Highway maintenance factsheet – Summer 2018

About Oxfordshire's roads

- The road network managed by Oxfordshire County Council is 2,994 miles long.
- The network is made up of: A roads (15%); B roads (10%), and C or unclassified roads (75%). The high proportion of C and unclassified roads, which are often not built to modern standards and in rural locations, makes highway maintenance a major challenge.
- The A34, M40 and A43 are managed and maintained by Highways England.
- Our total budget for carriageway repairs for 2018/19 is around £11m.
- It would cost around £250m to bring the network to an acceptable standard, and then would require an annual capital investment of £21m to keep them at that standard through resurfacing.
- In addition, £5m a year is needed for regular maintenance (gulley cleaning, pot hole repair, grip cutting, siding out etc).
- Oxfordshire has fewer miles of road assessed as 'good' than the national average, but fewer in a 'poor' condition. We also have a higher percentage in 'fair' condition than the national average. The table below shows the condition of the highway network nationally with the Oxfordshire comparison.

	Good %		Fair %		Poor %	
	Oxfordshire	England	Oxfordshire	England	Oxfordshire	England
2017/18	47	54	43	28	10	18
2016/17	45	53	45	30	10	17
2015/16	48	48	43	39	10	13

Good: 15 years or more life remaining

Fair: 5-15 years life remaining

Poor: less than 5 years life remaining

Winter impact

- The regular freeze and thaw, coupled with some exceptionally wet weather means that road surfaces have taken a battering, resulting in a jump in defect reports.
- Snow in December 2017 damaged an already fragile network, with two further freezes in January and March 2018.

Fix My Street

- Fix My Street is the main way to report any highway defect that does not pose an immediate safety or injury risk found on our roads. (**https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk**)
- Reports on Fix My Street peaked at 8,456 reports for the month of March.
- If you are reporting an emergency please do not report it online, but ring our Customer Service Centre on **0345 310 1111.**
- The table below shows **all** reports (including potholes, streetlighting, traffic signals, general highway requests) made since the start of 2017 month by month. August 2017 is when our own inspectors started adding their finds on Fix My Street.

	2017	2018
January	1852	7171
February	2727	7080
March	2104	8456
April	915	7989
May	1248	6214
June	1259	5064
July	1544	N/A
August	2750	N/A
September	2994	N/A
October	3194	N/A
November	3233	N/A
December	2952	N/A
Total	26772	40630

Highways inspections

- We carry out routine inspections of our road and footpath network. The frequency depends of the type of road and volume of traffic, with the busiest roads being inspected up to 12 times a year.
- We have a team of 18 highway inspectors in Oxfordshire.
- Our inspectors check things that are reported to us by the public on Fix My Street and also carry out their own proactive inspections ensuring that everything that requires repairing is logged and an order placed with our contractors.
- We have a duty to ensure roads are safe and our policy is to fix the most serious safety concerns within 24hrs. Any judged as less urgent will be fixed within 28 days.
- Inspectors mark-up potholes with one of two coloured paints. Red is for potholes that we will fill within either two or 24 hours depending on the circumstances, and white for all others i.e. up to 28 day.
- Yellow paint is used by technical officers to mark up larger scale patching works but not standard defects.

Maintenance progress

- We currently have 18 crews working on our roads – the largest number we have ever used. In the summer, we would previously have had six.
- We have doubled our minor patching crews from two to four, and also doubled our minor works gangs from two to four.
- We have recently bought a new Dragon patching machine. We now have two Dragons in Oxfordshire, with a third shared with two other highway authorities.
- We have dealt with 23,809 potholes since January 2018. This is 64% up on last year and equates to fixing and average of 3,968 potholes a month.
- Pothole fixing peaked in March with 5,146 being repaired.
- We have dealt with a total of 28,358 defects (potholes, drains, damaged signs etc) in total since January 2018.
- Again repairs overall peaked in March with 5,786 being completed.
- We are doing more ‘saw-cut’ repairs on A and B roads. This is a longer-lasting but more expensive method, but is not suitable for roads in a generally poor condition.
- The county council received an extra £2.9m in funding from the Department for Transport to repair roads damaged during the most recent winter. This is made up of £1.574m pothole grant and £1.362m from the flood resilience fund.

Maintenance types

Temporary fill
Used in some instances to make a location safe for a few days until traffic management can be organised to do a permanent repair.

Sweep and fill
'Sweep and fill' is a quick, simple and cost-effective method to deal with a defect and make it safe. This is also the best repair method when the surrounding road condition is poor.

Saw-cut repairs
A neater and longer-lasting method which is used on A and B roads and some other roads where the circumstances allow. Holes are cut square and any debris removed before being filled and compacted.

Dragon patching
This versatile machine can carry out pothole filling and small-scale surface dressing. The pothole is dried with a flame-thrower before spraying in bitumen and chippings, creating a waterproof fix. The Dragon is used on rural roads and, for this reason, is largely self-sufficient with a small crew being able to travel round, fix potholes and handle any traffic management that is needed.

Structural patching
This is like resurfacing as detailed below. However the team targets a specific area where there are problems with potholes and cut out the unsound area of surfacing – often several square metres – and resurface only that area. This is a good for localised problems that do not justify a larger resurfacing scheme and means that we can do more work with our limited funds.

Surface dressing
This technique, which involves applying bitumen and chippings, is used to seal and extend the life of roads by 8 to 12 years. This is not a repair in the same sense as those listed above, but something you will see on local roads from time to time.

Resurfacing
Full resurfacing of stretches of road is the most costly but effective solution to worn and crumbling road surfaces. The county council, as is the case across the country, is able to do only a limited number of these comprehensive reconstruction projects.

- We monitor the quality of repairs and if any are found or reported to us that have failed these are raised with our contractors who will take remedial action.
- In some instances you may see a repair, or the road surrounding it, that appears to be in poor condition. This situation it is likely that it is a temporary solution until we are able to programme a more substantial repair for that piece of road.

The costs of repairs

Sweep and fill	**£40/50 approx. per defect**
Dragon patcher	**£22 per defect**
Saw cut repair	**£70-80 per defect**
Structural patching	**£2,500 a day**
Surface dressing	**£4 - £8 per sqm**
Surfacing	**£25 to £80 per sqm depending on depth**

Costs vary depending on the traffic management required to carry out the work e.g. traffic lights, road closures or diversions.

How to report a problem on Fix My Street

- Visit **fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk**
- Enter an Oxfordshire postcode, or street name and area.
- Locate the problem on the map.
- Enter details of the problem. You can submit pictures if you have some, but don't try to take them if it's not safe to do so. If you can get a picture try to provide one that shows the defect and the area around it so our inspectors can find it on site – close ups of potholes don't help too much.
- Confirm the report and Oxfordshire County Council will investigate.
- If you are reporting an emergency please do not report it online, but ring our Customer Service Centre on **0345 310 1111**