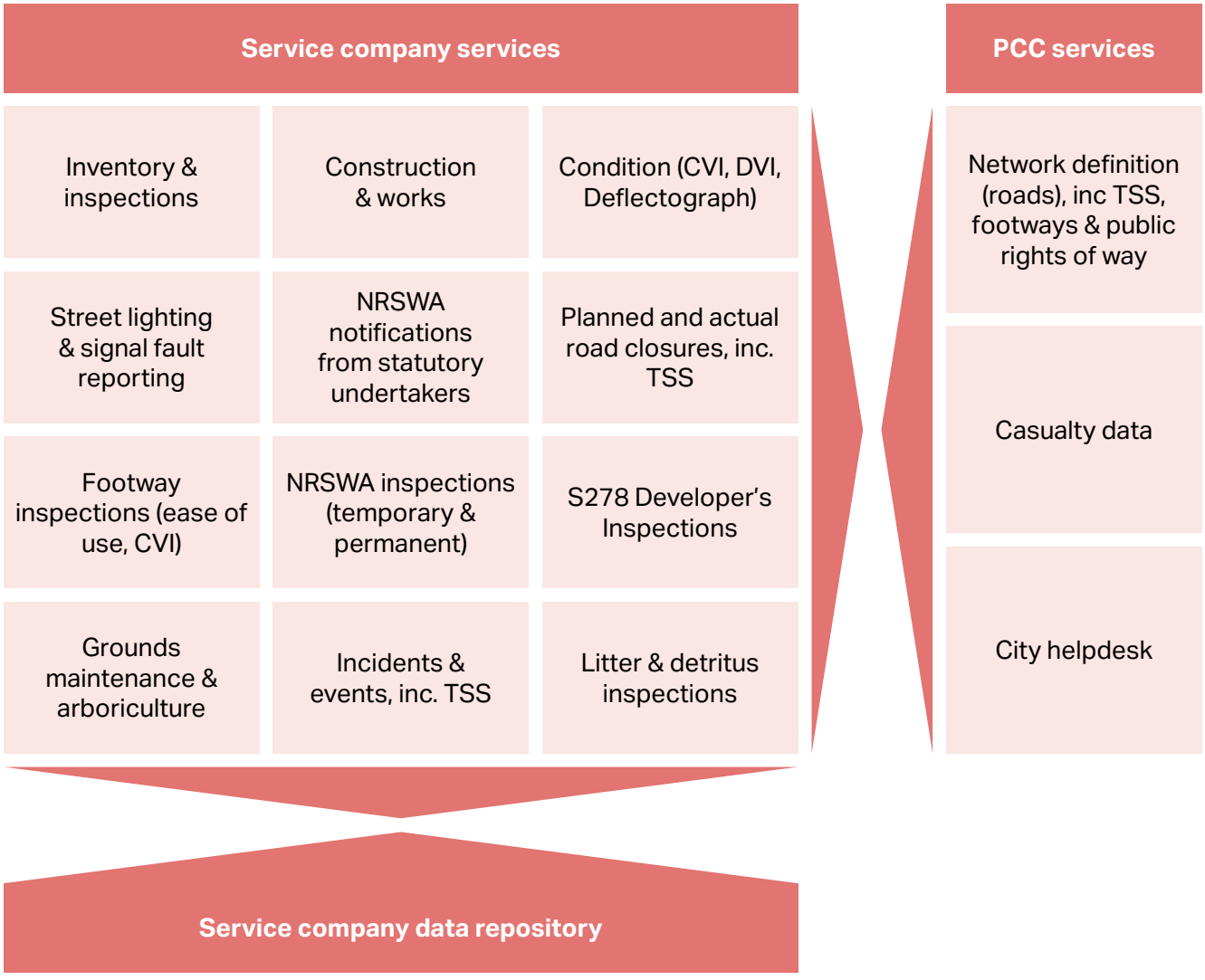
Assets and responsibilities

Asset group	Asset component	Maintenance responsibility
Roads	Carriageway surfacing and marking	PFI contract
	Drainage and gullies	PFI contract
	Traffic calming	PFI contract
	Road studs	PFI contract
	Central reservation	PFI contract
	Manhole cover	PFI contract
	Entrance markings	PCC
Licences and statutory documents	Licences and statutory documents	PFI contract
Fences and barriers	Safety fence	PFI contract
	Pedestrian guardrail	PFI contract

Asset group	Asset component	Maintenance responsibility
Footways and cycleways	Footways - paving	PFI contract
	Cycleways	PFI contract
	Kerbs	PFI contract
	Drainage and gullies	PFI contract
	Vehicle crossovers	PCC
Structures	Bridges, retaining walls, culverts etc.	PFI contract
ITS	Traffic signals	PFI contract
	Urban traffic signal control and systems	PCC
	Detector loops	PFI contract
	VMS	PCC
Signs and street furniture	Signs - illuminated, non-illuminated, street name plates	PFI contract
	Bins	PFI contract
	Bench	PFI contract
	Street architecture	PFI contract
	Parking meters	PCC
	Bollards	PFI contract
	Cycle stands	PFI contract
	Fountains	PCC

Asset group	Asset component	Maintenance responsibility
Earthworks and embankments	Grass	PFI contract
	Trees	PFI contract
	Shrubs	PFI contract
	Weeds	PFI contract
	Street cleansing	PFI contract
	Planters and boxes	PFI contract
	Planting	PFI contract
	Hedges	PFI contract
	Verges	PFI contract
Weather emergencies	Depots	PFI contract
	Facilities - grit bins	PFI contract
Street lighting	Lighting columns	PCC
Bus shelters and stops	Bus shelters and stops	PCC
	Bus shelter line marking	PFI contract
Car parks	Car parks	PCC
Public transport interchanges	Public transport interchanges	PCC
Off-road footpaths	Public rights of way	PCC/PFI contract
Statutory undertakers	Plant equipment and private apparatus	Utilities
Sea defences	Tidal lakes	PCC
	Storm gate	PCC

Service responsibilities



3.2

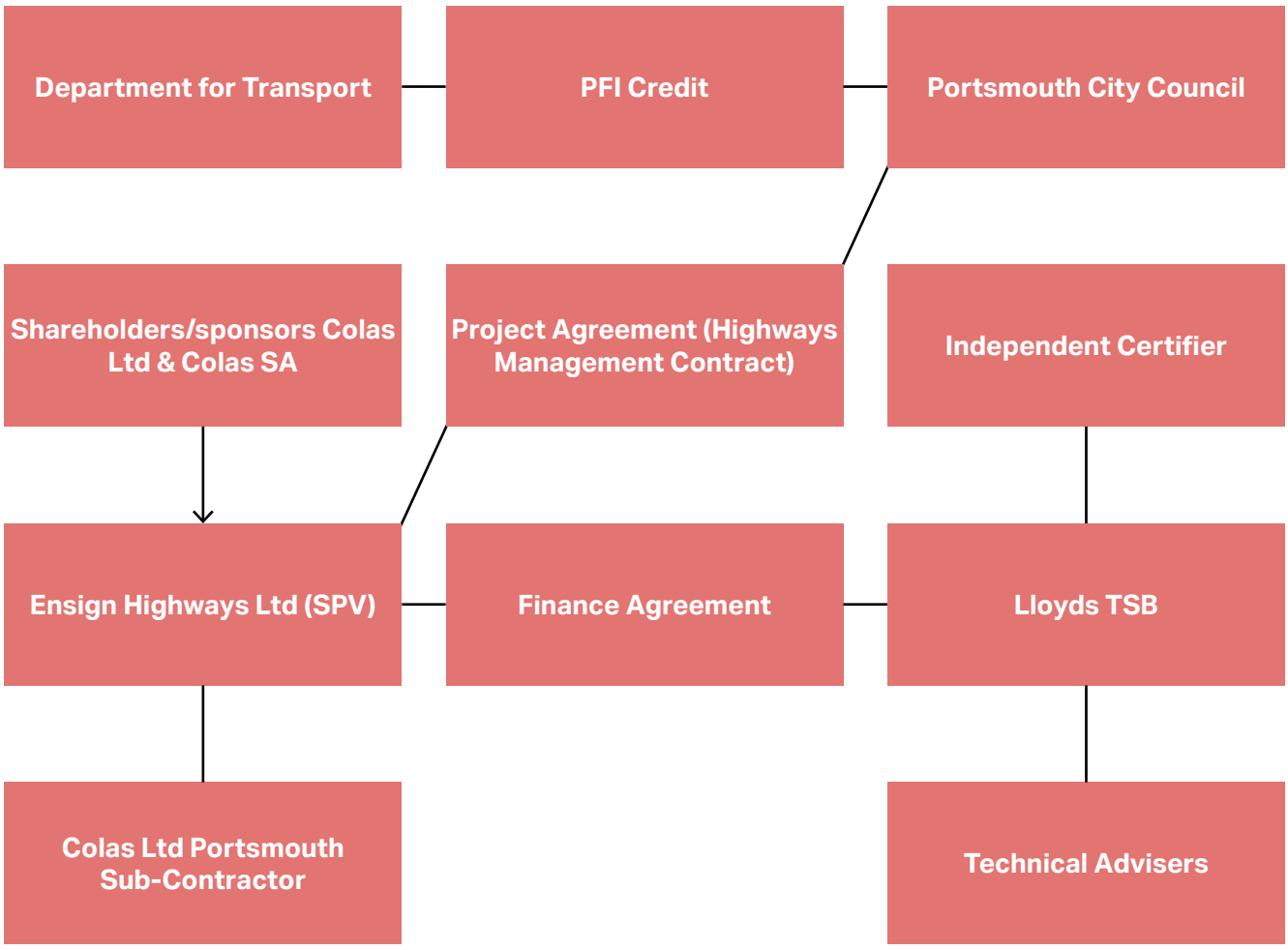
Highways maintenance PFI contract and delivery model

Portsmouth City Council's 25-year Highways Maintenance PFI contract commenced in 2004 and runs to March 2030. It provides for inspections, maintenance, lifecycle replacement, enhancements and operational services across most of the city's highway network. The Department for Transport supported the original procurement through specialist advisers.

The contractual delivery structure, shown in the figure below, comprises:

- Ensign Highways Ltd as the service company; and
- Colas Ltd as the subcontractor responsible for delivering the maintenance and operational functions.

Contractual delivery structure



The Network Board meets quarterly to set the strategic direction of the contract, review performance, lifecycle planning, risk and service delivery, and consider matters arising under the contractual dispute procedures.

Defined maintenance and lifecycle risks for assets within the PFI project network are transferred to the service company. Assets excluded from the network remain the responsibility of Portsmouth City Council, as shown in the supporting figure.

3.2.1 Delivery and funding model

During the initial five-year Core Investment Period, the service company was required to bring the highway network up to a pre-agreed condition standard measured through the Network Condition Index. It must maintain that standard for the remainder of the contract through planned interventions.

The fixed service payment incentivises efficient lifecycle planning and the application of asset management best practice, helping to maintain the assets, deliver value for money and minimise disruption to highway users.

The service payment is funded through a combination of Council funding and PFI credits provided by the Department for Transport. The contract also allows for additions to or omissions from the project network. Where a change is proposed, a commuted sum is calculated to cover maintenance and lifecycle replacement for the remainder of the contract, and the Council must identify an appropriate funding source.

For capital projects that alter the network, the Council's policy is also to provide for maintenance and lifecycle replacement over a 25-year planning period. This applies whole-life asset management principles to new and changed assets and helps avoid unfunded future liabilities.

3.2.2 Service delivery priorities

The PFI contract's service delivery priorities and the mechanisms used to achieve them are summarised in the figure below.

Service delivery priorities

PFI Contract Outcomes	Customer Satisfaction	Contract Satisfaction	Network Reliability
PFI contract priorities	To **Maximise** the potential of the contract for the Council, Public & Stakeholders. **Excellence** in communication with the Council, Public & Stakeholders. An **Excellent** standard of Customer Service.	**Fence-to-Fence** responsibility of Network **Stewardship**. A **Proactive** rather than reactive approach to the Network.	**Significant & Flexible** resources to respond to unexpected & planned events. **Minimise** delay to traffic as a result of maintenance works.
PFI contract aims to meet objectives	Stakeholder communication maintained PCC image maintained Public perception / satisfaction maintained	Delivery & quality of services Deliver on time & value for money Deliver right first time Maximised return on spend & savings	Resilient network Reduce congestion Reliable & predictable journey times Improved management of works & incidents
PFI contract measures to meet aims	Stakeholders informed Customer surveys Customer response & feedback Network appearance Community involvement	Compliance with service requirements Non-conformities identified, minimised & resolved Efficiencies & value for money	Mitigate delays Coordinated stakeholders Emergency & contingency response Effect of non-conformities minimised

Assets Maintained	Safe Operations	Sustainable Operations
To **Bring** the City's Road & Footway Network up to a fair to good condition & **Maintain** them in that condition for the 25 years.	**Health & Safety** adhered to at all times.	**Minimise** the impact of maintenance works on the environment.
Whole life proactive approach Rehabilitate the network for minimal life cycle treatment to maintain Preventative maintenance & investment Save life time & cost of repeated **patch & mend** with whole life principles	Maintained in a safe & serviceable condition Reduce accidents & incidents Network safety improved Road user & worker safety improved	Environment respected Deliver economic sustainability Reduce energy consumption Promote innovation & continual improvement
Inventory data & condition improved &/or maintained Routine inspection & maintenance Non-safety defects responded & rectified promptly Life cycle replacement & capital (LTP) enhancement	Roads in a safe condition Safety defects responded & rectified promptly Accidents & incidents investigated for improvement	Reduce carbon footprint Reduce energy consumption Alternative sources Adaptation to climate change Community involvement

Part 4: Planning, Risk and Resilience

4.1

Asset management planning, data management and information systems

Reliable asset data is essential to effective highway asset management because it provides the evidence needed to understand what the Council owns or maintains, its condition, the risks it presents and where investment should be targeted. Portsmouth City Council will continue to improve the completeness, accuracy, consistency and usability of highway asset information so that decisions on safety, statutory compliance, lifecycle planning, funding, performance, transparency reporting and future service design are supported by robust evidence.

Asset information includes inventory, condition, inspection records, defects, works history, customer enquiries, claims, financial data, performance measures, risk scores and lifecycle planning information.

Where possible, these datasets are linked to provide a single evidence base for decision-making and to improve the Council's ability to analyse trends, prioritise investment, demonstrate value for money and prepare for the transition beyond the current PFI delivery model.

Priority is given to known areas of risk, including incomplete non-PFI asset records, PFI handback information, drainage assets, structures, coastal interface assets, electrical assets, historic records and newly adopted infrastructure. Data improvement is treated as a continuous improvement activity and focused on information that supports safety, risk management, DfT transparency reporting, future funding bids, lifecycle planning, climate resilience and post-PFI service readiness.

4.2
Lifecycle and investment planning

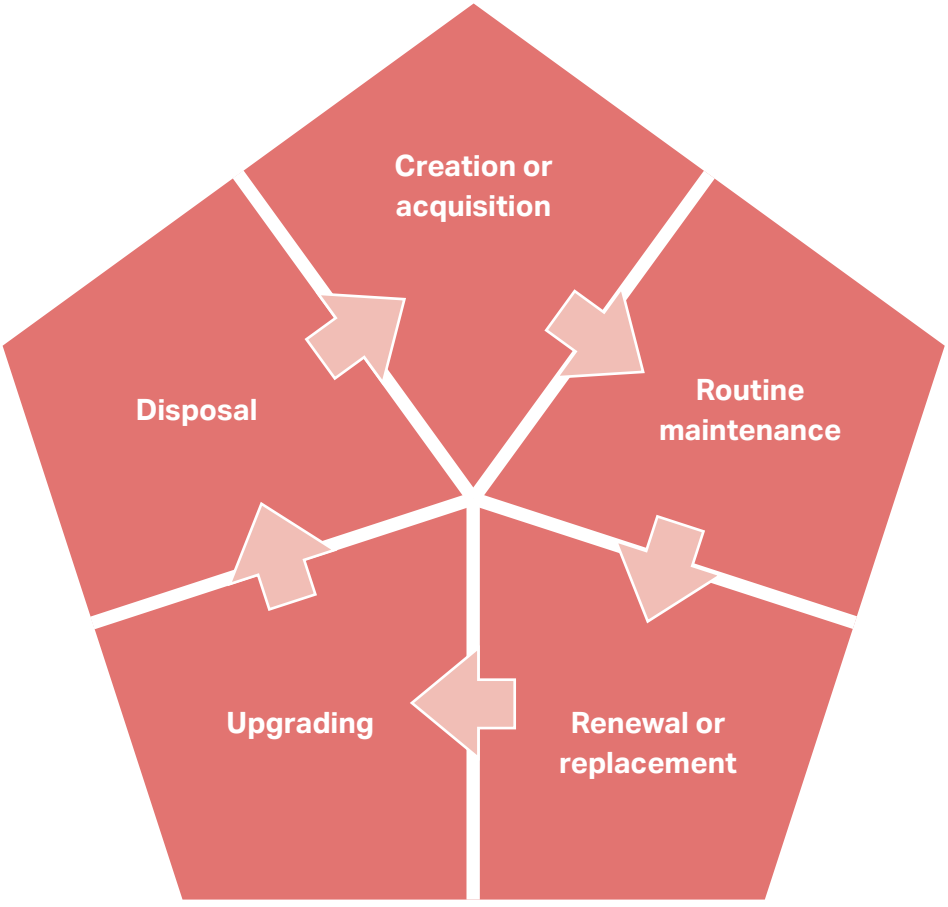
Taking a long-term view and applying a whole-life and lifecycle approach, maintenance of the asset will be carried out through the PFI contract.

Through the PFI contract, the Council has sought to achieve the maximum possible service delivery from the limited highway maintenance funding available. The road network is divided into three categories: primary, secondary and tertiary networks.

Each category has different service performance requirements and is treated differently for asset management purposes. This also enables the Council to consider transport and highways together, recognising that users of each category differ. Figure 7 below illustrates a generic asset lifecycle that can be applied to all aspects of the highway.

The key stages captured in the asset lifecycle involve identifying options for a lifecycle plan.

Asset lifecycle plan



4.3
Risk management

Effective control and governance of assets is set out in the PFI contract, the objective of which is to achieve the desired balance of cost, risk and performance.

The PFI contract allocates defined asset management, maintenance and lifecycle risks to the service company for assets and services within the project network. Portsmouth City Council nevertheless retains its statutory highway authority duties, contract management responsibilities, and risks relating to excluded assets, changes to the network, affordability, governance and future service provision.

4.4

Maintainability and new infrastructure

New or altered highway infrastructure can create long-term maintenance liabilities and must therefore be designed with maintainability, affordability and whole-life asset management in mind from the earliest practical stage. Portsmouth City Council will seek to ensure that new assets are safe, accessible, resilient, sustainable and capable of being inspected, cleansed, repaired, renewed and maintained effectively throughout their expected life.

Maintainability assessments should be embedded in scheme development, design review, planning, development control, public realm projects, active travel schemes, regeneration projects, developer-led works, Section 38 and Section 278 agreements, capital schemes and assets transferred to the Council. Designs should consider inspection and cleansing access, replacement requirements, standardisation, durability, drainage performance, utility interfaces, material choice, operational safety, climate resilience and ongoing maintenance costs.

New infrastructure should not create unfunded or poorly evidenced maintenance liabilities. Before adoption, transfer or implementation, the Council will seek appropriate asset information, as-built records, commuted sums where applicable, inspection requirements, warranties, lifecycle assumptions, data handover, maintenance responsibilities and confirmation that future funding and operational arrangements are understood.

Where changes are made to the highway network through capital schemes, development, adoption, omissions or additions to the PFI project network, the Council will seek to identify the funding required to meet ongoing maintenance and lifecycle liabilities. This will include commuted sums where applicable and, where appropriate, provision for maintenance and lifecycle replacement over a 25-year planning period.

4.6 Climate change and network resilience

4.6.1 Strategic climate risks

Portsmouth's island geography, extensive coastline, low-lying areas, dense urban environment and concentration of critical transport infrastructure make climate resilience a fundamental consideration for highway asset management. The principal risks include sea-level rise, tidal influence, storm surge, overtopping of coastal defences, surface water flooding, groundwater pressure, more intense rainfall, higher temperatures, severe weather, saline exposure and accelerated asset deterioration. These risks can affect safety, network availability, access to communities and essential services, emergency response, public transport, active travel and the long-term cost of maintaining the highway network.

4.6.2 Asset vulnerability and criticality

The Council uses asset inventory and condition information, inspection records, flood and drainage data, coastal monitoring, Environment Agency mapping, local modelling and operational intelligence to identify vulnerable assets and climate-risk hotspots. Exposure is assessed alongside asset condition, network function, criticality, dependencies and the consequence of failure. Particular consideration is given to critical and emergency routes, evacuation access, bus corridors, freight routes, active travel links, coastal communities and locations where disruption would have wider social, economic or operational effects.

This evidence informs risk registers, lifecycle plans and investment priorities and will be aligned, where relevant, with the Surface Water Management Plan, coastal defence strategies, flood risk programmes, emergency planning and regeneration schemes. Cross-service working is used to ensure that risks at the interfaces between highways, drainage, coastal infrastructure, public realm and development are understood and managed consistently.

4.6.3 Adaptation and investment principles

Climate adaptation is embedded in maintenance, renewal, design and investment decisions. Options are assessed against safety, serviceability, risk reduction, whole-life cost and carbon, technical suitability, maintainability, affordability and the potential consequences of inaction. Investment is targeted towards interventions that protect critical assets and routes, reduce repeated disruption, improve long-term performance and provide best value over the life of the asset.

The Council has adopted a balanced approach combining engineered and nature-based measures. Depending on the location and asset, this may include drainage maintenance and improvement, sustainable drainage systems, materials and specifications suited to saline exposure or higher temperatures, improved monitoring, tree planting and green infrastructure. This approach supports the Urban Forest Master Plan 2025–2035 where measures are compatible with highway function and supported by clear maintenance and funding arrangements.

4.6.4 Resilience actions and measures

The Council will develop and maintain a Resilient Network Plan, or equivalent evidence base, identifying critical highway routes, vulnerable assets and priority climate risks. This will support severe weather and emergency response planning, asset-specific lifecycle decisions, coordinated investment and assurance that climate risk is being addressed through highway maintenance planning.

Delivery will be supported by measurable actions and indicators, including completion of vulnerability assessments, identification of resilience priorities, delivery of targeted drainage and adaptation schemes, monitoring of repeat flooding and severe-weather disruption, assessment of carbon and energy performance, and review of asset data gaps. Smart technology, LED street lighting, the Central Management System, remote monitoring and fault detection will be used where they improve efficiency, resilience, energy performance and proactive maintenance.

Progress will be reviewed through the Council's performance and improvement arrangements so that emerging risks, lessons from events, changes in asset condition and the effectiveness of completed interventions can inform future programmes and investment decisions.

4.5

Biodiversity, carbon and environmental sustainability

Portsmouth City Council integrates biodiversity, carbon reduction and environmental sustainability into highway asset management where this supports a safe, serviceable, resilient and affordable network. Maintenance, renewal and investment decisions consider whole-life cost and carbon, durability, material reuse, recycled and lower-carbon materials, energy efficiency, waste reduction and opportunities to extend asset life. Environmental measures are proportionate to the function and risk profile of the asset and must not compromise highway safety, accessibility, drainage, visibility or maintainability.

Biodiversity and green infrastructure opportunities are considered alongside engineered solutions. These may include appropriate tree and verge management, planting, sustainable drainage, nature-based solutions and public realm improvements. Proposals must have clear maintenance responsibilities, suitable funding or commuted sums where required, and a realistic assessment of future operational liabilities. The Council works across highways, coastal engineering, drainage, planning, transport, climate, parks, public realm and regeneration to coordinate opportunities and avoid creating unfunded or unmanageable commitments.

Part 5: Performance and future readiness

5.1 Performance management and transparency

Performance management provides the evidence base for understanding whether this Strategy is delivering its intended outcomes. Portsmouth City Council monitors technical performance, customer-facing outcomes, asset condition, service delivery, investment impact, risk and public accountability together, so that decisions are informed by a clear view of how the highway network is performing and where improvement is required.

A highways performance framework will be maintained and developed to include indicators such as carriageway and footway condition, structures condition, drainage performance, defect response, network availability, planned programme delivery, claims trends, customer satisfaction, carbon and resilience measures, PFI performance, data quality and delivery against annual transparency reporting requirements.

Performance information is used to inform annual maintenance planning, investment prioritisation, risk reviews, service improvement, Member reporting, DfT submissions and future funding decisions. It also supports clear communication with residents and stakeholders by explaining what has been delivered, what outcomes have been achieved and why particular maintenance priorities have been selected.

5.1.1 Performance monitoring

The asset management performance standards are specified in Schedule 4 of the PFI contract, which sets out the service performance requirements.

The section below explains the various mechanisms used under the Project Agreement to monitor performance.

5.1.2 Performance indicator reports — monthly

Performance indicator reports provide results that enable the Council to gauge and assess the performance of the service company. The Council uses these results to identify improvements in the delivery of contract services as part of an outcome-based performance assessment.

5.1.3 Performance review and plan (annual)

The performance review and plan are developed through workshops, providing a forum for innovation and value-for-money proposals that enable the Council to collaborate with the service company to drive improvements over the following 12-month period.

The Council uses this process to drive performance not only in asset management, but across all areas of the contract services.

5.1.4 Customer satisfaction surveys (monthly and annual)

Customer satisfaction surveys provide results that enable the Council to gauge and assess residents' perception of performance.

The survey results are used to identify where improvements in the delivery of public services can be achieved and where resources should be prioritised.

5.1.5 National highways and transport (nht) public satisfaction survey (annual)

The NHT Survey Insights network enables the measurement and comparison of performance and the sharing of best practice across all aspects of highways and transport services. The survey results are used to assess effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement in public service provision as part of an outcome-based performance assessment for Asset Management Plans, Local Transport Plans and the Highway Maintenance Efficiency Partnership.

5.1.6 Highways PFI contract Joint action plan (pcc and service company) (annual)

A plan to achieve objectives over the following 12-month period covering:

NCI

Review of NCI/FCI processes, including surveys and input data (RDA/PANDEF).

PFI Asset Inventory Review

Review and continual improvement of the Portsmouth PFI Project Inventory.

Communications

Review and continual improvement of Portsmouth PFI Project communications.

Biodiversity and Decarbonisation

Development of joint approaches with partners and stakeholders on biodiversity and decarbonisation, taking account of PCC's climate emergency strategy and sustainable asset management.

Handback

Development of joint approaches to the handback methodologies and processes for the Second Inspection.

PMF and PPI Review

Review and continual improvement of the Portsmouth PFI Performance Management Framework (PMF) and Portsmouth Performance Indicators (PPI).

Transition

Development of the approach to transition, leading to a post-PFI service delivery model to be defined by PCC.

Call-off

Review of call-off procedures, including a comprehensive reassessment of current contract mechanisms used to procure additional and minor works, with recommendations for improved governance and efficiency.

Street Cleansing

Continued monitoring of the impact of the reduced cleansing service regime on the city of Portsmouth.

Drainage

Review of the drainage inventory, inspection methodology and standing-water issues.

5.2

PFI expiry, handback and future service readiness

The expiry of the Highways PFI contract in 2030 is one of the most significant strategic issues for Portsmouth's highway asset management approach. This Strategy therefore supports a managed transition from the current delivery model to future service arrangements, ensuring that asset value, service continuity, statutory compliance, public confidence and long-term affordability are protected during and after handback.

The PFI expiry process is governed through the PFI Expiry Programme Board, supported by appropriate workstreams covering asset condition and handback, contract and legal matters, finance and affordability, procurement and future service design, data and systems, risk management and communications. This governance structure provides oversight of programme milestones, decision points, dependencies, resource requirements and escalation routes, ensuring that the Council is prepared for contract expiry and future service delivery beyond 2030.

Handback readiness requires robust evidence of asset inventory, ownership, condition, maintained standards, lifecycle liabilities, risk, performance and future maintenance need. This will include condition surveys, technical audits, contract assurance, data transfer planning, risk reviews and early identification of any gaps between contractual handback requirements and the Council's future service needs.

The Council will strengthen its client-side asset intelligence before contract expiry so that future decisions are not overly dependent on contractor-held information. Priority areas include asset inventories, condition data, maintenance histories, structures information, drainage records, lighting and electrical assets, non-PFI assets, coastal interface risks and the data required to support future procurement, commissioning and service design.

Future service readiness will include development of the post-2030 operating model, procurement and commissioning options, budget planning, workforce requirements, systems and data requirements, governance arrangements, performance measures and Member assurance. PFI expiry planning will be linked to lifecycle planning, risk management, investment planning and transparency reporting so the Council can clearly demonstrate the condition of the asset base at handback, the investment required after 2030 and the risks associated with different future funding and delivery scenarios.

Strategic objectives for PFI expiry are to:

- establish a robust baseline of asset inventory, condition and responsibility;
- confirm handback standards, evidence requirements and inspection methodologies;
- identify condition gaps, non-PFI assets and future maintenance liabilities;

- ensure lifecycle works remain aligned to contractual targets and long-term network needs;
- develop the future service delivery model and required client capability;
- secure transition funding, governance and risk controls; and
- maintain business-as-usual service performance throughout the transition.



Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

You can get this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 023 9284 1347

Designed by: **design@portsmouthcc.gov.uk** • Published: **November 2026** • Ref: **74.1197**

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