

Brighton & Hove City Council
City Transport

Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report

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Brighton & Hove
City Council

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1. Introduction

On 20 December 2024, the Government announced the 2025/26 highway maintenance funding allocations for all eligible highway authorities and mayoral combined authorities - this included additional funding announced by the Chancellor as part of the 2024 Budget.

The Government has said that 25% of the £500 million additional funding for 2025/26 would be contingent on local highway authorities demonstrating to Government that they are complying with certain criteria aimed at driving best practice and continual improvement in highways maintenance practice.

The rationale behind these requirements stems 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 seek to improve its understanding of the condition of our country’s roads, and by sharing this information, our authority can help secure much-needed funding for our highway networks as well as better inform local people of the steps we are taking to improve them.

This report provides a summary of the Highway Maintenance funding received by Brighton and Hove City Council from the Department for Transport (DfT) over the last 5 years and how this funding has been spent. It provides a summary of the risk-based asset management approach that Brighton and Hove City Council has adopted to ensure it is aligned with the [‘Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – A Code for Practice’](#) and the Department’s principle that prevention is better than cure. It also ensures transparency with the public on how public funding has been allocated and used to maintain the roads in the local area to ensure safety whilst providing value for money with the limited funds available.

2. Our Highway Network

Table 1 sets out the length of road network that we are responsible for and how this is split by road type and usage.

<i>Lengths of highway, footways and cycleways (km)</i>						
A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way	Cycleways
62km	67km	480km	609km	976km	159km	49km

Table 1 – BHCC Highway Network

Table 2 summarises all the Highway assets which sit within the Highway Network that are managed by Brighton and Hove Highway Authority.

<i>Asset Group</i>	<i>Asset Inventory</i>
<i>Highway Structures</i>	51 Bridges 93 Retaining Walls 11 Pedestrian subways 3 Footbridges
<i>Highway Drainage</i>	20,496 Gullies 4,977 Soakaways 4.5km drainage channels
<i>Street Lights and other electrical infrastructure</i>	20,315 Street Lights 2,314 lit signs and posts 1,490 Lit and reflective bollards 112 Belisha Beacons 298 Subway lights 19 School amber warning signs 593 Feeder pillars
<i>Traffic Signals and other ITS infrastructure</i>	1,734 Traffic Signal poles 1,635 Traffic Signal lanterns 1,572 Pedestrian crossing lanterns 71 cycle signal lanterns 113 CCTV cameras 20 Variable message signs 34 Vehicle-activated signs 187 Real-time information signs 54 Automatic traffic counters (including Bluetooth)
<i>Road Signs</i>	39,353 Signs
<i>Road lining and markings</i>	752km of road markings
<i>Safety barriers and features</i>	11.8km of pedestrian guard rail 4.5km of vehicle safety barriers 15,819 Safety Bollards
<i>EV charging</i>	410 EV charging points
<i>Bus Shelters</i>	1,497 bus stops/shelters
<i>Cycle Parking</i>	2,023 Cycle stands 152 Cycle Hangers
<i>Grit bins</i>	427 Grit bins

Table 2 – Highway Assets

3. Highway maintenance spending figures

Table 3 details the level of funding received each year from the Department for Transport to maintain our Highway assets. It also details the revenue contribution made by the Council to fund reactive safety maintenance repairs across the City.

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)	£ 5,283	£ 5,283	£ 2,210	71%	29%
2024/25	£ 3,687	£ 3,738	£ 1,992	65%	35%
2023/24	£ 4,269	£ 4,463	£ 1,900	70%	30%
2022/23	£ 3,274	£ 3,936	£ 1,647	70%	30%
2021/22	£ 3,274	£ 4,615	£ 1,398	77%	23%
2020/21	£ 2,699	£ 4,425	£ 1,612	73%	27%

Table 3 – Highway Maintenance Spending

Notes

* total capital funding allocated by DfT per year for Highway Maintenance as part of the Highway Maintenance Block and the associated historic funding streams e.g. *Network North, Pothole Fund, Additional Pothole fund, Incentive Fund* etc. It does not include any additional funding from other departments for maintenance that has been bid for via a separate process e.g. National Highway Diversion Route Funding which is project/location specific. It also does not include the DfT Integrated Transport Block Fund which is primarily used to deliver new schemes.

** the actual spend of capital DfT Grant funding on maintenance across all Highway Assets. In some cases the spend exceeds the budget but in these years, DfT Integrated Transport Block grant funding was used to subsidise the maintenance needs within that year.

*** the total BHCC funded revenue spend on reactive safety maintenance on the Highway network to ensure safety across all asset groups.

+ It has been assumed that preventative maintenance includes resurfacing, surface extension treatments, large-scale patching to extend asset life, painting of cast iron assets, upgrade of signals and LED replacement programmes.

Additional information on spending




Capital Highway Maintenance

All capital funding provided by DfT as part of the Maintenance Block Fund and associated funding streams is spent on **structural and preventative maintenance**. This includes the following work programmes:

- Road and footway resurfacing
- Road surface extension treatments including rejuvenation and preservation treatments e.g. Reclamite and Micro-asphalt
- Large-scale machine patching of roads and footways to extend asset life
- Replacement and upgrade of traffic signals
- Painting of cast iron lamp columns to extend asset life
- Spend to Save projects to upgrade lighting and signals with LEDs
- Repair of highway structures

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The information below shows the 4 types of planned road maintenance that will be carried out on our carriageways in 2025/26.

Surface Extension	Machine Patching	Resurfacing
		
<p>Rejuvenation e.g. <u>Reclamite</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restores the surface - Prevents cracks - Seals the surface - Applied to new surfaces every 3 years 	<p>Preservation e.g. Micro-asphalt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restores skid resistance - Seals the surface - Extends life by 10 – 15 years 	<p>Machine Patching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repair of larger sections of failing roads to extend asset life - Also used for pre-patching before surface extension treatments if needed e.g. A259
		<p>Resurfacing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resurface of failed roads - Includes the use of specialist products e.g. <u>SureLayer</u> & <u>SureLane</u>

The split of the capital budget between preventative and structural maintenance for roads is determined by condition projection modelling. Since 2024/25, 53% of the available capital budget has been allocated to preventative maintenance and 47% has been allocated to structural maintenance.

Reactive safety maintenance

This includes the repair and making safe of all asset types on the highway in line with the BHCC Highways Reactive Safety Maintenance and Inspection Policy 2025. The approach taken specifically for roads and footways is to carry out permanent repairs whenever possible. This includes removing material back to solid ground and patching the surface using a warm-mix material. Temporary repairs are only carried out when there is an immediate risk of harm and/or access is difficult e.g. at a busy junction that requires more planning to gain access. In these cases, a temporary repair is carried out using a cold mix material however a follow-up ticket for a permanent repair is raised whenever feasible at the same time.

Estimate of the number of potholes filled					
2020/2021	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	
8353	3577	3163	4805	6027	

Table 4 – Estimated number of carriageway pothole repairs

Notes

Repairs are recorded in m2 rather than the number of potholes. It has therefore been assumed that 1m2 of surface repair is the equivalent of one pothole.

4. Condition of local roads

All Councils are required to submit road condition data to the Department for Transport annually. The method for collection and minimum frequency is set out by the government and this data is represented in tables 5-7 below. All A, B & C roads are required to be surveyed at least once every 2 years and unclassified roads are to be surveyed every 4 years.

In Brighton and Hove, we have traditionally collected data more frequently than is required; however in 2023-24, we carried out a full network condition survey of our roads using a new collection method. This was to improve the quality of our condition data and to create a new baseline. From 2025-26 onwards, we will continue to take a full network approach as this ensures that we can make informed decisions about all roads within our network each year.

Financial year ending	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	8%	39%	53%
2021	6%	34%	60%
2022	6%	32%	62%
2023	6%	38%	56%
2024 *	18%	26%	56%

Table 5 – A Roads – Road Condition

Financial year ending	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	5%	28%	68%
2021	4%	29%	67%
2022	4%	27%	69%
2023	4%	27%	69%
2024 *	15%	23%	62%

Table 6 – B & C Roads – Road Condition

Financial year ending	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
2020	16%
2021	13%
2022	11%
2023	12%
2024 *	8%

Table 7 – Unclassified (local) Roads – Road Condition

Notes

* Historically, road condition data has been collected using a method known as SCANNER. In the financial year ending in 2024, the Council moved to a new method of road condition collection to improve accuracy. The increase in the percentage of red roads in this year is therefore due to the change in collection method rather than a significant change in the condition of the network.

Changes in road condition data collection

Road condition assessments on the local classified road network in England have traditionally been collected 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

In 2023/24, the Council moved away from this approach as the accuracy of SCANNER in an urban environment is not as good as in rural settings. This means that the data has remained relatively consistent between 2020 to 2023 despite there being a noticeable decline in the condition of the network. We now carry out an Annual Engineers Inspection (AEI), which is carried out by professional engineers who record an effective treatment for a realistic treatment length i.e. junction to junction. This provides a more realistic representation of what work is needed on the network and how much it will cost to deliver. The condition indicators with an AEI survey are as follows:

- Green – As new/up to standard
- Amber – Requires preventative maintenance
- Red – Requires structural maintenance

From 2026/27, the Department for Transport will be introducing a new data collection standard (BSI PAS2161). The new standard will categorise roads into five categories instead of three to help the government gain a more detailed understanding of road conditions in England. This may mean that there is a further shift in the data before we can establish a baseline to compare year-on-year progress.

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>

5. Plans

Overall strategy

How do we improve the condition of our roads?

Once defects begin to appear regularly on a road, the road has structurally failed and needs to be resurfaced. There is not enough funding to resurface all the roads that have failed and therefore prioritising the repair of investigation-level defects keeps the road safe until a structural resurface can be funded.

There is currently a £57m maintenance backlog on carriageways and £39m on footways.

To improve the condition of our roads we need long-term investment in our capital-planned maintenance programmes. This includes surface extension treatments that rejuvenate and preserve the condition of good roads to prevent them from failing in the first place.

We follow a data-led lifecycle asset management approach to develop a prioritised programme of planned maintenance.

What is the lifecycle approach?

A lifecycle approach is a data-led technique used by most local authorities to monitor and predict the future condition of their highways assets so that they know which roads to treat, how to treat them and when to treat them to maximise the lifespan of each asset. This reduces the whole life cost and reduces carbon over time. The condition data collected as part of this process is also used to carry out condition projection modelling, which predicts the future budget requirements to maintain a 'steady state'.

By following a lifecycle approach, we treat roads at each stage of their lifecycle so that the overall life of the asset can be extended. This delays the need for costly resurfacing and reduces the whole life cost of the asset. A lifecycle plan includes cost-effective preventative maintenance such as rejuvenation and preservation treatments that are applied to surfaces whilst they are still in good condition. This way we keep our good roads good for longer.

How do we prioritise the programme?

Annual condition survey data is used to identify what treatments are needed on each road. We then apply value management to prioritise the required works. This is completed in two stages as set out below.

Stage 1 – An automated process which prioritises annual condition survey data based on several factors including: -

- Road Condition
- Predicted deterioration rates
- Highway inspection condition reporting
- Road maintenance hierarchy and strategic significance including walking and cycling networks
- Historic reactive maintenance costs
- Proximity to key services
- Ride quality

Stage 2 – A manual process to filter schemes based on: -

- An engineering site assessment
- Proximity to live or upcoming development sites
- Proximity to live or upcoming Capital Projects
- Road space availability i.e. planned utility works
- Applying lifecycle planning budget allocations across treatment types
- Review of scheme-level cost and affordability

For further details of our approach across all our highway asset groups, please refer to the [Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2023-2025](#). This document is currently being reviewed and an update will be published later in 2025.

How do we follow best practice, deliver innovation and drive efficiency?

Brighton and Hove City Council's Highway Asset Management approach aligns with the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice. We are active members within local and regional groups, such as the Local Council Road and Innovation Group (LCRIG) and Local Government Technical Advisers Group (LGTAG). These groups meet regularly to share best practice and to discuss the latest innovations within the industry.

Specific plans for 2025/26

Full details of how the Highways Maintenance grant funding will be spent in 2025/26 were agreed by members at Full Cabinet on 24th April 2025. Links to the relevant documents are below:

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- [Local Transport Plan Capital Programme Report 2025/26](#)
- [Indicative road improvement programme 2025/26](#)

As the plans are finalised, details of upcoming road surface improvement works will be published on our [website](#) and promoted in social media and the press.

Table 8 summarises the key anticipated deliverables for 2025/26.

Asset Group	DfT Grant Funding Allocation (£000)	Outputs
Roads	£3,950	131,327m ² of preventative maintenance including both rejuvenation and preservation surface treatments 35,894m ² of road resurfacing 45,104m ² of large-scale patching to extend asset life
Footways	£628	10,000m ² of preventative maintenance including slurry seal to extend asset life Up to 35 footways will receive large-scale patching to extend asset life
Highway Structures	£300	Project contributions to strengthen East Cliff wall to support Madeira Terrace and Duke's Mound retaining wall
Drainage	£100	Repair of highway drainage infrastructure at key flooding sites around the City, including replacement of broken gullies and pipes as needed to reduce surface water. Expected to bring improvement to 10-15 sites.
Street Lights	£100	Preventative painting of up to 360 cast iron lamp columns and 360 swan neck brackets
Traffic Signals	£150	Upgrade of up to 2 existing traffic signal junctions/crossings
Asset Management Framework	£55	Contribution towards condition and risk surveys and condition projection modelling for two further asset groups.
Total	£5,283	

Table 8 – Highway Maintenance Programme Summary 2025-26

Streetworks

Table 9 explains the steps the Council are taking to minimise disruption caused by street works across the City and to ensure that they are planned and coordinated effectively. Streetworks include all works carried out on the public highway, whether it is works carried out on behalf of the Council or by third parties such as utility companies, developers or local residents and businesses.

Activities	Status
Permit scheme	BHCC has had a road permit scheme in place since 2015, which manages works on the network to improve the strategic and operational management of the road network through better planning, scheduling and management of activities to minimise disruption to any people using the road or pavement.
Regular liaison with utilities	The Permit Team meets with utility companies and contractors every month to improve coordination and compliance with the relevant regulations.
Section 58	A Section 58 notice is raised ahead of any planned carriageway or footway resurfacing works. This protects our newly laid roads and footways, and prevents utilities from digging them up for 3 to 5 years after they've been reconstructed or resurfaced, unless there is an emergency.
Internal monthly coordination meetings	Regular internal meetings are held to improve works coordination across service areas and project boards are set up to manage larger projects or programmes.
Restrictive hours	Hours of working are restricted on the strategic network to minimise disruption. E.g. works in the vicinity of schools are often restricted to school holidays when feasible or carried out within restricted hours to minimise disruption.
Established wide load routes	Specific routes for wide loads are designated and street furniture within these routes is removable where possible to aid the movement of wide loads when needed.
Special events	The Council works closely with event organisers to ensure that events are managed safely and to minimise disruption to other road users. Large events are coordinated from the Traffic Control Centre which operates 24/7.
Transparency of active works – One Network	All permitted works are visible on www.one.network/uk which can be accessed by everyone
Permit Inspectors	Permit Inspectors monitor works carried out on the network to ensure that they are carried out safely and to the required standards. Action is taken against organisations that do not comply with the conditions of their permits or where standards are not met.
Local Street Gazetteer and National Street Gazetteer	Maintaining the Local Street Gazetteer and providing monthly updates to the National Street Gazetteer
National Underground Asset Register (NUAR)	Providing asset data on an annual basis to the National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) to improve safety for road operatives and to improve transparency
Licensing for skips, scaffolding, table and chairs and hoarding	The Council has a duty to protect the Highway and keep it safe for all road users. This includes managing the use of skips, scaffolding, table and chairs and hoarding via a licensing scheme. Action is taken against those who do not comply with the conditions of their licence or where standards are not met.
Lane Rental Scheme	Future consideration is being given to the introduction of a Lane Rental Scheme which will apply charges to external organisations for the time spent on the Highway. This aims to reduce traffic congestion and disruption caused by street works. The charges are focused on the busiest streets and times.

Table 9 – Managing streetworks on the road network

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

In December 2018, Brighton & Hove City Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in a cross-party commitment. The council held a [Climate Assembly](#) and Youth Assembly on the topic of travel and transport in autumn 2020. Ongoing development of climate action work was published in the 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme and approved by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2021. The latest annual report and information on what actions have been taken specifically within the area of Travel and Transport can be viewed on our website - [Brighton & Hove City Council 2030 Carbon Neutral Programme Annual Report 2022 to 2023](#)

The Council has also published a [Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and Adaption Action Plan](#) that sets out the key impacts of climate change on all aspects of the City including infrastructure.

Key initiatives in the last three years to decarbonise our maintenance operations have included:

- Adopting a data-led whole lifecycle approach to managing our key Highway assets, such as roads and footways. This is intended to maximise asset life, reduce costs and reduce the carbon impact of maintaining our roads in the long-term.
- Using preventative maintenance treatments and processes as recommended by the [Road Surface Treatment Association](#) to extend the life of assets and reduce the whole life carbon cost.
- Use of the latest products within the industry to reduce the volume of new material needed to maintain the network e.g. use of poly-modified binders to add strength to the roads and therefore reducing construction depths.
- Trialling of innovative surface extension treatments on our ageing 150km concrete road network.
- Retrofitting LED lights into all street lights and traffic signals by 2030.
- Working towards 100% of all Council vehicles being electric by 2030.
- Alignment with the Orbis Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy which ensures that carbon reduction and accountability are built into our NEC Highways Construction Framework Contract and all future Highway contracts.
- Implementing a new Highway Asset Management System to improve efficiencies in the operations, as well as to improve data and reporting and therefore improve decision making and quality control.

Additional information on plans

The [Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2023-25](#) is available to view online and provides further information on the Council's approach to Highway asset management. This document is currently being updated and an update will be published later in 2025.

The [Local Transport Plan](#) sets out the Council's outcomes and priorities for Transport and Travel. Details of past and future Local Transport Plans can be viewed on our website.

The [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) is a strategic document that sets out how the bus services in the city could be improved. Specifically, this includes how the council and operators will respond to the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy and grow bus use.

