

Local highways maintenance transparency report

The Department for Transport expects all local highways authorities to publish information about their highways maintenance activities to help local taxpayers see the difference that funding is making in their areas.

Our highway network

The highway infrastructure asset in West Berkshire is large and diverse. The Council is the highway authority for highway assets on the local road network and is responsible for managing and maintaining the network as shown in the table below. All these combined assets have an estimated replacement cost of £2.96 billion (including land).

Lengths of highway, footways and cycleways (km)						
A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way	Cycleways
117km	475km	711km	1303km	822km	1193km	76km

In addition, West Berkshire Council is responsible for the following highway assets:

Asset Group	Elements
Structures	Bridges, sign gantries, culverts, embankments, retaining walls and subways
Lighting (including illuminated signs and bollards)	Lighting columns, lamps, cabling, ducts, feeder pillars, subway lighting, illuminated signs and posts and information boards
Integrated Transport Systems	Signalised junctions, signalised pedestrian crossings, detection equipment, cabling, ductwork, bollards and variable message signs
Safety Fences	Vehicle safety fences
Non-illuminated Signs	Non-illuminated signs, warning, regulatory and local direction/ information posts and information boards
Closed Circuit Television	CCTV installations and monitoring equipment
Drainage	Gullies, linear drainage channels, highway drains (including pipework, manholes and outfalls), land drainage ditches, watercourses, roadside ditches and swales
Traffic Calming	Traffic calming features (including tables, cushions and chicanes)
Road Markings	All road markings
Verges and Planted areas	Verges, soft landscaped areas and trees
Street Furniture	Cycle stands, bollards and benches



Highways maintenance spending figures

Highway maintenance spending					
Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£,000s)	Capital spend (£,000s)	Revenue spend (£,000s)	Estimate of % spent on preventative maintenance	Estimate of % spent on reactive maintenance
2025/26 (projected)	£8,901	£16,801	£2,330	91%	9%
2024/25	£5,387	£11,515	£2,348	88%	12%
2023/24	£5,304	£11,869	£2,533	89%	11%
2022/23	£5,387	£8,482	£2,789	88%	12%
2021/22	£5,387	£10,518	£2,762	90%	10%
2020/21	£7,243	£12,416	£3,286	92%	8%

Capital allocated by DfT can be found here - [Highways maintenance funding allocations - GOV.UK](#)

Additional information on spending

The Highway maintenance spend summarised in the above table comprises of the following areas:

- Highway resurfacing programmes
- Highway patching programmes
- Reactive and emergency repairs
- Drainage gully cleansing
- Bridges and structures
- Signs and road markings
- Winter maintenance

The maintenance programme is prioritised by using a risk-based approach and following the hierarchal categories of A roads first, followed by B roads, then C roads, and then other roads, when developing the priority programme. This ensures that the funding is used on the roads of higher risk. By following good asset management practices, reprioritisation is undertaken during the year to ensure that the roads with the worst condition are given high priority. This has enabled more funding to be used to prevent defects forming resulting in a reduction on funding required for reactive maintenance.

Potholes remain as the defect that is most reported through our Council's customer reporting system. In addition to customer reporting, we also carry out regular inspections on the highway to identify any safety repairs that are needed.

The table below shows the estimated number of repairs that have been completed over the last 5 years.

Estimate of number of potholes filled				
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
1,072	924	2,011	2,928	3,048

Condition of local roads

By adopting an asset management approach, the Council can identify and treat roads at the right time to maximise design life at minimum cost. This approach has enabled the Council to maintain and improve the condition of the classified road network over time.

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	2%	24%	74%
2021	3%	27%	70%
2022	3%	26%	71%
2023	3%	24%	73%
2024	4%	20%	76%

The condition of the classified network (A roads) is assessed annually. Digital video imagery is captured as part of the surveys and is used to check condition, accessibility, serviceability and for asset inventory collection.

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	2%	22%	76%
2021	2%	21%	77%
2022	2%	20%	78%
2023	3%	24%	73%
2024	3%	22%	75%

The condition of the classified (B and C) network is assessed annually. Digital video imagery is captured as part of the SCANNER surveys and is used to check condition, accessibility, serviceability and for asset inventory collection.

Whilst there is no national requirement to report on the unclassified network, the Council continues to survey the unclassified network annually to establish its condition for the purpose of developing appropriate programmes of repair in accordance with current asset management guidance and best practice. 100% of the unclassified network is assessed annually to establish a local indicator.

Year	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
	Red
2020	2%
2021	2%
2022	2%
2023	3%
2024	3%

Road condition assessments on the local classified road network in England are currently made predominantly using Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads (SCANNER) laser-based technology.

A number of parameters measured in these surveys are used to produce a road condition indicator which is categorised into three condition categories:

- Green – No further investigation or treatment required
- Amber – Maintenance may be required soon
- Red – Should be considered for maintenance

From 2026/27 a new methodology will be used based on the BSI PAS2161 standard. Local Highway Authorities will be required to use a supplier that has been accredited against PAS2161. This new standard will categorise roads into five categories instead of three to help government gain a more detailed understanding of road condition in England.

Further details are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc#condition-of-local-authority-managed-roads-rdc01>

In addition to SCANNER, the Council use the following:

- Route Reports – this is a driven survey using mobile technology that detects defects on the road surface. The results produce a RAG rated map and a percentage of defect length that may need maintenance works. This will be our method of choice as the DfT are changing the requirements for reporting.
- Visual Inspection - Highway inspectors undertake safety inspections; these inspections help to inform programmes of work on the worst roads and footways in their respective areas.

Plans

Overall strategy

The overall strategy is for the highway assets to remain in a condition that supports the safe, reliable, and sustainable functioning of the highway network. This is achieved by maintaining assets to an acceptable standard aligned with usage, hierarchy, and risk.

Specific objectives include:

- Reducing long-term maintenance liabilities through increased use of preventative treatments
- Prioritising high-traffic and high-risk sections (e.g. A-roads, strategic routes) for condition improvement where safety is compromised

Asset specific Highway Asset Management Plans are being developed to capture how each asset is managed, in line with the overall asset management policy and strategy.

We manage and maintain the highways assets in a planned, cost effective, coordinated, sustainable and efficient manner, over the whole life cycle of the asset.

Best practice and innovation

West Berkshire Council has adopted the Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. This guidance suggests a preventative first time approach to Asset Management. As such a preventative approach has been taken to treat roads prior to failure occurring, this ensures that the roads are maintained in a safe condition.

The Council utilises good Asset Management techniques to deliver a long-term sustainable Highway network. This follows National Guidance with fully embedding the Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'. The Council's updated Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

(HIAMS) supports the aspirations of the Council's Corporate Strategy and Vision 2036. These documents detail the way in which the road network is managed ensuring consistency.

Potholes are of high priority to residents; The Council has fully embedded the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) 'Prevention is Better than Cure'. This supports intervening at the right time with the right repair and a first-time approach.

Working with other authorities we continually look at innovative ways to maintain the highway network. Trials have been undertaken of rejuvenation products that seal and reactivate the surface of the road extending their life. The use of low temperature asphalt is now the standard material for resurfacing roads. This reduces carbon emissions and as the material does not take as long to cool and cure the roads can be opened sooner reducing congestion.

West Berkshire Council is a member of LCRIG and ADEPT. The Council is also working with Future Highways Research Group (FSRG) to undertake a Value For Money review of highways maintenance activities.

Specific plans for 2025/26

For 2025-26 a total of 83 roads have been identified for resurfacing with an estimated length of 64km. There is a three-year highway improvement programme in place which is reviewed annually. Treatments include, surface dressing, re-texturing, micro asphalt/ slurry and traditional inlay underlining the carriageway preventative maintenance approach. For 2025-26 a total budget of £12m will be invested in the network which is £4m more than 2024-25.

In addition, the Council has developed a Footway Maintenance Programme for 2025-26 consisting of 18 schemes, delivering approximately 6km of surface improvement.

We will also be undertaking minor maintenance on the bridge stock across the district.

We will be conducting a number of investigations at locations where we are aware of problems with the effectiveness of the highway drainage system and will look to implement repairs.

Funding will continue to be prioritised on preventative maintenance over reactive maintenance with the aim to reduce the number of potholes appearing and maximising the condition of the road network.

Streetworks

We currently run a permit scheme for all works on our highway network. This allows us to manage when, how and where street and road works take place across public highways in our district. The primary objective of the scheme is to enable works to be carried out in an appropriate manner with due regard to the impact on road users.

We hold quarterly co-ordination meetings with all works promoters to go through and discuss schemes, events, developments that are planned to start in the coming months.

We also hold regular project meetings with scheme promoters before works start to agree the methodology for how the works will be undertaken looking at the best ways to achieve the scheme outcomes whilst limiting the impact on the network.

We monitor the performance of all promoters working on our network and engage with them to help improve their performance should that be necessary. All planned works are shown on the One. Network system that can be viewed by anyone and provide details of the works, duration, and possible impact.

We also use advance information/ warning signs, including Variable Message Signs (VMS) across the district to give information on future and current activities that will affect the network as well as advising use of alternative routes.

The Council is also currently in the process of undertaking a Lane Rental feasibility study to investigate whether transitioning to such a scheme would allow for a further reduction to the disruption caused by Streetworks on the network.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

Much of West Berkshire is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a lot of work has already been undertaken to increase activity in the natural environment.

The management of highway infrastructure assets can have an unavoidable impact on the environment. The Council has a responsibility to make sure environmental risks and opportunities are managed positively. It considers the impact of its actions and treatments, identifies where it is feasible to reduce or mitigate these impacts and to ideally have a positive impact on biodiversity.

Maintaining highway infrastructure assets can be a balancing act, selection of appropriate treatments and timely interventions while protecting and improving natural and historic assets. West Berkshire is looking at ways to reduce carbon in maintenance activities, use of warm mix asphalts, use of recycled asphalt materials, rejuvenators to preserve the condition of the carriageway, low carbon cold applied materials for ironwork reinstatements, use of recycled rubber speed cushions and cold applied paint products.

The Council's Environment Strategy contains proposals for carbon sequestration measures, such as the development of a programme of tree and wildflower planting in open spaces and on urban highways, including street tree planting and management.

The Council will monitor the success of these actions and incorporate them into the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan as necessary.

The conservation and enhancement of streets can provide high value to the community and local economy. In undertaking maintenance, the Council will consider the risks and opportunities locally for the choices it must make. In general, maintenance will be selected that is appropriate for the local area and funded from existing capital funding.