

Local highways maintenance transparency report

Wokingham Borough Council is a Unitary Authority and provides all local government services within the Borough.

Councils across the country continue to face difficult financial situations and it is important that residents understand that the money we get from Central Government and Council Tax is not enough to cover the increasing cost of the vital [services we provide](#).

As a Highway Authority, the Council's Highways & Transport team manages the day-to-day active travel, highway maintenance and transport functions across a Borough of 179 square kilometres, serving its 177,500* residents. This is in addition to the many road users that pass through it daily or who access it in connection with their work and business needs.

We maintain various highway assets, and the value of our Highway network is estimated to be in the region of £1,452,000,000. It is one of our most valued and used assets and relied upon by every resident of the Borough.

The Council subscribes to the National Highways and Transport Network annual survey to help us understand the issues important to our residents and how they feel the authority is doing across key highway issues. It identifies the good work but also where we need to do more to improve. It assists our focus, enabling us to shape how we allocate our resources and what methods we might deploy to improve those outcomes.

The Highways and Transport team with its alliance partners were recognised by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) in 2024 and nominated alongside seven other Councils as a best performer across several performance indicators in the Highways and Winter Maintenance category.

* Data from 2021.

Our highway network

The table below indicates the size of our Highway network as of January 2025.

Lengths of Highway, Footways and Cycleways in Wokingham (km)						
A Roads & A329(M) Motorway	B and C Roads	U Roads*	Total Roads	Footways & Footpaths**	Other Public Rights of Way***	Cycleways
118.6 km	162.1 km	524.7 km	805.4 km	815 km (including 60 km of footpaths)	250 km	65 km of off-carriageway cycleways

* U roads are local roads that are unclassified, i.e. roads that are neither a motorway, A, B or C class road. U roads are typically urban residential roads or minor rural roads.

** Footways, immediately alongside carriageways as well as footpaths that link the footways together – they all count as part of the highway and are maintained by the Council.

*** Other Public Rights of Way refer to a variety of footpaths, bridlepaths and other rights of way that don't have the status of highway. The Council is responsible for their maintenance.

In addition, we maintain many specific assets which support the road network, and these include 16,039 streetlights, 32,831 drainage gullies, 241 bridge structures, 373 embankments and 128 signal junctions. Other smaller assets are also maintained.

Highways maintenance spending figures

Highway maintenance spending in Wokingham*					
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)	£5,719	£5,721	£1,852	76%	24%
2024/25	£3,732	£4,360	£1,718	72%	28%
2023/24	£3,732	£4,463	£1,760	72%	28%
2022/23	£4,055	£5,925	£1,399	81%	19%
2021/22	£4,055	£4,783	£1,797	73%	27%
2020/21	£5,130	£5,607	£1,727	76%	24%

All sums exclude management costs.

*The data shown above is for carriageway maintenance spend only. A breakdown of spend across other assets is shown below.

Capital allocated by DfT can be found here - [Highways maintenance funding allocations - GOV.UK](#)

Additional information on spending

Wokingham Highway Investment Programme

In addition to grant funding allocated by Government, the Council itself invests circa £2.38m per annum to supplement its planned maintenance programme. It has undertaken this investment since 2019 and comes from additional capital borrowing. The funding has allowed us to extend our annual programme of works, particularly for preventative treatments.

In 2022 a conscious decision was made to increase even more the spend levels of preventative treatments to help combat potholes. 2025/26 will be the third year we have undertaken a substantive preventive works programme. This strategy will continue for the foreseeable with the teams actively seeking out other suitable and cost-effective preventative treatments to test and use.

The table below shows the forecasts spend for each asset type in the 2025/26 financial year.

Capital allocated by DfT (£,000s)	Total Capital spend (£,000s)	Capital spend (£,000s) by Asset	Asset activity	Revenue spend (£,000s)	Revenue spend (£,000s) by Asset	Asset activity
£5,719	£10,877	£3,341	Road Maintenance	£4,896	£1,852	Road Maintenance
		£2,380	Wokingham Highway Investment Programme		£471	Emergency & Winter Maintenance
		£3,298	Bridge Maintenance**		£327	Bridge Maintenance
		£407	Drainage		£740	Drainage
		£40	Street Lighting Maintenance		£601	Street Lighting Maintenance
		£1,065	Vehicle Restraint Systems (VRS)		£905	Street Lighting Energy
		£346	Earthworks			

All sums exclude management costs.

**Includes minor planned bridge maintenance plus the bridge refurbishment at Earley Station (programme still to be confirmed).

Pothole Repair Figures

We have a duty to keep our road network safe. This includes ad hoc repairs, including potholes. The work is typically defined as reactive works.

Some defects are kindly reported to us, and many are identified by our own programme of annual safety inspections. Every road in the Borough is inspected at least once with some roads on a more frequent basis.

The number and severity of potholes in any year can be influenced by both weather and traffic volumes but individual pothole numbers between Councils are not directly comparable. Quantities are impacted by network length, the way highway services are contracted, and how defects are risk assessed.

We estimate we will fill approximately 2,000 potholes in 2025/26 alongside 4,440 other carriageway and footway defects.

Estimate of number of potholes repaired in Wokingham					
Year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
No. of Repairs	2069	2449	1580	2817	2052

Note: The values shown are estimates based on the number of minor works orders completed to repair potholes. Some works orders may repair more than one pothole, but this is not always recorded. Most pothole repairs are permanent, however in accordance with the Wokingham Highways Maintenance Management Plan, when this is not possible a make safe or temporary repair within the emergency or urgent response time is acceptable (more details are available at [Highways Maintenance Management Plan](#)).

Condition of local roads

How we monitor road condition

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.

Several 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. 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. Local Highway Authorities will be required to use a supplier that has been accredited against PAS2161.

Although Wokingham's classified roads are surveyed by the SCANNER method, SCANNER technology isn't necessarily appropriate for most unclassified (U) roads. U roads may be narrow with parked vehicles, or they may use different surfacing materials, such as block paving.

In Wokingham, road condition assessments of the U road network are made using a survey known as Coarse Visual Inspection (CVI). The survey is carried out from a slow-moving vehicle, and the extent and position of road defects are recorded as the vehicle moves along. In Wokingham, half (50%) of the U road network is typically surveyed by CVI each year.

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>

The tables below indicate the current condition of our roads by classification.

Year	Percentage of Wokingham A roads and motorways in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	3%	21%	76%
2021	3%	19%	77%
2022	3%	19%	78%
2023	3%	20%	77%
2024	3%	20%	77%

The data shown is for both A classified roads and motorways; specifically, the A329(M).

We are one of only a few local authorities which maintains a section of motorway between the junctions of Coppid Beech and Winnersh which provides access to J10 of the M4.

Our A classified roads and motorways are surveyed every year.

For the years 2020 to 2023, the values are taken from public data and for 2024 are from our own data. Please note that due to rounding to the nearest %, values may not add up to 100%.

Year	Percentage of Wokingham B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	2%	20%	78%
2021	4%	23%	74%
2022	4%	23%	74%
2023	3%	24%	73%
2024	4%	23%	73%

The data shown is for B and C classified roads. Our B and C roads are surveyed every year.

C classified roads are much like A and B roads, but they don't have nationally assigned road numbers that appear on route maps.

For the years 2020 to 2023, the values are taken from public data and for 2024 are from our own data. Please note that due to rounding to the nearest %, values may not add up to 100%.

Year	Percentage of U roads in red category
2020	15%
2021	3%
2022	21%
2023	8%
2024	13%

The data shown above is for Unclassified roads. Each unclassified road is surveyed every 2 years.

Due to the different survey method used for unclassified roads, amber and green categories aren't reported as they are for motorways, A, B and C classified roads.

For the years 2020 to 2023, the values are taken from public data and for 2024 are from our own data. Please note that due to rounding to the nearest %, values may not add up to 100%.

Plans

Asset & Highways Maintenance Strategies

Our management of highway assets follows the Code of Practice issued by the DfT called [‘Well-managed Highway Infrastructure’](#).

A Wokingham Borough Council [Highway Asset Management Strategy](#) and [Policy](#) were developed and form the basis of how we manage our assets, the right investment at the right time. Both documents are currently under review alongside other specific direction for individual assets, such as earthworks, bridge structures & vehicle restraint systems.

Our [Highway Maintenance Management Plan \(HMMP\)](#) was created and to set out the context within which highway and highway-related maintenance will be delivered.

Reactive Works

We have a developed road hierarchy for aiding our highway inspections, frequency and defect repairs. Identification and timescale for defect repair follows a risk-based strategy which prioritises the worst defects for repair based on site factors. Incidents can or could still arise from low-risk defects, but the strategy acknowledges that from the outset.

Planned Works

Our planned works programmes of structural repairs and preventative treatments are derived from the various specialist surveys and road condition data collected annually. This helps us assess which roads are prioritised for treatment.

Works programmes are established 12 months in advance of delivery which allows for scheme design and development in the year preceding delivery. This best serves our resource allocation.

We are preparing a more definitive 3-year ‘look ahead’ programme, still with years 2 & 3 being indicative but with a greater level of certainty. This aligns favourably with the Councils medium term financial planning.

Bridges & Structures

The Council contracts out the management of its highway structures and bridges to WSP under a professional services contract. An asset data system tracks and logs activity and the scheduling of the various forms of inspection needed. The team has an overview of all our structural assets with a long, medium and short-term plan of work need.

The scope includes Bridge Management, Bridge Inspection, Annual Maintenance, Forward Planning, Structural Assessment, Abnormal Loads, BMS Supply Management, Technical Approvals, Earthwork Management, Earthwork Inspection, VRS/PMS Management.

Street Lighting

The Councils Street lighting stock is in good condition and uses modern LEDs for illumination.

In 2016 the Council undertook to replace two-thirds of its lighting stock and convert light sources over to LEDs which are more energy efficient. The Council received a grant from the DfT under their Challenge Fund which allocated 70% of the total cost in a non-returnable grant. The 30% remainder was funded by the Council.

Our lighting stock can be operated remotely, and this was extended to all columns during the contract in 2016. The Council has been running this software in many of its columns since around 2009 and allows the council to adjust lighting levels to further reduce energy consumption.

Most of our annual lighting repair costs are reactive spend but annually, the Council undertakes a small proportion of electrical and structural testing of its lighting stock.

Drainage

The drainage team has recently been moved into the Highways & Transport team to help bring increased benefit and use of shared resources. Reactive, Cyclical and Planned works will continue to be undertaken.

Specific plans for 2025/26

In 2025/26 our planned works programmes will include:

- 190,000 m2 of [surface dressing](#)
- 42,000 m2 of [carriageway resurfacing](#)
- 1,400 m2 of [crack sealing](#) on the A329(M)
- 12,000 m2 of [footway slurry treatment](#).
- 5,000 m2 of local structural repairs
- 1,500 m2 of pre-patching for 26/27 surface dressing programme
- 8,000 linear metres approximately of planned ditch clearance works
- 1 No Bridge refurbishment at Earley Station
- 70 embankment inspections
- 104 routine structures inspections

Our annual programme is available here [Annual Road Maintenance Scheme 25/26 - Google Drive](#) and is updated throughout the year to show planned programme dates and completed works. Additional works and schemes can be added throughout the year.

This year we are allocating funding to undertake local structural repairs. Typically, this will see structural repairs of areas of the network up to approximately 200 m2 per site location. This is in response to what residents told us in the last NHT survey about some repairs taking too long to be rectified. We hope this initiative will assist and we will review the outcomes and our ability to roll this out each year.

We have recently reintroduced a crack sealing programme. This allows us to intervene much earlier, seeking to prevent defects becoming longer term problems. Works have focussed on the A329(M) where the cost of reactive repairs can be excessive due to traffic management needs.

The team are investigating other treatment options for joint sealing of minor cracks on all classes of road as an early intervention and prevent the ingress of water into pavements. Trials will take place during the year.

Streetworks

Wokingham's road network faces high demand for street and road works, and our authority is committed to minimising disruption to residents, businesses, and road users through a robust programme of planning, coordination, and communication.

We work closely with Works Promoters to coordinate activities in the same areas, reducing the overall duration and frequency of works. Collaborative planning across multiple teams maximises opportunities for joint working, helping to streamline operations and minimise disruption.

Recently, we amended our permit scheme to extend coverage over the entire network that was previously excluded and conducted a review of sensitive streets to better manage impacts. While lane rental is under consideration, it is currently not a priority compared to our core operational duties and the need to focus resources effectively.

Our main priorities include:

- Effective coordination and proactive engagement with all stakeholders
- Minimising permit overruns to reduce delays and inconvenience
- Continuous review and adaptation of our Streetworks policies and procedures to meet evolving needs
- Minimising defects to our asset caused by works

To strengthen our delivery, the Highways & Transport (H&T) team structure was revised in 2023 to better align resources between active Streetworks management and traffic management duties, such as road closures and traffic orders.

We also leverage advanced technology and communication tools, including digital platforms like One.Network and Facebook, along with a Traffic and Travel newsletter, to provide real-time updates and maintain transparency. Our communication strategy includes weekly updates and forward planning notices disseminated through the wider H&T channels to keep the public and stakeholders well informed of upcoming works.

Through these integrated approaches, Wokingham's authority strives to balance essential infrastructure maintenance with minimising disruption to the community.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

The Council has developed its [Climate Emergency Action Plan](#) to help tackle impacts from climate change. The Highways & Transport Service contributes towards active measure under 10 key priorities.

The service completed some years ago a full replacement of its highway lighting infrastructure converting lighting sources to LED thus reducing energy consumption considerably. The changes continued to allow for lighting to be dimmed at certain times of the night to further reduce energy consumption.

We continually track emerging solutions from the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonising Roads and work with our term maintenance contractor to determine the viability of treatments, material choices, their durability and cost impacts and sustainable benefits.

The use of treatments which preclude the need to break out and dispose of materials are seen as beneficial and we will actively trial new initiatives to gain a greater understanding of their whole life benefits. Some treatments cannot provide smooth surfaces or remove undulations which can draw complaint. However, a balanced approach to use, with clearly defined criteria will assist us to explain the benefits of these.

Removal of water from the network is a key priority as this can play a significant role in the damage caused to our road network and so relocation of the Drainage Team back into the Highways & Transport Service from April 2025 is seen as a significant step forward providing greater resilience.

Wetter periods and extreme rainfall event frequencies coupled with reductions in other activities such as street cleansing means more than ever, we must focus on ensuring the cyclical programme of cleansing gullies and catchpits is effective. Analysis work has recently been conducted reviewing much of the network and looking at sites which need higher levels of attention, this has included analysis of tree lined roads, lidar data and road usage. Active street cleansing has also been targeted for some roads to ensure that leaf fall is cleared as soon as possible.

Our Term Maintenance Contract will be renewed from 2029 and in accordance with the Council's key climate action plan priorities, we will use this opportunity to focus on climate factors and to consider these as part of the overall procurement.