

Executive summary

The Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey was introduced in 1995 and has evolved to highlight the connection between local road maintenance funding and conditions in England and Wales. The findings are based on information provided directly by those responsible for its upkeep.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of ALARM and a record

number of local authorities (78%) responded to the survey, providing robust data for analysis and underscoring the value that those working in the sector place on its annual findings.

It is used by local authorities for benchmarking and by stakeholders across the sector as a valuable tool for tracking local road conditions and funding.

Key facts 2024/25

Funding:

- Local roads are considered to be councils' most valuable asset, worth in excess of £400 billion but only around 1% of this value is spent on their annual maintenance.
- Highway maintenance budgets saw a real terms cut of 4.1% in England and Wales, to an average of £26.0 million per authority.
- The average percentage of highway maintenance budget spent on the carriageway is up slightly but is still just 53%. This means the average carriageway maintenance budget remained in line with last year at £14.2 million per authority.
- Local authorities in England and Wales reported that, on average, they would have needed an extra £7.4 million each last year to maintain their network to their own targets. This equates to a total carriageway maintenance budget shortfall of £1.25 billion, an increase of 58% on the figure reported 10 years ago.
- £16.81 billion is now reported to be needed, as a one-off, for local authorities to bring the network up to their 'ideal' conditions and the work would take 12 years to complete. In the last decade this backlog figure has increased by 42% from £11.8 billion reported in ALARM 2016.

Acknowledging use of ALARM data

The Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) is happy for journalists, researchers, industry organisations, government departments and others to use and/or quote the findings of ALARM 2025 contained in this report. We stipulate that it is always acknowledged as the source – referencing it as the AIA's ALARM survey report 2025 (or AIA ALARM 2025) – in all cases.



Key facts 2024/25 continued

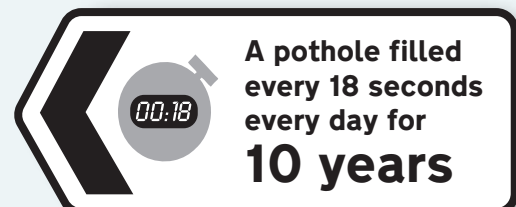
Conditions:

- Less than half (48%) of the local road network is reported to be in good structural condition, with the remaining 52% stated to have less than 15 years' structural life remaining. Structural maintenance is needed when surface maintenance alone won't suffice, and structural conditions data provides a more holistic assessment of the carriageway asset's resilience.
- The general condition of the surface of the carriageway has declined, with a 1% drop in the number of roads reported to be GREEN (in a good state of repair) and a 1% increase in those classed as RED (poor overall condition).
- Road Condition Index (RCI) data shows that around 24,500 miles – more than one in every 10 miles – of network in England and Wales is likely to require maintenance in the next 12 months.
- The average frequency of resurfacing for all classes of local roads is once every 93 years.
- 1.9 million potholes were filled over the last year. In the last decade more than £1.08 billion has been spent filling 17.5 million potholes – equivalent to one every 18 seconds, every day, for 10 years.

Highway maintenance funds need to at least double and be consistent over the next 5 to 10 years to deliver lasting improvements.



Roads resurfaced every 93 years



Recommendations

There has again been no quantifiable improvement in the condition of local roads in England and Wales. Almost all (94%) of ALARM respondents think that there has been no improvement to their local network over the last year, with nearly two thirds stating that conditions have declined.

The cost of tackling the backlog of carriageway repairs has reached new heights at £16.81 billion and it is clear that the continuing pattern of short-term cash injections rather than sustained funding means that making lasting improvements remains out of reach.

A complete change of mindset is needed to allow local authorities to proactively improve the network. They need:

- A substantial and sustained increase in highway maintenance budgets.
- New investment to be frontloaded with full delivery across two five-year investment periods – similar to the [Road Investment Strategy \(RIS\)](#) that supports the SRN in England.
- All funding to be ring-fenced for local road maintenance with targeted and accountable budget allocations.

This would deliver a more resilient network and an effective return on investment for taxpayers, while providing local roads that are safe, keep people connected and will help kickstart economic growth.