Annex A - Local Highway Maintenance Transparency Report

Introduction

The Department for Transport (DfT) now requires all local highway 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

Sunderland City Council manage and maintain most of the adopted highway within the City of Sunderland boundary, however the A1(M), A194(M) and A19 are maintained by National Highways. The information below provides some details of the highway assets, budgets and maintenance regimes that Sunderland Council are responsible for.

Length of highways, footways and cycleways

Type of highway	Length in kilometres
A roads	**94.9**
B & C roads	**112.2**
U Roads	**961.1**
Total roads	**1168.2**
Footways	**1709**
Other Public Rights of Way	**205**
Cycleways	**170**

Structures –

No. of road bridges, footbridges, subways and retaining walls = **427**

Last year (2024/25) the council undertook major maintenance on Harbour View Bridge.

Street Lighting – Sunderland City Council (SCC) operate a Private Finance Initiative(PFI) contract for Street Lighting which is due to end in 2028. The PFI contractor maintains the street lighting, lit and most unlit traffic signs and traffic bollards.

Number of Street Lighting columns = 49,952

Number of lit signs = 3389

Number of unlit signs = 8833

Number of lit/unlit traffic bollards = 1509

Traffic Signals

The Council have 171 traffic signal sites. Works have taken place in the last 12 months on upgrading several sites with funding from the Traffic Signals Obsolescence Grant. This work is scheduled to continue in 2025-2026.

Other Highway Assets – Sunderland Council maintain the following assets on the highway:-

Length of safety fence = 66.8km

Length of pedestrian guardrail = 35 km

Number of bollards = 9,433

Length of white lines = 830km

Number of highway gullies = 44,700

Highway Maintenance Spending figures

Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£)	Capital spend (£)	Revenue spend (£)	Estimate of percentage spent on preventative maintenance %	Estimate of percentage spent on reactive maintenance %
2025 to 2026 Projected	6,631,120	11,472,000	735,022	65.5	34.5
2024 to 2025	4,732,919	7,342,021	735,357	64.9	35.1
2023 to 2024	5,888,000	7,598,150	735,726	71.0	29.0
2022 to 2023	4,129,000	5,726,225	775,669	58.9	41.1
2021 to 2022	4,129,000	9,859,633	724,574	67.7	32.3
2020 to 2021	5,826,000	7,992,168	727,650	69.3	30.7

The table above includes highway maintenance and bridges, budgets and spending.

For the table above, preventative maintenance includes all works included in the annual highway maintenance programmes, planned patching and similar works. Reactive maintenance includes all urgent and emergency works including pothole repairs and footway repairs.

Reactive (Revenue) budget types of activity

Sunderland Council follow the guidance set down in the ‘Code of Practice on Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure’ and use a risk-based approach when determining whether any repairs are required to the highway.

The proportion of spending on reactive maintenance is influenced by the condition of the network and what is deemed ‘actionable’—that is, requiring urgent or emergency repair. Although efforts are

made to minimise this expenditure, the Council's statutory duty to maintain a safe highway remains the overriding priority.

The budget split between preventative and reactive maintenance is determined by previous years spend and projected cost rises.

Preventative (Capital) Maintenance

Sunderland Council try to strike an optimum balance between prevention and reactive repairs and as an example have in May 2025 employed a specialist surfacing contractor to apply a 'rejuvenation treatment' which will extend the life of the road surface whilst providing excellent value for money. The Council have over the last decade used different types of materials, treatments and techniques to try and provide best value for money whilst also reducing the carbon footprint and the disruption to road users.

The council have borrowed (Prudential borrowing) £19m in the last 8 years to invest in Highway maintenance and £9m over the last 8 years to invest in Bridge maintenance.

Miles/kms resurfaced last year – The amount of carriageway resurfaced and reconstructed is provided to the Department for Transport on an annual basis as part of the statutory data collection exercise.

In summary approximately 15.54 km (9.65 miles) of carriageway was resurfaced and 3.52 km (2.19 miles) of carriageway was reconstructed in 2024/25, see DfT website for more detailed information,

Road condition statistics: data tables (RDC) - GOV.UK

The target for 2025-26 is to resurface and reconstruct approximately 19.3km(12 miles) of carriageway and approximately 6.1km (3.8 miles) of footway.

Estimate of the number of potholes filled

Financial year	Estimate of the number of potholes filled	Estimate of cost of repairing potholes £	Estimate of % of reactive spend on potholes
2024 to 2025	11,422	384,457	14.1
2023 to 2024	14,131	358,658	16.5
2022 to 2024	7,799	238,438	11.7
2021 to 2022	8,455	292,710	15.7
2020 to 2021	9,325	297,526	17.3

Based on the information in the table above and the recorded road condition it is expected that the number of potholes that will be repaired in 2025/26 will be approximately 12,800.

Condition of local 'A' class roads	Percentage of road length in red category	Percentage of classified 'A' roads in amber category	Percentage of classified 'A' roads in green category
2020-21	1.2	13.7	85.2
2021-22	1.2	11.8	87.1
2022-23	1.0	9.8	89.2
2023-24	1.2	9.5	89.3
2024-25	0.9	9.1	90.0

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 now

From 2026/27, a new method will be used to assess road conditions, based on the BSI PAS2161 standard. Local Councils will need to work with suppliers who are officially approved under this standard. Instead of using three categories, roads will now be grouped into five. This change will help the government get a clearer picture of road conditions across England. You can find more information at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc#condition-of-local-authority-managed-roads-rdc01 .

Road condition data for A-class roads is collected every year using a SCANNER survey vehicle, with the goal of surveying 100% of the A-road network annually. For B and C-class roads, data is also collected annually using the same type of vehicle. Around 50% of the B and C road network is surveyed each year, with the aim of covering the entire network over a two-year period.

Condition of Local 'B' and 'C' class roads	Percentage of classified 'B & C' roads in red category	Percentage of 'B & C' roads in amber category	Percentage of 'B & C' roads in green category
2020-21	1.35	17.15	81.5
2021-22	1.3	14.75	83.95
2022-23	0.85	11.0	88.15
2023-24	1.05	11.9	87.05
2024-25	1.3	12.1	86.6

Approximately 25% of the unclassified road network was surveyed using coarse visual inspections, with the goal of covering the entire network over a four-year cycle. Please note that the 2024 results were based on survey data collected using the Vaisala system which utilises a windscreen mounted mobile phone and AI technology. This change in methodology may explain any variations in the results.

Condition of Local Unclassified roads	Percentage of Unclassified roads in red category
2020-21	18
2021-22	17
2022-23	19
2023-24	19
2024-25	23

Plans

Overall strategy

The Council's current approach to asset management/highway maintenance is detailed in the Highway Asset Management Strategy which is published on the following weblink- Highway asset management - statement strategy - Sunderland City Council

Best Practice & Innovation

Sunderland City Council is committed to continuous improvement in highway maintenance by trialling innovative materials and learning from the experiences of other local authorities. Recent initiatives include:

- **Surface Rejuvenation with Reclamite**
  In May 2025, the Council piloted the use of Reclamite, a surface rejuvenator designed to extend the life of the carriageway's surface course by at least five years. This treatment offers a cost-effective alternative to full resurfacing, significantly reducing both carbon emissions and disruption to road users.
- **Warm Asphalt Trials**
  The Council has trialled warm asphalt, a material that requires lower production temperatures, reducing energy use and emissions. Plans are in place to expand the use of similar sustainable materials in future projects.
- **Cold Lay Materials**
  Sunderland has long used cold lay materials such as slurry seal for footways and micro-asphalt for carriageways. These treatments are efficient and cost-effective for maintaining surface condition.
- **'Supreme' Asphalt for Bus Laybys**
  A new material known as Supreme, supplied by Asphalt Industries, is currently being trialled. It is specifically designed to prevent rutting in high-stress areas such as bus laybys.
- **Digital Innovation in Highways**
  As a leading Digital City, Sunderland is at the forefront of the public sector's digital transformation. The Council uses a range of advanced software systems for highway maintenance and network management. This includes the Vaisala system, which uses AI and mobile technology to assess road conditions and monitor other highway assets.
- **Vivacity Sensors**
  The Highway Authority have a network of ~80 VivaCity smart traffic sensors covering principal and major road network, primarily in and around Sunderland city centre. Delivered as part of the Smart City partnership with Boldyn Networks, these AI powered computer vision sensors process live imagery on the edge in a GDPR compliant manner, detecting and classifying a range of transport modes, from pedestrians, cyclists and e-scooters to cars, buses and HGVs, and everything in between.

- With access to a range of highly accurate and granular datasets the Authority is gaining valuable insight into network and behaviour patterns, allowing a higher degree of accuracy in post-scheme monitoring, particularly around active travel and modal shift. The data feed is also available to the regional UTMC, where it is being used to intelligently implement traffic signal exit plans for large scale events such as concerts and football matches. In the

world of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV), the sensor data and capabilities are assisting self-driving vehicle research, supporting prospective future phases of the Sunderland Advanced Mobility Shuttle and wider UK CAV trials. The council use Vivacity sensors to monitor multimodal transport data which enables more accurate and efficient data led decision making.

- Sunderland City Council is a founding member of the **North East Highway Alliance**, a regional partnership of 11 local authorities which focuses on:
  - Sharing best practices
  - Benchmarking performance
  - Driving efficiency in highway maintenance and management

  Sunderland has played a leading role in the Alliance, having chaired the group for five years. This collaboration has strengthened regional coordination and supported continuous improvement across member authorities.

- Sunderland City Council has participated in the development of the **National Underground Asset Register (NUAR),** acting as the lead local authority in a pioneering collaboration with Northumbrian Water, regional partners, and Ordnance Survey on NUAR's prototype the North East Underground Infrastructure Hub NEUIH.
  This initiative served as a forerunner to the national NUAR programme, aiming to improve the mapping and coordination of underground infrastructure.

- SCC also chair the **North East Combined Authority (NECA) Highway Asset group** and before it's formation chaired the Tyne and Wear Highway Asset Group for over 10 years.

Specific plans for 2025 to 2026

The following weblink gives details of the Highway maintenance programme for 2025/26 which shows which sections of the network will be benefitting

Roads and bridges - Sunderland City Council

Detailed programmes of work are also published on the above weblink when available.

Bridges

The following structures will be the subject of maintenance and/or principal inspections in

2025-2026: _

Pallion New Road Bridge

A182 Bridges – Phase 3

A1018 Newcastle Road bridge

Southwick Road Bridge

Northern Spire Bridge

Hylton Park Road Bridge

Streetworks

In March 2020, Sunderland City Council introduced a Road Activities Permit Scheme under the Traffic Management Permit Scheme Regulations 2007. This scheme provides the Council with greater control over both its own works and those carried out by utility companies. It enables better coordination by allowing specific conditions to be attached to permits, helping to minimise disruption to road users and residents.

To support this coordination, the Council uses Symology Aurora software alongside the Department for Transport's Street Manager online portal. These tools help identify potential conflicts between works and allow the imposition of tailored conditions—such as restricting the area occupied by works or limiting the times when the carriageway can be used.

Where appropriate, manual control of traffic signals is also implemented during peak hours to optimise traffic flow. Additionally, the Council promotes collaborative working between parties, although uptake from utility companies has been limited to date.

The Council is a member of the North of England Highways Authority and Utilities Committee NEHAUC, which meets quarterly to discuss street works related activities such as training, co-ordination, collaboration, standards and best practice across the sector.

The following web link provides more information on the Council's Road Activities Permit scheme:-

- Road activities permit scheme - Sunderland City Council

Climate Change, Resilience and Adaptation

Carbon

The Council is working to decarbonise its highway maintenance operations by using materials and processes which minimise the release of carbon i.e. using Miles Macadam's Milepave.

Milepave™ - Miles Macadam

The Council has used cold lay materials such as micro-asphalts on the carriageway and slurry on footways. A trial was also recently undertaken of a road surface rejuvenator material, Reclamite, which will extend the life of the road surface at a reduced cost and reduced impact on the environment.

Surface Treatments - Roadtechs

Network Resilience

The Council has developed a resilient network in line with the recommendations from the DfT. This involved aligning the Council's strategies, winter maintenance plan, flood risk management strategy and network management plans. More detail on this is found on the following web page.

- Resilient Highway Network - Sunderland City Council

Flooding and Drainage

The following web link below provides access to the Council's plans and strategies with regards to Flood Management, how the Council manages flood risk, drainage assets and complies with the statutory roles of lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and Coastal Protection Authority (CPA).

- Flooding, drainage and water - Sunderland City Council

The provisional list of Drainage (Flooding) Improvement schemes for 2025-2026 are listed below.

All three schemes below aim to improve highway drainage by increasing capacity and installing large gullies and drainage.

Dovedale Road, Fulwell

Blind Lane, Silksworth

Wellbank Road, Washington

The above schemes are the subject of funding bids to the Environment Agency, the results of which are expected in July.

Additional Information on Plans

The Council also undertake many other projects which include the construction of new roads, bridges and footways and which are funded through other budgets. Examples of these projects include the Keel Line footbridge, Sheepfolds Public Realm, St Mary's Boulevard Improvements and Dame Dorothy Street Cycleway.

Further works to improve the connectivity and condition of the existing highway network are planned.

ANNEX B – which relates to 'Incentive element questions' is a separate document which will be completed and posted on the Council's website before the October deadline.