Sefton Council ✠

Sefton 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 has been spent on Sefton Councils highway network.

Our highway network

Sefton Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance 956km of public roads which vary between classified roads (A's, B's and C's) and unclassified roads, the latter of which basically make up the housing estates across the borough. Each of these road categories has different needs for management and maintenance to ensure that they provide a quality service.

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

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

Lengths of highway, footways & cycleways (KM)						
A Roads	B&C Roads	U Roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public Rights of Way	Cycleways
110 km	103 km	741 km	956 km	1723 km	81 km	34km

Supporting Information from [Road Lengths in Great Britain: 2024](#)

The A, B and C roads make up the classified network which carry most journeys and account for 22% of the network. The remaining roads are unclassified and are residential in nature. These roads carry much less traffic but play important movement and public realm functions within the Borough's distinctive neighbourhoods.

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

- 32,172 street lighting columns
- 49,139 Street gullies
- 291 signalised junctions
- 30,094 Street Signs
- 8,507 Street Nameplates
- 107 bridges and other structures

Highways maintenance spending figures

Year	Capital funding for highway maintenance allocated by Dft (£s)	Capital funding for highway maintenance CRSTS (£,s)	Revenue funding for highway maintenance (£,s)	Total Budget Allocation (£,s)	Capital Spend (£,s)	Revenue Spend (£,s)	Estimate of % spent on Preventative & Programmed maintenance	Estimate of % spent on Reactive & Routine maintenance,
2025/26 (predicted)	£1,458,556	£4,607,000	£2,895,000	£8,960,556	£6,065,556	£2,895,000	64%	36%
2024/25	£898,604	£4,725,851	£2,580,000	£8,204,455	£5,624,455	£2,580,000	61%	39%
2023/24	£628,487	£5,168,895	£3,530,000	£9,327,382	£5,797,382	£3,530,000	82%	18%
2022/23		£4,705,000	£3,471,000	£8,176,000	£4,705,000	£3,471,000	86%	14%
2021/22		£2,820,750	£3,571,250	£6,392,000	£2,820,750	£3,571,250	70%	30%
2020/21	£167,400	£3,585,000	£3,591,000	£7,343,400	£3,749,400	£3,591,000	65%	35%

Additional information on spending

The Highway maintenance spend summarised in the above table comprises of the following areas:

- Highway resurfacing/ reconstruction
- Highway extended patching
- Highway preventative treatments
- Reactive and emergency repairs

Sefton Borough Council's annual maintenance spending is split between reactive works (i.e. repairing of potholes) and planned works (i.e. resurfacing of whole streets / sections & preventative maintenance).

Reactive works play a very important role as they allow rapid repairs to be carried out on localised areas which deteriorate quickly due to either high traffic flow or adverse weather conditions however a preventative maintenance programme, if planned correctly, can reduce the reactive spend and in turn increase the lifespan of the carriageway. Resurfacing is considered when road surfaces have fallen into disrepair and have become uneconomical to maintain through reactive repairs and where preventative type surface treatment applications are considered unsuitable.

The 'Highway Maintenance Spending' table shown above indicates an average of 29% of the annual budget is spent on reactive maintenance, it is anticipated that the extra funding made available on the basis of this report will be used to support expanded works programmes to such an extent that Sefton Borough Council sees some reduction of this reactive spend.

Planned maintenance programmes are 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.

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Planned Maintenance			
Year	Resurfacing (km)	Preventative carriageway Maintenance (km)	Footways maintained (km)
2025/26 (predicted)	16.1	10.8	14.1
2024/25	17.0	9.3	1.0
2023/24	15.0	9.1	11.5
2022/23	19.0	12.0	6.40
2021/22	11.0	25.0	-
2020/21	10.0	5.0	-

Reactive maintenance estimate of number of repairs				
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
2398	2430	2026	2872	3102

* Sefton Borough Council's asset management system does not allow easy extraction of pothole quantities and as a consequence the figures above are the number of 'repair jobs' raised by the highway inspectors – please note a repair job may include more than one defect if such quantities are identified outside the same location.

Condition of local roads

Condition surveys reveal the state of the network and are used to inform long and short-term maintenance decisions. Comparing results from previous years allows trends to be analysed and ensures objectives are being achieved, and budgets are being spent effectively. These condition surveys are split into two categories, machine-based surveys & visual based surveys.

The outputs from surveys allow a programme of maintenance projects to be developed to improve the overall condition of the roads and other assets.

Survey data is also used to undertake an analysis to determine the backlog of maintenance. This provides us with an indication of the treatment type and costs required to bring our road network to an acceptable and manageable 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.

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.

The unclassified road network is inspected periodically by an independent industry accredited service provider to determine the condition.

These types of survey are carried out using a rigidly defined process to national rules as part of the United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS). The surveys are normally mobile inspections carried out in a slow-moving vehicle or on foot, although there is no current national requirement to undertake these surveys, visual based surveys continue to be a viable source of information to monitor condition across the highway networks.

Surveys Undertaken (Classified Road Network)

Sefton Borough Council has undertaken SCANNER surveys to 100% of its A, B & C Class Carriageway Network annually. Where budgets are restricted, condition surveys have been commissioned every two years.

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.

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, 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	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned
2021	3%	21%	76%
2022	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned
2023	3%	20%	77%
2024	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned

The table below shows the percentage of **B and C roads** in each condition category over the past five years.

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Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	**Amber**	**Green**
2020	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned
2021	2%	21%	77%
2022	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned
2023	3%	21%	76%
2024	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned	No Survey Commissioned

Supporting information at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc#condition-of-local-authority-managed-roads-rdc01

Generally, across the classified road network, Sefton Council's 'Red', i.e. 'failed' sections of the network have remained in a steady state. Some of these sections over the years will have undoubtedly been subject to planned maintenance and then 'replaced' by 'amber' sections which have deteriorated and crossed over into the 'red' category.

Surveys Undertaken (Unclassified Road Network)

Visual assessments are carried out periodically across the unclassified road networks and are commonly known as Course Visual Inspections (CVI). This type of survey doesn't produce the Green, Amber, Red results like SCANNER surveys but produces a percentage detailing the length of failed carriageway – this is generally equivalent to the 'Red' score mentioned in SCANNER above.

The table below shows the percentage of **Unclassified (U) roads** in each condition category over the past five years

Year	Percentage of U Roads in each condition category
	Red
2020	No Survey Commissioned
2021	22%
2022	No Survey Commissioned
2023	18%
2024	No Survey Commissioned

Generally, across the unclassified road network, Sefton Council's 'Red', i.e. 'failed' sections of the network has been reduced over the course of the past 5 years. However, failure levels remain high when compared to condition levels across the classified road network.

Additional information on condition

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.

In addition to the machine and visual based condition surveys, our network is continuously monitored by a team of inspectors who organise repairs in line with the Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure'.

Further information on the council's highway safety defect policy can be found here: https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/8544/strat-guide-highway-safety-inspect-april-2024.pdf

Plans Council

Overall strategy

The development of Sefton Council's highway maintenance programmes 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.

Sefton Council'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 and planned 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.

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 and planned 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.

The priorities for scheme selection are based on several 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.

Category	Treatment Type	M2
Preventative Treatment	Surface Dressing	83,570
	Footway Slurry Sealing	24,719
	Treatment total	**108,289**
Renewal	Footway Reconstruction	1,600
	Carriageway Resurfacing	112,382
	Treatment total	**113,982**
	Total combined area treated	**222,271**

Sefton Council's additional funding of (**£1,458,556.00**) awarded through the DfT Local Highways Fund will support the completion of the councils 2025/26 approved highway maintenance programme, ensuring all schemes listed are completed in their entirety and not in part as initially anticipated for some selective projects identified for improvement.

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 and preventative type surface treatments addresses the root cause of road deterioration, ensuring a more permanent solution and extended life of the road.

Street works

The Council operates a Permit Scheme in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage access to, and occupancy of the roads within Sefton. 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 objectives and benefits of the Sefton 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

In addition, the Council subscribes to an interactive mapping tool, which aids co-ordination and prevents works clashes, helping works promoters to plan their works in advance and save un-necessary applications.

The scheme is subject to regular evaluations which help refine KPI's and target areas of concern. The scheme evaluations have evidenced a reduction in average works durations which results in significant savings to the economy that are higher than anticipated in the original business case.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

Climate change

Sefton Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and set a target of Net Zero carbon emissions from its estate and services by 2030. The council is working with partner organisations to reduce emissions across the borough.

Further information on the council's climate emergency policy can be found here: https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/4733/climate-emergency-strategy-final.pdf

Working with our service providers we are looking at innovative ways to maintain the highway network. Trials of rejuvenation products that seal and reactivate the surface of the road extending their life are being considered along with other innovative systems. The use of low temperature asphalt is now becoming 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.