June 2025

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

Solihull's highways network comprises of 985 kilometres of carriageway, with the unclassified network accounting for approximately 69% of the total highway's asset.

The footway and cycle network length is approximately 2,021 kilometres. The council does not maintain trunk roads or motorways which are the responsibility of National Highways.

The overall breakdown of road length by classification is shown below

A Road	*B and C roads*	*U roads*	*Total Roads*	*Footways*
120km	*185km*	*680km*	*985km*	*2,021km*

In addition to this, Solihull Council is responsible for over 600 structures including road bridges, footbridges, underpasses, subways, culverts and retaining walls and approximately 40,000 drainage assets, 24,000 street lighting assets and a significant quantum of street furniture, road markings and verges.

Solihull's highway network is estimated to have a replacement value of £1.37 billion. This is the Council most valuable council asset, servicing the borough and regions economic growth. It is imperative that this delivers the required levels of services to users to ensure the efficient movement of people and goods.

Our network is in the heart of the country, with many of the West Midlands economic assets located with the borough boundary. Our network provides vital connections to Birmingham Airport, Birmingham International Station and the National Exhibition Centre, all of which lie within Solihull and are served by the Solihull highway network.

Solihull will also be home to the HS2 Interchange Station, making the road network in Solihull one of the country's most strategically important, connecting people and skills to vital labour markets.

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)	£7,162	£7,162	£2,630	**81%**	**19%**
2024/25	£4,552	£4,552	£2,666	**78%**	**22%**
2023/24	£4,146	£4,293	£2,723	**67%**	**33%**
2022/23	£5,737	£6,417	£2,657	**87%**	**13%**
2021/22	£5,733	£5,733	£2,686	**85%**	**15%**
2020/21	£4,278	£4,336	£2,567	**85%**	**15%**

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.

The following work types are undertaken for all class of roads.

- **Patching**- Undertaken up to a maximum of 10% of the road surface.
- **Overlay (preventative treatments) –** thin overlays are applied to road surfaces where structural failure has not occurred. These treatments extend the life of the existing structure between 6 and 10 years.
- **Resurfacing** – where the existing surface layer has deteriorated and needs to be replaced, this may be partial or the entire road. This provides a life of more than 20 years.
- **Reconstruction** – This is where the top layers are removed as the structural integrity

has failed. This provides a design life circa 40 years but will require a surface treatment during its lifecycle.

Our network is continuously monitored by a team of inspectors who organise repairs in line with the DfT code of practice for well maintained highways. Using this methodology, the following reactive repairs have been undertaken year on year.

Estimate of number of potholes filled				
2021/22	**2022/22**	**2022/23**	**2023/24**	**2024/25**
753	773	775	1,065	1,640

Condition of local roads

The following tables show the condition of the highway network by road classification, the percentages in the red column shown the percentage of the road network that may be considered for some form of maintenance treatment.

It can be seen from the tables that a steady state is being maintained for the condition of the highway network. Solihull's target for A roads is 4% During 2023 more resource was put in to repairing B and C Roads which resulted in that year's A roads being above target. As the B and C roads condition indicator is now reducing, funding is being prioritised on A roads to ensure that the condition indicator remains at 4% or less.

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	**Amber**	**Green**
2020	1%	28%	71%
2021	4%	29%	67%
2022	4%	31%	65%
2023	6%	30%	64%
2024	3%	29%	68%

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	**Amber**	**Green**
2020	1%	11%	88%
2021	2%	18%	80%
2022	2%	16%	82%
2023	3%	23%	74%
2024	2%	14%	84%

The unclassified network has deteriorated due to a reduction in available funding and the increased use of several rural roads as diversion routes due to HS2. As these are being used as diversion routes only minor maintenance can be undertaken which does not prevent further

deterioration from occurring. It is proposed to include these roads in future programmes when the road space and funding become available.

Year	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
2020	36%
2021	17%
2022	21%
2023	21%
2024	27%

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

To ensure that we have the most up to date information we undertake annual independent condition data surveys (SCANNER). However we have now introduced our own additional continual surveys (VAISALA) where data is collected daily and the condition information continually updated.

The types of surveys are detailed below and are used on all class of roads.

- **Scanner** – this is a machine-driven survey that uses lasers to detect defects on the road surface. The results produce a RAG rated map and a percentage of defect length that may need maintenance works. This is the main system as currently required by the DfT for the classified network for reporting the percentage of road requiring treatment.

- **Vaisala** – 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** - The unclassified network is inspected visually by an independent company; they determine the condition of the roads that produces a percentage of the network that needs to be considered for maintenance work where a RAG rated system

is also produced to show this.

- **Inspectors** – Highway inspectors undertake safety inspections; from these inspections each inspector is expected to highlight the 5 worst roads and footways in their respective areas.

Additional information on condition

Work associated with HS2 and National Highways have been in progress for several years, which is putting a continuing pressure on the local network with several roads deteriorating at a faster pace than would normally be expected.

The road closures and diversion routes have had an impact on the overall carriageway condition as some roads were not designed for the traffic they received. The volume of works being undertaken has impacted on the road condition as the volume of HGV lorries on a daily basis has caused increased deterioration across roads in the Borough. Whilst the impact has been seen on the Classified network the unclassified rural roads have suffered the most deterioration as a result. This is often due to the traffic management conflicts meaning it has been difficult to undertake major repairs until the works have been completed. As a result a 'make safe' repairs approach has had to be undertaken to keep the road safe.

Plans

Overall strategy

Solihull 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. As a result, insurance claims due to defects on the road have reduced.

Solihull 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'. Solihull has a Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and a Highway Maintenance Plan in place. These documents detail the way in which the road network is managed ensuring consistency.

Potholes are of high priority to residents; Solihull has fully embedded the Highways Maintenances 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 highway 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.

Solihull is also working with Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) and Livelabs2, developing a knowledge bank, real-life conditions testing and sharing and learning insights. Solihull is also working with Future Highways Research Group (FSRG) to identify ways to collect and reduce carbon in both highway construction and highways maintenance.

Specific plans for 2025/26

For 2025-26 a total of 88 roads have been identified for resurfacing with an estimated length of 35km. There is a three-year programme in place which has been developed using AI technology where in car cameras identify and collect defect data on the road network. This then produces a programme of locations for the highways team to review and determine the work type required. Our Highway inspectors also input into the process as they can advise on locations that they have identified as needing consideration for the next programme of works.

Solihull's approach is to be proactive in maintaining the road network, looking to identify roads starting to fail before it happens. This approach ensures a safer network, reduces potholes and insurance claims. The 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, which reduces the insurance claims made against the Council.

Streetworks

Solihull Council implemented a Permit Scheme for Road and Street Works in October 2018. Since this time, all works carried out on the road by both utility companies and the council must have a permit before works can be commenced. The permit scheme enables better co-ordination of activities on the highway network, allowing competing demands for space and time in the street to be resolved in a positive and constructive way.

The objective of the Solihull Permit Scheme is to improve the strategic and operational management of the highway network through better planning, scheduling and management of activities. Minimising delay for any road or pavement user is a key objective of the Permit Scheme.

All activities on highways have the potential to reduce the width of the street available to traffic, pedestrians and other users and have the potential to inconvenience businesses and local residents. The scale of disruption caused is relative to the type of activities being undertaken and the capacity of the street location. Activities where the traffic flow is close to, or exceeds, the physical capacity of the street will have the potential to cause congestion, disruption and delays.

The objectives and benefits of the Solihull Permit Scheme are:

- Reduced disruption on the road network
- Improvements to overall network management
- A reduction in delays to the travelling public
- A reduction in costs to businesses caused by delays
- Promotion of a safer environment
- Reduced carbon emissions

The Permit Scheme objectives are facilitated by improving performance in line with the Authorities' Network Management Duty in relation to the following key factors:

- Enhanced co-ordination and co-operation
- Encouragement of partnership working between the Permit Authority, all Promoters and key stakeholders
- Provision of more accurate and timely information to be communicated between all stakeholders including members of the public
- Promotion and encouragement of collaborative working

- Improvement in timing and duration of activities particularly in relation to the busiest streets within the network
- Promotion of dialogue with regard to the way activities are to be carried out
- Enhanced programming of activities and better forward planning by all Promoters

The Permit Scheme objectives align with the strategic objectives contained within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 and the Solihull Traffic Management Strategy:

- Co-ordinating and directing works on the highway
- Making the best use of technology
- Consulting and engaging with partners, key stakeholders, and road user groups
- Providing information to road users and the community
- To maintain the level of service of the transport networks and improve journey time reliability through proactive management
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the Area's transport system, in terms of infrastructure, vehicles and journeys
- To reduce stress by improving the journey experience of highway and public transport users

In the last year SMBC have issued 75 Fixed Penalty Notices to utility companies for breaching permit conditions. Conditions are attached to the permits to minimise the disruption caused by the works.

Since the permit scheme came into operation on 1 October 2018, 871 days of disruption have been saved on the network.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

Solihull along with the other West Midlands highway authorities are working with Transport for West Midlands to understand ways to reduce the carbon produced because of highway works.

As detailed above, Solihull is looking at ways to reduce carbon, the Livelabs trials will help develop this but at a local level trials of alternative products have taken place, such as rejuvenators which are applied to the roads surface and seep into the structure to re activate the structural components. Trials have also been undertaken utilising mastic asphalt to treat smaller areas of deterioration, where whilst this is effective and reduces carbon the cost has proven to be prohibitive within the available financial resources.

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