

**REPORT TO:** Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 18th June 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director Environment and Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Environment and Urban Renewal

**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 PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Well maintained highways lead to a safe 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 affect all service users alike.

**6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

There are no equality and diversity implications.

**6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

Well maintained highways promote a more efficient network for users.

**6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

None identified.

**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**

9.1 None identified.

**10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

‘None under the meaning of the Act.’

## 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

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.

748 km of Footways is made up of 574 km of footways adjacent to carriageways and 174km of adopted, surfaced, independent footpaths which connect between 2 different lengths of adopted Highway. 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 and are therefore potentially being double counting in parts.

### 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%

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 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.

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.

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

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%	84.5%
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%

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 an 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.

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 the inspector walking those sections and has proved very difficult to get accurate repeatable data and there has been a national view including DfT that this survey and data output was felt to be poor and unreliable to use. 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.

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.](#)

The actual value of the highway asset is based on a formula provided by CIPFA ( chartered institute of public finance and accountancy) in 2018 as part of the Whole of government accounts these figure have not been updated by them, however we have used various indices to try and give a more up to date figure, however the process requires a lot of inputs from various survey types of different elements the highway asset including structures street lighting as well as the carriageway and footway surveys and has not been run for a number of years.

## **Maintenance Plans**

### **Overall strategy**

Asset management helps Halton, as the local Highway Authority, to understand the value of the highway asset and the costs linked with maintaining that asset, providing a framework to ensure that available funding is targeted to where it is needed most to deliver on local priorities. It achieves this by linking high level business objectives, stakeholder expectations and legislative requirements to actions on the ground to deliver the optimal level of service within the available funding at the lowest risk.

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.

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 term actions which arise because of under investment.

### **Specific plans for 2025/26**

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 in keeping with recent years. 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 and current.

This year's programme includes conventional resurfacing schemes, as well as an extensive highway preservation and rejuvenation programmes on the following roads:

Silver Jubilee Bridge including its approaches, Ditton Junction, Queensway and the recently reconfigured roundabout junction serving Runcorn Station 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.

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

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

This year's footway programme is still in development using data analysis and detailed visual inspections.

### **Streetworks**

Works are planned and coordinated through the Streetworks team, quarterly meeting are held with Utility Companies and the Highway Authority to share programmes and to discuss potential mitigations. Works are posted on the freely accessible One Network national website and the national Street Manager system ensuring the public and all utilities have notification and access to relevant data on up and coming as well as 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**

Following successful trials in the previous years, we are embarking on 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.

When resurfacing schemes are necessary, we seek to use warm and low temperature asphalt where possible and applicable to help reduce carbon emissions. Since 2017 we have operated a winter maintenance cold route for marginal nights. This is based on a thermal map of Haltons 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. 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.

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. 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.