

LB Camden

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# Local highways maintenance transparency report

## Our highway network

**Table 1. Network lengths**

Lengths of highway, footways and cycleways (km)						
A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way	cycleways
27km	20km	211km	258km	259km	Information not held	24.9km

## Highways maintenance spending figures

**Table 2. Budgets since 2020**

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)	£444,000	£7,780	£1,825	81%	19 %
2024/25	£183,500	£8,359	£1,800	83%	17%
2023/24	£0	£8,650	£1,790	83%	17%
2022/23	£200,000	£8,068	£1,326	86%	14%
2021/22	£0	£6,155	£1,267	83%	17%
2020/21	£200,000	£7,030	£1,200	86%	14%

Camden's highways Infrastructure is split into five main areas: Carriageways, Footways, Street Lighting, Highway Drainage and Highway Structures. There are approximately 2 million m<sup>2</sup> of carriageway surface, 1.45 million m<sup>2</sup> of footway surface, 13,000 street lighting units and 9,400 drainage gullies along with 9 bridges.

The lifecycle of an asset in central London, of which Camden is part, is significantly lower than that of other urban, sub-urban or rural areas owing to its exceptionally high usage and density of surrounding population, along with other interferences such as significant utility interventions. Those factors determine that the carriageway lifespan is reduced to around 16 years and the footways around 20 years.

Therefore, the deterioration of the footway and carriageway assets alone are that each year there is the potential that almost 74,000m<sup>2</sup> of footways and 129,000m<sup>2</sup> of carriageways may annually deteriorate to failure. In addition, street lighting columns have a lifecycle of 25 years and therefore potentially approximately 100 columns may need changing every year depending on their age.

Camden like other Local Authorities have road networks that have evolved over decades and so were not specifically designed or built to take current levels of use i.e. the size and weight of modern HGVs. The roads take a high-level of punishment, which can lead to damage, which is then made worse by severe weather. As the carriageway and footway infrastructure deteriorates cracks within it allow water to penetrate which freezes in winter accelerating its failure. Heavy traffic or flooding then has a far greater detrimental effect on these weakened roads and can harm the lower layers leading to more costly repairs.

There is, of course, a cost in deferring maintenance investment. Firstly, any time delay will lead to construction costs rising further, eventually costing more. Secondly, by neglecting early intervention, the asset failure grows more complex and complete. As an example, the resurfacing of a failing carriageway (with a relatively shallow treatment) can prevent the more costly and deeper full reconstruction of the road required when it is failed.

To address these issues, Camden operates a Network recovery strategy that has proven successful over the years in maintaining its highways assets in a cost effective manner. Its essence was to stabilise the infrastructure, address failing assets to extend their life cycle, allowing a time window to repair the backlog of assets that have already failed. By focussing on failing, rather than failed assets and firstly stabilising the network, this achieved increased value for money across our highways investment.

Highways investment also supports a broad range of Council priorities, including: improving road safety; improving air quality; improving health and well-being for anyone living, working in or visiting the borough, and; creating a climate resilient environment. Such work encompasses incorporating additional Electric Vehicle charging points into new street lighting schemes along with the integrating sustainable drainage systems into maintenance works and increasing street trees across the borough.

Other examples involve the introduction of greenspaces and ‘rain gardens’ that aid drainage and additional tree planting within potential highway works. Such schemes have additional benefits apart from aesthetics in that they relieve the pressures on Camden’s drainage systems given the wetter and hotter environment being experienced, through the capture of surface water and tree canopies holding and slowing down rainwater from reaching the ground enabling time for the drainage systems to manage water.

**Table 3. length of network resurfaced each year**

2020/21	resurfaced	6.357miles (10.23km)
2021/22	resurfaced	5.719miles (9.3188km).
2022/23	resurfaced	5.474miles (8.8088km).
2023/24	resurfaced	6.47miles (10.4120km).
2024/25	resurfaced	4.263miles (6.8120km).

**Table 4. number of potholes attended to each year**

Estimate of number of potholes filled				
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
44	301	102	294	340

## Condition of local roads

A number of parameters are measured in road condition surveys, which are used to produce a road condition indicator, comprising 3 categories:

- Green: No further investigation or treatment required
- Amber: Maintenance may be required soon
- Red: Should be considered for maintenance

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-road conditions are monitored using SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads). It is a carriageway assessment method; it utilises state of the art technology to provide comprehensive and completely objective surface and structural condition data. The system incorporates laser scanning, accelerometer, advanced optic, GPS, and high-resolution image capture technologies.

B, C and unclassified road condition is monitored by annual visual inspections the whole borough by UKPMS (United Kingdom Pavement Management System). The cyclic safety inspections also note conditions, alongside Council Engineers who note condition as well in addition to their other inspections.

U-roads (unclassified roads) are minor roads that make up the largest portion of our local road network, typically serving residential, and lower traffic areas. They are crucial for local connectivity, so they are included in our yearly resurfacing programme

From 2026/27 there will be a new methodology 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 the three previously. This will help government gain a more detailed understanding of road condition in England.

**Table 5. A road condition. (\* We have not yet received the data for the 2024 submissions The frequency of collection for A road data is every year)**

Year	Percentage of A roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	22.38%	35.04%	41.64%
2021	23.38%	28.83%	45.88%
2022	15.8%	25.1%	60%
2023	23.2%	30.3%	45.4%
2024	*%	*%	*%

**Table 6. B and C road condition (B and C road data is collected annually)**

Year	Percentage of B and C roads in each condition category		
	Red	Amber	Green
2020	18.1%	19%	62.9%
2021	19.3%	20%	60.7%
2022	18.7%	19.5%	61.8%
2023	18.3%	18.6%	63.1%
2024	17.8%	17.6%	64.6%

**Table 7. Unclassified road condition (Unclassified road data is also collected annually)**

Year	Percentage of U Roads in the Red category
2020	15.1%
2021	15.5%
2022	15.3%
2023	15.4%
2024	15.1%

### Additional information on condition

General climatic conditions and the changing climate (wetter and warmer conditions) present hazards to the condition of highway infrastructure and is one of the prime causes of deterioration especially in footways. It is generally known that there is an expectation that there will be drier, hotter summers, milder wetter winters along with more extreme rainfall events. Clearly this will mean the infrastructure will be subject to excess water, higher mean and extreme temperatures and high soil moisture deficit. These factors result in further accelerating deterioration across networks that are already both aged and under specified.

## Plans

### Overall strategy

Our current approaches to asset management and highway maintenance have evolved to a strategic, data driven approach aimed at ensuring the standard, longevity, safety, and efficiency of our highway structures. Central to this is the core element of the 'network recovery strategy', mentioned earlier, which through informed asset management prioritises proactive maintenance over continued reactive maintenance. Reactive maintenance is safeguarded through our contractual 'find and fix' service whereby minor defects are noted and repaired following cyclic safety inspections. As stated earlier, Camden adopted this strategy to gain control of its assets and ensure monies were best spent and this has proved successful.

This strategy has now evolved as technology improves informing progressive network intelligence and localised deterioration modelling. Sensing, digital trends and laser scanning all determine greater understanding and knowledge of our highways' asset behaviours over time. That in turn enables some interventions to be more effectively planned prioritising repairs based on traffic volume, climate impact, and cost effectiveness.

With the advent of greater technology comes more effective asset management. Programmes of work determined well in advance create the opportunity of improved partnership working – working with others to deliver works. For instance, if it is determined to resurface a carriageway that knowledge being shared with utility companies, internally with potential traffic schemes along with drainage interventions for failed infrastructure. In the same way predicted failure of a footway will align again with utilities, traffic schemes and street lighting capital programmes. In conclusion the greater information now gleaned on condition enables co-ordinated works to take place, which enhances efficiency and reduces local traffic congestion and resource / energy use.

## Specific plans for 2025/26

Budgets and financial liabilities from contracts increase annually although normally around 15-20% of the overall spend is on reactive maintenance and sustaining the network in safe condition. Reactive maintenance will continue as it is contractually bound and will work towards a defect free network. Last financial year Camden invested around £1.8m on reactive maintenance and there were over 7,300 defects noted across the borough and addressed following the cyclic safety inspections. That then provides the platform for the capital works programmes. Footways, carriageways, drainage, street lighting and structures programmes are delivered and co-ordinated with scheme works and utilities wherever possible.

The major programmes for this financial year will see Camden invest around £7.8m in those areas. The carriageway resurfacing programme will replace around 50,000m<sup>2</sup> of carriageway surface and return around 40 roads to good order. Footways will undertake around 1,500m<sup>2</sup> of cobbles that will be re-laid across 5 streets along with over 3,000m<sup>2</sup> of footways addressed. There will also be around 70 non-functioning gullies and around 300 street lighting columns replaced. Lastly works to walls and structures will continue to take place where required.

Sustained emphasis will remain on delivering works in an environmentally sustainable manner and steering works that enable them towards more carbon neutral outcomes be that through materials used or energy used.

## Streetworks

The Streetworks Team perform a statutory duty in coordinating, permitting and monitoring streetworks and roadworks activities under the New Roads and Streetworks Act and the Traffic Management Act. This team also licence and monitor building activities under the Highways Act and arrange Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders to facilitate activities under the Road Traffic Act.

Their aim is to actively encourage collaborative working where possible, remove dangers, minimise traffic disruption and keep traffic moving whenever possible. They collaborate with statutory undertakers to enhance their communication with residents, ensuring clear, concise details about how their work impacts local communities. By targeting communications effectively, they provide regular updates through multiple channels, including websites, drop-in sessions, and direct messaging.

Utility companies and our contractors must obtain 'permits to work' before starting any planned activities. This allows the streetworks team to arrange traffic management and address any concerns such as, bus diversions, access to essential buildings (schools, hospitals, medical centres), events, and local businesses.

They oversee both planned and emergency works carried out by statutory undertakers to provide services such as water, gas, electricity, and telecoms. In genuine emergencies (loss of essential services, dangerous potholes, or sinkholes), utility companies or our contractors can perform emergency repairs before obtaining a permit. These emergency works cannot be coordinated in advance.

They receive approximately 20,000 permit requests per year which includes permit variations and licence extensions that have to be granted or approved for works to continue on the highway. These works have to be approved to meet statutory deadlines and Service Level Agreements. The team continuously consults with stakeholders such as, Transport for London (TfL), Buses, HS2, Internal Camden Services, London Underground, and actively take part in the TfL Bus Sense initiative and the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Additionally, they have applied to the Department for Transport to operate a lane rental scheme under the London framework. This initiative aims to reduce disruptions for residents by promoting efficient project management and minimizing roadwork impact. Lane rental schemes are designed to minimise disruption on busy roads by encouraging utility companies and highway authorities to complete street works more efficiently. By charging a daily fee for occupying lanes in high-traffic areas during peak times, these schemes incentivise organisations to expedite their work on the busiest roads at the busiest times. This approach promotes better planning and execution, reducing congestion and inconvenience for residents and commuters.

The fees collected through lane rental schemes can be reinvested into improving road infrastructure and traffic management, creating a more streamlined system for essential maintenance and upgrades. Lane Rental schemes aim to balance the necessity of roadworks with the need to keep traffic flowing smoothly. By reducing the duration and adjusting the timing of works on key routes, they help to minimise disruption for the public while maintaining vital traffic flows.

Since July 2020, Camden have been using Street Manager's digital data system, which is a £10 million project developed by the Department for Transport which aspires to transform coordination and collaboration. Now all LAs and utilities across the country are compelled to use one centralised system, giving everyone information about all works taking place on the whole road network.

## Climate change, resilience and adaptation

The climate and ecological emergency impacts highways maintenance. Whilst our assets have always been impacted by climatic events, the changing climate is even more important in driving how we now design, operate, maintain and manage highways assets.

We are now in a time when there are generally drier, hotter summers, milder wetter winters along with more extreme rainfall events. This means that infrastructure will be subject to excess water, higher mean and extreme temperatures and high soil moisture deficit. Climate has always presented a hazard to the condition of highway infrastructure and is one of the prime causes of deterioration especially in footways.

We work with our highways maintenance contractors to identify and implement environmentally conscious solutions to decarbonise their operation and works. Over a number of years our contractors have worked with us to achieve significant carbon savings through various initiatives some examples of which are:

- Maximising the use of recycled materials including using a higher percentage of Recycled Asphalt Planings in our new roads;
- Using innovative design to incorporate the re-use of traditional granite kerbs in schemes to maintain the historical significance in Camden, and;
- Using warm mix asphalts for the whole capital resurfacing programme saving the energy required by not needing to heat asphalt to previous temperatures.

There are also the opportunities afforded through the use of materials that if a failed material does not need to be removed it can be left and a material overlaid saving the breaking out and disposal. This has been the case in some areas of Camden where a failed asphalt surface has been overlaid with bound gravel. Camden’s material palette also uses low carbon concrete.

There are now more extreme weather events being experienced such as heavy rainfall that can overwhelm existing infrastructure not designed to deal with it. Therefore, our approach to managing drainage assets has been adapted. In areas at risk of flooding, gullies have additional inlets installed increasing the opportunity to catch rainwater. In addition, sustainable drainage systems are also being installed along with rain gardens to help mitigate and slow down rainwater entering sewer systems. Lastly highways investment supports the annual tree planting programme which is important by providing tree leaf canopies that help slow down water reaching the ground resulting in taking some pressure away from drainage systems.

Our highways contractors also ensure where possible 100% of their construction waste is diverted from landfill and look to use Camden-based waste contractors to limit the distance waste must travel. Below are some of the quarterly contract Key Performance Indicators and one is based on material re-use and recycling. The slight dip in the last quarter centred on the disposal of large volumes of clay removed to facilitate sustainable urban drainage schemes although the remainder of the year performance was very strong.

Table 8. Highways Contract Key Performance Indicators – Response times / Material re-use and recycling

Environment & Sustainability Key Performance Indicators	Target	Q4 23-24	Q1 24-25	Q2 24-25	Q3 24-25
Percentage achievement of 1-hour emergency response time - Highways	95%	100%	98.50%	100%	100%
Percentage of asset defects permanently repaired within 5 days Highways	95%	98%	98%	100%	99%
Percentage of construction waste reused or recycled	95%	100%	98.50%	100%	94%

In street lighting works, a circular economy approach is similarly taken and offers the opportunity to reduce costs, extend the asset life, and minimise environmental impact. By prioritising modular luminaires, serviceable components, and recycling over replacement we can design lighting systems that are easier to maintain, upgrade, and repurpose – significantly reducing waste. End-of-life fittings can be refurbished or recycled, while data-driven maintenance can extend operational efficiency. This not only supports sustainability targets but also ensures long-term value from public investment in street lighting infrastructure for the users and residents.

The use of electric plant and vehicles reduce carbon emissions, reduce air pollution and improve energy usage across highways maintenance operations. The highways term contractors have taken reduction savings very seriously by both introducing that all their company cars are electric, and one that 55% of their small tipper vans and around 40% of their power tools are electric. In addition, one is also undertaking a trial of a 3-ton digger that is electric and if proven successful should look to increase that number. One also has all their commercial vehicles using logistics planning to monitor their efficiency and journey optimisation. Other items being used are welfare cabins powered by solar energy, as well as switching the majority of their fleet to EV or low emission alternatives. Other fuel alternatives include different types of oil and some plant is now running on hydrotreated vegetable oil as opposed to diesel.

### Additional information on plans

Highways are the arteries of Camden, supporting millions of journeys, including walking, cycling, public transport and private cars, commercial and emergency vehicles. Highways benefit everyone, supporting healthy travel choices, social activity and Camden's economy - they are vital to ensuring Camden is a "green, clean, vibrant, accessible, and sustainable place" and their continued effective management is essential to support this ambition for the future.

As may be seen throughout this document a range of approaches, considerations and services ensure effective highways asset management in Camden. These range from environmentally sustainable delivery models and materials management to improved technology usage that informs co-ordinated delivery approaches whilst also offering best value for money.

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