Operational Highways

Frequently asked questions for residents and road users

About operational highways

The questions below cover potholes and repairs, road maintenance, inspections and claims, roadworks, vegetation, winter services and highway-maintenance responsibility.

1. How are pothole reports, defects and completed repairs counted?

These measures aren't interchangeable:

- **Public reports** may be counted by road reference.
- **Actionable defects** are defects that meet the maintenance policy threshold.
- **Completed repair tickets** can include more than one pothole.

The measure and reporting period should always be stated when a figure is quoted. For 2025–26, a reviewed response recorded 5,789 reports, 2,054 actionable defects and 7,229 completed repair tickets. These figures are subject to caveats about unique reports and multiple potholes being covered by one ticket.

2. How long does the council take to repair potholes?

Repair time depends on the defect's priority and the dates used to measure the work.

For 2023/24, the recorded average time from a job being raised to completion was **23.8 days**. The category averages were:

- **C1:** 1.88 days
- **C2:** 59.35 days
- **C2L programmed work:** 60.18 days

These figures don't measure directly from the first public report. Not every report becomes a job, and not every job originates from a public report.

More information on categories is available on our website.

3. Does the council operate a fixed road-resurfacing cycle?

No. A fixed resurfacing cycle isn't used, including for rural roads.

Resurfacing is prioritised using:

- road condition and survey evidence
- safety risk

- traffic levels
- value for money

Preventative and reactive treatments continue between full resurfacing schemes.

4. Can inspection and complaint dates be released for a road defect?

Highway-condition information and redacted site-history records may be disclosed. However, inspection and complaint dates can be withheld under EIR exceptions where disclosure could facilitate fraudulent claims or reveal internal communications. Personal information is also redacted.

For an existing insurance claim, use the Highways Customer Service route so relevant evidence can be considered under the Civil Procedure Rules.

5. What records are available for an existing highway damage claim?

Through the Civil Procedure Rules process, a genuine claimant may be provided with:

- the last safety inspection before the incident; and
- relevant complaint and repair records between that inspection and the incident date, where available.

FOI or EIR disclosure and civil-claim disclosure are separate access routes.

6. Who must remove temporary roadworks signs, frames, sandbags and cones?

Suppliers must comply with the relevant qualifications, specifications and codes of practice. Equipment left after works is treated as a contract defect. Utility overrun charges can apply if redundant equipment isn’t cleared after notification.

A reviewed response described a nominal £100 fine where fewer than five items were cleared within 24 hours. Higher daily Section 74 charges may apply where items remain or more than five items are left.

7. Did the council install or pay for Union or St George’s flags on highways?

The reviewed responses state that the council didn’t install the flags, approve a project for them or spend money on their installation. The flags were placed by members of the public.

The council monitors flags and removes them where safety issues arise. A later response recorded 12 completed work instructions for flag removal from May 2025. Each instruction could cover more than one flag, and the cost of removal wasn’t held.

8. Who is responsible for roadside vegetation and hedge maintenance?

Responsibility depends on landownership and legal obligations. The council may act to remove an immediate hazard affecting the highway, but this doesn't transfer ongoing maintenance responsibility from the relevant landowner or responsible party.

Weed-treatment programmes may be scheduled, while records of some activities, such as footway edging, may not always be held.

9. How does the council organise winter gritting?

Operational winter records run from November to the end of March. The council uses priority 1 and priority 2 routes for most gritting actions.

The reviewed response recorded:

- a maintained network of **4,345 km**
- **2,114 km (48%)** covered by precautionary or priority routes

Seasonal activity, distance, working hours, spending and budget figures vary by winter and should be quoted with the relevant season.

10. How can I find out whether a bridge, culvert or road is maintained by the council?

Provide the structure's name and precise location. Where the information is held, the council can confirm:

- highway-maintenance responsibility
- asset type and identification number
- adopted-highway status
- inspection records
- recorded defects
- planned works

The availability of project records, historical information and flood-modelling information varies by asset.