

Freedom of Information Request – Response - 26937

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information regarding council expenditure:

1. **Consultant Spending:** A breakdown of all payments made to external management consultancy firms (including but not limited to Impower) between January 2024 and the present date.

Suffolk County Council service area/directorate	Consultant	Consultants Fees
Adult Social Care	31TEN CONSULTING LTD	39,892
Public Health & Communities	REED	239,142
	NATIONAL SOCIAL MARKETING	1,200

2. **Executive Pay:** The total number of senior staff currently receiving a "spot salary" or a base salary exceeding £100,000 per annum.

We can confirm that Suffolk County Council holds this information. However, the information is readily accessible to you, as it is already in the public domain.

Section 21 of the FOIA states that a public authority does not need to provide information under section 1 of the Act if that information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means.

Please use the link below to access the requested information.

[scc-organisational-structure-28-02-25.xlsx](#)

3. **Highways Efficiency:** Any internal reports or correspondence regarding the Department for Transport's recent "Red Rating" for Suffolk's highways effectiveness.

Please find attached the following reports regarding recent DfT 'Red Rating':

- DfT Transparency Methodology and Calculations – summary.pdf
- DfT Transparency Methodology and Calculations.pdf
- DfT Transparency Summary - IC January 2026.pdf
- Feedback to the Department for Transport.pdf

4. **River Pollution:** A list of all recorded instances where the Council has formally challenged or lobbied water companies regarding sewage discharge into Suffolk rivers since 2024.

Zero instances.

Suffolk's Scores and Calculations

Road Condition (Metrics 1–3)

Metric 1 – A Roads:

2024 data: Green = 68%, Amber = 30%, Red = 3%

Calculation: $68 + (30 \div 2) - 3 = 80$ points (GREEN)

Metric 2 – B/C Roads:

2024 data: Green = 73%, Amber = 23%, Red = 4%

Calculation: $73 + (23 \div 2) - 4 = 80.5$ points (GREEN)

Metric 3 – U Roads:

2024 data: Green = 82%, Red = 18%

Thresholds: 10% red = 80 pts; 20% red = 45 pts → 3.5 pts lost per 1% above 10%

Points lost = $8 \times 3.5 = 28$ → Score = $80 - 28 = 52$ points (AMBER)

Combined Condition Score:

$(80 + 80.5 + 52) \div 3 = 70.83$ points (AMBER)

Spend (Metric 6)

DfT calculation:

- $\pounds 36.398\text{m} \div \pounds 40.833\text{m} = 89\%$

Or

- $\pounds 36.398\text{m} \div \pounds 43.771\text{m} = 83\%$
Both < 90% = 0 points (RED)

Suffolk calculation (including £10m forward funding in 2024/25):

- $\pounds 46.398\text{m} \div \pounds 40.833\text{m} = 114\%$
- $\pounds 49.153\text{m} \div \pounds 43.771\text{m} = 112\%$
The above would return 59 or 62 points (AMBER)

Requirement for GREEN (80 points):

Spend = 130% of DfT allocation.

Based on December 2025 allocation $\pounds 43.771\text{m}$, total required to have been spend is **$\pounds 56.902\text{m}$** (**$\pounds 13.131\text{m}$** additional).

Best Practice

Metric 4 – Preventative vs Reactive Maintenance

No guidance provided prior to 11 January. DfT methodology now implies **capital-only basis**.

Suffolk submission (capital + revenue): Preventative 54% = **64.3 points (AMBER)**

Assumed scale: **Points = 20 + 0.8 × (% preventative)**

If **capital-only**: Preventative **77.6% = 82.1 points (GREEN)**

Metrics 5a & 5b – Resurfacing and Preventative Treatments

Network length composition (km): A = 634; B/C = 2,600; U = 3,467; **Total = 6,701**

Road condition **Red = 747.1 km; Amber = 788.2 km; Green = 5,165.7 km.**

Metric 5a (Red resurfaced): 19.33 km resurfacing / 747.1 km Red = **2.6%**

Metric 5b (Amber/Green preventative): 152.53 km preventative / 5,953.9 km Amber+Green = **2.56%**

Points Indicative scales (from published scores):

Metric 5a: 20-point floor + ~1.34 points per 1% of Red resurfaced = 20 + 1.34 x 2.6% ≈ 23.4 points (RED)

Metric 5b: 20-point floor + ~17 points per 1% of Amber/Green treated = 20 + 17 x 2.56% ≈ 63.7 points (AMBER)

Minimum lengths to change banding:

- **Amber (≈60 points):** 5a ~223.5km resurfacing; 5b ~140.1km preventative treatments
- **Green (≈80 points):** 5a ~335.3km resurfacing; 5b ~210.1km preventative treatments

Metrics 7–10 (Binary evidence items)

No deductions applied → **meets requirements.**

Overall Rating (DfT Calculation)

Metric	Score	Weighting	Weighted
1	80.0	1/9	8.9
2	80.5	1/9	8.9
3	52.0	1/9	5.8
4	64.3	1/9	7.1
5a	23.4	1/9	2.6
5b	63.7	1/9	7.1
6	0.0	1/3	0.0

7-10	No deduction	n/a	0.0
Total			40.43 = RED

Thresholds: Red 0–45; Amber 45–80; Green 80–100

What-If Scenario: Suffolk Adjusted Scores

Assumptions:

- **Metric 4** scored on **capital-only** basis (77.6% preventative = **82.1 points**).
- **Metric 6** £10m forward funding included (use mid-point of Suffolk range: **62 points**).

Metric	DfT Score	Suffolk Adjusted	Weighting	Weighted
1	80.0	80.0	1/9	8.9
2	80.5	80.5	1/9	8.9
3	52.0	52.0	1/9	5.8
4	64.3	82.1	1/9	9.1
5a	23.4	23.4	1/9	2.6
5b	63.7	63.7	1/9	7.1
6	0.0	62.0	1/3	20.7
7-10	No deduction	No deduction	n/a	0.0
Total	40.43	63.1		

Adjusted Overall Rating: AMBER (if both adjustments are accepted).

Summary of What Is Required to Achieve GREEN—by Metric, with Implications

Note: Metrics 7–10 are already compliant (no deductions). Metrics 1 & 2 are already **GREEN**. The focus for GREEN uplift is **Metric 3 (U roads), Metric 4 (clarification), Metric 5a, Metric 5b, and Metric 6**.

Metric 1 – A Road Condition (Already GREEN)

- **Current:** 80 (GREEN)
- **Requirement for GREEN:** Maintain/improve current balance of Green/Amber/Red.

- **Implications:** Continue steady-state surface treatments to sustain condition; low risk.

Metric 2 – B/C Road Condition (Already GREEN)

- **Current:** 80.5 (GREEN)
- **Requirement for GREEN:** Maintain/improve.
- **Implications:** As above; focus on targeted defect prevention to avoid slippage to Amber.

Metric 3 – U Road Condition

- **Current:** 52 (AMBER) with 18% Red
- **Requirement for GREEN:** Reduce % Red sufficiently to push score ≥ 80 .
 - Using the linear relationship (10% Red = 80; 20% Red = 45), **each 1% reduction in Red (from 18%) adds 3.5 points.**
 - To move from 52 to 80 requires **+28 points = ~8 percentage-point reduction in Red**, i.e., from **18% to ~10% Red.**

Metric 4 – Preventative vs Reactive (Basis Clarification)

- **Current (combined cap+rev):** 54% preventative \rightarrow **64.3 (AMBER)**
- **If capital-only (as implied):** 77.6% preventative \rightarrow **82.1 (GREEN)**
- **Requirement for GREEN:**
 - **Short path:** Secure DfT acceptance that Metric 4 is **capital-only** for scoring, using the 77.6% figure.
 - **Operational path (if combined basis retained):** Increase preventative share (mix shift) from **54% to $\geq 75\%$** to score ≥ 80 on the assumed linear scale (approximate).

Metric 5a – Resurfacing of Red Roads

- **Current:** 2.6% of Red \rightarrow **23.4 (RED)**
- **Requirement for GREEN (~80 points):** Approx. **335.3 km** resurfaced (vs **19.33 km** planned).
 - That is an uplift of **~316 km** within the year ($\approx 17\times$ the planned volume).
- **Implications:**
 - **Funding:** Very substantial capital uplift required.
 - **Delivery capacity:** Supply chain ramp-up, aggregate/asphalt availability, network access windows.
 - **Disruption:** Major traffic management, particularly on U network; communications plan needed.

Metric 5b – Preventative Treatment on Amber/Green Roads

- **Current:** 2.56% treated \rightarrow **63.7 (AMBER)**

- **Requirement for GREEN (~80 points):** Approx. **210.1 km** treated (vs **152.53 km** planned).
 - Net uplift **~57.6 km** (+38%).
- **Implications:**
 - **Achievability:** More tractable than 5a; can be scaled with surface treatment gangs and season extension where feasible.

Metric 6 – Spend vs Allocation

- **Current (DfT):** 83–89% → **0 (RED)**
- **Suffolk (with forward funding):** 112–114% → **~59–62 (AMBER)**
- **Requirement for GREEN (80 points):** **130%** of allocation in 2025/26
 - For £43.771m allocation → **£56.902m** spend (**+£13.131m**).
- **Implications:**
 - **Funding:** Identify/additional capital (e.g., re-profiling, corporate borrowing, external grants).

Metrics 7–10 – Evidence of Best Practice

- **Current:** No deductions (compliant).
- **Requirement for GREEN:** Not scored as “green/amber/red” individually (binary deductions), but **maintain evidence** to avoid penalties.
- **Implications:** Keep documentation and transparency report strong; no change required.

Pathways to Overall GREEN (≥80)

To reach **overall GREEN**, Suffolk needs a combination of improvements that lift the **weighted total** to ≥80. The most leverage comes from **Metric 6 (1/3 of the total)**, then **Metric 4, 5a, 5b, and 3**.

Scenario A – Funding-led Path (Most Direct)

- **Metric 6:** Achieve **GREEN (80 points)** by reaching 130% spend.
- **Metric 4:** Secure **capital-only basis** (→ 82.1 GREEN) or raise combined preventative share accordingly.
- **5b:** Increase preventative treatments to **~210.1 km (GREEN)**.
- **5a:** Remains RED/low AMBER in-year due to scale, but gains in 3, 4, 5b, and 6 likely push overall ≥80.
Implications: Highest reliance on additional capital; delivery is feasible (especially for 5b). Communications needed to explain why preventative is scaled before deep renewals.

Scenario B – Condition-led Path (Operationally Intensive)

- **Metric 3:** Reduce U-road Red from **18% to ~10%** to score ~80.
- **Metric 5a:** Raise resurfacing to **~335 km (GREEN)**.
- **Metric 5b:** Raise to **~210 km (GREEN)**.
Implications: Very large works programme and budget; more disruption risk; supply-chain constraints; harder to deliver in a single year without exceptional funding.

Scenario C – Hybrid Path (Balanced & Pragmatic)

- **Metric 6:** Lift to **mid-GREEN (≥80)** via additional £13.131m.
- **Metric 4:** **GREEN** via capital-only basis (or programme mix shift).
- **Metric 5b:** **GREEN** (~210 km).
- **Metric 3:** Partial improvement (e.g., 14–15% Red → scores ~66–71).
- **Metric 5a:** Improve towards Amber (e.g., ~223.5 km).
Implications: Mix of funding, targeted renewals on worst U-road clusters, and expanded preventative programme; better balance of cost, deliverability, and public impact.

Executive Summary – Requirements & Implications at a Glance

- **Already GREEN:** Metric 1 (A roads), Metric 2 (B/C roads), and **binary Metrics 7–10** (no deductions).
- **Quickest Wins to Overall GREEN:**
 1. **Metric 6** to 130% (add **£13.131m**) → **+~20.7 weighted points** vs current DfT zero.
 2. **Metric 4** clarified to **capital-only** → **82.1 (GREEN)** → **+~2.0 weighted points** vs 64.3.
 3. **Metric 5b** to **~210 km (GREEN)** → **+~2.3 weighted points** vs 63.7.
- **Hardest Lift: Metric 5a** to **~335 km** resurfacing (GREEN) and **Metric 3** U-road Red down to **~10%**—both are **high-cost, high-disruption** moves.
- **Overall GREEN Feasibility (in-year):** **High** if **Metric 6** is funded and **Metric 4** is accepted on capital-only basis, plus uplift **5b**; **moderate** if attempting large condition shifts (5a/3) within one year.

Methodology used to calculate ratings for local road maintenance

Published 11 January 2026.

Overview

Every local highway authority in England has received a ratings for each of these 4 elements:

- condition, based on the local highway authority's road condition
- spend, based on how much money a local highway authority spends on highways maintenance
- best practice, based on how well the local highway authority follows best practices in highways maintenance
- overall, based on all the aspects outlined above

The ratings range from green (highest) through amber to red (lowest).

To work out the ratings for each local highway authority, 11 numeric metrics were calculated. These were then used to work out a numeric score for each of:

- condition
- spend
- best practice
- overall

Table 1 outlines how the 11 metrics contribute to the numeric scores for each scorecard element. All 11 metrics contribute to the overall numeric score.

Table 1 - what the metrics measure and the scorecard element they count towards

Metric	What it measures	Which scorecard element it counts towards
1	Condition of A roads	Condition
2	Condition of B and C roads	Condition
3	Condition of U roads	Condition
4	How much of a local highway authority's maintenance spend was spent on preventative maintenance, rather than reactive maintenance, as a percentage	Best practice

Metric	What it measures	Which scorecard element it counts towards
5a	The percentage of red-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to resurface in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice
5b	The percentage of green and amber-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to apply preventative treatment to in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice
6	How much capital funding a local highway authority plans to spend on highways maintenance in the financial year ending 2026, compared to their allocation from Highways Maintenance Block	Spend
7	Whether a local highway authority has plans to adopt innovation, such as innovative technologies in highways maintenance	Best practice
8	Whether a local highway authority has plans to minimise disruption caused by street or road works	Best practice
9	Whether a local highway authority has plans to decarbonise its maintenance operations and increase climate resilience	Best practice
10	Whether a local highway authority has plans to maintain footways or cycleways	Best practice

After combining the 11 metrics into 4 numeric scores, thresholds were applied to turn the numeric score into a rating.

Table 2 - how the score thresholds were applied for condition, spend and best practice

Numeric score threshold	Rating
From 0 up to 45	Red
From 45 up to 80	Amber

Numeric score threshold	Rating
From 80 up to 100	Green

To turn the overall numeric score into an overall rating, different thresholds were used, as shown in Table 3. The threshold for achieving amber on the overall rating is slightly higher than for the scorecards, to reflect that a good standard of performance across all 3 scorecards is needed to achieve an amber overall rating.

Table 3 - overall numeric score thresholds

Overall numeric score threshold	Rating
From 0 up to 50	Red
From 50 up to 80	Amber
From 80 up to 100	Green

How numeric scores were worked out and turned into ratings

This section explains how numeric scores were produced for each of the metrics that make up the overall rating and the scorecards for condition, spend, and best practice.

The data sources for all numeric scores and metrics are outlined in the [Data sources](#) section.

Condition scorecard

The condition rating is based on a numeric score that was calculated using 3 metrics.

The 3 metrics used to calculate the condition score were:

- metric 1, the condition of A roads
- metric 2, the condition of B and C roads
- metric 3, the condition of U roads

These metrics were then combined, with each metric given a weighting of 33.3 recurring percent (one third), to produce a numeric score for the condition rating.

This numeric score was then compared to the score thresholds set out in the previous section, to produce a red, amber or green rating.

Condition metrics

Metric 1 (the condition of A roads) and metric 2 (the condition of B and C roads) were calculated using the same steps:

- plus 1 point for every percent of green-rated road
- plus 0.5 points for every percent of amber-rated road

- minus 1 point for every percent of red-rated road

Metric 3 (the condition of U roads) was calculated using the following thresholds:

- 100 points if 0% of roads are red-rated
- 80 points if 10% of roads are red-rated
- 45 points if 20% of roads are red-rated
- 0 points if 35% or more of roads are red-rated

Between these defined points, the score changes linearly. For example, if 5% of a local authority's U road network is red-rated, then their score would be 90, halfway between 100 and 80.

Metrics 1, 2 and 3 have a minimum score of 20, so scores below 20 were increased. If a local highway authority was not able to provide road condition data for A, B and C and/or U roads for either of the 2 most recent years, then they were given a score of 20 for the relevant metrics.

Spend scorecard

The spend rating is based on the numeric score for metric 6. Metric 6 is the only metric that counts towards the spend rating.

Metric 6 is calculated as follows.

1) Work out how much capital a local highway authority plans to invest into highways maintenance in the financial year ending 2026, compared to their Highways Maintenance Block allocation for the financial year ending 2026, as a percentage:

Capital spend on highways maintenance divided by Highways Maintenance Block allocation, multiplied by 100

2) Define score thresholds using the percentages for all local highway authorities.

Find the median spend percentage for local highway authorities outside of London and [City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement](#) (CRSTS) areas. For the financial year ending 2026 this median spend percentage rounds to 130%.

Find the 75th percentile of spend percentages for local highway authorities outside of London and CRSTS areas. For the financial year ending 2026 the 75th percentile spend percentage rounds to 200%.

Find the maximum spend percentage for any local highway authority. For the financial year ending 2026, this maximum spend percentage was 6,930%.

3) Convert the percentage for each local highway authority into a numeric score, by comparing to the following thresholds:

- 0 points if the percentage is 90% or less
- 45 points if the percentage is 99.5%
- 80 points if the percentage is 130%
- 90 points if the percentage is 200%

- 100 points if the percentage is 6,930%

Between these defined points, the scores move linearly.

The metric 6 numeric score was then compared against the score thresholds set out previously, to produce a red, amber or green rating for spend.

Best practice scorecard

The best practice rating is based on a numeric score that was calculated using 3 numeric metrics and 4 binary (yes/no) metrics.

The 3 numeric metrics that count toward the best practice score are:

- metric 4, - how much of a local highway authority's maintenance spend was planned to be spent on preventative maintenance, rather than reactive maintenance, as a percentage
- metric 5a, the percentage of red-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to resurface in the financial year ending 2026
- metric 5b, the percentage of green and amber-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to apply preventative maintenance to in the financial year ending 2026

The 4 binary (yes/no) metrics that also affect the best practice score are:

- metric 7 – whether a local highway authority has plans to adopt innovation, such as innovative technologies in highways maintenance
- metric 8 – whether a local highway authority has plans to minimise disruption caused by street or road works
- metric 9 – whether a local highway authority has plans to decarbonise and increase climate resilience
- metric 10 – whether a local highway authority has plans to maintain footways or cycleways

For the 4 binary metrics, if the local highway authority provided evidence for the metric in their transparency report, their score remained unchanged. Five points were taken away from the best practice score for each metric where a local highway authority did not provide evidence.

The best practice numeric score was then compared to the score thresholds set out previously, to produce a red, amber or green rating.

Overall rating

The overall rating is based on a numeric score that was calculated using all 11 metrics. The metrics were calculated in the same way as for the other scorecard elements, as described in the previous sections.

The 7 numeric metrics were combined into one score using the following weightings:

- metrics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5a and 5b were given a weighting of 11.1 recurring percent (one ninth)
- metric 6 was given a weighting of 33.3 recurring percent (one third)

This score was then adjusted for metrics 7, 8, 9, and 10. These are 4 yes/no metrics relating to different areas of best practice in highways maintenance. For each of these 4 metrics, if a local highway authority provided evidence supporting the area of best practice, their score remained unchanged. Five points were taken away from the score for each metric where a local highway authority did not provide evidence.

The overall numeric score was then compared to the score thresholds set out previously, to produce a red, amber or green rating.

Local highway authorities where data was not applicable

An adjusted approach was taken for some local highway authorities. Where the data used to work out the numeric scores is not available because it is not applicable for these local highway authorities, the relevant metrics were not calculated. The weightings for the other metrics were adjusted so that the ratings are still comparable across local highway authorities.

For Birmingham, Sheffield and the Isle of Wight, metric 6 (how much capital funding a local highway authority plans to spend in 2025/26 on highways maintenance compared to their Highways Maintenance Block allocation) was not calculated and no spend rating has been produced. This is because these local highway authorities have private finance initiative arrangements in place that cover their highways maintenance activity, and so they have limited ability to adjust their spending on a year-to-year basis.

Metric 2 (the condition of B and C roads) was not calculated for the Isles of Scilly.

Metrics 2 and 3 (the condition of B and C roads, and the condition of U roads) were not calculated for Transport for London.

Data sources

Metrics 1, 2 and 3

In most cases, these metrics were worked out using [road condition statistics](#). The most recent available figure from the financial years ending 2023 or 2024 was used.

Where DfT official statistics were unavailable for the financial years ending 2023 or 2024, figures from the 2025/26 highways maintenance transparency reports published by local highway authorities were used.

Metric 4

Estimated percentages of capital spent on preventative and reactive maintenance were taken from transparency reports. These are projected estimates for the financial year ending 2026.

In a small number of cases, adjustments were made to scale the provided percentage so that it was out of 100, or the percentage was not provided but could be calculated using other spend-related information in the transparency reports.

Metrics 5a and 5b

Projected lengths of roads to be resurfaced or to receive preventative treatment in the financial year ending 2026 were taken from transparency reports, where this data was provided. Where it was not provided, local highway authorities were contacted and asked to provide this data.

The [complete resurfacing and preventative treatment dataset that was used for these metrics is available as an Excel file on this webpage](#).

To calculate the total length of red, amber and green rated road in each local highway authority, road length statistics were used alongside the road condition statistics used for metrics 1, 2 and 3. In most cases, [road length statistics from 2022](#) were used, as this was the most recent year with separate data for C and U roads.

Metric 6

Projected capital spend on highways maintenance for the financial year ending 2026 was taken from the 2025/26 highways maintenance transparency reports published by local highway authorities. Where unavailable from transparency reports, forecasts for capital expenditure in the financial year ending 2026 on structural maintenance were used instead from the [forecast estimates of local authority capital expenditure and financing for 2025 to 2026](#).

Funding allocation figures are based on [Highways Maintenance Block \(HMB\) allocations](#) published by DfT in January 2025. Other sources of funding were not included.

For local highway authorities that are within combined authorities, individual allocations were not published. Instead, the individual allocations were combined to produce a total, which was paid to the combined authority. For the purposes of the scorecard, the individual allocation was used, unless a local highway authority confirmed how much they were allocated by their combined authority.

Metrics 7, 8, 9 and 10

Evidence of plans to support 4 areas of best practice was taken from local highway authority transparency reports.

Suffolk's scores and calculation

Road Condition (Metrics 1, 2 and 3)

Metric 1 – A road condition = 80

2024 data Green = 68; Amber = 30; Red = 3 $68 + (30/2) - (3) = 80$ points (GREEN)

Metric 2 – B/C road condition = 80.5

2024 data Green = 73; Amber = 23; Red = 4 $73 + (23/2) - (4) = 80.5$ points (GREEN)

Metric 3 – U road condition = 52

2024 data Green = 82; Red = 18

At 10%, score = 80 points, At 20%, score = 45 points. Difference = 35 points over 10% → 3.5 points per 1%

Points lost = $8 \times 3.5 = 28$ therefore Score = $80 - 28 = 52$ points (AMBER)

Combined road condition score

$(80/3) + (80.5/3) + (52/3) = 26.67 + 26.83 + 17.33 = 70.83$ points – based on table 3 this gives an overall **AMBER** rating for road condition.

Spend (Metric 6)

DfT's calculation:

- $\pounds 36.398\text{m} / \pounds 40.833\text{m} = 89\%$ (based on the June 2025 transparency report)
- $\pounds 36.398\text{m} / \pounds 43.771\text{m} = 83\%$ (if using the December 2025 allocation including the 25% incentive)

Both percentages fall below 90%, which means a **RED** rating and a **score of 0**.

Suffolk's calculation:

- $\pounds 46.398\text{m} / \pounds 40.833\text{m} = 114\%$ (June 2025 transparency report taking account of forward funding £10m in 2024/25)
- $\pounds 49.153\text{m} / \pounds 43.771\text{m} = 112\%$ (December 2025 allocation with incentive and taking account of forward funding £10m in 2024/25)

Using the scoring table:

- **112% ≈ 59 points**
- **114% ≈ 62 points**

Both figures return an **AMBER** rating.

To achieve a GREEN rating (80 points):

Suffolk would need to reach **130% of the DfT allocation**, meaning an investment **30% above the allocation**.

For the December 2025 allocation (£43.771m), this would require an overall expenditure of £56.902m which equates to £13.131m of additional capital investment.

Best Practice

Preventative vs Reactive Maintenance Spend (Metric 4)

The DfT methodology published after ratings were released states that, where authorities did not provide data, **capital spent on preventative and reactive maintenance was taken from transparency reports**. This strongly implies that the intended basis for Metric 4 was **capital-only**, not combined capital and revenue.

However, this was **not made clear in the pre-submission guidance or the transparency template**.

Suffolk's submission used **combined capital and revenue spend**, reporting **54% preventative and 46% reactive**, which produced a score of **64.3 points (AMBER)** under DfT's calculation.

The calculation used has not been published however, but it would appear that percentages are linked to a 0-100 score using a linear scale with a 20-point floor.

$$\text{Points} = 20 + 0.8 \times (\% \text{ preventative}) = 20 + 0.8 \times 54\% \approx 64.3 \text{ points}$$

If the intended basis had been clear, Suffolk could have reported **capital-only preventative share**.

In the **Capital Maintenance** table for 2025/26, Suffolk lists:

- Roads (carriageways), footways, drainage, lighting, ITS, signs, etc. — all of which are typically **preventative** activities = 77.6% of capital
- A single line for **Planned Reactive Repairs = 22.4% of capital**.

Using the above and inserting capital only figures:

Points = $20 + 0.8 \times 77.6 = 82.1$ points which would place in the **(GREEN)** rating unless the DfT confirms categorisation rules.

Resurfacing and Preventative Treatments - Metric 5a and 5b

	Length (km)	DfT Red	DfT Amber	DfT Green	Length Red	Length Amber	Length Green
A Roads	634	3%	30%	67%	19.0	190.2	424.8
B/C Roads	2600	4%	23%	73%	104.0	598.0	1898.0
U Roads	3467	18%	n/a	82%	624.1	0.0	2842.9
Total	6701				747.1	788.2	5165.7

Length of roads in red condition = 747.1 km and resurfacing length in transparency report for 2025/26 = 19.33 km

$$19.33/747.1 = 2.6\%$$

Suffolk's Metric 5a score = 23.4 (RED)

Length of roads in green/amber condition = 5,953.9 and preventative treatment length in transparency report for 2025/26 = 152.53 km

$$152.53/5,953.9 = 2.56\%$$

Suffolk's Metric 5b score = 63.7 (AMBER)

Again, the calculation formulae have not been provided but it would appear like before that percentages are linked to a 0-100 score using a linear scale with a 20-point floor (i.e the minimum score that can be obtained even with no or little information).

Suffolk's published metric scores in the workbook are:

Using Suffolk's percentages above, these imply:

5a scale: A 20-point floor plus roughly 1.34 points per 1 percentage point of Red resurfaced:

$$20+(2.54 \times 1.34) \approx 23.4$$

5b scale: A 20-point floor plus roughly 17 points per 1 percentage point of Amber/Green treated:

$$20+(2.57 \times 17.0) \approx 63.7$$

In order to achieve Amber/Green banding, the minimum lengths required for resurfacing and preventative treatments are:

Amber Rating (\approx 60 points)

- Resurfacing (Red roads – Metric 5a): \sim 223.5 km
- Preventative treatment (Amber/Green roads – Metric 5b): \sim 140.1 km

Green Rating (\approx 80 points)

- Resurfacing (Red roads – Metric 5a): \sim 335.3 km
- Preventative treatment (Amber/Green roads – Metric 5b): \sim 210.1 km

Best practice (Metrics 7 to 10)

For metrics 7 to 10, Suffolk did not receive any deductions which suggests Suffolk provided sufficient evidence to satisfy these criteria.

Overall rating

The overall rating is based on a numeric score that was calculated using all 11 metrics. The metrics were calculated in the same way as for the other scorecard elements, as described in the previous sections.

The 7 numeric metrics were combined into one score using the following weightings:

- metrics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5a and 5b were given a weighting of 11.1 recurring percent (one ninth)
- metric 6 was given a weighting of 33.3 recurring percent (one third)

This score was then adjusted for metrics 7, 8, 9, and 10. These are 4 yes/no metrics relating to different areas of best practice in highways maintenance. For each of these 4 metrics, if a local highway authority provided evidence supporting the area of best practice, their score remained unchanged. Five points were taken away from the score for each metric where a local highway authority did not provide evidence.

The overall numeric score was then compared to the score thresholds set out previously, to produce a red, amber or green rating.

DfT Overall Rating

	Score	Weighting	Weighted score
Metric 1	80	1/9th	8.9
Metric 2	80.5	1/9th	8.9
Metric 3	52	1/9th	5.8
Metric 4	64.3	1/9th	7.1
Metric 5a	23.4	1/9th	2.6
Metric 5b	63.7	1/9th	7.1
Metric 6	0	1/3rd	0.0
Metric 7	No deduction	n/a	0
Metric 8	No deduction	n/a	0
Metric 9	No deduction	n/a	0
Metric 10	No deduction	n/a	0
			40.43

Red = 0 to 45

Amber = 45 to 80

Green = 80 to 100

Informal Cabinet

DfT Transparency Report
Scoring Methodology
19th January 2025



Timeline

- March 25 – DfT announce that 25% of future years funding allocations will be incentive based.
- June 25 - DfT requirement for submission of a Transparency Report by every LHA (proforma to complete)
- Thu 18th Dec 25 – DfT confirmation of 25% incentive funding, payment on Fri 23rd Jan
- Fri 9th Jan 26 – DfT release letters to LHA's with **previously unsighted assessment scores**
- Fri 9th Jan 26 – Media story issues to the press under embargo.
- Fri 9th Jan 26 – SCC provide initial media statement questioning the results.
- Fri 9th Jan 26 – SCC call upon DfT to hold the story because of significant concerns about accuracy.
- Sun 11th Jan – DfT release creates national headlines, naming red ranked authorities. **This is the first time that the underlying mythology for the assessment is available (not fully exposed calculations)**
- Sun 11th Jan – SCC proactively release enhanced press statement.
- Mon 12th Jan – SCC meet with DfT to challenge assessment outcome.
- Tue 13th Jan – SCC formally write to DfT requesting a change in the assessment.
- Wed 14th Jan – SCC write to the SoS demanding amendment.
- Wed 14th Jan – SCC release additional press statement clearly stating DfT are wrong.
- Thu 15th Jan – National Pothole day continues to amplify the story.

DfT Transparency Report

Every local highway authority in England has received a ratings for each of these 4 elements:

- **condition**, based on the local highway authority's road condition
- **spend**, based on how much money a local highway authority spends on highways maintenance
- **best practice**, based on how well the local highway authority follows best practices in highways maintenance
- **overall**, based on all the aspects outlined above

The ratings range from green (highest) through amber to red (lowest).

To work out the ratings for each local highway authority, 11 numeric metrics were calculated. These were then used to work out a numeric score for each of:

- condition
- spend
- best practice

Headlines

- Our analysis of the detailed assessment underlines the conviction that **SCC data has been reported inaccurately** (as can be seen in detail on the following slides if required).
- The scoring methodology is overly complicated (and still not entirely transparent) and has a number of unintended consequences as a result (**artificially incentivising spend on carriageways** over other elements of the network for example and **rewarding authorities who are substantially investing their own funding**).
- Despite insisting that this process is about ensuring DfT spend, LHA's need to show more than 130% spend to achieve green. In SCC's case this would equate to an additional £13.1m of our own money this year.
- As a result of the DfT publication, SCC have suffered significant reputational harm, including MP criticism. Results were also released while the LGR consultation was still live.
- Cabinet Member has done a series of interviews stating SCC position and written to the SoS.
- DfT have been widely criticised by a range of industry bodies who have raised significant questions about the approach, ability to fact check before publication and the potential to inadvertently skew spend away from priority assets like structures or drainage.
- While we should have been judged as Amber, It is impossible for SCC to move to a Green assessment without significant additional spend. SCC already score highly in the other categories.

Detailed Analysis

The following slides contain a detailed evaluation of the scoring methodology used by the DfT and where inaccurate data was used for SCC's outcome.

Table 1 outlines how the 11 metrics contribute to the numeric scores for each scorecard element. All 11 metrics contribute to the overall numeric score.

Table 1 - what the metrics measure and the scorecard element they count towards

Metric	What it measures	Which scorecard element it counts towards
1	Condition of A roads	Condition
2	Condition of B and C roads	Condition
3	Condition of U roads	Condition
4	How much of a local highway authority's maintenance spend was spent on preventative maintenance, rather than reactive maintenance, as a percentage	Best practice
5a	The percentage of red-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to resurface in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice
5b	The percentage of green and amber-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to apply preventative treatment to in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice
6	How much capital funding a local highway authority plans to spend on highways maintenance in the financial year ending 2026, compared to their allocation from Highways Maintenance Block	Spend
7	Whether a local highway authority has plans to adopt innovation, such as innovative technologies in highways maintenance	Best practice
8	Whether a local highway authority has plans to minimise disruption caused by street or road works	Best practice
9	Whether a local highway authority has plans to decarbonise its maintenance operations and increase climate resilience	Best practice
10	Whether a local highway authority has plans to maintain footways or cycleways	Best practice

After combining the 11 metrics into 4 numeric scores, thresholds were applied to turn the numeric score into a rating for each element as set out in table 2.

Numeric score threshold	Rating
From 0 up to 45	Red
From 45 up to 80	Amber
From 80 up to 100	Green

Table 2 - how the score thresholds were applied for condition, spend and best practice

To turn the overall numeric score into an overall rating, different thresholds were used, as shown in Table 3.

Overall numeric score threshold	Rating
From 0 up to 50	Red
From 50 up to 80	Amber
From 80 up to 100	Green

Table 3 - overall numeric score thresholds

Road condition metric

Road Condition (Metrics 1–3)

Metric 1 – A Roads:

2024 condition data: Green = 68%, Amber = 30%, Red = 3%

Calculation: $68 + (30 \div 2) - 3 = \mathbf{80 \text{ points (GREEN)}}$

Metric 2 – B/C Roads:

2024 condition data: Green = 73%, Amber = 23%, Red = 4%

Calculation: $73 + (23 \div 2) - 4 = \mathbf{80.5 \text{ points (GREEN)}}$

Metric 3 – U Roads:

2024 condition data: Green = 82%, Red = 18%

Thresholds: 10% red = 80 pts; 20% red = 45 pts → 3.5 pts lost per 1% above 10%

Points lost = $8 \times 3.5 = 28$ → Score = $80 - 28 = \mathbf{52 \text{ points (AMBER)}}$

Combined Condition Score:

$(80 + 80.5 + 52) \div 3 = \mathbf{70.83 \text{ points (AMBER)}}$

Best practice metric

Metric 4 – Preventative vs Reactive Maintenance

Suffolk submission (capital + revenue):
Preventative 54% = **64.3 points (AMBER)**

Assumed calculation used to convert into points:
Points = 20 + 0.8 × (% preventative)

No guidance provided prior to 11 January. DfT methodology now implies **capital-only basis**.

Suffolk submitted data for capital and revenue.

If **capital** preventative vs reactive data used:

Preventative **77.6%** = $20 + 0.8 \times 77.6\% = \mathbf{82.1}$
points (GREEN)

Extract from Suffolk's transparency report

Highway maintenance spending					
Year	Capital allocated by DfT (£,000s)*	SCC Capital spend (£,000s)*	Revenue spend (£,000s)	Estimate of % spent on preventative maintenance	Estimate of % spent on reactive maintenance
2025/26 (projected)	£40,833	£36,398**	£19,594	54%	46%
2024/25	£34,428	£47,885	£17,944	57 %	43 %
2023/24	£32,829	£35,182	£17,513	40 %	60 %
2022/23	£27,238	£40,279	£16,395	58 %	42 %
2021/22	£27,238	£35,268	£14,145	49 %	51 %
2020/21	£36,829	£30,981	£15,274	53 %	47 %

Best practice metric

Metrics 5a & 5b – Resurfacing and Preventative Treatments

Network length composition (km): A = 634; B/C = 2,600; U = 3,467;

Total = 6,701

Road condition (km) **Red = 747.1; Amber = 788.2; Green = 5,165.7**

Metric 5a (length of planned resurfacing in 2025/26 as a % of roads in red condition)

19.33 km resurfacing / 747.1 km Red = **2.6% = 23.4 points¹ (RED)**

Metric 5b (length of planned preventative surfacing in 2025/26 as a % of roads in amber/green condition)

152.53 km preventative / 5,953.9 km Amber & Green = **2.56% = 63.7 points² (AMBER)**

Minimum treatment lengths required in 2025/26 to return to Amber or Green bandings:

Amber (≈ 60 points): 223.5 km resurfacing (5a) and 140.1 km preventative treatments (5b) = **c£60m***

Green (≈ 80 points): 335.3 km resurfacing (5a) and 210.1 km preventative treatments (5b) = **c£90m***

SCC spend = £13.8m so additional £50 to £80 needed to have been spend in 2025/26

* Based on average widths & unit costs

1 - Assumed calculation to convert score into points for Metric 5a: **Points = 20-point floor + ~ 1.34 points per 1% of Red resurfaced = $20 + 1.34 \times 2.6\% \approx 23.4$ points**

2 - Assumed calculation to convert score into points for Metric 5b: **Points = 20-point floor + ~ 17 points per 1% of Amber/Green treated = $20 + 17 \times 2.56\% \approx 63.7$ points**

Spend metric

Spend - Metric 6

DfT calculation:

£36.398m ÷ £40.833m = **89%***

or

£36.398m ÷ £43.771m = **83%**

Both < 90% = **0 points (RED)**

Suffolk calculation (including £10m forward funding in 2024/25):

£46.398m ÷ £40.833m = **114% ***

or

£49.153m ÷ £43.771m = **112%**

The above would return **59 or 62 points (AMBER)**

Requirement for GREEN (80 points):

Spend = **130%** of DfT allocation. (Only valid for 25/26 and may raise in future years)

Based on December 2025 allocation £43.771m, total required to have been spend is **£56.902m (£13.131m additional spend)**.

* Transparency report published June 2025, at that time the 25% incentive element was not confirmed by the DfT (confirmed December 2025) so allocation and spend not included in report

Best practice metric

Metrics 7, 8, 9 and 10 (GREEN)

Binary yes/no metrics

- metric 7 – whether a local highway authority has plans to adopt innovation, such as innovative technologies in highways maintenance
- metric 8 – whether a local highway authority has plans to minimise disruption caused by street or road works
- metric 9 – whether a local highway authority has plans to decarbonise and increase climate resilience
- metric 10 – whether a local highway authority has plans to maintain footways or cycleways

For the 4 binary metrics, if the local highway authority provided evidence for the metric in their transparency report, their score remained unchanged. Five points were taken away from the best practice score for each metric where a local highway authority did not provide evidence.

Condition, spend, best practice scores

Metric	What it measures	Scorecard element	DfT				SCC			
			Score	RAG	Combined Score	RAG	Score	RAG	Combined Score	RAG
1	Condition of A roads	Condition	80	Green	70.8	Amber	80	Green	70.8	Amber
2	Condition of B and C roads	Condition	80.5	Green			80.5	Green		
3	Condition of U roads	Condition	52	Amber			52	Amber		
6	How much capital funding a local highway authority plans to spend on highways maintenance in the financial year ending 2026, compared to their allocation from Highways Maintenance Block	Spend	0	Red	0	Red	59 or 62*	Amber	59 or 62*	Amber
4	How much of a local highway authority's maintenance spend was spent on preventative maintenance, rather than reactive maintenance, as a percentage	Best practice	64.3	Amber	50.5	Amber	82.1	Green	56.4	Amber
5a	The percentage of red-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to resurface in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice	23.4	Red			23.4	Red		
5b	The percentage of green and amber-rated roads that a local highway authority plans to apply preventative treatment to in the financial year ending 2026	Best practice	63.7	Amber			63.7	Amber		
7	Whether a local highway authority has plans to adopt innovation, such as innovative technologies in highways maintenance	Best practice	0	Green			0	Green		
8	Whether a local highway authority has plans to minimise disruption caused by street or road works	Best practice	0	Green			0	Green		
9	Whether a local highway authority has plans to decarbonise its maintenance operations and increase climate resilience	Best practice	0	Green	0	Green				
10	Whether a local highway authority has plans to maintain footways or cycleways	Best practice	0	Green	0	Green				

* Depending on whether June figures or December (25% incentive confirmation) figures are used

Overall rating

The overall rating is based on a numeric score that was calculated using all 11 metrics. The metrics were calculated in the same way as for the other scorecard elements.

The 7 numeric metrics were combined into one score using the following weightings:

- metrics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5a and 5b were given a weighting of 11.1 recurring percent (one ninth)
- metric 6 was given a weighting of 33.3 recurring percent (one third)

This score was then adjusted for metrics 7, 8, 9, and 10. Five points were taken away from the score for each metric where a local highway authority did not provide evidence.

Overall rating

Metric	Weighting	DfT Score	DfT Weighted Score	Suffolk Adjusted	Weighted	Suffolk Adjusted	Weighted
1	11%	80	8.9	80	8.9	80	8.9
2	11%	80.5	8.9	80.5	8.9	80.5	8.9
3	11%	52	5.8	52	5.8	52	5.8
4	11%	64.3	7.1	82.1	9.1	82.1	9.1
5a	11%	23.4	2.6	23.4	2.6	23.4	2.6
5b	11%	63.7	7.1	63.7	7.1	63.7	7.1
6	33%	0	0.0	59	19.7	62	20.7
7-10	n/a	No deduction	0	No deduction	0.0	No deduction	0
Total			40.4		62.1		63.1

Red = 0 to 45
Amber = 45 to 80
Green = 80 to 100

Suffolk Adjusted Scores

- **Metric 4** scored on **capital-only** basis (77.6% preventative = **82.1 points**)
- **Metric 6** £10m forward funding included (Suffolk range = **59¹ or 62² points**)

Adjusting metric 6 only would return an overall Amber rating for Suffolk.

Feedback to the Department for Transport

Transparency Report Assessment Methodology – Review and Areas for Improvement

1. Introduction

We welcome the Department for Transport's ambition to improve transparency, consistency and comparability in local highway authority reporting through the scorecard methodology.

The purpose of this feedback is to reflect on how the methodology currently operates and to highlight areas for improvement that would strengthen fairness, accuracy and alignment with established asset management practice.

This document does not propose precise metric formulas. Instead, it outlines principles and potential directions for refinement to support the development of future iterations of the methodology.

2. Feedback on the Current Methodology

2.1 Over-reliance on a Single Reporting Year

Much of the current methodology, covering condition, preventative treatment, resurfacing volumes and spend, relies on single-year snapshots. Single-year data is highly sensitive to:

- Survey variability (especially SCANNER and AI-assessed unclassified road data)
- Weather conditions prior to surveys
- Annual programme phasing
- Market capacity constraints
- Natural year-to-year deterioration cycles
- Network access constraints (e.g. impacts from NSIPs)

This can produce misleading volatility and ratings that do not reflect long-term performance or the maturity of an authority's asset management approach.

2.2 Preventative and Resurfacing Metrics May Not Reflect Practical or Financial Reality

Performance scores based on the percentage of red/amber/green networks treated do not always align with operational or financial reality:

- Treatment volumes required to reach higher performance bands are **not realistically achievable** within current DfT maintenance funding levels, even if an authority allocated its entire settlement purely to carriageways.
- Red and amber networks do not exist in neat, contiguous sections, making percentage-based assessments impractical as a measure of capability or performance.
- Treating green roads solely to increase scores conflicts with good lifecycle practice and risks premature intervention.
- Annual treatment volumes fluctuate based on deterioration opportunities, not managerial intent.

Using treatment length as a percentage of banded condition is therefore **not a reliable indicator of good asset management**, and comparisons across authorities can be misleading due to differing network characteristics and demands.

2.3 Spend Metric (Metric 6) Rewards Financial Capacity, Not Good Management

Combining an authority's own capital spend with the DfT allocation disproportionately rewards:

- Authorities with large local budgets
- Authorities able to supplement funding through political or financial mechanisms

This penalises authorities without access to similar financial levers, regardless of how well they manage their networks, and may encourage spending simply to achieve a higher score rather than investing in line with lifecycle need, risk or value for money.

2.4 Ambiguity in Definitions (e.g. Preventative vs Reactive Maintenance)

The Transparency Report template did not clearly define:

- Whether preventative/reactive splits should apply to capital only, or to a combined capital and revenue position.

This led to inconsistent interpretation, undermining comparability and fairness.

2.5 Limited Scope – Focus Only on Carriageways

The current scorecard focuses almost exclusively on carriageway metrics, with little consideration for:

- Drainage
- Structures
- Traffic signals and ITS
- Lighting
- Footways
- Cycleways

This offers only a partial view of highway authority performance and does not align with modern asset management frameworks.

2.6 No Normalisation for Network Differences

Local highway networks vary significantly in:

- Total length
- Traffic loading and HGV proportions
- Rural/urban profile
- Historic condition and backlog
- Regional cost bases

Without normalisation, scorecard outcomes may reflect inherent network characteristics rather than quality of asset management decisions.

2.7 No Process for Data Validation or Clarification

Authorities were not provided a mechanism to validate or clarify data prior to final scoring. Where guidance was ambiguous or automated scoring flagged anomalies, this created a risk of misinterpretation.

Future versions should include:

- A data validation stage
- Opportunities to clarify or correct anomalies
- Early publication of definitions and methodology

This would support consistency and accuracy across the sector.

3. Areas for Consideration for Improvement

3.1 Use Multi-Year Condition Indicators

A rolling average or trend analysis (minimum three years, ideally five or more) would:

- Reduce survey noise and smooth out natural year-to-year variations
- Provide a more reliable measure of network performance
- Recognise long-term investment strategies
- Better align with lifecycle planning and asset management maturity frameworks

3.2 Support Lifecycle-Aligned Management Rather Than Rewarding Quantity

Metrics could focus on whether the **right treatments** were delivered at the **right time**, considering:

- Alignment with the authority's Asset Management Plan
- Evidence of lifecycle-based prioritisation
- An appropriate balance of preventative and structural treatment
- Suitability of the treatment relative to condition and deterioration mode

This would ensure assessment is based on management quality, not treatment volume.

3.4 Clarify and Standardise Definitions in Advance

All reporting definitions and requirements should be published well in advance of submission windows to ensure consistent interpretation.

3.5 Introduce Light-Touch Data Validation

A validation stage could include:

- Automated outlier detection
- Alerts to authorities for unusual patterns
- A short clarification window
- Feedback on common data issues

This would increase accuracy and confidence in the final outputs.

3.6 Introduce Normalisation for Network Characteristics

Where appropriate, metrics should be normalised for:

- Network length
- Road class distribution
- Traffic loading
- Starting condition/backlog
- Regional cost differences

This would ensure authorities are assessed on performance, not inherent network challenges.

3.7 Consider the Wider Highway Network

Future iterations could benefit from incorporating light-touch indicators for other key assets, supporting alignment with recognised standards such as HMEP.

4. Conclusion

The current methodology represents positive progress toward improving transparency. However, targeted refinements would help ensure the scorecard measures what matters most: sustainable, efficient, lifecycle-based management of the highway network.

The improvements outlined above would:

- Enhance fairness and comparability
- Reduce unnecessary volatility
- Better reflect real-world constraints
- Support modern asset management practice
- Avoid perverse incentives
- Provide a more accurate and meaningful picture of performance across the sector