Kent County Council

Local Highways Maintenance Transparency Report 2025

Date published: 30 June 2025

Our highway network

Lengths of roads, footways, public rights of way and cycleways (km)

A-roads	B- and C-roads	Unclassified roads	Total roads	Footways	Public rights of way	Off-road cycleways
992 km	2,334 km	5,484 km	8,811 km	6,355 km	6,915 km	373 km

In addition to roads, footways, public rights of way and cycleways, Kent County Council maintains the following associated assets including bridges and other structures, gullies and drains, street lights, traffic signals, trees, grass verges, signs and road markings.

Asset	Quantity	**Estimated value** (The cost of a like for like replacement)
Roads	5,400 miles of roads	£6,400 million
Footways	4,000 miles of footways	£1,200 million
Drainage	275,000 roadside drains 41,250 chambers/manholes 3,850 miles of gully leads and carrier lines 8,500 soakaways 250 ponds and lagoons 15 pumping stations 346 small culverts	£3,700 million
Structures	2,200 bridges and other structures 2 tunnels and an underpass	£1,300 million
Crash Barriers	160 miles of safety barriers	£61 million
Street Lighting	125,000 street lights 16,250 illuminated signs 7,500 illuminated and non-illuminated bollards 2,100 Belisha beacons and centre island posts	£175 million
Intelligent Traffic Systems	780 sets of permanent traffic signals 380 electronic information signs 190 CCTV cameras	£69 million
Signs and Lines	140,000 unlit signs 80 miles of pedestrian guardrail 9,200 miles of road markings 700,000 cats' eyes	£42 million

Soft Landscape	550,000 trees 3,200,000 m^2 of urban grass verges 3,000 miles of rural grass verges 572,200 m^2 of conservation verges	*These are not currently included in the valuation estimate*
Land	28 square miles	£11,600 million

Highways maintenance spending figures

Highway maintenance spending

Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£,000s)	Capital spend (£,000s)	Revenue spend (£,000s)	Estimate of % spent on preventative maintenance	Estimate of % spent on reactive maintenance
2025/26 (projected)	£54,283	£79,283	£40,400	75%	25%
2024/25	£38,354	£63,354	£38,222	75%	25%
2023/24	£34,058	£64,058	£37,114	75%	25%
2022/23	£34,058	£67,858	£32,578	75%	25%
2021/22	£27,984	£65,884	£29,252	75%	25%
2020/21	£27,984	£76,184	£30,920	75%	25%

Additional information on spending

In addition to Department for Transport capital grants, KCC contributes its own capital funds, £25m in 2025/26. This combined resource is then allocated across asset groups based on need.

The majority of annual spend is on planned maintenance to reduce/prevent reactive maintenance. This is based on a good understanding of our highway assets, their condition and likely lifecycle performance. For example, on roads, we use an asset condition modelling tool to understand the deterioration of road surfaces so that we can, where funding allows, intervene before potholes occur and target finite resources to maximise the positive effect of investment. Accordingly, in 2025/26, we are delivering £35m of road surface renewal and preservation.

Roads

In 2024/25, we delivered around 1.2million square metres of planned road surfacing to prevent potholes occurring. This included around 880,000 square metres of road surface preservation (at a cost of around £10m) and 310,000 square metres of road surface renewal (at a cost of around £25m). We are seeking to increase preventative work to extend the lifespan of the roads we resurface, reducing the need for future maintenance and associated

carbon emissions. As part of that work, we are carrying out several trials of new materials and technologies.

Our website contains descriptions and videos of the types of surfacing we carry out in Kent.

Footways

In 2024/25 we also surfaced around 80,000 square metres of footway, the majority of which was surface preservation works, at a cost of around £3m.

Drainage

During 2024-2025, KCC successfully carried out the comprehensive cleansing of 116,433 gullies across the service area. Of these, approximately 92% were fully operational upon completion. This extensive work was accomplished through a dual approach: a cyclical maintenance programme, valued at around £1.8 million, designed to systematically clean and maintain gullies on a scheduled basis, and a reactive cleansing initiative, costing approximately £1 million, which addressed urgent drainage issues as they arose.

In addition, we implemented a soakaway cleansing programme with an allocated budget of about £240,000. This involved cleaning and maintaining existing soakaways to prevent blockages and ensure effective surface water management.

KCC also undertook a variety of minor drainage repair and improvement projects. These included 388 individual jobs such as repairing gullies, chambers, and pipework, as well as minor improvement via installing new gullies and chambers to enhance drainage infrastructure. The total cost for these works was approximately £2.5 million.

We also completed fifteen larger, more complex drainage schemes. These projects involved extensive work on drainage systems, including repairs to failed soakaways, installation of new soakaways, and significant system re-designs to improve overall drainage efficiency. The combined cost of these works was estimated at around £1.5 million.

Structures (including Tunnels)

In 2024/25, we completed significant capital repairs and renewals, or design work for future repairs and renewals, valued at around £4.3m, to our structures and tunnels assets. Structures and tunnels projects typically take more than one financial year to complete from start to finish, so this figure encompasses various delivery stages of various projects. Design phase works completed in 2024/25 include footbridge replacements, full bridge replacements, retaining wall renewals, and structural culvert lining works. Construction phase works completed in 2024/25 ranged from bridge deck replacements, retaining wall reconstruction following collapse, full reconstruction of bridges and replacing safety-critical tunnel equipment that has life-expired.

In 2024/25, we also completed principal inspections of 99 structures (at a cost of approximately £1.23m) and general inspections of over 2,000 structures using our in-house inspection teams. We undertook £76k of revenue maintenance such as vegetation clearance, repointing of masonry structures, and bridge drainage clearance. We spent nearly £300k of revenue funding on non-recoverable accident damage to our structures, tunnels

and safety barriers. There is a further recurring annual revenue spend for hire of a temporary bridge at Faversham Creek of £71k per annum (revenue costs to date for temporary hire are more than £400k).

In 2024/25, we spent £2.34m of revenue funding on inspection and operation of the two road tunnels we are responsible for.

Crash Barriers

In 2024/25, we delivered around 4km of planned crash barrier upgrades and repairs at a cost of around £1.3m of capital resource. We also delivered around 26km of planned crash barrier re-tensioning at a revenue cost of around £65k.

In 2024/25, we also delivered revenue repairs to crash barriers at a cost of approximately £136k.

Street Lighting

During the financial year 2024/25, we have carried out 30,000 structural and electrical tests of street lighting assets. The structural testing results informed a replacement programme, and approximately 1,000 streetlights that were at the end of their life were replaced.

A percentage of the electrical network is owned and maintained by KCC, and during the year we carried out approximately 100 cable fault investigations and repairs at a cost of £150,000. We also continued with the de-illumination of assets where appropriate, and approximately 130 illuminated signs and bollards have been de-illuminated.

General maintenance saw 11,140 repairs carried out, and 14,000 bollards and signs on gritting routes were cleaned. We also continued to carry out night-time inspections of assets that are not controlled and monitored by our central management system.

We also upgraded 963 lanterns from historical developer sites that were adopted during 2024/25.

Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS)

The ITS asset comprises traffic signal-controlled junctions and crossings, electronic roadside message signs, CCTV cameras for monitoring traffic, the Traffic Operations Centre and all associated communications infrastructure on the Kent highway network. We inspected almost 1,400 on-street assets and responded to 1,500 reported faults to restore the normal operation of the equipment.

The Traffic Operations Centre sent 16,000 tweets related to issues affecting the highway network, including over 3,000 incidents such as crashes and events. We used the roadside message signs to warn of problems on the network, indicate diversion routes, and promote road safety campaigns.

In addition, we completed full asset refurbishments of eighteen existing signal sites, including converting Sandwich Toll Bridge to a wireless system to allow removal of the cables in the River Stour.

Soft Landscaping

As part of our soft landscape programmed works, we carried out six cuts to over three million square metres of grass within our urban environments and cut a further 3,000 miles of rural verges. As part of our grass cutting programme, we also cut 1,400 visibility splays at junctions and at key safety points to improve highway safety and to remove obstructions.

We inspected around 2,800 miles of highway hard surface and spot-treated weeds to prevent them from becoming safety issues and damaging infrastructure. During 2024/25 we prioritised sign clearance to the strategic network to ensure that our high-risk roads were managed effectively.

As part of our statutory obligations, we inspected nearly 100,000 street trees to assess their safety and arrange any works if required. As part of the continued investment in trees we planted 850 new trees over the winter to replace those that had been removed and to maintain our stock of around 550,000 street trees with all the benefits they bring.

Pothole and Patching Repairs

Below is a table showing the volume of pothole and patch repairs we have delivered in recent years. Where possible, we seek to carry out larger and longer lasting repairs to prevent future failure.

Financial year	Potholes number	Patching m^2 area	Number of pothole reports received from the public
2024/25	44,939	192,032	24,217
2023/24	57,481	289,163	32,146
2022/23	41,135	390,605	25,668
2021/22	44,670	482,998	13,392
2020/21	45,284	508,424	13,875

Condition of local roads

Percentage of A-roads in each condition category

Year	Red	Amber	Green
2020	3.8 %	24.2 %	72.0 %
2021	4.8 %	25.3 %	69.8 %
2022	5.4 %	28.4 %	66.2 %
2023	5.8 %	31.8 %	62.4 %

2024	5.9 %	31.1 %	63.0 %

Note: All A-roads are surveyed via SCANNER (Surface Condition Assessment for the National Network of Roads) laser-based technology each year.

Percentage of B- and C-roads in each condition category

Year	Red	Amber	Green
2020	4.5 %	30.0 %	65.5 %
2021	5.4 %	30.9 %	63.7 %
2022	5.9 %	30.2 %	63.9 %
2023	6.3 %	31.8 %	61.9 %
2024	8.4 %	33.1 %	58.5 %

Note: All B-roads are SCANNER-surveyed each year. C-roads are subject to SCANNER surveys over a two-year period (50% each year).

Percentage of unclassified roads in each condition category

Year	Red	Green
2020	16.8 %	83.2 %
2021	13.6 %	86.4 %
2022	18.0 %	18.0 %
2023	18.0 %	82.0 %
2024	39.0 %	61.0 %

Note: Unclassified roads that are classed as Locally Important in our maintenance hierarchy are SCANNER-surveyed over a two-year period (50% each year). Remaining unclassified roads are subject to a coarse visual inspection (CVI) over a two-year period (50% each year).

Road Condition Assessments

Road condition assessments on the local classified road network in England are currently made predominantly via SCANNER laser-based technology.

Several parameters measured in these surveys are used to produce a nationally recognised 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

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 road condition data is available on the government website.

Additional information on condition

KCC's Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) for 2021/22 to 2025/26 was formally adopted and published in July 2021. When it was published, we observed that it had long been accepted that the rate of highway asset deterioration far exceeded the rate of investment from central government in terms of both capital grant and revenue support. This is something that national commentators have observed for many years, for example in the annual ALARM report, the most recent of which was published in March 2025 and based on data provided by the majority of local authorities in England. The ALARM report observed that the backlog of road maintenance in England and Wales alone now sits at £17bn, the highest figure in thirty years of reporting. The road maintenance backlog in Kent was estimated in 2023/24 to be circa £625m, with an annual funding shortfall of over £30m to maintain roads in a steady state condition. The backlog and shortfall for all highway assets were estimated in 2023/24 to be circa £1.1bn and £93m respectively.

Since 2021, the construction and highways maintenance sectors have experienced hyper-inflation, including typical price increases in 2023 of 20-30%. In addition, we experienced a couple of very severe winters which accelerated road deterioration in particular and led to a significant increase in road surface defects. Together, these factors, and not being able to fund steady state maintenance, had the effect of significantly increasing the maintenance backlog to over £1bn. The majority of this backlog concerns roads (£625m), footways (£275m) and drainage (£140m). Ultimately, we are in challenging financial times. Historically, government funding has not increased each year to reflect inflation or population/traffic increases – factors which particularly affect Kent given its strategic position as the gateway between Europe and the rest of the UK - and the effect of that is to further reduce the amount of maintenance we can deliver on the ground.

In early 2025, the government announced funding of £1.6bn for the whole of England. This is to maintain all highways assets, such as bridges, drainage and streetlighting, not just roads. Whilst the amount awarded to Kent for 2025/26 for all highway assets (£54.3m) is £15.9m higher than in 2024/25, much of that simply addresses price rises in recent years, particularly the hyper-inflation experienced in 2023 because of various global factors.

Plans

Overall strategy

Kent County Council's current approach to maintaining its roads and associated highway assets is set out in its HAMP document. This document explains how effective and efficient highways asset management supports the delivery of Kent's strategic objectives. It includes asset condition forecasts based on current investment levels, sets out the maintenance services we provide and those we do not, and also includes an assessment of associated

risk and a five-year forward works programme. The HAMP espouses the importance of certainty of approach and broad levels of funding to enable greater efficiency and planning, treating highways asset management as a multi-year activity rather than an annual one.

As we approach the end of the period covered in the HAMP, a key task for us will be to produce a new HAMP covering 2026/27 to 2030/31. This will include producing revised condition forecasts, reviewing our maintenance services and associated risks, and producing a new forward works programme covering the next five years, each of these being based on the improved data that we now hold on our highway assets, and on our understanding of likely future levels of investment. Looking forward, this will enable KCC to continue making informed decisions about future highway maintenance policy.

Many workstreams included in the HAMP have now been completed or substantially progressed. A key achievement is the publication of our Kent Pavement Manual, which provides detailed technical guidance on the construction and maintenance of road, footway and cycleway pavements. This follows the publication of our revised Highway Safety Inspections Manual (May 2024) and Kent Traffic Signs Manual (V2.0 July 2023), as well as technical guidance on a range of issues. We have also continued to develop our technical approval process and other measures aimed at helping developers and others to make design decisions that will result in highway assets remaining safe, serviceable and attractive for longer.

Whilst we have yet to identify our future priorities, our new HAMP will include a greater focus on the way we use data to manage our assets, and on innovation, carbon reduction and resilience, as well as a continuing focus on bringing teams across Highways and Transportation together to progress workstreams aimed at supporting economic growth, casualty reduction, active travel and conservation.

Specific plans for 2025/26

Our five-year Forward Works Programme, published on our webpage, includes planned maintenance across all asset groups in the coming years, assuming the level of funding available in 2024/25 were to continue. The vast majority of that activity comprises planned, optimised, preventative maintenance to prevent/reduce the volume of defects that we would have to repair reactively.

The additional capital funding announced by the government is being used to resource an extensive £14.2million Pothole Recovery Strategy intended to address the significant damage to our roads caused by winter weather in recent years. Most of this work will be planned road resurfacing and major preventative patching to tackle problem roads that existing resource could not address, making a real difference to local communities.

To quickly deliver on the ground, we have initially been utilising existing contracts. Around £4m of work, on small scale resurfacing and major patching repairs, is being delivered through our existing drainage framework. Around £1.8m of that work has already been delivered on the ground. We will also shortly be delivering around £2.2m of medium- to large-scale road resurfacing work that will prevent potholes occurring on those roads for decades to come, using our road asset renewal contract with GW Highways Ltd, a Kent-based company. Our existing highways term maintenance contract, with Amey plc, will also

be delivering planned patching work across the county. Finally, we are currently commissioning new Local Highway Maintenance Support contracts, involving up to six additional SMEs, to provide extra capacity to deliver locally on the ground. Those contracts are expected to commence in the autumn.

The works already identified (and in some cases already delivered) have been selected using our district highway managers' extensive local knowledge and expertise and reflecting feedback from locally elected representatives. The sites are listed below, and will be added to as further works are identified.

Resurfacing Works being delivered under the Road Asset Renewal Contract

District	Road Name	Extents	Area (m^2)	Length (m)
Sevenoaks	B245 London Road	Morleys Roundabout to Tonbridge and Malling boundary	1,460	325
Sevenoaks	B2019 Seal Hollow Road	Hillborough Ave to Plymouth Drive	8,583	10,400
Sevenoaks	Pembroke Road	A225 to A224	1,989	240
Sevenoaks	Chipstead Lane	Witches Lane to A25 Worships Hill	2,526	475
Ashford	High Street Tenterden	Recreation Ground Rd to end of High Friction Surfacing outside WH Smiths	1,255	100
Ashford	West Cross Tenterden	Westwell Court to Station Road	4,210	450
Maidstone	A274 Sutton Valance	Sutton Valence School to Sutton Valence Village Gateway	10,485	1,250
Maidstone	B2010 Yalding Hill	Four sections of full width surfacing between Shingle Barn Lane and Lughorse Lane.	7,091	1,050
Tunbridge Wells	Longfield Road	HFS extent full width at junction with Lamberts Road	1,210	250
Tunbridge Wells	Rusthall High Street	Lower Green Road to Nellington Road	3,716	580
			42,525	**15,120**

Resurfacing Works and Major Patching being delivered under the Drainage Framework

<u>Ashford</u>

- Finn Farm Road, Kingsnorth
- Chart Road (approach), Ashford
- Chart Road (exit), Ashford

- Newtown Road, Ashford
- Gladstone Road, Willesborough
- Mace Lane, Ashford
- Millbank Road, Kingsnorth
- Canterbury Road, Kennington
- Boys Hall Road, Ashford
- Pluckley Road, Charing
- Charing Road (Forge Hill), Pluckley

Canterbury

- Central Parade, Herne Bay
- Hackington Road, Tyler Hill
- Island Road, Upstreet
- Joy Lane, Whitstable
- Pier Avenue, Herne Bay
- Burgate, Canterbury
- Marley Lane, Kingston
- Hollow Lane, Canterbury

Dartford

- Crayford Road, Dartford
- Hythe Street, Dartford
- Station Road, Southfleet
- Darent Mead, Sutton-at-Hone
- Manor Road, Swanscombe
- Home Gardens, Dartford

Dover

- Molland Lane, Ash
- Warren Lane, Alkham
- Astley Avenue, Dover
- Guildford Road, Deal
- Stanhope Road, Dover
- Maxton Road, Dover
- Underdown Road, Dover
- Mongeham Road, Great Mongeham

Gravesham

- East Kent Avenue, Northfleet
- A226 Gravesend Road, Higham
- Hadley Close, Meopham
- Ordnance Road, Gravesend
- Overcliffe, Gravesend
- Highview, Higham

- Erskine, Higham

Folkestone and Hythe

- Bargrove, Newington
- Brockhill Road, Hythe
- North Road, Hythe
- Coast Drive, Greatstone
- Clapper Hill, Stelling Minnis
- Dane Hill Road, Bladbean
- Ridge Row, Acrise
- Verschoyles Lane, Elham

Maidstone

- Hill Brow, Bearsted
- Mynn Crescent, Bearsted
- King Street, Maidstone
- Tonbridge Road, Barming
- Fairbourne Lane, Hollingbourne
- Maidstone Road, Lenham
- Chatham Road, Saltwood
- Water Lane, Bearsted

Sevenoaks

- Coppings Road, Sevenoaks Weald
- Swan Lane, Edenbridge
- Watery Lane, Kemsing
- Moat Lane, Cowden
- Church Road, Sundridge (two sections)

Swale

- Marine Parade. Sheerness
- Minster Road, Minster
- Brickfield Lane, Boughton
- Lower Road, Faversham
- Hawthorn Road, Sittingbourne
- Sutton Baron Road, Sittingbourne
- Marine Parade. Sheerness
- Roseleigh Road, Sittingbourne
- Marine Parade. Sheerness
- Brenchley Road, Sittingbourne
- The Fairways, Sittingbourne
- A251 Ashford Road between A2 and M2 jct 6
- Priory Road, Faversham

- Dark Hill, Faversham

Thanet

- New Haine Road, Ramsgate (three sections)
- Dumpton Park Drive, Ramsgate (two sections)
- Grenville Way, Broadstairs
- Homeleigh Way, Ramsgate
- Queens Avenue, Margate
- Abbey Grove, Ramsgate
- Spratling Street, Manston

Tonbridge and Malling

- Vigo Hill, Trottiscliffe
- Vigo Hill, Stansted
- Fairfield Road, Borough Green
- Leigh Road, Hildenborough
- Oxenhoath Road, West Peckham
- Pilgrims Way, Wouldham
- Clare Avenue, Tonbridge

Tunbridge Wells

- Gedges Hill, Brenchley and Matfield
- A262 Goudhurst Road, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst
- Tonbridge Road, Pembury
- Constitutional Hill Road, Southborough
- Mount Sion, Tunbridge Wells
- Cranbrook Road, Benenden.

Street Works

Statutory undertakers have specific legal rights and obligations when undertaking certain development related and infrastructure maintenance work. These can sometimes overrule the ability of the highway authority to coordinate work within the highway. Undertakers have a statutory right to undertake works on the public highway under ss48-106 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), and they may not have to apply for planning permission for small works because of the General Permitted Development Order 2015.

An authority's duties and powers must be balanced against the statutory obligations of the promoter and must adhere to duties under sections 59 and 60 of NRSWA for authorities to coordinate works and for promoters to cooperate.

KCC's key aim is to coordinate the works to reduce disruption; we are not able to stop the works from taking place.

There are also other organisations that will require access to and use of the highway (e.g. for diversion routes and the like) and these include other infrastructure providers that cover the

provision of roads, waterways, railway and airports. These authorities may also have statutory powers that need to be considered as part of any request to close or access the highway.

KCC operates a permit process to coordinate highway access. This process is bound by legislation and regulatory procedure. It protects both the works promoter and the highway authority and places obligations, and conditions on both parties. We have also implemented a Kent Lane Rental scheme covering the most traffic-sensitive roads in the county.

As the highway authority, KCC, through its Street Works teams, administers the process whilst also seeking to mitigate the impact of the proposed works and coordinate it with other prevailing/competing works.

When a works promoter meets the conditions of the permit, KCC has no ability to refuse or reject the application.

KCC now has Road Closure Inspectors across the county, and in addition to the statutory inspections that they are required to carry out they are also completing additional audits to drill deeper into any identified issues with the closure. The Inspectors record all action they have taken on each site attended, and this is fed back to the Street Works Managers to discuss at performance meetings with the utility companies -- or sooner should it need to be.

Street Works teams continue to engage with utility companies to ensure the most appropriate form of traffic management is provided for all works carried out on Kent roads.

Climate change, resilience and adaptation

Climate Change and Adaptation

In November 2024, a cabinet decision was made to approve KCC's Climate Change Adaptation Plan. As part of this programme of work, climate change risk assessments that cover KCC's highway network assets will be undertaken towards the end of the 2025/26 financial year and the start of the 2026/2027 financial year. This activity aims to uncover actions that could be implemented by asset managers once climate or certain financial thresholds have been exceeded, and will be reviewed annually to account for the high degree of uncertainty posed by climate change in Kent. Additional actions directly related to KCC's highway network include exploring increased preservation works on road surfaces to account for changing precipitation patterns, and supporting the delivery of externally funded SuDS retrofit works on sections of KCC's Highways to reduce surface water flood risk.

Our Maintenance Strategy

Kent County Council has introduced a suite of measures to decarbonise our road maintenance operations, aligning with the UK government's target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 and KCC's High Ambition Carbon Reduction Pathway.

In 2019/20, our baseline year for measuring carbon emissions from road carriageway maintenance, we adopted a strategic, long-term asset management approach. Moving beyond traditional short-term methods typically adopted by local government that focussed on the immediate and near future, we focused on improving road quality while reducing our

carbon footprint by choosing a strategic decision-led approach, looking at the bigger picture and making decisions that aligned with increasing the quality of our roads, while reducing our carbon footprint.

This shift has enabled us to:

- Prioritise lower carbon, cost effective, preservation treatments;
- Increase the life span of our assets by treating more of our road network with life extending preservation treatments;
- Introduce retread on the Kent network (a circular economy approach that recycles the existing road surface by mixing it with bitumen and re-laying it);
- Reduce carbon emissions per square metre of treated carriageway. In 2019/20 our average carbon emissions per square metre of carriageway treated was 4.62 $kgCO^2e$. By 2024/25 this had reduced to an average of 2.69 $kgCO^2e$ per square metre laid, the equivalent of a 41.77% reduction in carbon emissions per square metre of carriageway treated since our baseline year.

Innovative Materials and Treatments

In 2019, KCC Highways and Transportation introduced the Trials of New Materials and Technologies process, enabling the testing and evaluation of innovative solutions on the Kent network. Trial designs are now required to consider whole-life carbon reduction and climate adaptation.

Innovation is part of our carbon reduction efforts, and in the last five years we have introduced the following lower carbon, materials and treatments into our road carriageway maintenance practices:

- Low Temperature Asphalt (LTA) - historically, we exclusively used 100% hot mix asphalt, but successful trials led to us transitioning to LTA for base and binder courses as standard.
- Reclaimed Asphalt Pavement (RAP) – the use of RAP has advanced considerably over the last five years, and we now incorporate 10% RAP in surface courses and 20% in base and binder courses, in accordance with national guidance (PD6691).
- Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB) - previously, our use was restricted to Hot Rolled Asphalt (HRA). We now include PMBs in all our materials, which contributes to longer pavement life, aligning with our asset management approach to whole-life carbon reduction.
- Asphalt Preservation - proprietary liquid emulsion products like Asphalt Rejuvenation enhance carbon efficiency by preserving the condition of road surfaces and extending their lifecycle through periodic applications (five or ten-year cycles).
- Retexturing - where appropriate, this treatment offers a low-carbon alternatives to resurfacing using high-pressure water or steel shot to restore surface texture.

- Surface Seal (Lock Chip) - this treatment is applied post surface dressing to seal and 'lock' the chippings into the surface, improving waterproofing of the road surface and increasing its durability to prevent defects, cracks, and potholes.

KCC Highways and Transportation Tender Process

In line with the social value objectives of the Procurement Act 2023, Kent County Council is shaping its procurement strategies to embed carbon reduction and environmental considerations into all tender processes, tailored to suit the scale and nature of each requirement. This includes setting carbon targets, with a focus on Scope 1 and 2 emissions, and exploring approaches to address Scope 3.

Each commercial strategy outlines how carbon reduction will be incorporated into the tender, providing suppliers with the opportunity to propose their own solutions. Where applicable, suppliers may also be expected to demonstrate relevant environmental accreditations and existing processes/policies. These submissions are assessed and used to shape the final contract, with performance tracked against agreed carbon targets. Some of our recently awarded contracts illustrate this approach, with carbon reduction forming a key part of the evaluation process and contract.

As our approach continues to develop, we remain committed to ongoing improvement and to working collaboratively with suppliers to achieve practical and lasting outcomes.