

# Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report

June 2025



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## Forward

This Transparency Report offers a clear and comprehensive overview of the work carried out by West Sussex County Council in its capacity as the Highway Authority.

The scale of the county's highway assets is substantial and managing them effectively, so that residents and businesses can go about their daily lives with minimal disruption, is no small task. When factoring in both operational and financial constraints, the complexity of this responsibility becomes even more apparent.

Council officers work diligently to ensure that the highway network remains safe, functional, and cost-effective. Their efforts are guided by a commitment to delivering services that meet both local needs and national standards.

As is the case across much of the country, maintaining road conditions in West Sussex presents ongoing challenges. However, this report demonstrates that, despite these difficulties, the Council's performance - aligned with the Council Plan and national best practices - is commendable.

I hope you find this report both informative and engaging.

*Joy Dennis*

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

## Our highway network

The council's highway network plays a strategic role in connecting people and places across the county.

It supports the wellbeing of our residents, enables our communities to thrive and provides our residents with access to jobs, learning and business opportunities.

The highway network is made up of a variety of assets as listed below. Carriageways are the single most significant asset:

Asset	Items	Quantity
Carriageways (total)	Length (km)	4068.61
A Road	Length (km)	506.74
B and C roads	Length (km)	1,333.64
U Roads	Length (km)	2228.23
Footways	Length (km)	3,984.2
Other Public Rights of Way	Footpaths	2778.03
	Bridleways	1184.78
	Restricted Byways	130.52
	Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT)	13.59
	G-Class Highways	46.87
Cycleways	Length (km)	81
Structures	Bridges (no)	677
	Subways (no)	33
	Footbridges (no)	95
	Retaining Walls (no)	76
Highway Drainage	Gullies (no)	139,700
	Ditches (km)	228.172
	Grips (no)	6640
Street Lighting	Streetlights (no)	69,700
	Illuminated Signs (no)	8,500
	Illuminated Bollards (no)	3,100
Traffic Signals and Intelligent Transport Systems	Signalised Junctions (no)	129
	Pedestrian Crossings (no)	398
	Vehicle Activated Signs (no)	186
Highways Trees	Trees (no)	313,000
Highways Soft Estate	Grass verges (km)	4,900
	Highways Hedges (m2)	120,900
	Planted Areas (m2)	78,200

These network assets require constant review, maintenance and improvement to ensure they meet the demands placed upon them; they are also the councils most valuable asset. For example, to replace all the carriageways within West Sussex would cost in the region of £5.5bn.

# Highways maintenance spending figures

## Capital Budget

The Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme each year identifies capital highway infrastructure maintenance schemes, transport improvements and Community Highway Schemes planned for implementation.

The Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme 2025-26 is developed from the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and Strategy and aligned to corporate policy. This is derived from Highway Infrastructure Maintenance, Road Safety, Local Transport Improvements Programme (LTIP) and Community Highway Schemes (CHS).

Strategic transport and asset management principles are applied in considering transport priorities, highway asset condition, and determining the appropriate maintenance and improvements based on need.

The Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme itemises all the capital works planned for the year and can be found here for 2025/26 Programme – [Here](#)

For the current Delivery Programme, the capital funding required to deliver the 2025/26 programme is £42.753m funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) block funding allocations totalling £31.110m, made up of DfT Highways Maintenance £20.058m baseline and an additional £7.289m funding as well as the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) £3.763m (not yet confirmed). Section 106 Agreement developer and other external contributions £0.934m, and West Sussex Corporate Resources of £10.709m

Previous years budgets are outlined below:

Highway maintenance spending					
Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£m)	Capital spend (£m)	Revenue spend (£m)	Estimate of % spent on preventative maintenance	Estimate of % spent on reactive maintenance
2025/26 (projected)	£31.110	£42.7	£21.33	73%	28%
2024/25	£25.866	£43.1	£20.62	70%	30%
2023/24	£23.945	£38.846	£19.06	71%	29%
2022/23	£20.899	£34.846	£13.32	76%	24%
2021/22	£20.899	£29.527	£10.34	78%	22%
2020/21	£26.921	£20.068	£9.43	73%	27%



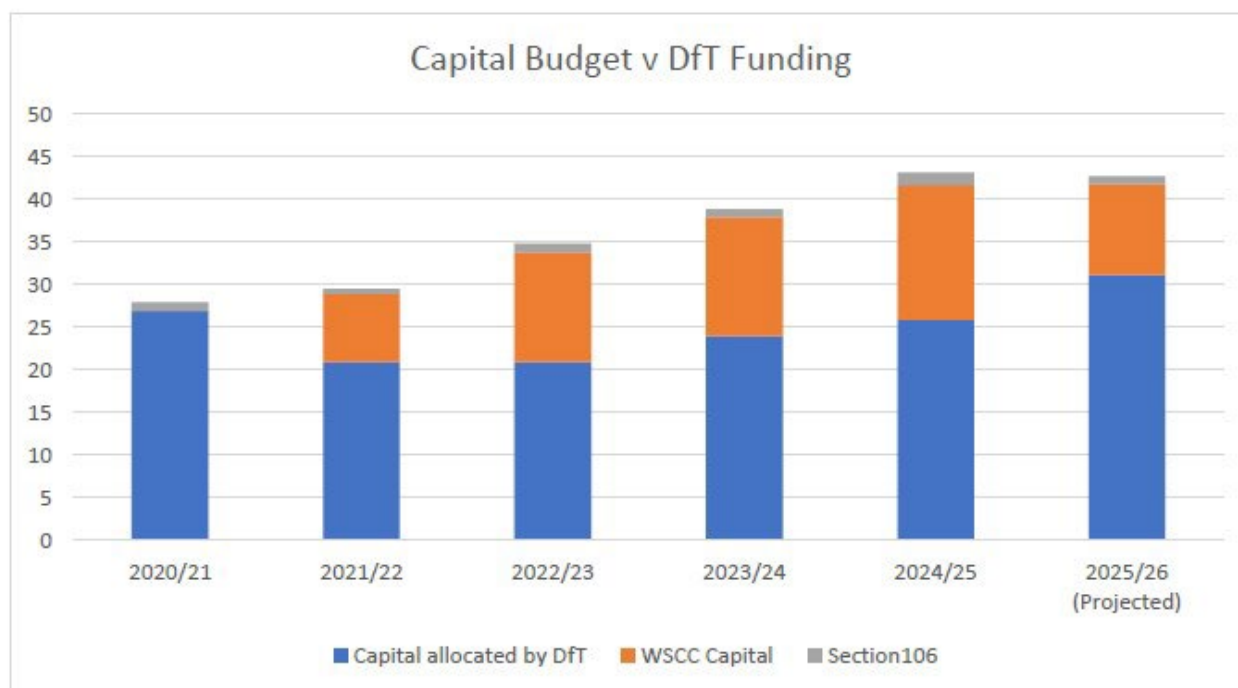
## Additional information on capital spending

The Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme will typically undertake works to:

- Carriageway and Footways
- Highways Structures
- Highway Drainage
- Signals and Crossings
- Highway Improvements

It should be noted that Street Lighting, whilst is a responsibility of West Sussex County Council as Highway Authority, is provided via a 25-year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) that is due to expire in March 2035. The funding for this is split between Central Government credits and WSCC revenue at a cost of approximately £12million per annum. This cost covers annual planned and reactive maintenance, risk and management of the asset. In addition, there are energy costs of approximately £3million per annum.

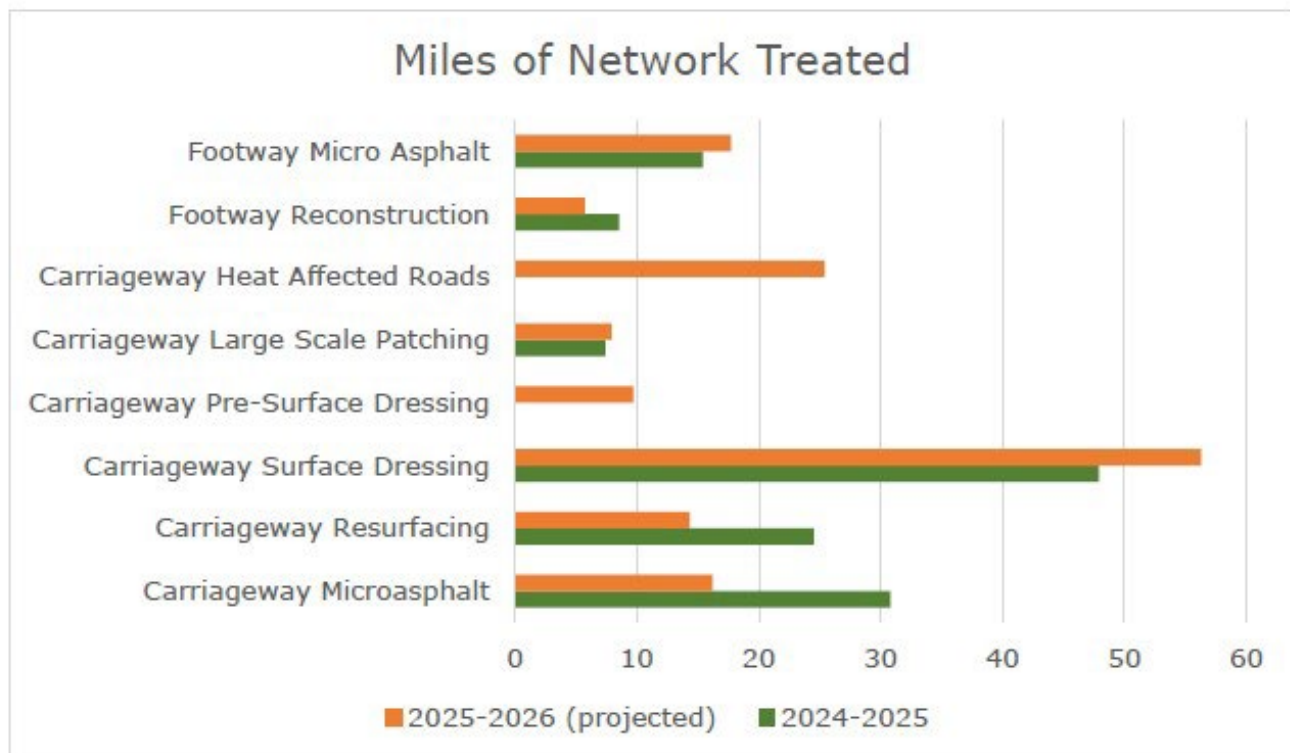
The table below indicates the funding received from DfT as well as the County Council Corporate Resources that have been provided to try and meet some of the known demand on the network in an attempt to reduce the ongoing maintenance and in particular to stem the revenue, reactive maintenance activity and cost.



The most significant proportion of capital expenditure is usually for carriageway capital maintenance. The table below show the total kilometres of network treated during 2024–25, along with the projected length for 2025–26 by treatment type.

Kilometres of network treated		
Surfacing works	2024-2025 (KM)	2025-2026 (Projected) (KM)
Carriageway Micro Asphalt	49.5	26
Resurfacing	39.4	23
Surface Dressing	77	90.6
Footway reconstruction	13.6	9.1
Footway Micro Asphalt	24.7	28.4
Large scale Carriageway Patching	11.9	12.7
Pre-Surface Dressing Patching	0	15.6
Heat affected roads	0	40.8
Total	216.4	246.2

The total miles of network treated during the 2025–26 period is currently projected based on planned works; however, these figures are subject to change. In-year additions to the programme - such as newly identified priorities or accelerated schemes - may result in fluctuations to the final outputs delivered.



## Additional Information on Revenue Maintenance

The annual highway revenue budget supports several programmes of routine and reactive maintenance:

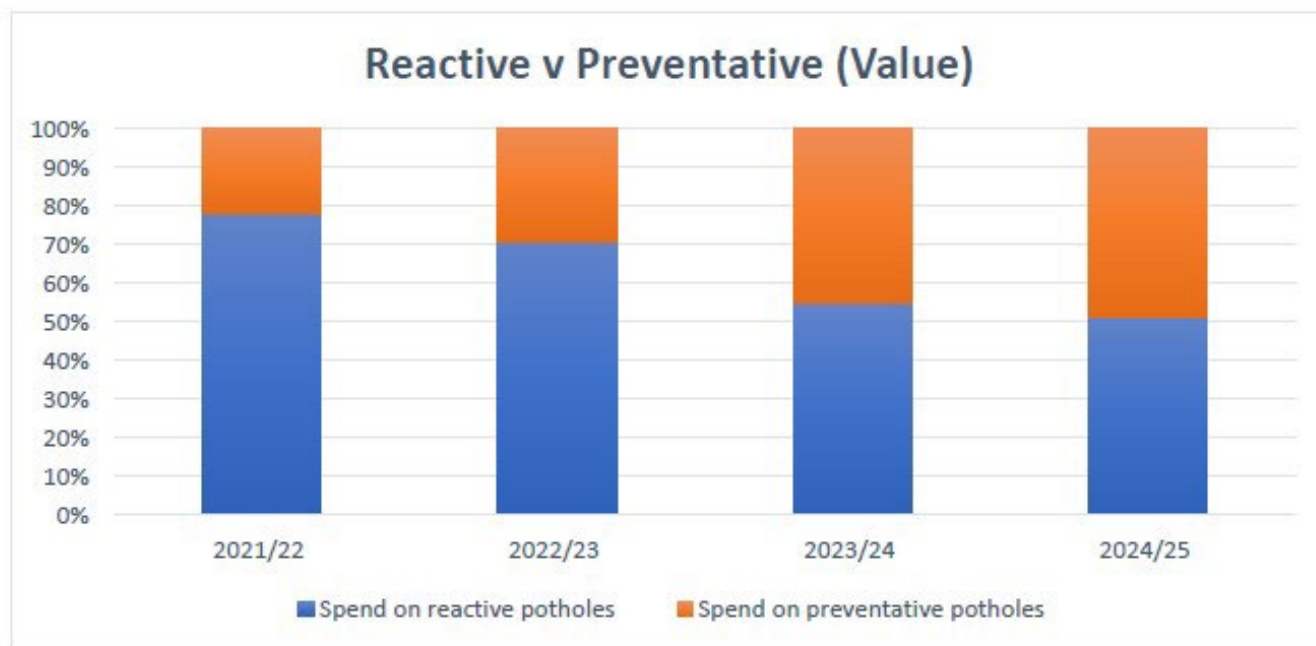
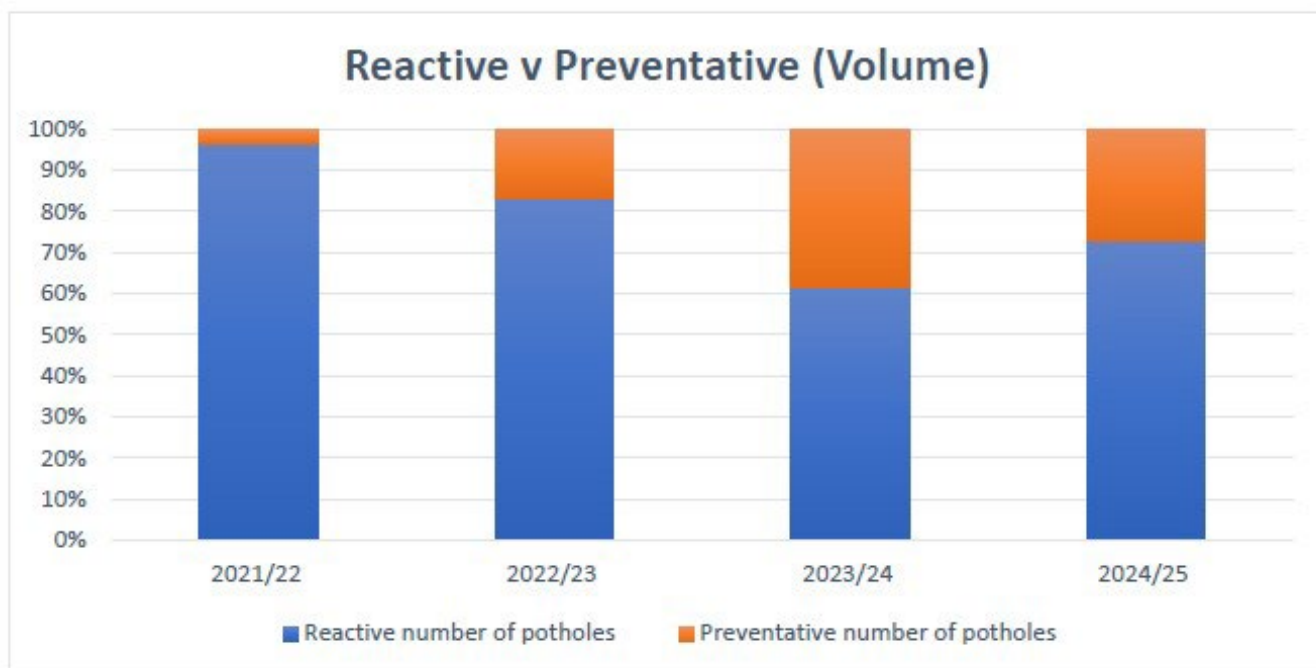
- Reactive Safety Response – Responding to emergencies, fixing safety defects – including potholes
- Drainage Cleansing – Cyclical cleansing and reactive jetting and investigations
- Winter Service
- Maintenance of Green Estate – Including Trees, Grass and Weed Removal
- Maintenance of signs and lines
- Maintenance of structures, drainage assets and traffic signals
- Condition Surveys

The highway network has been experiencing a notable, year-on-year increase in the number of safety defects, reaching the highest level on record in 2024/25. This rise is linked to a combination of an increase in named storm events and more frequent, intense and prolonged rainfall. This has led to a significant increase in flooding incidents and drainage-related issues across the network. We have also undertaken above average winter gritting operations due to prolonged cold weather.

In response, the Council has allocated additional revenue funding in the current and past two financial years, to support a more proactive maintenance approach. This includes the deployment of spray injection patchers and pothole 'find and fix' gangs. Drain jetting capacity has been increased, and additional drainage work has also been carried out, including gully repairs, clearing jammed grids, digging grips, and substantial programme of roadside ditching. These measures aim to strengthen the resilience of the highway network and reduce the impact of extreme weather events on infrastructure performance, particularly during the winter period.

Financial year	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Total number of potholes repaired	22,728	29,248	48,104	44,699
Reactive number of potholes	21,901	24,320	29,660	32,530
Preventative number of potholes	827	4,928	18,444	12,169
Percentage reactive to preventative	96%	83%	62%	73%
Spend on reactive potholes	£992,973	£1,472,844	£1,832,616	1,887,231
Spend on preventative potholes	£280,825	£610,301	£1,517,559	1,784,669





The two tables above illustrate the spend and volume profile between Reactive and Preventative works for the previous four financial years.

## Condition of local roads

Road condition data provides information about the overall state of roads in the County as well as an indication of whether the condition is improving or worsening.

There are several ways of measuring road condition, depending on which aspect of the road is of interest. Most of the information collected is about the surface condition of the road – for example, how many defects there are, whether the surface is breaking up. Surface condition surveys can be carried out either manually, by a surveyor visually inspecting the road, or automatically, using vehicles with mounted lasers and cameras to measure different aspects of the road.

Apart from unclassified roads, all the information on the surface condition comes from automated surveys. The machines that carry out the surveys on the local roads are called SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads)

The Scanner Survey on all A and B class roads is carried out annually on 100% of the network in one direction, and on 50% of the C class network in one direction. A visual inspection is undertaken on 50% of the unclassified network each year. Note, this is in addition to safety inspections undertaken by WSCC officers in accordance with the Highway Inspection Manual.

The Road Condition Indicator (RCI) is used to assess the condition of individual sections of road. It is calculated using the outputs from the surveys mentioned above. An RCI score can range between 0 and 315. Any stretches of road scoring below 40 are declared to be in good, or 'green', condition. Any stretches scoring greater than or equal to 40 but less than 100 will not be in perfect condition but would still offer a good driving surface (called 'amber' condition). Anything scoring greater than or equal to 100 is likely to be in poor condition and will probably need maintenance within in the next year or so (called 'red' condition). Highways engineers use RCI scores to help identify which sections of road need repairing.

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: [Here](#)

Financial Year End	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	4%	24%	72%
2021	5%	26%	69%
2022	6%	26%	68%
2023	6%	25%	69%
2024	6%	27%	67%
2025	6%	28%	66%

*Note. Table percentages are rounded up, in accordance with DfT submissions*

Results for 2023-2025 show a slight improvement on A roads this year where the 'RED' condition has reduced 0.5% to 5.7%.

Financial Year End	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	4%	27%	69%
2021	6%	26%	68%
2022	8%	24%	68%
2023	6%	26%	68%
2024	6%	26%	68%
2025	5%	29%	66%

*Note. Table percentages are rounded up, in accordance with DfT submissions*

B and C class roads show a slight improvement, with 'RED' condition B roads reducing by 0.3% and C class roads from 0.8%.

Financial Year	Percentage of Unclassified Roads in the Red category
2020	15%
2021	12%
2022	8%
2023	10%
2024	14%
2025	17%

*Note. Table percentages are rounded up, in accordance with DfT submissions*

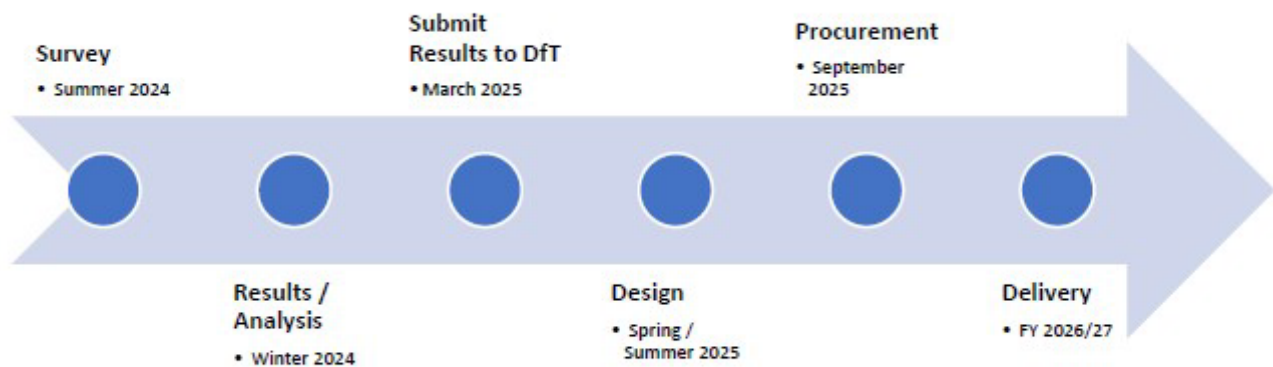
The proportion of the Unclassified Roads in 'RED' condition has risen by 2.9% to 16.6%, continuing an upward trend over the last 3 years. This is considered a reflection of the various pressures on the network, such as increasing volumes of utility works, and traffic as well as the impact of more extreme weather.

In addition, much of the Unclassified network, particularly in rural areas, is constructed to a lower standard. Neighbouring authorities have experienced a similar trend, with more of their Unclassified network falling in to 'Red' condition.

## Additional information on condition

The timeline for surveys, data analysis, design, procurement and delivery means observed road condition is unlikely to be addressed for at least 2 years, assuming sufficient budget is available.

The diagram below presents the timeline, based on Summer 2024 survey.



# Plans

## Overall strategy

West Sussex County Council (WSCC) is committed to delivering high-quality services to its residents while managing assets effectively and sustainably. This commitment is articulated through Our **Council Plan 2021- 2025** and the **West Sussex Transport Plan (WSTP) 2022-2036**.

- **Our Council Plan 2021-2025** – [Here](#)
- **The West Sussex Transport Plan** – [Here](#)

The role of West Sussex's highway infrastructure assets fundamentally underpins the ability of the Council to meet its vision and strategic aims set out in these plans. The highways network and associated assets supports many of the services provided by the Council and access for its residents, customers and stakeholders.

**West Sussex County Council Highways Asset Management Policy and Strategy** sets out the strategic approach WSCC as Highway Authority to manage all assets on the Highway Network.

The Highways Asset Management Strategy has two parts in which the first describes the approach to delivering the aims and objectives stated in the Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Policy. It also provides the framework for achieving the council's strategic priorities in relation to the delivery and management of the council's highway assets.

This strategy has been developed to ensure alignment with the Council Plan and other key documents including the UKRLG Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice.

This strategy establishes the activities and process that are necessary to develop, document, implement and continually improve highway management and maintenance meeting the needs of the assets and ensuring a safe and effective network for all that use it.

- **Highway Infrastructure Policy and Strategy** – [Here](#)

## Other Plans

The council's vision is that in 2030, West Sussex County Council is carbon neutral and climate resilient, using our limited resources wisely, and that we have enabled positive actions and behaviours across our county to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Our Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2030 sets out our framework for action and key commitments that will help us to achieve our vision.

- **Climate Change Strategy** – [Here](#)

The overarching aim of the **West Sussex Resilient Network Plan** is to keep West Sussex moving, particularly during emergencies. It will do this using a risk-based approach to ensure the delivery of an efficient and effective service.

- **Resilient Network Plan** – [Here](#)

The **Winter Service Plan** is adopted in accordance with the Code of Practice 'Well Managed Highway infrastructure', which supports wider objectives for transport, integration, accessibility, and network management. A Resilient Winter Service will reduce the risk in the delivery of the Service during normal and severe winter conditions.

- **Winter Service Plan** – [Here](#)

WSCC is one of the Highway Authorities in the country to adopt a **Lane Rental Scheme**. The West Sussex Lane Rental Scheme (WSLRS) gives works promoters a financial incentive to carry out and complete highway works in a less disruptive way when a road or lane closure is needed.

The scheme helps to reduce the length of time that sites are unoccupied and improve planning, coordination and working methods to maximise efficiency.

- **Lane Rental Scheme** – [Here](#)

This **Highway Network Management Plan** (HNMP) has been developed to set out the way in which West Sussex County Council (WSCC) will fulfil the Network Management Duty imposed by the Traffic Management Act (2004). The West Sussex Transport Plan (WSTP) is a parent of this plan, and the content is intended to facilitate the delivery of the WSTP.

- **Network Management Plan** – [Here](#)

The council's **Street Works Permit Scheme** is a process for delivering proactive traffic management and targeting improvements. This ensures more effective use of our highways while minimising disruption from road and street works.

- **Street Works Permit Scheme** – [Here](#)



# Procurement

## Procurement of highways works.

In April 2020 West Sussex Highways established a range of new contractual arrangements for the provision of safety response, routine and cyclical maintenance, planned carriageway and footway structural maintenance and highway improvements. Previously, WSCC Highways had a single supplier "Term Maintenance Contract" that provided all such Highway services.

The services are now divided into seven separate 'Lots'. Lots 1, 2 and 3 are dedicated reactive and cyclical maintenance; core services, grass cutting and drain gully cleansing.

Lots 4, 5, 6 and 7 are delivered under a Works Framework and deliver the planned carriageway and footway structural maintenance and improvements defined by the West Sussex Highways annual delivery programme.

The portfolio approach to procuring services as provided significant benefits in a number of ways including:

- Direct relationship with contractors has provided significant improvements in partnership working for both client and contractor
- Value for money has been improved
- Flexibility of delivery programmes has provided improved ability to provide agile services where necessary
- Close working between client and contractor allows for greater innovation and service improvement
- Framework facilitates the use of local SMEs to work with WSCC

## Climate change, resilience and adaptation

West Sussex County Council's highways operations has been contributing to corporate efforts to reduce emissions since the council recognised the climate emergency in 2019. The service has embedded principles set out in [WSCC's Climate Change Strategy](#), and initiated delivery against the council's [Climate Action and Adaptation Plan \(CAAP\)](#). The service now has a CAAP, specific to the service outlining how the directorate will deliver against areas responsible for.

As a highly emitting directorate in WSCC (due to the nature of services), considerable effort is being dedicated to decarbonising and mitigating the effects of climate change, as well as adapting to the impacts already being faced across the county as a result of climate change.

Initiatives in progress to decarbonise maintenance operations are:

- Transitioning traffic signals and streetlights to LEDs
- Moving highway operations vehicles and equipment to electric alternatives where practical
- Delivering DfT funded Livelabs innovation project '[Greenprint](#)' alongside South Gloucestershire Council to decarbonise verge maintenance
- Measuring and tracking carbon emissions associated with service to identify hotspots and track progress
- Implementing a sustainable approach to procurement by utilising National TOMs framework which enables prioritisation of bidders that would support HTP's net zero ambitions
- Utilising warm mix and recycled asphalt (RAP) in resurfacing to reduce embodied carbon
- Making the most of preventative treatments to extend asset lifespan

Initiatives to understand risks of climate change to the network and improve resilience

- Utilising [Rapid Adaptation Pathway Assessment \(RAPA\)](#)
- Increasing the frequency of drainage cleansing and improving drainage infrastructure to enhance capacity
- Increasing the frequency of bridge scour assessments to account for increased rainfall and water flow
- Engaging with riparian owners to ensure ditches are maintained to allow free flow of water and reduce flooding risk
- Improving winter preparedness plans to account for more extreme rainfall events
- Agreed a new asset management strategy/policy that includes climate change considerations to ensure strategic management of assets accounts for climate change impacts
- Adapting carriageway and footway surfacing designs to withstand more extreme weather
- Prioritising Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) in project delivery
- Delivering '[Operation watershed](#)' initiatives - projects that enable community groups to reduce local flood risk and improve resilience (e.g. implementation of rain gardens)
- Increasing embankment and cutting monitoring to reduce risks associated with climate impacts