



# The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

## Local highways maintenance transparency report

### 1. Our Highway Network

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea manages a dense urban road network with high footfall town centres serving residents, businesses, and visitors. Our network includes a combination of strategic distributor roads and quieter residential streets, as well as vital infrastructure such as Chelsea bridge.








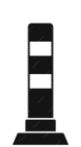



Many of our road network is under increasing strain, as many carriageways weren't designed to handle today's heavier vehicles, such as EVs and buses, or the constant pressure of 24/7 traffic. This accelerates deterioration and shortens asset life. Utility works further impact road condition, with ongoing concerns about reinstatement quality and inconsistent enforcement of Section 58 restrictions.

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is responsible for the following assets:

- Public Highway, i.e. carriageway and footway
- Signs (including street name plates and Legible London totems) and line markings
- Bridges, i.e. Albert Bridge, Chelsea Bridge, Ladbroke Grove Canal Bridge, Stanley Bridge, Thames Embankment wall and Acklam Road Footbridge
- Highway lighting, including Belisha Beacons and lamp column electric vehicle charging points
- Drainage, i.e. gullies
- Street furniture, i.e. bollards, cycle stands, benches and guard railing
- Tree pits

A Road	B and C roads	U roads	Total Roads	Footways	Other Public rights of way
16.7 km	17.1 km	154.5 km	188.3 km	376.6 km	0.8 km

**Table 1** Lengths of highway and footways (km)

Carriageway	Footway	Drainage	Street Lighting	Structures	Benches
					
188.3km	376.6km	10500	8856	6	227
Traffic Signs	Bollards	cycle stands	Guard railing	Tree Pits	
					
12039	3432	1798	1.9km	7389	

**Table 2** Breakdown of highway assets

## 2. Highways Maintenance Spending

Preventative maintenance funding is used for resurfacing and footway renewal. It is important to note that variations in resurfacing methods (e.g. full-depth reconstruction vs. surface dressing), the need for night working in urban areas, and differences in material specifications can significantly affect unit costs. As such, the extent of resurfacing delivered within a given budget will vary depending on local conditions, standards, and operational constraints.

Reactive works include emergency defect repairs, such as potholes and safety-related reinstatements. In 2024/25, total reactive maintenance expenditure was approximately £450,000, covering emergency call-outs and follow-up works. The reactive maintenance budget also addresses other safety-critical issues, including trip hazards on footways, localised carriageway failures, maintenance of street furniture, and the upkeep of memorials and statues.

Year	Capital Allocated by DfT (£000s)	Capital Spend (£000s)	Revenue Spend (exc. DfT) (£000s)	Preventative %	Reactive %
2025/26 (proj.)	328	328	4,149	89%	11%
2024/25	101	101	4,048	89%	11%
2023/24	101	101	3,738	91%	9%
2022/23	0	0	3,876	91%	9%
2021/22	0	0	3,861	85%	15%
2020/21	0	0	3,861	90%	10%

**Table 3** Spending figures for the past five years

The low proportion of the budget allocated to reactive maintenance reflects the effectiveness of our preventative maintenance strategy. This approach enables us to prioritise planned works while keeping reactive interventions to a minimum. As a result, we are able to maintain a safe and reliable network for all users while also reducing the risk of accidents and potentially costly claims against the Council. The above figures exclude drainage, street lighting and structure maintenance work costs.

### 3. Condition of local roads

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 number of parameters measured in these surveys are used to produce a road condition indicator which is categorised into three condition categories:

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

**Table 4** Road condition categories

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

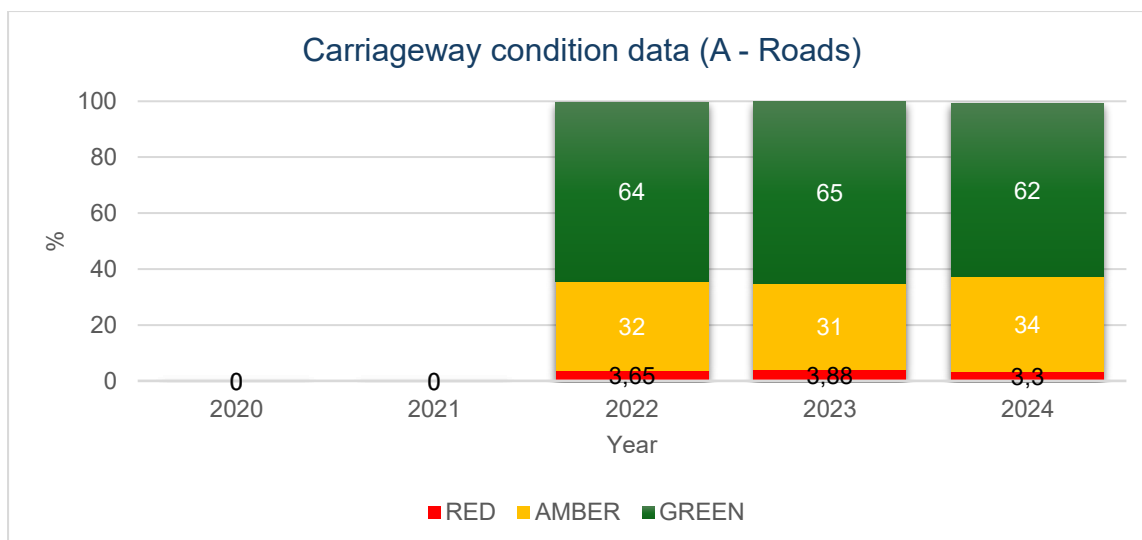
Further details are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc#condition-of-local-authority-managed-roads-rdc01>

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea uses a combination of condition data, public reports, and visual inspections to prioritise defects and determine our reactive vs. preventative allocation. The Council's goal remains to shift the balance further in favour of preventative maintenance through risk-based asset planning, early intervention, strategic resurfacing, and improved coordination with utilities.

We conduct SCANNER surveys only on A roads. The condition of B, C, and unclassified (U) roads is assessed visually by our experienced engineers, and this information is used to develop the annual maintenance work programme. SCANNER surveys are not carried out on these roads due to budget constraints.

The chart below presents the condition trends of A roads in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea from 2022 to 2024. Data for 2020 and 2021 is unavailable due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that the data reflects a snapshot of carriageway conditions at the time of assessment and does not represent the condition throughout the year, as these assets are subject to continuous use. Additionally, carriageway condition is affected by seasonal weather variations and ongoing utility works, both of which can accelerate deterioration.



**Figure 1 A Roads Condition 2020-2024**

The data shows a slight reduction in the proportion of roads classified as Red between 2022 and 2024; however, there has been a corresponding increase in the percentage falling within the Amber category, alongside a decline in the Green category. This trend indicates a gradual decline in overall carriageway condition, with a shift towards more roads requiring intervention. To prevent further deterioration and avoid more roads reaching the Red (poor condition) category, additional investment will be necessary to maintain asset performance and extend service life. In order to maintain a steady state of the network and to stem the green section gradually turning into amber and red, it is essential to invest in early intervention to manage the asset in a most cost effective way. Figure 1 A Roads Condition 2020-2024

## 4. Plans

### 4.1 Overall Strategy

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea follows a data-driven, risk-based asset management plan that prioritises proactive and cost-effective interventions to maintain the borough's highway infrastructure.

Our approach to highway maintenance is to carry out the optimum amount of planned maintenance to minimise the need for more expensive reactive repairs. This makes the best use of our resources and helps achieve our objective to maintain our assets at the minimum "whole life" cost.

### 4.2 Best Practice, Innovation, and Efficiency

As part of our commitment to best practice and continuous improvement, we actively work to improve public understanding of the value of highway maintenance and the reasons behind service disruptions. This includes clear and timely communication with residents through on-site signage, advance warning notices, and the Council's website. We aim to explain not just the "what" and "when" of works, but also the "why"—emphasising how planned maintenance helps avoid larger, more disruptive repairs in the future. This approach helps manage expectations, reduce complaints, and build appreciation for the long-term value of well-maintained roads.

The Council also embraces innovation to improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact. We have trialled new asphalt mix to cut carbon emissions, increasing the use of electric vehicles and plant and are exploring AI-driven defect detection to enhance inspection

accuracy. Other best practices include targeted night-time resurfacing to minimise disruption, improved permitting systems for utility works, and increased use of recycled materials in both resurfacing and footway construction.

We also actively collaborate through the London Highways Engineering Group to share good practice and align with industry standards.

### 4.3 Specific Plans for 2025/26

For 2025/26, we plan to allocate funding with an approximately 90:10 split between preventative and reactive maintenance.

- Carry out essential maintenance on Streetlighting assets and 6 highway structures, including repainting and bridge deck joint repairs.
- Carry out planned and reactive highway network programme
- Implement new schemes

### 4.4 Street works

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea coordinates street works via the LondonWorks permitting system to minimise disruption and protect newly resurfaced roads. We apply Section 58 restrictions following major resurfacing and conduct regular inspections of utility reinstatements.

We hold monthly meetings with our contractor and quarterly coordination meetings with major utility companies to align planned works and ensure compliance with reinstatement standards. We are also piloting “lane rental” scheme for utility works to improve efficiency while maintaining oversight.

### 4.5 Climate Change, Resilience, and Adaptation

To support the decarbonisation of our operations, we are increasing the use of low-energy materials such as recycled asphalt and low-temperature asphalt. We also require contractors to expand their use of electric vehicles and plant, prioritise sustainable materials (e.g., Type 1 recycled aggregate), and provide carbon reporting for their activities.

Resilience is also a key priority, ensuring continued economic activity and access to essential services during extreme weather events. In Kensington and Chelsea, the primary risks to the highway network are snow, ice, and flooding. Accordingly, the borough’s resilient network aligns with the highest-priority gritting routes and includes the construction of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), as outlined in our Winter Service and Flood Management Plans.

### 4.6 Additional Information on Plans

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea’s highway maintenance activities are linked to wider council objectives on sustainability, accessibility, and economic resilience.

For more information, stakeholders can visit:

- Highway maintenance works <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/streets-and-transport/roads-and-pavements>.
- Current consultations open for new schemes being considered <https://consult.rbkc.gov.uk/>
- or contact the highways team via [highways@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:highways@rbkc.gov.uk)