

Meeting of:	COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	12 OCTOBER 2026
Report Title:	CONDITION OF HIGHWAYS AND STATUS OF ROAD RESURFACING PROGRAMME
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	ZAK SHELL HEAD OF SERVICE OPERATIONS
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To explain to the committee current practices in Highway Asset management, to present the Committee with the current highways resurfacing programme and to provide an update on the progress of the current resurfacing programme.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Explain to the Committee current practices in Highway Asset management
- b) Update on Progress of the current resurfacing programme

2. Background

2.1 Highways comprise many assets ranging from traffic signals, street lighting, structures, through to the carriageway surfacing itself, all of which are subject to deterioration through use, weathering and ageing of components.

The Council's highway assets consist of:

- 880 km of carriageways,
 - 188km A roads

- 61km B roads
 - 206km C Roads
 - 425km Unclassified roads
- 888 km of footway
 - 483 highway structures, including 101 road bridges,
 - 26000 Drainage Gullies
 - 19240 streetlights
 - 74 traffic signals (signalised junction and pedestrian crossings)
- Plus, miscellaneous street furniture including signs, bollards, barriers etc

2.2 The average **annual capital investment** required for the carriageway asset was calculated in 2026 at £3.35m.

2.3 These figures exclude the revenue budget required to fund reactive and routine repairs and any costs associated with third party claims. In recent years, there has been an unprecedented rise in inflation coupled with a faster rate of deterioration in the network, which now suggests a current annual deterioration of the carriageway asset that would cost approximately £3.35m to remedy to steady state.

2.4 There are specific duties which a highway authority is by statute obliged to comply with, and powers that are discretionary in their application. Within the Highways Act 1980, Section 41 (s41) advises the duty to maintain the highway.

‘41Duty to maintain highways maintainable at public expense’.

‘(1) The authority who are for the time being the highway authority for a highway maintainable at the public expense are under a duty, subject to subsections (2) and (4) below, to maintain the highway.’

2.5 This duty does not guarantee that the highway will be safe in all circumstances, however, the highway should to be maintained in such a state of repair that it is reasonably passable for the ordinary traffic of the neighbourhood without danger caused by its physical condition. The standard of repair of the highway must reflect the type and level of use that is made of it.

2.6 The duty in s41 has to be read in the context of s58 of the Highways Act which provides a special defence if it can be proved that the highway authority took such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway in question was not dangerous to traffic.

2.7 The requirement in paragraph 2.6 is managed through street inspections and intervention criteria adopted by the authority.

2.8 All highway authorities must also be aware of the potential risk of the offence of corporate manslaughter. This is a serious offence which arises under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.

- 2.9 For an organisation to be guilty of corporate manslaughter the following five points need to be proved: that the defendant is a qualifying organisation, that the organisation owed a relevant duty of care to the deceased, that there was a gross breach of that duty by the organisation, that the way in which its activities were managed or organised by its senior management was a substantial element in the breach and that the gross breach of the organisation duty caused or contributed to the death.
- 2.10 Whilst not seeking to go into any great detail in relation to this legislation, any such prosecution instigated by the Crown Prosecution Service will have significant consequences on an authority as well as individuals within the organisation and consequently its operations.
- 2.11 Successive years of austerity and competing Council priorities has influenced the level of highway maintenance that can be delivered. The unintended consequence of budget prioritisation, has resulted in a focus on maintaining the core road network of the borough that carry large volumes of vehicles, including heavy goods vehicles, buses and commuter traffic, which accounts for 31% of the network. The remaining 69% relates to the unclassified network of local streets and rural roads, which deteriorate at a lesser rate, due to being less trafficked by vehicles such as HGV's, but nevertheless are in need to intervention and exist within a backlog of streets to be addressed. An inspection in October 2023 undertaken by a nationally accredited independent survey company has identified a carriageway maintenance backlog of £44m.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The impact of weather conditions on aging roads can most vividly be seen following a weather event such as snowfall, freezing and thaw, when the carriageway suddenly appears to erupt in pothole defects caused by water entering the road surface and the expansion of frozen water causing the surface to deform and fracture. Furthermore, climate change issues lead to higher groundwater tables which are also affecting the formation layers of highway. This has resulted in additional works to rectify the lower layers of construction due to the poor ground conditions under the bituminous layers in some locations. It is understood that this is causing issues with many highways throughout the County Borough and leading to earlier than anticipated failures in carriageway surfaces.
- 3.2 Highway inspections do highlight those streets that are considered in need of intervention, and these are recorded on a works register for subsequent assessment of patching or resurfacing subject to available funding.
- 3.3 Currently there are circa 1,000 streets listed on the works register with typically circa 25 being added to the list each year. It is the case that rather than the list continuing to grow, capital funding from Welsh Government and the Council has created a steady state whereby the resurfacing works being carried out are matching the rate at which other streets are at a stage whereby they require intervention. Until a road is addressed it may be subject to temporary (pothole) repairs identified from scheduled or ad hoc inspections.

- 3.4 Circa £29m of revenue/capital funding has been invested in the highway carriageway network in BCBC since 2018, which has improved the carriageway condition to its current levels with only 13% of the network considered to be in the RED category (POOR CONDITION IN NEED OF PRIORITY MAINTENANCE).
- 3.5 Considering the Classified network alone (A/B/C Roads) for which the Authority has to provide National and Local performance indicators, the current condition of roads in Red (POOR) is:
- A Roads --- 5.4%
 - B Roads – 2.3%
 - C Roads – 8.4%
- 3.6 To continue these levels and based on standard highway deterioration models it is calculated that a level of continued capital investment of circa £3.35m p.a. would achieve a steady state.
- 3.7 In respect of those streets yet to be addressed, intervention in relation to potholes is funded through the Council's revenue funding. However, this is the costliest type of repair in terms of overall asset protection. It is more cost effective to invest in planned resurfacing of roads to prevent potholes forming in the first instance, rather than to repair potholes on a reactive basis. Repairing roads by pothole is equivalent to £150 per square metre. Resurfacing a road costs in the order of £35 per square metre.
- 3.8 Generally, the Network Management Section receive over 5,500 referrals per annum from both the public and members requesting repairs/actions to the highway asset, covering carriageways, streetlighting, footways, drainage etc. Over the last 5 years the Authority has undertaken on average over 3,000 potholes repairs per annum, at a cost of approximately £550k. Potholes are categorised as Cat 1 (emergency defects) repaired within 24 hours, Cat 2 (non-emergency defects) repaired within 28 days.
- 3.9 Prioritisation of Highway Repairs & Treatments:-
- 3.9.1 In assessing the appropriate prioritisation for any intervention various factors are taken into consideration. This includes the lifecycle of the road itself, information from automated surveys on Surface Condition Assessment (SCANNER) and/or skid resistance Sideways-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM). This is combined with information collected from the recent independent survey by highway inspectors from safety inspections and stakeholder contact to provide a circumspect highway programme.
- 3.9.2 Subject to assessment and available funding, interventions range from patching to reconstruction if the road is at the end of its lifecycle. Each of these interventions is considered in relation to individual circumstances, to gain best value for the funding available. The majority of planned interventions seek to extend the life of the road by sealing it from damage caused by water and UV radiation. The interventions are explained in paragraphs 3.9.3 – 3.9.8 below.

- 3.9.3 **Patch Repair** – hand applied material for the rectification of small sections of highway, generally patches of up to 50m², are undertaken, however patching works can extend up to an area of circa 100-200m². This involves the cutting out and filling of the defect with hot material laid by hand with compound applied to the periphery to seal the repair. This approach generally requires specialised vehicles to keep the material hot until it can be applied. Core public realm funding has enabled the recruitment of a dedicated hot box team and the acquisition of a second hot box unit for patching in the 2026-27 financial year.
- 3.9.4 **Micro Asphalt** (residential and less trafficked roads). This restores surface texture, improves ride quality and prevents ingress of water into the lower road structures.
- 3.9.5 **Surface Dressing**. This provides an enhanced skid resistance and prevents ingress of water into the lower road structures. The road surface is treated by applying liquid bitumen onto the road surface to seal it and provide a binder for the stone chippings spread on top. This is a low-cost, effective preventative treatment, that is widely used across the UK and, by timely intervention, prolongs the life of a road and underlying structure. This approach is not as popular with residents as there is the need initially for loose material to be swept from the road, however the surface quickly settles down through the curing process and compaction due to moving traffic.
- 3.9.6 **Surface Overlay**. Where there is more damage to the surface of the road in some limited circumstances it may be prudent to apply an overlay on top of the existing surface with minimal or no patching and can thereby strengthen the road. This methodology can generally only be applied in rural areas where the level increase does not affect adjoining properties/land (i.e., where no existing kerbing is present).
- 3.9.7 **Planed and surfaced**- where the road surface has deteriorated beyond the point where an overlay application could be applied but the underlying structure of the road is sound. This treatment involves the removal of the upper surface layers (Planed), and the reapplication of hot bituminous material to create a new more durable road surface..
- 3.9.8 **Reconstruction**. Where a road has reached the end of its lifecycle whereby the road surface and underlying layers have deteriorated to an advanced stage intervention would require deep excavation and replacement down to the sub-base stone layer, in addition to the upper layers of structural foundation and running surface.
- 3.10 The foregoing maintenance interventions rely on material to be applied in optimum conditions with low precipitation and hence these activities are normally scheduled March – October. Outside these times weather conditions are more likely to affect the products application constraints, which may lead to premature failure of the material.
- 3.11 In the absence of a highways capital programme that is sufficient to retain a steady state, this will mean that road condition overtime will deteriorate moving more carriageways towards the red category. This may manifest itself, for example in differing ways, from water ingress into the lower levels of the road construction, increasing numbers of small ineffective repairs, deformation of the carriageway and loss of skid resistance.

- 3.12 Where roads accelerate in deterioration this may result in greater claims against the authority, if physical deterioration is at an extent that it presents a danger to the public, this may need to be managed by lane closures/traffic management measures, with resultant impact on the effectiveness of the highway network with longer journey times and queueing traffic.
- 3.13 For the financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27, Capital funding provided by Welsh Government and BCBC has meant that circa £8.4m is being invested in carriageway maintenance to 99 roads within the borough, through some of the methods described in section 3.9.3 – 3.9.8. Of the £8.4 million £4.689 (£2.750 25/26 + £1.939 26/27) million has come via Welsh Government LGBI (Local Government Borrowing Initiative) and the balance of capital from Council funding.
- 3.14 In addition to the works in paragraph 3.13, the authority has also set up a dedicated patching team dedicated to address potholes across the borough. This team undertakes larger areas of repair to reduce the potential for further deterioration around an existing pothole. To date the team have undertaken 1,200m² of patching works
- 3.15 Whilst there are no specific performance indicators reported for pothole repairs, there are a number of metrics that the authority has provided for requests for FOI's etc. For 2025/26 these include:-
Average time to repair potholes (Cat 1 and Cat 2) – 9 days
Number of potholes repaired – 3,755 No.
Percentage of Cat 1 repairs undertaken with 24 hours – 92%
Percentage of Cat 2 repairs undertaken within 28 days –97%
- 3.16 Network Management of Utilities:-
- 3.17 The monitoring and inspections of Statutory undertaker's works on the public highway is set out within the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991. The Council's Streetworks Team undertake the role of monitoring their works. The team consists of 5 staff, Team Leader, Streetworks Inspectors/2No. Streetworks Inspectors/Noticing Officer, Systems Technician.
- 3.18 **Team Leader Streetworks** – Oversees team and control workloads, budget monitoring, liaises directly with Statutory Undertakers and represents BCBC at Wales National Level on Streetworks
Streetworks Inspectors – Inspects works being undertaken, investigates complaints/referrals, provides advice and notifies restrictions for works locations, raises defect notices and other streetworks enforcement notices.
Streetworks Noticing Officers – Reviews and provides comments to works notices issued by Statutory Undertakers planning to work on Network, raises invoices for fees, fixed penalty notices, defects and Temporary Traffic Orders.
System Technician – Oversees and maintains Streetworks computerised systems, eg Mayrise streetworks computer system that receives all works notices from Statutory Undertakers, updates street gazetteers for national databases. Liaises with Legal Section to facilitate Temporary Traffic Orders where required.
- 3.19 The Authority undertakes random inspection of works equal to 10% of works ongoing, 10% of completed works, and 10% of end of guarantee works, for which standard fees are applicable. The Council does not receive payment to inspect every works

notice. Whilst the Council could inspect every work notice, however fees/costs are not received for this unless a defect or issue is present. Inspections are also undertaken following referrals being raised by residents or members etc.

- 3.20 Any defects that are noted through the above inspections (eg poor works reinstatements/or failures) then the team issues defect notices which require the Statutory Undertaker to rectify any issues identified. These defects result in fees and charges. There are also charges applicable for overruns of works and fixed penalties relating to incorrect notification of works.
- 3.21 All Statutory Undertaker works are subject to maintenance guarantees of 2 years in most cases, and the authority inspects all works to sign them off as satisfactory before they are accepted. Any issues/defects noted will result in non-acceptance and requirement for remedial works.
- 3.22 The authority also undertakes "Core Sampling" where small coring holes are undertaken on a random selection of reinstatements. This permits checks to ascertain whether the correct material specifications have been used, the correct thicknesses have been installed, and the material has been compacted properly. Any failures will result in the requirement for remedial works by the Statutory Undertaker and fees and charges also apply.
- 3.23 There are costs/fees for all Temporary Traffic Orders that are required, and the total income received in 2025/26 for fees, fixed penalty notices, defects and Temporary Traffic Orders, was £160k. All income received off sets the costs for the Authority to operate a Streetworks Team.
- 3.24 Road Safety Schemes:-
- 3.25 A number of road safety improvement schemes are being progressed across the borough which includes the continued establishment of residents parking schemes within Bridgend Town Centre. In February 2026, Zone 2 (Sunnyside and Cae Dre Street) was implemented, with the pre-identified trial zones 4 (Morfa Street, Vernon Street, Acland Road, High View, Charles Street, Herbert Street and Minerva Street) currently subject to engagement.
- 3.26 Feasibility studies are underway to assess the suitability of introducing formal crossings across the borough with the aim of supporting safe, convenient, and accessible crossings for vulnerable road users whilst encouraging walking, active travel, and supporting access to key local facilities. Locations include B4281 Aberkenfig, A4063 Coytrahern, Heol Canola Bryncethin and B4281 Cefn Cribwr. Additionally, crossings are progressing at A4106 Newton Nottage Road as part of an Active Travel Scheme.
- 3.27 A scheme is currently being carried out to identify viable options to assist with traffic flow at the of Coychurch Road with Simonston Rd.
- 3.28 Finally, as part of the 20mph scheme on restricted roads, the authority are in the process of implementation additional soft traffic calming measures to increase compliance in the Llynfi Valley, Ogmores Valley and Garw Valley communities. At present Welsh government are not supplying funding for hard traffic calming measures such as road humps.

3.29 Enforcement:-

- 3.30 The Council undertakes enforcement action against vehicles that are observed to be parked in contravention of parking restrictions through its Civil Parking Enforcement operations. Where a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) or enforcement camera car observes a vehicle parked in breach of an applicable Traffic Regulation Order, a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) may be issued in accordance with the relevant legislation in place. For motorists who repeatedly contravene parking restrictions, each observed offence is considered on its own merits and may result in the issue of a further Penalty Charge Notice. The Council's approach is to encourage compliance through education, engagement and as a last resort enforcement with motorists, whilst ensuring that enforcement resources are deployed proportionately across the borough and in accordance with statutory guidance.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty, and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services, and functions. This is an information report; therefore, it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 Long-term: It is a statutory duty to maintain the highway failure to do so will result in creating longer term issues that would require significantly more intervention.

Prevention: In addressing the condition of the highway prevents more significant issues developing, which would otherwise require far greater levels of intervention and repair.

Integration: The maintenance of the highway and its infrastructure supports the aspirations of the BCBC Corporate Plan, the Local Development Plan and Bridgend County Economic Strategy.

Collaboration: Developing a maintenance programme requires collaboration with utility companies (Gas, Telecom, Electricity etc) who may be planning to carry out works on the same road at a later date, and collaboration avoids abortive or ? works.

Involvement: Involvement of key stakeholders is essential to assess impacts of a planned programme of works, such stakeholders may include utility companies, public transport providers, traffic management designers, local land holders for accommodation for access arrangements during delivery of works.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 Consideration of climate change implications is made during the planning of maintenance works to minimise the intervention to no more than required and the type of intervention to best address climate change impacts.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Works are planned and delivered to approved budgets, The report is for information and there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee review the contents of this report and provide comments.

Background documents

None