

## CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

County Council  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**REPORT AUTHOR:** County Councillor Liam Fitzpatrick, Portfolio Holder for Highways

**SUBJECT:** Question from County Councillor Roger Williams

**What assessment has the Cabinet made of the condition of unclassified roads in Powys?**

### Answer

The condition of our unclassified roads is monitored through routine inspections of the road network. The frequency of inspections is set on a hierarchical basis and will take place typically on 6 or 12 monthly cycles. Roads in urban areas serving residential areas or with significant usage will be inspected more frequently whilst those in rural areas providing access to a limited number of properties will be on 12 monthly inspections. The purpose of these inspections is to identify work that is required in the short term as well as to assess overall condition and programme more major work such as surface dressing.

SCANNER surveys are currently a requirement of Welsh Government only for assessing the condition of classified roads across Wales. These more detailed technical surveys using computer analysis are not considered to represent value for money on the unclassified network. It is however proposed as part of the Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) development to introduce a new inspection regime that will also include a coarse visual assessment of condition at each inspection. Whilst not comprehensive or scientifically based it should provide a broad measure of condition.

Road Type	Road km	SCANNER Survey Frequency
A (Class 1)	238	Annual
B (Class 2)	604	Annual
C (Class 3)	2,102	4 Year Cycle
U (Unclassified)	2,126	None

For information, the last recorded SCANNER surveys on unclassified roads were undertaken in 2011/2012 and based on SCANNER principles for surveying. The survey records a range of factors including profile along the road (ride quality); across the road (rutting); cracking and texture depth (skidding) and these are combined to produce an overall factor which is reported on the traffic light basis

(Red/Amber/Green). See <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/asset-condition/road-condition-information/data-collection/scanner/> for more detail.

The condition of the unclassified roads recorded in 2011/2012 is shown in the table below with 30.2% in the red category (in need of further investigation) which amounts to 640km. Comparisons are included for C and A roads in the same year and the current year 2016/2017.

	<b>11/12 Unclassified (U roads)</b>	<b>11/12 Class 3 (C roads)</b>	<b>11/12 Class 1 (A roads)</b>	<b>16/17 Class 3 (C roads)</b>	<b>16/17 Class 1 (A roads)</b>
<b>Red %</b>	<b>30.2%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>24.4%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
<b>Amber %</b>	<b>25.2%</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>24.6%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>28.5%</b>
<b>Green %</b>	<b>44.6%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>69.2%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	<b>68.0%</b>

In 2011/2012 the percentage of U roads in the red category was double that of C roads although the total in the Amber and Red categories was broadly comparable. Looking at C roads for 2016/2017 the condition has deteriorated compared with 2011/2012, and the unclassified condition is therefore likely that the percentage of roads in the Red category has also increased beyond 30.2%.

Based on the 2011/2012 data of 30.2% of unclassified roads in the red category, if for example the 640km were treated with surface dressing (minimum treatment) the cost would be c£8.5M, if the treatment was resurfacing then it would be c£30M. This would not reduce the red percentage to zero however but is an indicator of the potential costs if we wanted to significantly improve the condition.

Survey results for classified roads are published annually and are available via their website <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/road-lengths-conditions/?lang=en>.

Powys has been consistently at the bottom of the condition table, having the highest percentage of classified road network in need of further investigation (Red category). This is due to the high percentage of C roads in Powys compared with other authorities which distorts the combined figures. When separated out our performance on A and B roads is comparable with other councils.