Swindon Borough Council

June 2025

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

Swindon's Highway Asset has an estimated value of over £1.8bn. The table below and following text describe the extent of our network and the primary asset types:

Lengths of highway, footways and cycleways (km)

A roads	B and C roads	U roads	Total roads	Footways	Other public rights of way	Cycleways
74km	165km	647km	886km	1,074km	325km	124km

Structures

We are responsible for 450 highway structures on our network including road bridges, footway / cycle bridges, subways and culverts. Around 130 of these are on the Public right of way network.

Traffic signals

We have 215 traffic signal sites, split between 80 Traffic Signal junctions, 66 Puffin crossings, 68 Toucan crossings and 1 Pelican crossing.

Public rights of way

74% of our 325km Public right of way network is public footpath, 22% public bridleway and 4% restricted byway and byway open to all traffic. The Ridgeway and Thames path National Trails are notable routes that run through the Borough.

Street lighting

The total number of lighting assets is 34,957. These are predominantly column mounted street lighting but also includes lighting for road signs, bollards and pedestrian subways and Zebra crossings.

Drainage

We are responsible for over 36,000 highway gullies and an extensive underground highway drainage network.

SBC is not responsible for the M4 motorway or A419. These routes are the responsibility of National Highways.

Highways maintenance spending figures

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)	£5,761	£5,981	£2,787	80%	20%
2024/25	£3,937	£5,919	£2,491	70%	30%
2023/24	£3,937	£3,445	£2,711	70%	30%
2022/23	£3,496	£4,349	£2,421	75%	25%
2021/22	£3,496	£3,754	£2,376	60%	40%
2020/21	£4,738	£1,407	£2,295	90%	10%

Additional information on spending

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

- Highway resurfacing programmes
- Highway patching programmes
- Reactive and emergency repairs
- Drainage gully cleansing
- Bridges and structures
- Traffic Signals, signs and road markings
- Winter maintenance
- Street Lighting

Carriageways

In the five years to 2024/25 we have treated over 45.1km's of carriageway with a combination of resurfacing and surface treatments. A further 13.5km are included within the 2025/26 programme. A significant further amount of carriageway renewal has been secured in this period within the Borough's major transportation projects and associated with private developments.

Highway Structures

In the five years to 2024/25, the following number of structures have been maintained in Swindon:

Number of highway structures maintained

Year	Major maintenance or replacements	Minor repairs and maintenance	PRoW structures
2024/25	3	6	4
2023/24	4	3	2
2022/23	7	2	-
2021/22	4	2	-

Our network is continuously monitored by a team of inspectors who organise repairs in line with the DfT code of practice for well-maintained highways and the Council's intervention policy. Using this methodology, the following reactive repairs have been undertaken year on year:

Estimate of number of potholes filled

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
6,000	6,500	7,932	14,411	10,230

Condition of local roads

The tables and following text describe the condition of our highway network:

Percentage of A roads in each condition category

Year	Red	Amber	Green
2020	2.0%	22.9%	75.1%
2021	2.8%	25.7%	71.5%
2022	2.4%	23.1%	74.5%
2023	3.0%	26.6%	70.4%
2024	3.7%	25.7%	70.6%

Data is collected annually for A Class roads, with the whole network surveyed each year.

Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category

Year	Red	Amber	Green
2020	4.0%	25.0%	71.0%
2021	3.7%	23.9%	72.4%
2022	3.7%	24.0%	72.3%
2023	4.7%	26.9%	68.4%
2024	5.4%	29.6%	65.0%

Data is collected over a two-year period for B & C Class roads, with around half of the network surveyed each year.

Year	Percentage of U roads in the red category
2020	9%
2021	9%
2022	9%
2023	13%
2024	11%

U Class roads in Swindon Borough are surveyed using Coarse Visual Inspection survey methodology as opposed to SCANNER for classified roads. Data is generally collected over a two-year period for Unclassified roads, with around half of the network surveyed each year.

The condition of local roads in Swindon Borough have been on a trend of gradual condition deterioration over the past 5-years. This trend has been fairly similar across all road classes. The

primary cause of this deterioration is deemed to be the historic low levels of capital funding available annually for major carriageway maintenance in the Borough, previously calculated as being roughly a third of that deemed necessary to keep the road condition at a steady state (i.e. no overall condition deterioration, but no overall improvement).

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

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

Additional information on condition

Structures

The majority of our highway structures are in Good or Very Good condition. The average condition of the bridge stock scores of 91 out of 100.This is measured using the nationally agreed Bridge Condition Indicator scoring system. We have only 1 bridge that still requires strengthening and this will be programmed for completion in the next 2/3 years.

Traffic signals

The average age of our traffic signal sites is 11.29 years. This has reduced from 11.73 years in the last couple of years and 96% of traffic signals use LED aspects. Both condition metrics compare favourably with neighbouring local authorities.

Public Rights of Way: No condition data or metrics available, therefore, recommend not including this heading.

Drainage

Last year we cleaned 15,818 gullies. This is approx. 44% of the recorded gullies on our network and were prioritised due to their condition. We aim to clear gullies when the silt levels are at 50-75% of capacity, which the majority of gullies visited were within. We continue to assess and adjust gully clearing frequencies to ensure efficiency.

We are also actively working to plot other drainage asset types, e.g. trash screens, minor culverts etc. onto the management system so that we can continue to monitor and maintain assets efficiently.

Lighting

90% of our lighting stock has been converted to LED. This is providing benefits in reduced energy costs and reduced maintenance intervals (less frequent replacement of luminaires). We are also now able to remotely monitor lighting and adjust parameters such as dimming levels via our Central management System.

We test approx. 2000 columns per year as part of our routine annual structural testing programme. This helps to identify and prioritise columns that require replacement. This includes 3086 old concrete columns which have been scheduled for replacement.

Plans

Overall strategy

The Council receives Government capital grant funding for highway maintenance each year as part of the spending review. The relative grant settlements for Local Highway Authorities in England are based on datasets for road lengths, bridge numbers and street lighting numbers requested periodically by central government.

In order to refine and approve its approach to maintaining highway assets, an updated Highway Asset Management Policy and associated Plans was approved in February 2022. The Plans included the Council's first Highway Asset Management Carbon Management Plan to align with the Council's Corporate Plan to achieve Carbon Net Zero, and an updated Strategic Network Hierarchy to ensure that all the available funding is allocated in the most efficient way to serve the needs of the community.

It remains key to the Council's asset-driven funding approach that maintenance schemes continue to be selected on a needs-led basis in line with the Asset Management Strategy. However, it is recognised that there is community concern regarding highway defects that are outside the intervention criteria set out in the policy and are not therefore being addressed. The Council will therefore further review the Highway Asset Management Policy in light of these concerns.

Specific plans for 2025/26

Preventative (Capital) Maintenance: 2025/26 plus prior year carry forward schemes estimated network treatment lengths:

- A Class roads = 3,000m (1,800m resurfacing including patching; 1,200m surface treatment)
- B Class roads = 5,750m (2,450m resurfacing including patching; 3,300m surface treatment)
- C Class roads = 750m (all resurfacing including patching)
- U Class roads = 4,000m (all resurfacing)
    - **Carriageway total = 13,500m = 8.4 miles**
- Footways etc. = 14,040m
    - **Footway total = 14,040m = 8.8 miles**

Structures

Routine inspection of our Highway structures helps inform the Capital and Revenue spend programmes which annually typically includes 2 major maintenance schemes, e.g. bridge waterproofing, strengthening or refurbishment. We also replace on average 2-3 Timber foot / Cycle bridges on the urban network along with a similar number on the public right of way network.

Traffic signals

We plan to continue to reduce the average age of traffic signals sites with the target of having no traffic signals greater than 20 years of age. Also, completing a program of timings and operational checks for all signal junctions.

Public rights of way

The annual revenue maintenance budget is predominantly used to clear vegetation from the network with over 40km of paths on the annual vegetation clearance schedule. The annual LTP capital allocation is used to replace three or more footbridges each year and complete surface repairs to the network. In 25/26, it is planned to replace two wooden footbridges on the Thames Path National Trail with more accessible and durable GRP structures and at least two other smaller footbridges as well as complete repairs to over 3km of path surface.

Drainage

The Council is in the process of developing a programme of works to address key highway drainage issues and this is reflected in the Section 19 report.

Lighting

We plan to get the remaining 10% of our streetlights converted to LED and onto our Central Management System.

We will continue to prioritise columns identified as requiring replacement through the annual routine structural testing programme. This includes our remaining concrete columns. We are typically replacing approximately 100 columns per month.

Reactive maintenance

In 2025/26, we estimate we will fill in 9000 potholes, repaint road markings covering over 400 areas, clean over 14,000 gullies, complete over 250 masonry repairs and complete over 250 repairs to signs and bollards.

Streetworks

In 1991 the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) placed a duty on the Council, as a highway authority, to coordinate activities (works) of all kinds on the highway under the control of that Authority.

In 2004 the Traffic Management Act (TMA) and associated secondary legislation widened the NRSWA coordination duty. The scope of this increased duty has the following main considerations and Part 3 of the TMA allows for an Authority [the Council] to introduce a permit scheme to support the delivery of this duty.

The Swindon streetworks permit scheme was introduced in October 2021. The powers under a permit scheme enable the Council to take a more active involvement in the planning and coordination of works, from the initial planning stages through to completion. This includes:

- organisations book occupation for work instead of giving notice, essentially obtaining a permit for their works;
- any variation to the work needs to be agreed, before and after works have started, including extensions to the duration;
- the Council can apply conditions to work to impose constraints; and
- sanctions with fixed penalty notices for working without a permit or in breach of conditions (of the permit).

These powers enable a Council to deliver a more effective network management service, through the increased capability to control the planning and undertaking of work across their network.

We have recently published our year 3 evaluation report for the period October 2023 to September 2024. Streetworks permit scheme | Swindon Borough Council.

Designations in the local street gazetteer enable the council to identify whether a street is traffic-sensitive, based on a set of criteria which includes the volume of traffic travelling on the street over a given period, and the times of that traffic-sensitivity, e.g. common peak periods such as 07:00 – 10:00 and 16:00 – 19:00.

The Council is currently reviewing and updating its register of Traffic Sensitive Streets to ensure that it is using the most up to date data when applying permit restrictions to streetworks to minimise disruption to the busiest parts of the network. The revision is at draft stage and will be subject to consultation later in 2025.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

The Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Carbon Reduction Plan was adopted by the Council in 2022. The plan reflects the start of the journey to ensure that highway infrastructure is maintained in such a way to minimise the impact on the environment and to determine how the Council may offset any unavoidable carbon costs that remain, to maintain the trajectory towards 2030 reductions, in line with the strategic vision.

Swindon Borough Council will also continue to benchmark and challenge the supply chain to understand and promote ways to reduce the carbon produced because of highway works.