

Local Highway Maintenance Transparency Report

June 2025

Contents

Document Information	3
Document Control	3
1.Our Highway Network	4
2. Highway Maintenance Spending Figures	5
3. Condition of Local Roads	7
4. Plans	8

Document Information

Title	Local Highway Maintenance Transparency Report
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Description	This document presents key information about Bath & North East Somerset Council's highways maintenance activities to help local taxpayers see the difference that funding is making in their area.

Document Control

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1. Our Highway Network

Bath & North East Somerset Council's highway network includes over 1,000km of carriageway and thousands of highway assets like streetlights and drainage gullies.

The Bath & North East Somerset Council's highway network consists of:

- 1,102km carriageways
- 886km of footways & cycleways
- 39.1km off-road cycleways/shared paths & permissive paths
- Approx. 35,600 drainage gullies, chambers, soakaways and outfall
- 320 bridges and culverts
- 123 footbridges
- 2 subways
- 576 retaining walls
- 16,799 streetlights
- 2,628 illuminated signs and bollards
- 861 feeder pillars
- 44 traffic signals junctions
- 74 signalised pedestrian crossings
- 16 variable message signs
- 953km of Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- 4,266 PROW furniture and structures

Detailed Length of Highways, Footways and Cycleways

Type of Highway	Length in Kilometres
A roads	142.3
B and C roads	362.6
U roads	597.4
Total roads	1102.3
Footways	886
Other public rights of way	953
Cycleways (off road)	39.1

2. Highway Maintenance Spending Figures

Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£)	Capital spend (£)	Revenue spend (£)	Estimate of percentage spent on preventative maintenance	Estimate of percentage spent on reactive maintenance
2025 to 2026 projected	£7,718,000	£9,958,000	£7,085,697	58%	42%
2024 to 2025	£6,957,920	£8,957,920	£6,864,095	57%	43%
2023 to 2024	£6,626,295	£8,626,295	£6,147,040	58%	42%
2022 to 2023	£5,834,343	£7,834,343	£6,770,509	54%	46%
2021 to 2022	£4,479,655	£6,479,655	£6,177,259	51%	49%
2020 to 2021	£6,136,510	£6,636,510	£5,934,446	53%	47%

The Council's expenditure on highway assets is based around revenue funding for the day-to-day reactive maintenance, and capital funding for ongoing preventative asset improvements.

Examples of preventative maintenance spend include improvements to highway surfaces and highway structures. Based on current capital funding levels, in any one year we would aim to resurface or surface treat around 2-3% of our total network length. We have also planned to undertake one embankment stabilisation, five bridge improvements and other assessment works in 2025/26.

With regards to reactive revenue maintenance, the presence of pothole defects in our carriageways or footways is the most recognisable and newsworthy topic nationally, but to provide a perspective, typically 10% of our total revenue expenditure on carriageway and footway assets is apportioned to the filling of potholes.

The split in spending between preventative and reactive maintenance works is driven by the allocation of capital and revenue funding streams, and rules around how this funding can be spent. With the ongoing increased capital investment year on year, we would look to increase spending on preventative maintenance. Having an agreed level of future funding over a longer-term period would help us achieve this.

The total number of potholes filled is not an indication of the overall condition of carriageways and footways. Preventative maintenance is aimed at reducing defects and therefore if more preventative maintenance is undertaken there are likely to be fewer potholes.

As a competent highway authority, we would like to be able to resurface all our carriageway and footway assets as they reach the end of their serviceable life, at which time the formation of potholes is most prevalent. Based on current expenditure and network condition we are at a point where we are holding the decline of assets but with more preventative capital funding, we could be in a position to reverse some of the recent years trends and reduce the reactive workload. However, the impact of recent weather events is presenting us with a wholly different challenge.

Number of Potholes Filled

Year	Number of potholes filled
2025 to 2026	7,084 (estimate)
2024 to 2025	6,445
2023 to 2024	7,724
2022 to 2023	3,759
2021 to 2022	3,579
2020 to 2021	4,245

3. Condition of Local Roads

The following tables set out the high-level condition ratings of roads across the Bath and North East Somerset Council highway network. Highway infrastructure is vital to the local economy and the ability of residents, businesses and visitors to safely travel around the authority. With current levels of investment, we have been able to slow the deterioration of the roads, as can be seen in the information provided. To reverse the decline after many years of underfunding is a challenge, one faced by highway authorities across the country.

Up until 2020 we had been using SCANNER surveys to gather consistent condition data across parts of our carriageway network. We then moved to the Gaist high-definition video surveys and assessments from 2021. The new approach allowed a full annual survey across the whole carriageway network.

A number of parameters measured in these surveys are used to produce a road condition indicator which is categorised into 3 condition categories:

- green – no further investigation or treatment required
- amber – maintenance may be required soon
- red – should be considered for maintenance

Percentage of A Roads in Each Condition Category

Year	Percentage of A roads in red category	Percentage of A roads in amber category	Percentage of A roads in green category
2020	3.72%	49.78%	46.5%
2021	4.27%	52.53%	43.2%
2022	4.57%	54.22%	41.21%
2023	4.92%	55.78%	39.3%
2024	4.58%	59.48%	35.94%

The condition data for A roads is collected annually.

Percentage of B and C Roads in Each Condition Category

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in red category	Percentage of B and C roads in amber category	Percentage of B and C roads in green category
2020	16%	58.69%	25.31%
2021	13.2%	60.76%	26.04%
2022	16.84%	60.86%	22.3%
2023	17.35%	59.8%	22.05%
2024	17.14%	59.63%	23.23%

The condition data for B and C roads is collected annually.

Percentage of U Roads in the Red Condition Category

Year	Percentage
2020	25.16%
2021	25.44%
2022	24.67%
2023	24.33%
2024	23.96%

The condition data for unclassified roads is collected annually, where it has been possible for the survey vehicle to gain access.

4. Plans

Overall Strategy

Our management of our highway infrastructure is in line with the Code of Practice 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure' published on 28th October 2016.

https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/17087/well-managed_highway_infrastructure_combined_-_28_october_2016_amended_15_march_2017_-3.pdf

How we manage our highway assets can be seen in detail in our Highways Asset Management Plan, which is on our website:

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/highway-infrastructure-asset-management-plan>

Delivering Innovation and Efficiency

We are always looking for new, innovative and more efficient ways to improve our highway network and following a successful trial in 2022, invested in the procurement of a Thermal Road Repair vehicle and equipment. The equipment is a high output, low-emission road and footway surface permanent repair system.

The machine uses a unique thermal heating process, achieved by using specialised computer equipment, ensuring surfaces are reformed to a very high standard. It uses a combination of sustainable methods and materials so the impact on the environment and network is minimal.

Benefits include zero waste to landfill, no operator hand arm vibration on typical material excavation, in situ recycling of 90% material and overall, a less noisy operation.



Benefiting from the proximity of a supplier just across the authority boundary in Somerset, we are now utilising a Viafix cold lay permanent pothole repair material supplied in bulk bags. The material typically is three to four times more expensive than traditional hot supplied asphalt concrete, but in bulk supply we have been able to agree a more agreeable cost.

Material management is key, but we have significantly improved productivity of our reactive gangs by reducing their travelling and queuing time at the quarry for hot material. We have also reduced the wastage experienced when hot material was lost due to workability, particularly during colder and wetter months. This cold Viafix material is also now used on our thermal road repairs to replace defect loss material.

We are also using a post and pre-winter spray injection patching operation on our rural road network, addressing many defects rapidly in two typically eight-week programmes between April/May and September/October each year. The size of our network does not warrant owning our own machine, so this is hired in through our VolkerHighways contract via Archway Roadmaster and is well suited to rural roads and lanes.



As part of our continued efforts to improve the delivery of maintenance to our highway and street lighting assets, we have worked in collaboration with VolkerHighways since 2019. Our contract with VolkerHighways included improvements to our main operational depot in Clutton, where a new energy efficient modular welfare and office accommodation unit has been built, and fitted with 132 solar PV panels with a battery storage facility. Five EV charging points have also been installed.

The new offices provide a collaborative working space for both council officers and VolkerHighways staff and has significantly reduced the site's carbon footprint through the generation and storage of our own electrical energy.

Specific plans for 2025 to 2026

A combined capital investment of £9,908,000 will be spent to improve highway assets in 2025/26, making it the largest capital programme of investment for a number of years.

The funding approval was provided as part of the Full Council Budget Meeting on 25th February 2025, more information can be found here:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=272&MId=6407>

Visit this webpage to see which areas of our network will benefit from this funding:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s85801/Annex%205%20ii%20-%20Structural%20Maintenance%20Capital%20Programme%202025-26.pdf>

The funding in 2025/26 will be split between preventative and reactive works, with an estimated 58% of funds being spent on preventative works and 42% on reactive works. With the current level of funding, we are planning to resurface a total of 18 miles of carriageway and expect to repair around 7,084 potholes over this time period.

The approved highway maintenance capital programme for 2025/26 sets out to deliver:

Description	Scale	Value
Street lighting column replacement and underground cable improvements	424 columns	£750,000
One embankment stabilisation, five bridge improvements and other assessment works	6 asset improvements	£860,000
Twelve drainage improvement projects and detailed investigation works	12 projects	£600,000
Twenty carriageway resurfacing sites	9.1 miles (43,197m ²)	£3,625,000
Four carriageway surface dressing sites	8.9 miles (90,677m ²)	£1,450,000
Seven footway paving sites	1,105m ²	£508,000
Asphalt concrete footway sites	11,300m ²	£650,000
Planned carriageway patching programme	Various locations	£675,000
Planned road marking improvement programme	Various locations	£225,000
Spray injection patching programme	Two eight-week visits	£225,000
Traffic signals improvement programme	Various locations	£340,000
	Grand total	£9,908,000

This, together with the ongoing revenue investments in Council highways assets like filling potholes, fixing streetlights, cleansing gullies, replacing damaged street furniture and gritting roads, will go a long way to improving the lives of people in Bath and North East Somerset.

Streetworks

To minimise disruption caused by utility company works, we make sure all works are coordinated. We use a permitting scheme that requires companies to obtain permission before starting any planned works. This scheme also allows certain conditions to be attached to a permit, which, if not adhered to, will attract a fixed penalty notice. We also impose fines, like overrun charges, if agreed reasonable time periods are not adhered to.

We make sure that the most disruptive works are publicised and provide clear information for upcoming and ongoing works. We use a management platform that helps utility companies coordinate their works effectively and give real time updates to the traveling public. To further promote coordination and collaborative working, we run a scheme under Section 58 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, which protects newly laid roads from utility works for long periods of time under certain circumstances.

Climate change, Resilience and Adaptation

In March 2019 Bath and North East Somerset Council declared a climate emergency.

Corporately the council is driving a climate adaptation programme (i.e. preparing for and adjusting to the changing climate) and building climate resilience into the organisation, service delivery and places for the long-term. Therefore, an urgent area of focus under our core policy is to tackle the climate and ecological emergency.

Examples of how we are de-carbonising our highway maintenance operations have been outlined previously in this report under section 4; however, we are also working through our Highway Street Lighting LED Programme, which started in 2012. Advances in LED technologies have enabled us to introduce LED lamps in the World Heritage City of Bath, where the issue of lighting and lamp colour is more sensitive. Our street lighting also operates on an overnight dimming regime which helps reduce their energy consumption.

Eight of our fifteen highway fleet inspection vehicles are fully electric and as technologies in this area progress, we will be working with our supply chain to do more.

In recent years we have experienced impacts to our highway assets resulting from the effects of climate change. The winter of 2022/23 saw a cycle of extremely cold nights followed by heavy rainfall, which resulted in a spike of potholes forming and needing repairs. We are also experiencing increased pressure on our highway gully cleansing programme from more intense and frequent storm events.

Whilst our response during weather events is challenging, it also takes several weeks after the weather event to deal with the reactive fall out, which then negatively impacts our cyclic cleansing operations. Additional capital funding from the highway maintenance block programme is being allocated to flooding and drainage projects to deal with known flooding issues on our network to help address this problem.