

Subject:	Road Maintenance in RBWM
Purpose:	To provide information for Windsor Town Forum regarding road maintenance including pothole repairs, in advance of the forum meeting on 18 th July 2023.
Officer:	Chris Wheeler, Highway Services Manager
Date:	10 th July 2023

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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

Background

RBWM is responsible for the maintenance of most of the highway assets in the Royal Borough. These assets include carriageways, footways, bridges, street lighting, traffic signals, signs, and street furniture. A number of roads and other highway assets are the responsibility of other parties, including National Highways, Network Rail, Housing Associations, and private landowners.

The council is responsible for just over 600km of roads. The current road resurfacing budget, which is designated to individual schemes, allows us to resurface approximately 10-15km of the borough's roads each year, which is only around 1% of the total network. Therefore, we must channel the money to areas that are most critical.

The Boroughs Highway Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) and the Highway Maintenance Management Plan (HMMP), sets out the councils' approach to asset management and how works are prioritised; in turn, getting the best value from our financial investment.

The main reason for using an 'asset management' approach is that it promotes a proactive risk methodology to highway maintenance. It allows us to make best use of resources and delivers efficient and effective highway maintenance. It takes a long-term view of how highways are managed, focusing on outcomes by ensuring that funds are spent on activities that prevent expensive short-term repairs. This makes the best use of investment whilst minimising risk.

Technical assessment data

The annual road resurfacing programme is developed using vehicle mounted 'SCRIM' and 'SCANNER' surveys. SCRIM relates to skid resistance and SCANNER relates to condition factors such as profile, rutting, cracking etc. These surveys allow us to prioritise and provide justification for the streets recommended for treatment. These are carried out on all our A, B and C roads. The tables below set out the current road condition indicators in red, amber, and green.

Red (maintenance treatment required)

Road category	A	B	C
Percentage	3%	3%	3%

Amber (start to plan investigation)

Road category	A	B	C
Percentage	20%	19%	24%

Green (good condition)

Road category	A	B	C
Percentage	77%	78%	73%

In addition to this, all streets are subject to a visual inspection on a set frequency dependent on their category. If any safety defects are recorded by the highway inspector, a works order is raised and actioned. If the street regularly needs attention from the revenue budgets, the inspector will place it on a list for consideration/prioritisation for more significant patching or resurfacing.

Through these assessments we can put together a comprehensive list of roads and the type of treatment that is required, either to try to prolong the life of the road or where the road is beyond preventative measures, reconstruction of the road through it being planed out and resurfaced.

Potholes

Towards the end of 2022, and in the start of this year, the borough has seen a rise in potholes forming on our road network. This is not just a local issue but a national problem. The table below puts into some perspective how many additional enquiries and potholes the borough has received over the last 6 months.

2022/23	Quarter 1 (Q1)			Quarter 2 (Q2)			Quarter 3 (Q3)			Quarter 4 (Q4)		
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Highway enquiries	272	322	294	268	238	265	311	485	276	612	488	518
	Q1 total 888			Q2 total 771			Q3 total 1072			Q4 total 1618		
Emergency potholes	10	17	15	8	13	13	5	41	19	56	6	57
	Q1 total 42			Q2 total 34			Q3 total 65			Q4 total 119		

From the table it can be seen the amount of enquires relating to highways had doubled through the winter months and into the spring. Predominately due to the amount of rain combined with the prolonged cold temperatures we had experienced.

During the early months of 2023 there has been a requirement to undertake a greater number of 'plug' type repairs to ensure that the timescales for attendance are met and public safety maintained. This has resulted in a legacy of plug repairs which we intend to convert to full repairs through the following summer months.

Our Approach to pothole/defect repairs:

- Emergency (2-hour) and 24-hour attendance – the contractors undertake plug type repairs, as the nature of defect demands a rapid 'make safe' response, this is followed up with a full repair to ensure that the defect (and surrounding areas of deterioration) is fully rectified to prevent further/repeat deterioration. The target to undertake full patch repairs is within 3 months, on the assumption the plug repair remains safe and intact. This full patch repairs are also subject to a streetworks permit being granted, which is assessed to minimise disruption.
- 7-day and 28-day defects are carried out on a 'first time' fix basis using hot material and cut out patching, utilising short term traffic management (and road closures if necessary) and undertaking adjacent defect repairs within a single traffic management set-up.

The Department for Transport has also recognised there is has been an increase in road deterioration across the UK over the last 6 months and has given each local authority additional pothole grant funding to tackle this issue.

RBWM intend to invest this grant allocation into the highway removing the potholes and proactively preventing further deterioration.

Approach to permanently fixing the pothole back log due to the bad weather:

- Mobilise a wider supply chain to increase patching programmes.
- Trial and, if successful, utilise mastic and infrared repairs on high stress/ difficult to access locations for a quick and effective permanent repair.