

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Economy Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2023

**Subject:** Highways State of the City Annual Report 2021/22

**Report of:** Head of Network Management

---

### Summary

Manchester's highway network includes over 1,350 km of road length, 2,600 km of footway length and over 350 bridges and structures. Based on the latest valuations, the total highway asset has an indicative gross replacement value of over £3 billion, making it the Council's most valuable asset.

The Highways state of the City report highlights the performance, key outcomes, and successes that we have achieved in 2021/22 along with some of the challenges that we will face going forward.

### Recommendations

Members are recommended to comment on the content of the report and included proposals.

---

### Wards Affected: All

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Transport plays a vital role in Manchester's economic vitality. Regeneration aspirations will rely on effective transport links to enable employees and visitors to access new homes and workplaces, and for the business in and around our city to grow.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	By continuing to specify social value requirements in all our highway projects we are ensuring that we get extra value for Manchester's residents, including training, apprenticeships, and work placements for local people.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Providing infrastructure access for all to employment, education, healthcare, leisure and social opportunities enables people to make the most of life, supporting stronger communities.

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	We'll encourage walking, cycling and public transport with more investment in the infrastructure needed and harness technology to improve sustainability, reduce our carbon footprint and increase climate resilience.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	An integrated, smart, well maintained transport network will reflect the city's changing shape and the way people move around. We'll have more cycling and walking, with the improved infrastructure and signage needed. The city will be at the centre of first-class networks – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Kevin Gillham  
Position: Head of Network Management  
Telephone: 0161 234 5660  
E-mail: kevin.gillham@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Tony King  
Position: Highway Asset Manager  
Telephone: 0161 219 6508  
E-mail: tony.king@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Highways Asset Management Policy & Strategy – June 2022.
- Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025, Executive (March 2021).
- Highways State of the City Report – September 2022.

## **1.0 Introduction**

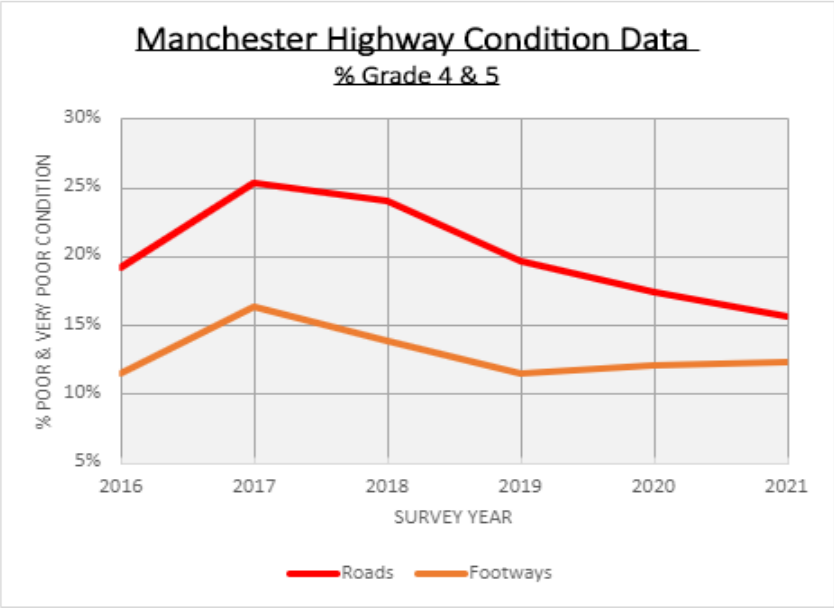
- 1.1 This summary report gives an update on the substantial works completed and progress achieved by the Highways service and provides an overview of methods of communication to ensure ongoing engagement with residents and members, as well as the performance of the service during the financial year 2021/22.
- 1.2 All Members have been sent the 21/22 Highways State of the City Report and references are made to this. The report can be accessed [here](#).
- 1.3 The Highways service is part of the Neighbourhoods Directorate which has facilitated opportunities and improved connections to support working at a ward and neighbourhood level, for example in terms of consultation, communication and engagement.
- 1.4 The service has a clear and recognised vision, which is *to manage, maintain and improve the highway and public spaces network for the current and future needs of our residents*. This vision is aligned to the relevant elements of the Our Manchester Strategy and the Corporate Plan about improving connections and neighbourhoods.
- 1.5 The report also forms, in part, our response to the Government's national approach through the Department for Transport (DfT), in that local authorities adopt a rigorous highway asset management approach to managing highway infrastructure.

## **2.0 Investing in our city**

- 2.1 As part of the Council's 2017/18 budget process the decision was made to invest £80m over 5 years in improving the condition of our highway network. This funding represented a step change in the level of investment by the Council to improve the condition of all our highway network.
- 2.2 2021/22 was the final year of this investment period and the total spent over the period was £79.4m. This total investment also includes annual funding from the DfT as well as Pothole Action Fund grants.
- 2.3 £5m of additional funding was received following a successful 2019/20 Challenge fund bid to the Department for Transport (DfT). This was used to resurface 7 major Manchester roads including Kingsway, Ashton Old Road, Oldham Road and Barlow Moor Road, along with associated drainage repairs.
- 2.4 We have secured an additional year's funding for year 6 (2022/23) to maintain the improvements achieved during the original 5-year investment, however if there is no Council funding available beyond this financial year (meaning that the service will only have Government funding in subsequent years), this would mean that the highway network will quickly deteriorate, and all the benefits of the previous Council investment risks being lost.

**3.0 Key Successes**

- 3.1 Despite the major disruption and service challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, unlike several other GM highways departments, we continued to meet the challenge of maintaining our highway network without a break in service, as well as delivering several major schemes on site.
- 3.2 The Major Projects team have been successful in being awarded £37.2m worth of bids from the Mayor’s Challenge Fund (MCF) to improve walking and cycling facilities across the city. More details of the schemes completed and programmed can be found in the ‘Major Projects’ section on page 11 of the Highways State of the City Report.
- 3.3 The service has successfully delivered the 5-year £80 million capital investment programme. The scale of the programme is, for recent times, unprecedented and has required a step change in the resources needed to deliver this large programme. Over the 5-year investment programme it is estimated that over 2,000 roads will have been improved representing about 3.9million m2 in area (an equivalent area of 600 Football pitches). The investment programme has succeeded in halting the overall decline in the condition of our road and footway network as well as enabling significant improvements to our drainage and other highway infrastructure. These improvements are highlighted in several sections throughout the Highways State of the City report (see page 6, 8 and 9).
- 3.4 The graph below shows the percentage of our roads and footways at grade 4 or grade 5 (poor) condition since 2016; As can be seen at the end of year 5 of the investment (2021/22), these percentages have improved to around 16% and 12% respectively.



Most of the initial 5-year investment was targeted at roads, which is why overall footway condition has generally been maintained, but not improved since 2019. Any future funding will be targeted at footways along with more

local and neighbourhood roads.

- 3.5 Other specific successes include the embedding of social value and sustainability in all our procurement activities, as well as setting up the Highways Access Group (HAG), which advises on ensuring that highways projects are accessible to all, with particular focus on access for disabled and other vulnerable road users. The HAG were recently recognised for their work at the recent CIHT industry awards, winning the prestigious CIHT Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Initiative of the Year Award, as well as being highly commended in the Best Practice category for the work the group has done in relation to seeking feedback from disability groups on scheme designs. More detail is on page 7 of the Highways State of the City report.
- 3.6 In April 2022, 'The Highways Social Value Strategy' was refreshed, and the following social value priorities have been identified as the main areas of focus for the Highways service over the coming year (2022/2023):
- Promoting women into construction to provide a diverse workforce
  - Identifying employment opportunities for ex-military/armed forces
  - Supporting the Read Manchester campaign
  - Supporting the Road Safety Programme
  - Supporting community projects in the various wards of Manchester
  - Contributing towards Environmental Sustainability initiatives
  - 2022 Our Year is a year for young people and children in Manchester.
- 3.7 Alongside the strategy refresh, the service has updated all Social Value and Sustainability tender documents to ensure that a minimum weighting of 30% is dedicated to Social Value and Environmental Sustainability. In addition to the above, Social Value and Sustainability tender questions have been amended to align with the defined KPIs and to enable the service to receive responses in the correct format. Highways are taking a leading role in the Council with the inclusion of environmental proposals as part of the contract award criteria. Social value case studies are included as an appendix to the Highways State of the City report on page 30.

## **4.0 Delivery**

### **4.1 Planned Maintenance:**

- 4.1.1 In 2021/22 (year 5 of the investment programme), we delivered a range of highway treatments and services, which are detailed in the Highways State of the City report on pages 8-15. A summary of the planned maintenance operations that we delivered is as follows:
- Carriageway Surfacing Programme: 109 sites, Total Area 196,278 sq.m.
  - Challenge Fund: 7 sites (including Kingsway, Ashton Old Road and Oldham Road), Total Area 61,731 sq.m.
  - Footways: 40 sites, Total Area 50,141 sq.m.
  - Preventative treatments: 99 sites, Total Area 116,748 sq.m.

Overall, that gives totals of 255 sites, with a total area of 424,898 sq.m which are significant numbers. The year 6 (2022/23) programme is also on track, with the resurfacing and preventative works progressing and scheduled to be completed before the end of the financial year.

#### 4.2 Inspections & repairs:

4.2.1 Our highway inspectors carry out walked and driven safety inspections across all our adopted highway network at regular frequencies. They also carry out ad-hoc visits following reports received from members or the public. In 2021/22, our highway inspectors carried out approximately 26,000 safety inspections in total.

4.2.2 Where defects are found, repairs are carried out by either our in-house Highway Maintenance Services team (formerly known as Manchester Contracts), or by contractors procured through our maintenance contracts. One of the repair techniques used by our contractors is thermal road repairs. This involves heating up the area around a pothole until it is workable, adding a small amount of new material and relaying. Compared to conventional repair techniques, this method is much more carbon friendly, with calculated CO2 emission savings of 1,920 tonnes over the last 12 months. Around 26,800 defect repairs in total were carried out in 2021/22.

#### 4.3 Street works:

4.3.1 We employ a team of street works inspectors who are responsible for routine and sample inspections of utility works and other highway licensed works. The table below shows the results of sample inspections carried out in 2021/22 and where failures resulted in fines being issued to utility companies:

Street Works 2021/22	
Total Sample Inspections 2021/22	2985 (746 each quarter)
Average Cat A fail %	3.82%
Average Cat B fail %	10.12%
Average Cat C fail %	3.34%

4.3.2 In 2021/22, our Network management and Street works teams managed over 22,000 requests to occupy the highway. These requests can range from utility companies who need to repair cables and pipes to requests from developers who are building new offices and homes. These numbers are nearly double those from 2020/21, reflecting the increased infrastructure work since the end of the pandemic.

#### 4.4 Winter services:

4.4.1 We continue to deliver an effective winter service operation. In 2021/22 we completed 54 gritting operations covering a total of about 38,016 km and using approximately 3,000 tonnes of rock salt.

4.4.2 Footways and bridges are treated with Potassium Acetate (liquid de-icer) and there is approximately 50 Km of footways.

4.4.3 Segregated Cycleways were treated 43 times with liquid de-icer. There are also approximately 190 Grit Bins located around the city which were filled, checked, and topped up when required.

#### 4.5 Major Projects:

4.5.1 Several notable projects were completed this year, including:

- The Medlock Street roundabout cycling and walking improvements.
- The eagerly awaited road-widening and pedestrian-improvement project at Hyde Road was completed.
- The first walking & cycling scheme through Chorlton was completed including the construction of the first CYCLOPS junction within the UK.
- The Great Ancoats Street project, which will improve safe access across this busy road.
- The A6 Stockport Road bus layby widening scheme.
- The Airport City Green Bridge scheme over the M56 motorway connecting the airport to Wythenshawe.

4.5.2 Future Major Projects:

- Highways have secured funding through City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and Active Travel Fund (ATF) tranche 3 to help deliver the City Centre Transport Strategy.
- Further work is being done to develop a clear pipeline of future highway infrastructure projects which will allow us to effectively bid for future funding streams.

#### 4.6 Road safety

4.6.1 The City Council does not have a road safety budget and that has been the case since the national spending cuts of 2010, however the Council has spent considerable sums on highway safety schemes that will along with other benefits improve road safety.

4.6.2 Collisions in the city are broadly following Greater Manchester trends. Serious and Fatal collisions (KSIs) reduced in 2019 and continued to fall in 2020, however there was a substantial rise in 2021. It can be assumed that this reflects the increase in traffic volume on the network following the Covid pandemic.

4.6.3 The Strategic Capital Board approved the proposal to fund a package of Road Safety schemes in 2021/22 in March. The proposal has been divided this into two separate programmes of work

- The first £1m is for delivering accident reduction schemes, using accident statistics provided by GMP & TfGM and prioritised using a scoring matrix looking at factors including traffic volumes, traffic speed, accidents, and several other features e.g., nearby bus stops and pedestrian crossings etc.
- The second £1m is to deliver local priority community safety schemes. Each Neighbourhood Team (North, Central & South) engaged with members to identify the top ten hotspots within their respective cluster of wards, providing circa 30 sites across the city. Each site was then individually scored using the same parameters as above and then ranked in priority order.





4.6.4 School safety has improved during the year, with the completion of 77 out of 81 school crossing improvements across the city. In addition, we offer cycle training to all pupils in Manchester schools, from level 1 training in basic skills that's taught on the school grounds to level 3 taught on busier routes. In 2020, 670 children across 24 schools attended these bikeability cycle safety training sessions.

## 5.0 Performance









5.1 Monitoring, reviewing and publishing our performance against defined levels of service enables the team to balance the needs of communities and our strategic aims & objectives to ensure that appropriate services are being delivered for businesses and communities in Manchester.

5.2 A range of some of the key performance measures are shown in the report on the Highways State of the City report pages 16 to 22, which show that the Council's highway infrastructure assets are currently being maintained in a steady state, with improvements in several areas following the 5-year investment programme. Service delivery performance has generally been maintained, with improvements in some areas and decreases in other areas.

5.3 A summary of some of the metrics are shown in the table below:

Measure	Target	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Performance
% of total road network in 'poor' condition	<20%	20%	17%	<b>16%</b>	
% of footway network in 'poor' condition	<10%	11%	12%	<b>12%</b>	
% of network at or below skid resistance IL	Downward trend	8.9%	8.3%	<b>8.4%</b>	
% of highway gullies not working as planned	Downward trend	47%	34%	<b>20%</b>	



Total number of recorded carriageway defects such as potholes	Downward trend	9641	8559	<b>9628<sup>1</sup></b>	
Bridges & structures condition (BCI Av)	Upward trend	84	84	<b>73.4</b>	
Percentage of LED streetlights installed	n/a	51%	99%	<b>100%</b>	
% of gullies emptied in the year	n/a	54%	100%	<b>62%<sup>2</sup></b>	
% of planned maintenance schemes completed	Upward trend	92%	95%	<b>96%</b>	
% of safety inspections carried out on time	Upward trend	49%	82%	<b>81%</b>	
Number of defects repaired	n/a	16,223	16,731	<b>15,625</b>	
Total no. of killed & seriously injured persons (KSI's) on roads (per 1,000km of network)	Downward trend	100	80	<b>129</b>	
<sup>1</sup> The increasing figures reflect the extra work completed to reduce the long standing back-log of defects.					
<sup>2</sup> Reduction in number of gullies emptied relates to a reduction in revenue funding.					

5.4 Results from the 2021 annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey showed a very slight fall in satisfaction from last year, although this trend is mirrored nationally. It is pleasing that we are at or above the NHT average satisfaction score for all themes in the survey, apart from road safety, and as mentioned above, we are implementing a £2m programme of road safety schemes in Manchester and improved communication around, and delivery of these schemes should help to improve our satisfaction scores in this area in future years.

## 6.0. Overview of Key Highway Assets

6.1. Pages 22 to 28 of the Highways State of the City report provide a summary overview of all our key highways assets in terms of condition, work carried out and future works required.