

REPORT TO: Environment and Regeneration PPB

DATE: 18 June 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Environment and Regeneration

SUBJECT: Local Highway Maintenance

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on local highway maintenance matters.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Government has said that 25% of the funding provided to Councils in 2025/26 will be contingent on local highway authorities demonstrating to Government that they are driving best practice and continual improvement in highways maintenance.

3.2 These requirements stem from the recent National Audit Office report and subsequent Public Accounts Committee hearing on the Condition and Maintenance of Local Roads in England. Both have recommended that the Department for Transport (DfT) seeks to improve its understanding of the condition of the country's roads.

3.3 On 25 March 2025 the DfT requested a data return from Local Authorities to unlock the uplift in funding. The DfT is particularly keen to ensure that the increase in DfT funding leads to increased highway maintenance expenditure; and that expenditure strikes the right balance between long-term preventative maintenance and reactive repairs. Reactive repairs are often necessary for safety and other reasons, but temporary quick fixes should be avoided wherever possible. A proper risk-based asset management approach will reduce the need for short-term patching. As set out in the Code of Practice on Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, when determining the balance between structural, preventative, and reactive maintenance, authorities should adopt the principle that prevention is better than cure.

3.4 The DfT have created a template covering specific information which they require all Authorities to publish on their websites by 30th June 2025. This is set out in Appendix A to this report.

3.5 By publishing this template Halton can secure the 25% of funding for our highway network as well as better informing local people of the steps being taken to improve them.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Halton already follows a risk based approach, as set out in the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice 2016.

4.2 Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a statutory duty on all Highway Authorities to maintain the highway network under their control. A failure to maintain or a failure to repair the highway can result in a breach of Section 41 and a claim for damages / compensation by a highway user.

4.3 However, Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 provides a special defence for the Council against a claim for an alleged breach of Section 41.

4.4 Maintenance of the highway network is essential to ensure the transport network in Halton operates smoothly.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Publication of the information requested by DfT is required to improve the potential amount of funding available from DfT.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S**

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence:
Well maintained highways provide a safe and more efficient highway network.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy
Ensuring Access to areas of employment ensures that business can function at all times

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families
There are no specific issues applicable to children and young people. Well maintained highways affects all service users alike.

- 6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need
The transport network links areas of opportunity and need, allowing people to access work. Active travel networks allow travel and life choices that support healthy living.
- 6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future
Well maintained highways promotes a more efficient network for users. Investment in the public transport and active travel network provides the choice of low carbon travel options.
- 6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community
The Council facilitates travel choices that are safe, inclusive, affordable, and low carbon. Travel is a key factor that allows communities to thrive.
- 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**
- 7.1 A risk assessment is not required.
- 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**
- 8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.
- 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS - None**

APPENDIX A

Halton's Highway Network

Lengths of highway, footways and cycleways (km)						
A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way	cycleways
86.4km	106km	425km	617.4km	748km	82km	112km

1. The above figures are based on the national standard United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS) network method of measuring carriageways. These are the surveyed lengths of adopted highway. These measures exclude the 31.5 Km of Mersey Gateway carriageway network as this is not maintainable at public expense.
2. The 748 km of Footways is made up of 574 km of footways running adjacent to carriageways and 174km of adopted, surfaced, independent footpaths which connect between 2 different lengths of adopted highway.
3. Other public rights of way are paths shown on the definitive map for example, a footpath across a field. Cycleways are a combination of shared footpaths and footways. Potentially these two categories may result in double counting lengths if simply added on to the Footways total.
4. The highway asset comprises of various elements which includes but not limited to bridges and structures, highway electrical equipment (such as traffic lights, street lighting, VMS), drainage infrastructure. Each of these require tailored maintenance strategies and asset management practices to ensure performance, safety and cost-efficiency over its lifecycle.
5. Highways are by far the most valuable asset Halton owns, reported at £2.3 billion in 2021-22. Significant investment is required year on year to prevent deterioration in the condition of highway assets and provide the most cost efficient level of service possible. Key to maximising value for money in highway maintenance is to understand when and how to intervene over the long term so that expensive invasive maintenance treatments are avoided for as long as possible.

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)	£7065	£7065	£2471	13%	16%

2024/25	£6380	£6380	£3576	14%	17%
2023/24	£2983	£2983	£2163	9%	27%
2022/23	£2679	£2679	£2782	6%	28%
2021/22	£1474	£1474	£2408	8%	37%
2020/21	£1640	£1640	£2761	7%	36%

6. In April 2022, the Liverpool City Region secured a £710 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) to support its five-year capital investment programme, running through to the 2026/27 financial year. Halton secured £25 million for highway works from this settlement over the 5 year period. The capital spending profile has been structured to allow sufficient time in the early stages for design and procurement, followed by increased on-site investment in the middle years. This approach ensures that by the final phase, necessary works can be completed efficiently within the programme's timeline.
7. Capital funding appears to be higher in recent year due to Highways being successful in bidding for additional capital funding allocations as part of the LCR pipeline programme
8. Key schemes associated with the Capital Funding have been:
 - Active travel network enhancements across the Borough
 - Runcorn Station Quarter connectivity
 - Silver Jubilee Bridge Refurbishment
 - A56 Major Maintenance
9. The table below highlights the number of potholes filled on the Halton network.

Estimate of number of potholes filled				
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
540	1049	3446	3592	3127

Asset Management and Condition Surveys

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	1.7%	13.8%	84.5%
2021	1.9%	15.3%	82.8%
2022	1%	10.4%	88.5%
2023	1%	13.7%	85.2%
2024	1.1%	14.2%	94.5%
Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green

2020	2%	23.6%	74%
2021	1.6%	13.4%	73.8%
2022*	1.8%	15%	83%
2023	2.3%	15.0%	82.6%
2024	2%	16.7%	81.2%

Year	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
2020	%
2021	5%
2022	14%
2023	22%
2024	27%

10. The road condition score above of Red, amber and green is a measure of the road surface condition and for the classified network of A, B & C it comes from a annual survey carried out by automated survey technology using a vehicle mounted with lasers and cameras to measure different aspects of the road. These parameters include but not limited to- rut depth, longitudinal profile (this is how bumpy the road is), texture depth and surface cracking. It is not identifying individual potholes as a specific detail these are picked up in other parameters. The measures are scored on a scale of 0-315, with any stretch of road scoring less than 40 being classed in good condition and being green, 40-100 is amber while not good it still offers a good driving surface, anything greater than 100 is poor and will probably require maintenance within the coming years.
11. For the unclassified network (U roads) the scoring is based on a visual survey carried out over a number of years to give a full network coverage. This only gives a red/ green output and is very subjective to an inspector walking those sections and has proved very difficult to get accurate repeatable data. DfT has shared a view that comparison of this data on a national basis was unreliable. As such DfT are currently accrediting new survey technology and once approved Halton will be looking to use the new type of data for reporting and future maintenance works programming once this has been determined nationally.
12. From 2026 to 2027 the DfT have mandated a new methodology of surveying and measuring roads 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 5 categories instead of 3 to help government gain a more detailed understanding of road condition in England](#)

Maintenance Plans

Overall Strategy

13. An asset management approach to the maintenance of the highway network provides a framework to ensure that available funding is targeted where need is most, and to deliver on local priorities. Such an approach links high level business objectives, stakeholder expectations and legislative requirements to decisions about delivery.
14. Asset Management also provides a clear evidence base to justify the need for investment in highway maintenance by providing a means of demonstrating how different investment strategies impact on our business goals over time. Making use of this long term approach on investment options allows decision makers to make informed choices, minimising whole-life costs in favour of more expensive, reactive short terms actions which can arise because of under investment.

Specific Plans for 2025/26

15. Carriageways and footways will be identified in accordance with the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) and specific sites will be highlighted using outputs from our Asset Management software analysis system, Horizons, which contains the database of all the independent carriageway surveys, feedback from Highways Inspectors, including areas of intensive reactive pothole repairs and will be subject to detailed visual inspection to be selected for treatment. At this point in the year the split between preventative and reactive works is yet to be determined and will be informed by the processes above. It is estimated that the number of potholes that will be repaired will be in the region of 3500, reflecting recent years.
16. The number of miles of carriageway and footways treated will be calculated once the treatment solutions have been settled upon and funding attributed accordingly. This document will be updated periodically to keep information up to date.
17. This years programme includes conventional resurfacing schemes, as well as an extensive highway preservation and rejuvenation programmes. The following roads will receive an innovative rejuvenation spray to add life to the existing road surface, reducing the need for early intervention with more conventional treatments and leading to lower CO2 emissions and environmental impact.
 - Silver Jubilee Bridge including its approaches
 - Ditton Junction
 - Queensway
 - Roundabout junction serving Runcorn Station
18. A comprehensive programme of preservation treatments including sprays and surface dressing on the following:
 - Queensbury way
 - Fiddlers ferry road
 - Ditchfield road
 - Hale road
 - Cronton lane
 - Boston Avenue
 - Pitts Heath lane
 - Hough Green Lane
19. A programme of more conventional reconstruction and resurfacing schemes including:
 - Everite Road
 - Tanhouse Lane
 - Lockett Road
 - A562 Speke Road (east bound)
 - Dundalk Road
 - Peel House Lane
 - A56/A533 Roundabout
 - Palacefields avenue junction

20. This years footway programme is still in development using data analysis and detailed visual inspections.

Streetworks

21. All roadworks are planned and coordinated through the Street Manager system. The Streetworks team hold quarterly meetings with utility companies and the Highway Authority to share programmes and to discuss potential mitigations.
22. Works are posted on the freely accessible the One Network national website:
[Causeway one.network](#)
23. The national Street Manager system ensures all utilities have notifications and access to relevant data on planned and current roadworks. The Highway Authority complies with the HBC permitting schemes and Section 58 notices are served where possible to ensure protections to newly treated road.

Climate Change, Resilience and Adaptation

24. Following successful trials in the previous years, Halton is using a programme of rejuvenation and preservation spraying for carriageways to add life back into the road surfaces delaying the need for expensive and disruptive resurfacing works. This is a technology that has been used successfully in America for decades but is relatively new to the UK highway market.
25. When resurfacing schemes are necessary Halton uses warm and low temperature asphalt where possible and applicable to help reduce carbon emissions.
26. Since 2017 we have operated a winter maintenance cold route for marginal nights. This is based on a thermal map of Halton's road network which shows the colder spots that may need treatment when others do not. Consequently the number of gritting routes can be reduced on these marginal nights, leading to savings in vehicle fuel, salt and economically in drivers over time.
27. Our Term Maintenance Contractor Tarmac Ltd, takes extensive measures to reduce its carbon footprint, both nationally and locally utilising electric vehicles and plant where appropriate, the latest Euro rated vehicles where electric is not currently practicable and adheres to comprehensive suit of key performance indicators aimed at driving down carbon usage.

Halton's Highway Team

28. The highways team consistently delivers work of the highest standard, underpinned by technical excellence, proactive planning and a strong commitment to public services. Through a combination of skilled project management, robust quality control and strategic collaboration with contractors and stakeholders the team ensures that every scheme is completed efficiently safely and to an exacting specification. The team applies best practice in asset management, data-led decision making and innovation in materials and methods, ensuring long term durability and the minimum disruption to the travelling public. Projects are regularly completed on time and within budget demonstrating meticulous financial oversight and a culture of continuous improvement.
29. In an environment where public expectations and fiscal pressures are high, the highways team stands out as a trusted capable and cost effective service and what sets the highways team apart is its ability to deliver value for money by leveraging competitive procurement processes reducing reworking through right first time delivery, and active seeking efficiencies in planning and delivery. This is evidenced further by strong performance indicators, and repeat success in securing external funding for Halton's network.