

Story embargoed to 00:01 Tuesday March 21st 2023 (National Version)

No Respite for Local Roads

Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) Survey

One pothole is currently filled on our roads every 22 seconds, but, according to a new survey published today, local authority highway teams in England and Wales only received around two-thirds of what they needed to stop our local roads from further deterioration last year.

Furthermore, almost £14 billion (£13.87 billion) is now needed to fix the backlog of carriageway repairs*.

The findings come from this year's Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey, commissioned by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), and reveals less is being spent on the carriageway, despite a small increase in overall highway maintenance budgets reported.

It seems rising costs due to inflationary pressures mean engineers have reported being forced to postpone or cancel road schemes to make savings.

And the gap is widening between what local authorities received and what they said they would have needed to keep roads to their own target conditions and prevent further decline is now £1.29 billion – a jump of 20% on last year's figure and the highest reported in 28 years of successive ALARM surveys.

The cost of fixing the backlog of carriageway repairs is also reported to have increased by a further 10% on last year's record figure to a new high of £13.87 billion – the equivalent of £67,514 per mile of local road in England and Wales. This backlog would take an average of 11 years to complete.

Other findings show that local authorities would have needed an average of an extra £7.7 million each last year just to reach their own target road conditions.

And, while half (51%) of the local road network is reported to be in good structural condition, the remainder, more than 100,000 miles of road, could, without appropriate maintenance measures, continue to deteriorate to the point of needing to be rebuilt within the next 15 years.

Findings of ALARM 2023, which relate to the 2022/23 financial year, show that in England and

Wales:

- Local authorities would have needed an average of an **extra £7.7 million each** last year just to reach their own target road conditions.
- It would now cost **£13.87 billion** to tackle the backlog and bring the network up to a standard from which it can be maintained efficiently and cost effectively going forward.
- While half (51%) of the local road network is reported to be in good structural condition, the remainder, **more than 100,000 miles of road**, could, without appropriate maintenance measures, continue to deteriorate to the point of needing to be rebuilt within the next 15 years.
- **18% of the network** (almost 37,000 miles) is already assessed as having less than 5 years' structural life remaining.
- One pothole is filled the equivalent of **every 22 seconds**.
- Roads are only resurfaced on average once **every 118 years**.

Available for interview on Tuesday 21st March (8am-5pm) are:

- **AIA directors Malcolm Simms and David Giles**

To book an interview, contact Shout! Communications carl@shoutcommunications.co.uk

B-Roll link:

- **Shout! to insert WeTransfer link**

Notes to Editors

* The backlog describes the amount that would be needed – as a one-off catch-up cost – to bring the network up to condition that would allow it to be managed cost effectively and sustainably going forward as part of a proactive asset management approach.

The full ALARM survey will be available to download from 00.01 hours on **Tuesday March 21st 2023** by visiting www.asphaltuk.org

The Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey is produced by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA). Now in its 28th year, the report is widely respected throughout industry and local and national government as the most authoritative and comprehensive study into local road maintenance funding and condition.

1. The ALARM survey 2023 was completed by 75% of authorities responsible for roads in England, London and Wales and was carried out between December 2022 and February 2023.
2. The 2023 ALARM survey's findings relate to roads maintained by local authorities only and therefore excludes those forming the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which is managed by National Highways.
3. The ALARM survey is commissioned by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), which represents the companies producing the raw materials used in asphalt for roads construction and repair.
4. The survey includes the findings of both quantitative and qualitative research and the results have been independently analysed by a registered member of the Royal Statistical Society [statistician].
5. ALARM survey reports from previous years can be accessed via www.asphaltuk.org and a broad range of road-related statistics are collated on www.roadusers.org.uk