



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 14 July 2026

Highway Maintenance in Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Overton – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Safer Streets and Better Housing
Lead Director:	Dean Sargeant – Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
Service Area:	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
Report Author:	Adam Brookes – Head of Highways, Engineering and Project Delivery
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT – 30 June 2026 Communities Scrutiny – 14 July 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

Communities Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the Council's continued investment into highway maintenance and improvement with £91m planned for the next four years.
- 1.2 Note the Council approach to highway maintenance, including the identification, prioritisation and repair of highway defects including potholes.
- 1.3 Note performance, investment and service development since the previous scrutiny update in 2022.

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- 1.4 Note the measures in place to ensure durability and quality of repairs.
- 1.5 Consider whether there are further opportunities to strengthen transparency, reporting and resident confidence in highway maintenance arrangements.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report provides Communities Scrutiny Committee with a detailed review of the Council's approach to highway maintenance and asset management.
- 2.2 The report builds on the previous update provided in 2022 and reflects changes in funding, inspection and prioritisation methods, repair techniques, and communication arrangements.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Since the previous update to Scrutiny in 2022, the Council has continued to strengthen its highway maintenance operations through sustained investment, service innovation and a greater focus on proactive asset management.
- 3.2 In Telford and Wrekin there is 1,000km of highway and over 1,000km of footways/cycleways. Highway maintenance continues to evolve from a predominantly reactive model towards one that places increased emphasis on preventative maintenance, network resilience and data-led decision making. This approach enables the Council to target investment more effectively, reduce the rate of deterioration and maximise the value from available funding.
- 3.3 The Council is committed to delivering well-maintained highways and has continued to invest significantly in highway and transport infrastructure over recent years, with £96 million invested since 2019 and over £19 million invested during 2025/26 alone.
- 3.4 This investment has supported improvements across the Council's highway assets, including carriageways, footways road markings and traffic management infrastructure as well as:
 - Drainage systems including 35,000 drains (gullies)
 - Over 300 bridges and structures
 - Over 30,000 streetlights

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- 3.5 In parallel, this investment has enabled the delivery of major maintenance and improvement programmes on both principal routes such as the A442, A518 and A41 and local residential roads.
- 3.6 The Council will continue to invest in highways and transport over the next four years with £91m set to be invested across all elements of highway infrastructure.
- 3.7 The benefits of this investment are reflected in resident satisfaction levels. In 2025, Telford and Wrekin were ranked joint second in the West Midlands for overall satisfaction with highways and transport services in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Survey. The survey also highlighted that satisfaction with the condition of roads in the Borough exceeds both regional and national averages, demonstrating the positive impact of sustained investment and highway management.

Risk-Based Asset Management

- 3.8 The Council's approach to highway maintenance is based on the principles of asset management, ensuring that finite funding is targeted where it will deliver the greatest benefit to residents, businesses and road users. Maintenance priorities are informed by condition data, safety inspections, engineering assessments, usage levels and local knowledge, enabling investment decisions to be made on the basis of risk, performance and long-term value rather than solely in response to individual defects.
- 3.9 This approach ensures that resources are balanced between reactive maintenance, such as pothole repairs, and proactive planned maintenance, including resurfacing, surface treatments, drainage improvements and footway renewal. Evidence demonstrates that preventative maintenance interventions undertaken at the right point in an asset's lifecycle can significantly extend asset life and reduce the need for more costly reconstruction works in the future.
- 3.10 Defects are identified through a combination of scheduled safety inspections, resident reports, officer observations and intelligence gathered through routine maintenance activities. Inspection frequencies are determined by the hierarchy and usage of the highway network, ensuring that the busiest routes are inspected more frequently whilst maintaining a consistent approach across the Borough. Reported defects are subsequently assessed by a team of Highway Inspectors who are trained against nationally recognised risk assessment principles and the Council's adopted inspection policies.

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- 3.11 Not all defects present the same level of risk and, as such, repair times are determined according to the severity of the defect, location, highway classification and potential risk to highway users.
- 3.12 Defects presenting an immediate danger to the travelling public receive an emergency response, whilst lower-risk issues may be scheduled for repair within longer planned maintenance timescales or monitored where appropriate. This ensures that resources are directed towards those defects that present the greatest risk whilst maintaining a safe and serviceable highway network.
- 3.13 Since April 2025, the Council has received 3,736 number of reports relating to potholes but have repaired over 4,800 due to the robust inspection regime

Durability and Quality of Repairs

- 3.14 The Council places significant emphasis on a right first-time approach where durable and sustainable repairs are achieved.
- 3.15 Permanent repairs are used wherever practicable, supported by quality assurance inspections and performance monitoring. Temporary repairs are utilised only where necessary to make a defect safe pending a permanent solution or where wider planned maintenance schemes are programmed. The Council continues to review and adopt innovative materials and repair techniques to improve longevity, reduce disruption and achieve better value for money.
- 3.16 Repair quality and contractor performance are monitored through inspections, audits and performance measures that are embedded within the highway delivery model.
- 3.17 The Council undertakes routine sample inspections of completed repairs to assess workmanship, compliance with specification and long-term performance. The outcomes of these inspections are used to identify trends, target improvements and ensure contractual standards continue to be achieved.
- 3.18 In 2025/26, 95% of defects have been repaired within the allocated response time despite a severe winter leading to significant number of defects when compared to previous years.
- 3.19 Residents are encouraged to report defects online through their MyTelford account which allows residents to receive updates on the progress on their report as well as ensuring the most efficient response is provided.

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- 3.20 The Council continues to explore innovative repair methods to ensure best value and highest quality repairs. An example of this is the introduction of a new pothole repair method 'Elastomac' that makes use of recycled materials meaning improved sustainability but also allows increased outputs and quality due to the methodology used.
- 3.21 This innovative approach has seen an increase of up to 80% in outputs which has supported improved response times especially during this year's challenging winter period. The trial forms part of the Council's wider commitment to innovation and continuous service improvement, ensuring that new technologies and techniques are assessed where they can improve durability, efficiency and value for money.
- 3.22 Whilst potholes often represent the most visible aspect of highway maintenance, the Council's approach extends beyond reactive repair activity. Significant investment has been made in carriageways, footways, drainage systems, structures, road markings, street lighting and associated highway infrastructure. This whole-asset approach ensures that the highway network remains safe, resilient and capable of supporting economic growth, active travel and residents. Recent resident satisfaction data demonstrates that this investment is contributing to highway condition outcomes that compare favourably with regional and national benchmarks.
- 3.23 The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in resident feedback, with the Borough's highways service being ranked amongst the highest performing in the West Midlands for overall resident satisfaction. £91m of continued investment over the next four years will enable the Council to build upon these improvements, maintaining a strong focus on preventative maintenance, network resilience and the delivery of high-quality repairs that provide lasting benefit for residents and road users.
- 3.24 The Council continues to monitor highway maintenance performance through a suite of operational and strategic indicators. These measures include volumes of pothole reports received, defects repaired, compliance with response times, network condition data, resident satisfaction levels and the delivery of planned maintenance programmes. Performance information is regularly reviewed to ensure that investment and operational activity remain aligned with asset management objectives and resident priorities.

Communication

- 3.25 Prior to improvement works taking place, that are over three days in duration, advance notification must be placed on site two weeks prior to the work

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commencing. This is complemented with a letter to properties directly impacted by the improvement works.

- 3.26 Furthermore, advanced notification emails are sent to Members, Parish and Town Councils, Schools and key officers prior to the scheme commencing.
- 3.27 Where a Streetworks permit is required, the above engagement is complemented by publication online via the Councils website (www.telford.gov.uk/roadworks). Residents, businesses, Town/ Parish Councils and Members are able to sign up to receive notification of works in areas of interest.
- 3.28 Detailed updates continue to be provided through various media platforms where frequently asked questions have been answered and requests for feedback sought. Engagement continues to receive positive responses through the Councils various communication channels.
- 3.29 In addition to planned communications, enquiries received from residents, Members and Parish and Town Councils are used to help shape future maintenance programmes and communication activity. This ensures local knowledge is considered alongside technical data and contributes to ongoing service improvement.

Transparency

- 3.30 The Council recognises the importance of providing residents with clear, accessible information about highway maintenance activity and performance.
- 3.31 To support this, information on pothole reports, repairs and highway maintenance activity is published through the Council's dedicated pothole webpage at www.telford.gov.uk/potholes, allowing residents to view current performance information and understand how defects are identified, assessed and repaired. The Council also provides online reporting tools and progress updates to ensure residents remain informed throughout the process.
- 3.32 In addition to local reporting arrangements, the Department for Transport (DfT) has introduced enhanced transparency requirements for local highway authorities as part of the Government's approach to highway maintenance funding. These requirements are intended to provide residents and government with greater visibility of how highway maintenance funding is being invested, the condition of local road networks, and the outcomes being achieved.
- 3.33 The Council supports this approach and has implemented arrangements to ensure compliance with all DfT transparency reporting requirements. This

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includes the publication of annual transparency reports on the Council's website, detailing highway maintenance investment, network condition, pothole repair activity, preventative maintenance programmes and asset management practices.

3.34 In addition to formal reporting requirements, the Council regularly publishes information relating to highway maintenance programmes, completed schemes and pothole repair activity to help residents understand where investment is being made and the outcomes being achieved.

3.35 To support continuous improvement and ensure compliance with emerging national requirements, the Council will undertake a review of its Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and supporting documentation over the next 12 months. This review will ensure that the Council's asset management framework continues to align with local priorities, investment objectives and the Department for Transport's transparency reporting requirements. The review will provide an opportunity to refresh the Council's approach to asset management, performance reporting, lifecycle planning and resident engagement, whilst ensuring that the Highway Asset Management Plan remains current, evidence-based and reflective of best practice across the sector.

3.36 The Council continues to review opportunities to further enhance public understanding on how the highway network is maintained. Potential areas for future development include providing greater visibility of planned maintenance programmes, increasing the use of digital communications and interactive mapping tools, and further promoting the balance between preventative maintenance investment and improvements.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 The report outlines the Council's current approach to highway maintenance and asset management, demonstrating how a risk-based and evidence-led approach is used to prioritise investment, manage defects and maintain a safe and resilient highway network. The report highlights the significant investment made in the Borough's highways infrastructure since 2022, the continued shift towards preventative maintenance and the positive outcomes being achieved through highway management planning.

4.2 The report demonstrates the measures in place to ensure the durability and quality of repairs, including the use of permanent repair techniques, quality assurance inspections, contractor performance monitoring and the adoption of innovative materials and maintenance methods. These arrangements maximise value for money and help strengthen the lifespan of highway assets.

5.0 Key Risks

- 5.1 While a multi-year settlement for highway funding is welcomed, key risks include fluctuations in national funding levels, increasing maintenance costs, the impact of severe weather events and inflationary pressures on construction materials and services. These factors can accelerate asset deterioration and increase demand for maintenance interventions across the network.
- 5.2 The Council mitigates these risks so far as possible through its adopted Highway Asset Management approach, which enables available resources to be targeted according to risk, asset condition and long-term value. Continued investment in preventative maintenance and lifecycle planning reduces the risk of more costly interventions being required in the future.

6.0 Council Priorities

- 6.1 The commitment to improving highway maintenance for all users supports the following priorities:
- Every child, young person, and adult lives well in their community;
 - Everyone benefits from a thriving economy;
 - All neighbourhoods are a great place to live;

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Highway maintenance activity is delivered through approved revenue and capital budgets as set out in the MTFs; where possible this is supported by external funding opportunities. The Council adopts an asset management approach to maximise the value achieved from available resources and ensure investment is targeted where it will deliver the greatest long-term benefit to the highway network.
- 7.2 Continued investment in preventative maintenance helps reduce whole-life asset costs by extending asset life and reducing the need for more expensive reconstruction or reactive maintenance activity in the future.

8.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1 Under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain highways that are maintainable at public expense. The Council's inspection, assessment and repair regimes are designed to support compliance with this duty and are informed by recognised national guidance and local policy.
- 8.2 The Council's risk-based highway inspection and maintenance arrangements support the statutory defence available under Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 where reasonable steps have been taken to maintain the highway.
- 8.3 There are no direct HR implications arising from the content of this report.

9.0 Ward Implications

9.1 This report covers the whole Borough with all wards being affected.

10.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

10.1 A safe and well-maintained highway network supports the health and wellbeing of residents by enabling people to travel safely, access services and participate in community life. Improvements to footways, cycleways and associated infrastructure also encourage walking and cycling, supporting healthier lifestyles.

10.2 Reliable transport infrastructure is essential to economic growth. The highway network supports access to employment, education, retail centres and strategic development sites, helping businesses operate efficiently and supporting inward investment.

10.3 Effective highway maintenance contributes to community confidence and resident satisfaction by ensuring the transport network remains safe, serviceable and resilient. The positive satisfaction levels reported through the National Highways and Transport Survey demonstrate the benefits of sustained investment and proactive asset management.

11.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 A well maintained highways improves accessibility and safety for all residents and visitors.

12.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

12.1 The Council's asset management approach promotes the use of preventative maintenance techniques that extend asset life and reduce the need for more carbon-intensive reconstruction activities. This helps minimise the environmental impact associated with highway maintenance.

12.2 The Council continues to explore innovative materials and repair techniques, including the use of recycled materials where appropriate, to improve sustainability whilst maintaining quality and durability standards.

12.3 Investment in drainage infrastructure and network resilience also helps support adaptation to the impacts of climate change, including more frequent extreme weather events and periods of intense rainfall.

13.0 Background Papers

Communities Scrutiny Report – 21 June 2022

14.0 Appendices

None.

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	03/06/2026	10/06/2026	DRS
Finance	10/06/2026	13/06/2026	PT
Legal	10/06/2026	13/06/2026	DTW