Medway Council

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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

Medway’s highway network consists of 845km roads in total, which is made of up three categories.

* 100.47km in A roads
* 115.16km of B and C roads
* 629.37km of U roads

The network also includes 1045.36km of footways, 309/4km of other public rights of way and 130.36km of cycleways.

In addition to maintaining our carriageways and footways, Medway Council has a statutory duty to maintain over 91,000 other highway assets including 406 structures such as bridges and retaining walls, 35,535 gullies, 11,681 items of street furniture such as highway signs and bollards and more than 27,000 streetlights. We also we maintain soakaways and roadside ditches, and over 45 miles of crash barriers and pedestrian guard railing.

Funding from the Department for Transport supports our adoption of a whole life asset management approach. This strategy focuses on proactive maintenance, timely interventions, and strategic upgrades to maximise asset performance and longevity. It allows us to develop more efficient maintenance regimes and make well-informed decisions about repair, replacement, or refurbishment. By extending the service life of our assets, we can significantly reduce long-term costs while ensuring a safer, more resilient highway network.

# Highways maintenance spending figures

Table 1 – 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) | £5,024,000 | £5,024,000 | £500,000 | 60% | 40% |
| 2024/25 | £3,578,000 | £3,578,000 | £200,000 | 55% | 45% |
| 2023/24 | £4,142,800 | £5,763,809 | £500,000 | 58% | 42% |
| 2022/23 | £3,177,000 | £5,033,542 | £500,000 | 54% | 46% |
| 2021/22 | £3,698,950 | £4,902,780 | £500,000 | 48% | 52% |
| 2020/21 | £4,171,373 | £5,775,253 | £500,000 | 59% | 41% |

# Additional information on spending

As the Highway Authority we have statutory obligations to maintain and operate the highway network efficiently and safely. The Highways Act 1980, as well as other legislation, establishes what our service is required to deliver and ensure we adopted and adhere to Codes of Practice such as ‘Well Managed Highway Infrastructure’ to help us set the standards.

The DfT Funding Medway Council are receiving this year has a baseline of £3,735,000 plus an additional £1,289,000.

The allocations have been split as below:

* Pothole Funding - £1,412,000 which is being used for assessed and scored Priority 1 sites for resurfacing and forms Medway Council’s annual resurfacing programme.
* Highways Maintenance Block (Needs) - £1,412,000 and Highways Maintenance Block (Incentive) - £353,000 which is being used for all Highway maintenance aspects such as Structures, Drainage, Highway Signage, Road Markings, Crash Barrier replacement programme, and for Skid deficient sites.
* Additional Highways Funding - £1,289,000 + £401,000 (Network North) + £157,000 (additional baseline) is being used to carry out larger patching works on the highway network, incorporating preventative works. This will enable us to address clusters of defects that do not yet meet our safety intervention threshold or resurfacing criteria, but visually make the network look in worse condition than it structurally is. This is also being used for sites that have scored as a priority 1 and are too large an area for patching and would benefit from a resurfacing scheme.
* Medway Council also has a Revenue budget of £500,000 to focus on the reactive maintenance. To improve the condition and appearance of the network, Medway Council have changed their repair methodology and are no longer using cold lay (Viafix) Material, which has been used as a permanent repair for several years to plug defects. This may still be used in emergency situations only and where it must be used, it is to be followed up with a permanent patch.
* Our aim from an asset and investment perspective is to transition our spend on more planned preventative maintenance than responsible and we will do this by ensuring our repairs are right first time along with utilising innovative products and AI technology.

Our Highway Asset Management System records the number of potholes ordered for repair and therefore the number repaired to date are shown in the table below:

Table 2 – Number of potholes repaired

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 |
| 9,024 | 12,040 | 16,373 | 7,252 | 957 to date |

Road condition assessments on the local classified road network in England are currently made 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

Medway Council carry out the classified surveys for A, B and C road classes annually.

Medway Council are aware that 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 the government gain a more detailed understanding of road condition in England.

Medway Council will be gathering the condition data as normal however we have also instructed our supplier to undertake the new method this year so that we can start to familiarise ourselves with the new categories going forward.

In addition, Medway Council has implemented AI technology to support Highway Safety Inspections. The provider is accredited to BSI PAS 2161, ensuring a robust and compliant standard of data collection.

We will be comparing the data generated from this platform with that of our current supplier to assess alignment and accuracy. If the AI-derived condition data is consistent, this will allow us to collect information at a higher frequency, enhancing our strategic planning and further supporting our adopted Asset Management Strategy.

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>

Table 3 - Percentage of A roads in each condition category

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Red** | **Amber** | **Green** |
| 2020 | 1.4% | 12.9% | 85.7% |
| 2021 | 2.3% | 13.8% | 83.9% |
| 2022 | 5.0% | 20.9% | 74.2% |
| 2023 | 2.3% | 14.6% | 83.1% |
| 2024 | 2.2% | 14.6% | 83.2% |

Table 4 - Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Road Class** | **Red** | **Amber** | **Green** | **Red B&C Reported** |
| 2020 | B | 3.0% | 19.4% | 77.6% | 4% |
| 2020 | C | 4.5% | 26.3% | 69.3% | 4% |
| 2021 | B | 5.4% | 21.5% | 73.1% | 5% |
| 2021 | C | 4.7% | 22.7% | 72.6% | 5% |
| 2022 | B | 9.8% | 27.5% | 62.7% | 8% |
| 2022 | C | 7.7% | 26.0% | 66.3% | 8% |
| 2023 | B | 5.0% | 21.7% | 73.3% | 6% |
| 2023 | C | 5.7% | 26.3% | 68.0% | 6% |
| 2024 | B | 4.4% | 20.5% | 75.1% | 6% |
| 2024 | C | 6.5% | 25.1% | 68.4% | 6% |

Table 5 – Percentage of U Roads in the Red category

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Percentage of U Roads in the Red category** |
| 2020 | 20% |
| 2021 | 19% |
| 2022 | 34%\* |
| 2023 | 22% |
| 2024 | 31% |

NB\* The condition survey undertaken in 2022 was carried out during an unsuitable time of year, specifically following the winter period. As a result, the data collected was incomparable and unusable, as it did not accurately reflect the true condition of the road network at that time.

Currently, there is no nationally recognised standard for monitoring the condition of the unclassified network. However, our suppliers conduct coarse visual inspections across these routes. Medway is divided into four areas for the purposes of this process, with each area being surveyed once every four years on a rotational basis.

# Additional information on condition

Medway Council’s target for carriageway condition is to meet or exceed the national average for each class of road. The data presented here would suggest that even with the current strategy of investing more of the resurfacing budget on unclassified roads, it is insufficient to continue improving the condition of unclassified roads and keep the classified roads to a standard which meets or exceeds the national averages.

Whilst some worsening of the overall condition on the classified roads would be expected to achieve the required improvement on unclassified roads, Medway Council will strategically keep this under review and tactically try and maintain a balance that enables all road classes to improve over time. It is acknowledged that to achieve this continual progress and move from a steady state to improvement, funding levels would need to meet those set out in our Lifecycle Plan to be able to satisfactorily maintain and improve the network.

# Plans

## Overall strategy

Medway Council is committed to using good asset management principles to manage and maintain our highway assets, based on fundamental principles of lifecycle planning. Our long-term approach to investment considers safety, serviceability, sustainability, and affordability. We aim to deliver the best value for money both effectively and efficiently.

To deliver our commitment, we aim to ensure:

* Our asset data is reliable, accurate and up to date so that it can be fed into strategic, tactical, and operational service delivery and that the data is maintained within a system that can support that;
* To continuously review our financial plan and align funding to asset requirements, for the most effective outcomes, leading to better value for money;
* Ensure our staff, senior management and elected members take ownership of good asset management principles, understanding and embedding them across the service and linking to the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy and long term Capital Strategy;
* Using out asset data and financial information to make long term decisions, on the whole life of our assets and using this to manage risk and make long term strategic plans.

Medway Council adopts the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice and manages its road network on a risk-based approach. This enables us to make more informed decisions regarding maintenance, timescales and repair methods leading to greater efficiencies and cost effectiveness.

## Specific plans for 2025/26

To date we have completed 11 out of 16 carriageway resurfacing schemes this year which totals 2.02km, the expected final length of resurfacing once all 16 are completed is approximately 3.39km.

With the additional incentive funding we are expected to resurface 8 sites which totals approximately 1.57km of the network. As mentioned in section 1 of this document our main priority for the additional incentive funding is to improve the highway network by carrying out larger patching works which will incorporate clusters of defects that do not yet meet our safety intervention threshold or resurfacing criteria, but visually make the network look in worse condition than it structurally is

There are planned General and Principal inspections for Bridges, Culverts, and Retaining Walls this year at several locations across Medway. General Inspections are carried out at 2-year intervals and Principal Inspections at 6-year intervals.

There are planned repairs to three retaining walls which have been identified from their routine inspections. Repairs to a Bridge involving hydro blasting, steel, and concrete repairs. Localised rendering repairs to cracks along a retaining wall in Rochester. Ther are also other works to be assessed and programmed in due course.

## Streetworks

We are currently working to apply to the Secretary of State to implement a Lane Rental Scheme alongside our existing Permitting Scheme later this year. Lane rental will enable us to identify our strategic routes where roadworks cause the most disruption on the network, increasing journey times for residents and visitors. Any works taking place on the routes included within the scheme will be subject to a daily charge, therefore encouraging Utilities to resource works efficiently and ensure they are carried out in a timely manner to keep costs low.

We are using our streetworks and other powers to ensure that resurfacing works are not undermined by repeated digging within the same road by utility companies.

We participate in a quarterly statutory undertaker’s co-ordination meeting where upcoming works by the council and statutory undertakers are discussed between all parties.

Cross-party working is encouraged and include discussions around future programmes to reduce the need for repeated digging.

Our streetworks team also issues section 58 notices on recently completed resurfacing schemes. These notices prevent statutory undertakers from digging up the road for several years following resurfacing unless there is an emergency or a new service.

## Climate change, resilience, and adaptation

Medway Council is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 for both the Council and the wider Medway area, as set out in our Climate Change Action Plan. This aligns with the strategic priorities outlined in the One Medway Council Plan, particularly Priority 3: supporting clean, green, safe, and connected communities—an objective to which our highway works contribute directly.

Our Highways Term Maintenance Contractor, Volker Highways, operates under the VolkerWessels UK Carbon Reduction Strategy and is taking active steps to minimise, and where possible, eliminate the environmental impact of on-site activities. In partnership with Medway Council and their supply chain, efforts are ongoing to reduce operational carbon across all aspects of delivery.

All material removed from site during road schemes is 100% recycled; a standard that has been consistently maintained throughout the life of the contract. Additionally, Volker Highways works with suppliers to ensure that materials used contain a high proportion of recycled asphalt pavement (RAP).

To maximise the lifespan of our highway assets and reduce the need for carbon-intensive resurfacing, we continue to apply preventative treatments such as surface dressing, micro asphalt, and crack sealing. Following a successful trial, Medway has now incorporated thermal road repair; a low-carbon alternative into its maintenance programme, scheduled three times per year over four-week periods. A Capital Funding bid is currently being developed to acquire this equipment, allowing for more frequent and sustainable repairs.

We are also reviewing the transition to alternative fuel vehicles. At present, three electric vehicles are in use as part of Medway’s highway contract, with a fourth recently introduced for highway inspections. Further EV acquisitions are planned, and with the implementation of Route Reports, we aim to refine our approach to inspections, thereby reducing both our carbon footprint and associated operational costs.

### Additional information on plans

Following the award of £2.14 million in LEVI Capital Funding, Medway Council’s Highways Service will be delivering an on-street electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure programme. This initiative aims to give residents the confidence to transition to EVs, directly supporting our ambition of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The contract is expected to be mobilised by October this year, with physical installations beginning within the current financial year.

Aligned with the One Medway Council Plan, and specifically its sub-priority to develop digital solutions for residents to access services and engage more effectively, the Highways team is working in partnership with the Council’s Transformation Team. Together, they aim to shift from transactional interactions to more meaningful engagement. A key focus of this effort will be to simplify the process for reporting defects or requesting services, while providing residents with accurate, real-time updates on progress.