

# Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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## Local highways maintenance transparency report

The following statement is made in compliance with the grant conditions for the additional highway maintenance funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) and outlines how and where the funding was spent on Knowsley Councils highway network.

### Our highway network

The highway network is the Council's most valuable corporate asset, currently valued at over £1 billion.

Knowsley Council is responsible for maintaining all assets within the adopted highway, this includes; roads, footways, cycleways, street lighting, traffic signals, drainage, structures, vehicle restraint barriers, bollards, guardrails, litter bins and benches.

The table below shows the lengths of the adopted network within Knowsley.

An adopted highway is one where the Local Authority has taken on the legal responsibility for its maintenance.

Motorway	A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way
11 km	79 km	65 km	436 km	591 km	967 km	53 km

In addition to the table above, Knowsley Council also maintain:

- 147 bridges and other structures
- 20,584 street lighting columns
- 32,883 gullies/drains
- 23,753 metres of drainage channels
- 72 signalised junctions
- 5 variable message signs

## Highways maintenance spending figures

Highway maintenance spending							
Year	Capital funding for highway maintenance allocated by DfT	Additional Capital funding allocated by DfT		Total Capital spend	Revenue spend	Estimate of % spent on Preventative & Programmed maintenance, (as listed under Capital below)	Estimate of % spent on Reactive & Routine maintenance, (as listed under Revenue below)
2025/26 (projected)	£6,253,000	Additional pothole funding	£1,010,708	£7,263,708	£3,098,000	70.10%	29.90%
2024/25	£3,862,000	Additional Pothole Funding	£622,509	£4,484,509	£3,215,000	58.24%	41.76%
2023/24	£4,407,000	Additional Pothole Funding CRSTS KRN Funding	£4,315,000	£8,722,000	£2,765,000	75.93%	24.07%
2022/23	£5,176,000			£5,176,000	£2,765,000	65.18%	34.82%
2021/22	£2,286,125			£2,587,250	£3,415,000	43.10%	56.90%
2020/21	£1,205,000	KRN Roads	£2,268,573	£3,473,573	£2,882,000	54.65%	45.35%
		Additional Pothole Funding					
		KRN Challenge Funding					
		Additional Highway Funding					

## Additional information on spending

The works undertaken within the Highways Maintenance Programme are split into two types: '**Capital**' and '**Revenue**'.

**Capital:** this funding is provided by central government and is used for planned, programmed and structural works such as: carriageway resurfacing/patching/surface treatments, footway reconstruction/patching/surface treatments, drainage renewal/improvement works, footway crossing improvements, traffic signal upgrades, structures maintenance and vehicle restraint system renewals.

The table below shows the different types of works undertaken on our roads and footways on an annual basis and the areas (m<sup>2</sup>) treated.

Treatment Type		2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Surface Treatment	Surface Dressing (m <sup>2</sup> )	25,738	53,446	47,524
	Micro Asphalt (m <sup>2</sup> )	63,762	17,707	0
	Footway Slurry Sealing (m <sup>2</sup> )	18,873	6,270	3,531
	Asphalt Preservation (m <sup>2</sup> )	0	0	61,596
	Carriageway Retexturing (m <sup>2</sup> )	0	0	19,602
	Surface Treatment total (m <sup>2</sup> )	<b>108,373</b>	<b>77,423</b>	<b>132,253</b>
Resurfacing	Carriageway Resurfacing (m <sup>2</sup> )	<b>48,348</b>	<b>79,910</b>	<b>63,077</b>
<b>Total combined area treated (m2)</b>		<b>156,721</b>	<b>157,333</b>	<b>132,253</b>

**Revenue:** this funding comes from the Council budgets and is used for the day-to-day operational repair of assets to keep the network safe. '**Routine**' or '**Cyclical**' works funded by the revenue budget include, gully cleansing, refreshing road markings, traffic management for grass cutting and minor works to bridges and structures.

The majority of revenue works are related to '**Reactive**' repairs on both the carriageway and footway, such as potholes or broken paving stones and damaged street furniture, these repairs are generally identified during planned safety inspections or as a result of customer enquiries.

All adopted roads in Knowsley are inspected regularly to ensure they remain in a safe condition. All defects are recorded and repaired in accordance with Knowsley's policy for highway safety inspections.

Knowsley Council defines a defect or pothole on the adopted highway as being **40mm** deep or more in the road and **25mm** deep or more in the footway.

The severity of the defect/pothole and the urgency of repair is determined by the risk it poses to road users and pedestrians. Factors taken into account include location, size and depth of pothole; traffic type, speed and volume; road type, alignment and visibility.

Further information on the Council's Highway Safety Defect Policy can be found here: <https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Knowsley-Council-Policy-for-Highway-Safety-Inspections-2019.pdf>

The table below show the total number of safety defects identified and repaired throughout the year on the adopted highway in Knowsley.

Category of Repair	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Priority 1 Defects (within 2-hours)	586	680	756
Priority 2 Defects (within 24 hours)	83	144	126
Priority 3 Defects (within 14 Days)	72	124	254
Priority 4 Defects (within 28 Days)	4,999	5,095	4,124
<b>Total number of defects repaired</b>	<b>5,740</b>	<b>6,043</b>	<b>5,260</b>

The table below focuses specifically on the number of carriageway potholes repaired during the years listed.

Estimate of number of potholes filled				
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<b>1,398</b>	<b>1,891</b>	<b>1,672</b>	<b>1,897</b>	<b>2,177</b>

The table below shows the number of highway drainage assets cleaned during the years listed.

Routine highway drainage cleansing	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number of highway drains cleaned (No)	5,313	12,859	9,760
Highway channels cleaned (m)	24,722	20,943	31,488

## Condition of local roads

Creating and keeping an up-to-date and accurate inventory of Knowsley Council's highway network is an essential component for our Highway Asset Management Strategy.

To obtain this inventory, the Council commissions an independent specialist company 'GAIST Solutions Ltd' to undertake an annual condition survey of the entire adopted highway network.

These surveys provide a visual in-depth overview of all the roads in the borough allowing them to be categorised into three condition categories:

- Green – No further investigation or treatment required
- Amber – Maintenance may be required soon
- Red – Should be considered for maintenance

The results of the condition surveys are used for both reporting statutory requirements to the Department of Transport and is also combined with other data intelligence the Council hold on the highway network to identify where we should direct our maintenance activities and develop the programme of works in accordance with the available budget.

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>

The table below shows the percentage of **A roads** in each condition category over the past five years. Where possible, **100%** of the A roads are surveyed **annually**, the only exception is when the survey team are unable to gain access to the road, this could be as the result of the road being closed to facilitate utility works, site development works or highway improvement works.

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	4.29%	61.08%	34.63%
2021	4.51%	61.34%	34.15%
2022	4.33%	62.60%	33.03%
2023	3.52%	54.39%	41.70%
2024	3.61%	59.70%	36.68%

The table below shows the percentage of **B and C roads** in each condition category over the past five years. Where possible **100%** of the B and C roads are surveyed **annually**, the only exception is when the survey team are unable to gain access to the road, this could be as the result of the road being closed to facilitate; utility works, site development works or highway improvement works.

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	5.70%	48.38%	45.92%
2021	6.34%	51.49%	42.16%
2022	5.61%	55.03%	38.94%
2023	5.38%	54.73%	37.64%
2024	5.84%	56.37%	37.79%

The table below shows the percentage of **Unclassified (U) roads** in each condition category over the past five years. Where possible **100%** of the U roads are surveyed **annually**, the only exception is when the survey team are unable to gain access to the road, this could be as the result of the road being closed to facilitate; utility works, site development works or highway improvement works.

Year	Percentage of U Roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	14.20%	43.70%	42.10%
2021	14.62%	46.97%	38.41%
2022	14.80%	47.68%	28.64%
2023	14.92%	50.24%	32.02%
2024	14.13%	55.21%	30.65%

## Additional information on condition

The Council manages the condition of the highway network effectively using the resources available, whilst the percentage of the carriageway being in the red category has remained relatively consistent over the last five years there has been a significant increase in the percentage of roads that are now categorised as amber that were previously green. Without significant investment the roads which are currently amber will deteriorate into the red category and become expensive to repair.

## Plans

### Overall strategy

Knowsley Council's highway maintenance programme is based on an asset management approach. Asset management involves using robust data to make good, informed decisions about how we manage and maintain the highway network as effectively as possible. This means making long term plans and finding the most cost-effective ways to make sure the network continues to meet the needs of road users and residents into the future.

This approach focuses on getting the best long-term value for money as opposed to a short-term approach which might prioritise immediate repairs over preventative work to preserve the asset and extend its life. In taking this approach, we look at the long-term costs and consequences of the choices that we make. In short, asset management is all about good, informed decision making.

To do this successfully, we take each of the following into account:

- road condition
- customer needs
- local priorities
- environmental issues
- risk management
- available budget

Maintaining our highway network in good condition and fit for purpose is essential for the wellbeing of those who live, work, invest and visit Knowsley.

The priorities for scheme selection are based on a number of weighting factors that create a ranking score; they include carriageway condition, number of safety defects, insurance claims, hierarchy, road environment, customer feedback and affordability.

## Specific plans for 2025/26.

The 2025-26 maintenance programme will fund the work types below;

	Treatment Type	km
Surface Treatment	Surface Dressing	12
	Micro Asphalt	6
	Footway Slurry Sealing	1
	Surface Treatment total	<b>19</b>
Resurfacing	Carriageway Resurfacing	<b>1</b>
	<b>Total combined area treated</b>	<b>20</b>

In addition to the works listed in the table above, Knowsley Council's allocation of the additional pothole funding (**£1,010,708**) will be used to undertake resurfacing works on the roads in the worst condition. Consideration has also been given to those roads with higher traffic volumes and roads immediately adjacent to other roads where maintenance works are planned to be undertaken in the approved Highways Capital Programme for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

This approach will enhance long-term durability and reduce the frequency of costly and disruptive maintenance repairs. While filling individual potholes provides short-term relief, resurfacing addresses the root cause of road deterioration, ensuring a more permanent solution and extend the life of the road.

Road Name	Extents	Length to be resurfaced (km)
Higher Road	Section of carriageway beneath Speke Boulevard	0.1
Lower Road	Baileys Lane to Railway Bridge before Yew Tree Cafe	0.3
Kirkby Row	Rowan Drive to Old Hall Lane	0.7
St Helens Road	High Street to school	0.4
Milton Avenue	Thingwall Lane to Childwall Lane	0.8
Evans Street	Whole roads/estate	0.1
Moss Street		0.2
Seddon Court		0.1
Eaton Street		0.1
Halsall Street		0.1
Hope Street		0.1
		<b>3</b>

Consideration was given to undertaking preservative highway maintenance treatments rather than resurfacing works, however preservative treatments need to be undertaken from April to September and the contractors are already booked up for this financial year.

## Streetworks

The Council operates a Permit Scheme in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage access to, and occupancy of the roads within Knowsley. The Street Manager system is used to manage applications for street and road work permits to minimise the impact of those activities, while allowing essential activities to take place.

The specific objectives of the Permit Scheme are to;

- Reduce occupation of the highway to benefit all road users
- Obtain greater control of all activities on the public highway
- Minimise/avoid/manage delays to all road users
- Enhance co-ordination of all activities on the highway

In addition, the Council holds quarterly coordination meetings with works promoters including those from the gas, water, electric and telecommunication providers, to promote coordination and ensure that the same roads are not repeatedly dug up by different organisations.

Whilst the Council does not have powers to prevent emergency repairs to utility apparatus or, for new connections the Council does use powers under Section 58 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 to prevent companies from carrying out planned works for up to three years following major highway works.

## Climate change, resilience and adaptation

### Climate change

Knowsley Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2020 and set a target of Net Zero carbon emissions from its estate and services by 2040. The council is working with partner organisations to reduce emissions across the borough.

In February 2025, the Council entered into a 7-year Highways Term Maintenance Contract with 'Tarmac Trading Ltd'. Through this contract, the Council introduced a number of measures to support the Council's journey to become a net zero authority and achieve its sustainability-related goals.

The first year of the contract will set the benchmarking for the service and the contracts Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will measure the contractor's performance on an annual basis.

- Annual increase - Percentage of sustainable source materials and resources used in highways maintenance (Based on weight - Tonnes)
- Annual reduction - Percentage reduction in carbon emissions (Tonnes of CO2)
- Number of new technologies trialled or introduced
- Number of engagements for green initiatives and environmental education



## **Resilience**

In 2018 the Council followed the recommendations of the Department for Transport (DfT) 'Transport Resilience Review' and identified its 'Resilient Highway Network' to which the Council gives priority, in order to maintain economic activity and access to key services during extreme weather events or major incidents.

Highway programmes of works take these changes of condition into consideration, increasingly adapting the highway network to make it more resilient. For example, increased preventative maintenance, more active travel options across the borough making it easier, cheaper, and safer to move around by low-carbon modes, and maintaining/replacing the highway drainage systems where they are prone to blockages, collapses or capacity issues linked to flooding events.

The Resilient Highway Network defined by this plan will be reviewed at least every two years and after any major event to ensure it remains relevant as lessons are learnt and services and businesses within the Borough and Liverpool City Region change.

Further details on the Councils 'Resilient Network' can be found here:

<https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Highway-Asset-Management-Resilient-Network-2021.pdf>