



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report - Core Report 2026-27

Published September 2026



Contents

How we maintain local roads, pavements, and the wider highway network in Sandwell4

 A1 – What we are responsible for maintaining.....4

 A2 – Road conditions in Sandwell.....5

 A3 – What we are doing about potholes and other road defects.....6

 A4 – What we spend to maintain the highway network and where the funding is coming from.....10

 A5 – Our maintenance plans for this year.....11



Service Director Declaration

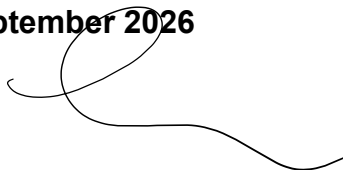
I confirm that this Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report has been prepared in accordance with Department for Transport guidance and, to the best of my knowledge, accurately reflects the highway maintenance activities, performance and investment undertaken by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

Name: Tammy Stokes

Position: Service Director – Regeneration and Economy

Date: 08 September 2026

Signature:



Section 151 Officer Declaration

I confirm that the financial information contained within this Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report is consistent with the Council's financial records and has been prepared in accordance with Department for Transport transparency reporting requirements.

Name: Alex Thompson

**Position: Executive Director of Finance and Transformation
(Section 151 Officer)**

Date: 08 September 2026

Signature:



How we maintain local roads, pavements, and the wider highway network in Sandwell

A1 – What we are responsible for maintaining.

If you live, work or pass through Sandwell on foot, by cycling, using public or personal transport, you will use the Borough's highway network. Sandwell's carriageway network is over 837 km in length and is divided into various asset types for the purpose of maintenance. The whole network has an estimated value of circa £3.9 billion, which makes it the largest and most visible infrastructure asset for which Sandwell Council is responsible. The network includes:

- 837 km of carriageway
- 1481 km of footway and remote footpaths
- 14 km of cycleway
- 114 bridges, 4 tunnels, 579 retaining walls, 10 subways and 31 culverts.
- 41,299 drainage gullies with associated access covers and pipework
- 31,080 streetlights and 3295 illuminated signs
- 266 traffic signal sites and 94 zebra crossings
- Other assets such as traffic signs, street name plates, bollards, guard rails, and vehicular restraint systems.

The Council, as Local Highway Authority, is responsible for maintaining all adopted public roads within the Borough, excluding motorways and trunk roads which are managed by National Highways.

Maintenance of a highway network presents several key existing and emerging challenges, such as increasing traffic levels and loads, the impacts of climate change resulting in more frequent extreme weather events, funding constraints and inflationary pressures, decarbonisation of maintenance activities, the transition to electric vehicles, the size and age of the asset and the ongoing backlog of maintenance.



A2 – Road conditions in Sandwell

A2.1. A roads

Year	Percentage of road in red category	Percentage of road in amber category	Percentage of road in green category
2023	2%	20%	78%
2024	2%	20%	78%
2025	2%	20%	78%

A2.2. B and C roads

Year	Percentage of road in red category	Percentage of road in amber category	Percentage of road in green category
2023	2%	21%	77%
2024	2%	21%	77%
2025	2%	19%	79%

A2.3. U roads

Year	Percentage of road in red category
2023	19%
2024	22%
2025	23%

Councils use road condition surveys to assess the condition of their roads. The results are grouped into three categories:

- **Green** – the road is in good condition and no further investigation or treatment is required.
- **Amber** – the road may need maintenance soon.
- **Red** – the road is in poor condition and should be considered for maintenance.

For unclassified roads, only the percentage of red category road requiring maintenance is currently reported.

The published [official statistics for road condition](#) include more detail about the methodology, timing, and coverage of this data.



A2.4. - Additional information on carriageway condition

Sandwell currently uses the mandated SCANNER survey type to collect condition data on its classified carriageway network. The data is collected over a two-year period and then combined to produce the indicators shown in tables A2.1 and A2.2. The indicators show the classified network to be in a broadly stable condition.

The unclassified carriageway network is surveyed using Coarse Visual Inspections, with data collected over a four-year period. The data is then combined to produce the condition indicators in table A.2.3. As there is no mandated survey type for unclassified roads in England, these figures may not be directly comparable with other highway authorities, who may use different survey frequencies or types. The proportion of unclassified roads requiring maintenance has increased from 19% in 2023 to 23% in 2025.

The condition indicators are monitored as key performance indicators and are used to inform the Authority's maintenance strategy and priorities. The authority also uses alternative survey types that use AI imagery analysis to assess the condition of the carriageway and footway networks within the Borough.

A3 – What we are doing about potholes and other road defects.

A3.1. – What is a pothole?

A pothole is a defect in the pavement surface where a portion of pavement material has broken away leaving a hole. Sandwell applies a risk-based approach to assess all highway defects, which determines what action we take. Where a defect is 20mm deep within pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes or 40 mm elsewhere these are assessed to determine whether they present an actionable safety risk. Potholes vary in shape and size, which along with other factors influences the level of risk they present to highway users.

Where potholes or other defects are considered to present a danger to highway users, works will be raised as an actionable defect for reactive repair. The level of risk presented by each defect determines the response time, with all actionable defects being categorised as either:

Defect Categories

Defect Category	Response Time
Category 1 defects - immediate hazard	2 hours
Category 1 defects – imminent hazard	5 days

The authority aims to undertake permanent first-time repairs, however there may be instances where temporary repairs are required to make the defect safe before we return to carry out a more permanent repair.



A3.2. – What we are we doing to tackle potholes

Sandwell aim to prevent potholes and other defects on the highway network by applying a “prevention is better than cure approach.” This proactive approach aims to use planned maintenance interventions at the optimum time, to improve network resilience, minimising the occurrence of defects and extend asset life. As part of this strategy, more than 90% of the carriageway maintenance budget is invested in planned and preventative maintenance, with less than 10% spent on reactive repairs.

Maintenance needs are identified through annual condition surveys, highway safety inspections, and lifecycle modelling. This information is used to determine the optimum treatment strategy and to develop forward programmes of work, with a variety of treatment options used:

Structural Maintenance – including resurfacing, reconstruction, or large areas of patching, target the areas of the network with structural deterioration.

Preventative Maintenance - such as surface dressing, crack sealing, preservation, and micro-asphalt treatments are used before major defects appear. These treatments slow deterioration, prevent water ingress, restore texture, and prolong asset life.

Reactive Maintenance – deals with safety defects identified through safety inspections or reports. During 2025/26, Sandwell reactively repaired 1,371 potholes and 598 other actionable carriageway defects. The authority aims to maximise the number of high-quality first-time permanent repairs wherever practicable. The most appropriate treatment option is determined on a case-by-case basis, taking account of a range of operational, technical and safety considerations, including:

- Existing pavement construction and condition;
- Traffic volumes and network criticality;
- Weather conditions;
- Size, nature, and extent of the defect;
- Traffic management requirements;
- Risk assessment outcomes; and
- Safety intervention criteria and repair timescales.

Where circumstances dictate, a temporary repair may be undertaken to make the highway safe and protect both highway users and the operational workforce. In such cases, a permanent repair is subsequently programmed and completed at the earliest appropriate opportunity.



A3.3. How members of public can report potholes and other highway defects

There are several methods by which the public can report potholes or other highway defects in Sandwell, using both traditional and digital forms, they include:

- **Online** - <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/contact/report-problem>
- **By email** – customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk
- **By telephone** - 0121 368 1177
- **In writing** - Sandwell Council, PO Box 2374, Oldbury B69 3DE
- **In-person** – Oldbury Local at Sandwell Council House

The Council also provides additional means to ensure its services are accessible to as many people as possible, such as a website designed to promote accessibility, a text relay service, interpreter services upon request and audio induction loops in our offices.



A3.4. What happens after a pothole is reported.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A POTHOLE IS REPORTED?

AFTER A CUSTOMER REPORTS A POTHOLE TO THE COUNCIL, AN OFFICER WILL INSPECT THE DEFECT, LOOKING AT ITS POSITION, SIZE AND DEPTH, ROAD CLASSIFICATION, TRAFFIC SPEED AND VOLUME.

WE AIM TO REPAIR POTHoles WITHIN:

2 HRS	IF THE DEFECT IS IDENTIFIED AS AN IMMEDIATE HAZARD
5 DAYS	IF THE DEFECT IS IDENTIFIED AS AN IMMINENT HAZARD

NOT ALL DEFECTS REPORTED WILL MEET THE CRITERIA FOR A REACTIVE REPAIR. WHERE LARGER AREAS OF POOR CONDITION ARE IDENTIFIED, THE COUNCIL WILL IDENTIFY THESE FOR INCLUSION IN OUR PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES.

THE COUNCIL WILL, WHERE POSSIBLE, NOTIFY THE CUSTOMER OF THE OUTCOME OF THEIR REPORT.





WHERE THERE ARE SEVERAL POTHoles IN AN AREA, THE DEFECTS MAY BE MARKED UP AND REPAIRED AS PART OF OUR **PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME**.

Once a defect is reported it is inspected and assessed against safety inspection criteria to determine the risk it presents. If the defect is assessed as actionable, repairs will be programmed according to the defect category and response times shown in the picture on the left. If a defect does not meet intervention criteria, it will continue to be monitored through a planned programme of Highway Safety Inspections



A4 – What we spend to maintain the highway network and where the funding is coming from.

A4.1. – Spending on highways maintenance

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 (projected)
Total spend on highways maintenance	£14,571,394	£19,528,063	£17,215,324
Of which spent on:			
Carriageways	£8,056,358	£11,739,645	£10,787,186
Footways	£2,291,602	£2,726,703	£2,216,114
Structures (for example bridges or tunnels)	£825,846	£879,701	£1,000,000
Drainage	£626,208	£791,709	£622,027
Street lighting	£1,360,537	£2,113,218	£1,779,000
Other assets (Traffic Signals)	£ 929,922	£761,042	£400,000
Condition Surveys and Analysis	£127,046	£134,034	£145,497
Live Labs Trials	£88,375	£88,375	£0
Winter Service	£265,500	£293,636	£265,500

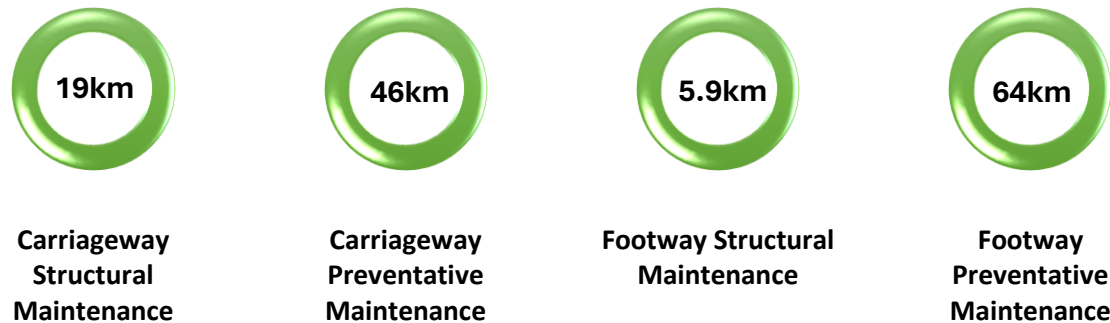
A4.2 – Where our funding for highways maintenance comes from

Funding sources for highways maintenance	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 (projected)
Funding received through the Department for Transport / UK Government	<u>£5,260,148</u>	<u>£8,524,965</u>	<u>£6,522,832</u>
[if applicable]: Additional highways maintenance funding provided by the Council and income from third parties	<u>£9,311,246</u>	<u>£11,003,098</u>	<u>£10,692,492</u>
Total	<u>£14,571,394</u>	<u>£19,528,063</u>	<u>£17,215,324</u>



A5 – Our maintenance plans for this year

A5.1 – Our plans for highways maintenance for 2026-27



Alongside our carriageway and footway maintenance programmes, the authority will continue to deliver data-led maintenance and investment to other highway assets, such as:

- Structures;
- Street lighting;
- Drainage;
- Traffic signals;
- Vehicular restraint systems and
- Winter maintenance

A5.2 - Full list of planned carriageway and footway works.

A list of our 2026/27 planned carriageway and footway maintenance works can be found on our website at:

<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/downloads/download/462/roads-being-resurfaced>



A5.3 – How decisions are made on our maintenance plans.

Sandwell prioritise our planned maintenance works using a risk-based, data-led approach, which prioritises the areas of the network which are in a poor condition and pose the greatest risk to highway users.

The potential schemes identified through analysis of condition data are prioritised using a prioritisation matrix. This has been developed to consider risk factors, such as:

- Condition;
- Network hierarchy;
- Reactive maintenance jobs data;
- Accident data;
- Skidding resistance data;
- Proximity to education; medical and retail establishments
- Proximity to public transport hubs; and
- Cycle routes.

Outputs from our lifecycle modelling are then used to determine the optimum treatment strategy based on the condition of the network and how we predict its condition to change over time.

The prioritised list of schemes is reviewed through engineering inspections, to develop programmes of work aligned to funding allocations. Where possible, schemes in close proximity will be combined to realise economies of scale and reduce disruption to highway users.

