

Date · Dyddiad 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
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**Pembrokeshire County Council**  
**Cyngor Sir Penfro**

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**Please ask for**  
**Os gwelwch yn dda gofynnwch am**

**Darren Thomas**

**Clerk, Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee,**  
**Third Floor, Tŷ Hywel,**  
**Cardiff Bay,**  
**CF99 1NA**

Dear Sirs,

**National Assembly for Wales' Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee**  
**inquiry into the State of Roads in Wales**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide views on a number of issues relating to the State of Roads in Wales. I am responding on behalf of Pembrokeshire County Council.

Pembrokeshire is the 4th largest Highway Authority in Wales. We have some 2,470km of highway, 576km of Footways (pavements), over 45,000 gullies, 880 bridges / structures, and 15,300 street lighting lanterns. The Gross Replacement Cost of the Assets is estimated at just over £2.5BN. The Highway Network is the largest and most visible community asset for which local authorities are responsible. It is used daily by the majority of the people, and is fundamental to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the community. Together with Highway Authority's statutory duty to maintain, it is vital that there is a sustainable management regime in place to ensure the highway network remains in a safe and serviceable condition.

In summary, the issues key we would highlight are:

- a) The Highway Network is a hugely important asset.
- b) In Pembrokeshire, the road network is not only fundamental to the local community, but also supports tourism activity, and also hosts a number of high profile international athletic events, such as Ironman Wales.
- c) Highway budgets have been reducing year on year, linked with general fiscal pressures.
- d) Local authorities have been successful over recent years in securing additional Welsh Government funding for highway maintenance which has, in part,

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English, and will respond within a maximum of 15 working days. We will respond in the language in which the correspondence is received (unless you ask us to do otherwise). / Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb cyn pen 15 diwrnod gwaith fan bellaf. Byddwn yn ymateb yn yr un iaith â'r ohebiaeth a dderbyniwyd (oni bai eich bod yn gofyn i ni wneud yn wahanol).

For a copy in large print, easy-read, Braille, audio, or an alternative language, please contact Pembrokeshire County Council on the number above. / Os am gopi mewn print mawr, fformat hawdd ei ddarllen, Braille, sain neu mewn iaith arall, cysylltwch â Chyngor Sir Penfro ar y rhif uchod.

helped to offset the impact of reducing budgets – such as LGBI & the recent Local Authority Roads Capital Refurbishment Grant scheme.

- e) A Highway Asset Management approach is essential – comprehensive knowledge about inventory and condition drives prioritisation and allocation of resources.
- f) There is evidence that the condition of local roads in Pembrokeshire is beginning to deteriorate as operational budgets are being reduced year on year.
- g) The use a regional framework approach has been highly successful in ensuring monies are spent promptly and in a compliant manner, and collaboration with our neighbouring Local Authorities is key.
- h) The Mutual Investment Model may help in terms of bringing forward some of the major enhancement projects, but for highway maintenance and condition schemes, these should be annual programmes anyway, rather than single, one-off enhancements.
- i) A 3 to 5 year funding profile should be examined, especially in relation to the “additional” LGBI and other Local Authority Roads Capital Refurbishment Grant schemes, which have proven to be very useful in supporting condition improvements.
- j) The success of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 is placing additional demands on local Highway Authorities

I respond to each of the points in detail as follows:

1. *Whether the approach to funding and delivery of maintenance programmes for the local road, trunk road and motorway network in Wales is effective, managed so as to minimise disruption to road users, and provides value for money*

It is evident that Council budgets have been under considerable strain over recent years. In highways and transport in Pembrokeshire there has been a 21% reduction in the highways & transportation budget over the period 12/13 to 16/17, not accounting for inflationary pressure. Education and Social Services have generally received protection and/or absorb the majority of funding. Against this backdrop, we have been successful over recent years in securing additional Welsh government funding for highway maintenance which has, in part, helped to offset the impact of reduced budgets. There has been a track record of initiatives such as the local Road Maintenance Backlog project, the Local Government Borrowing Initiative and the most recent Local Authority Roads Capital Refurbishment Grant scheme. This has very positively let to additional funding ring fenced for highway condition enhancements or improvements. As a result, in Pembrokeshire highway condition has improved year on year since 2010 until 2016. Figure 1 below shows road condition trend and Figure 2 shows investment in carriageways in Pembrokeshire.

## A, B & C Road Condition Trend

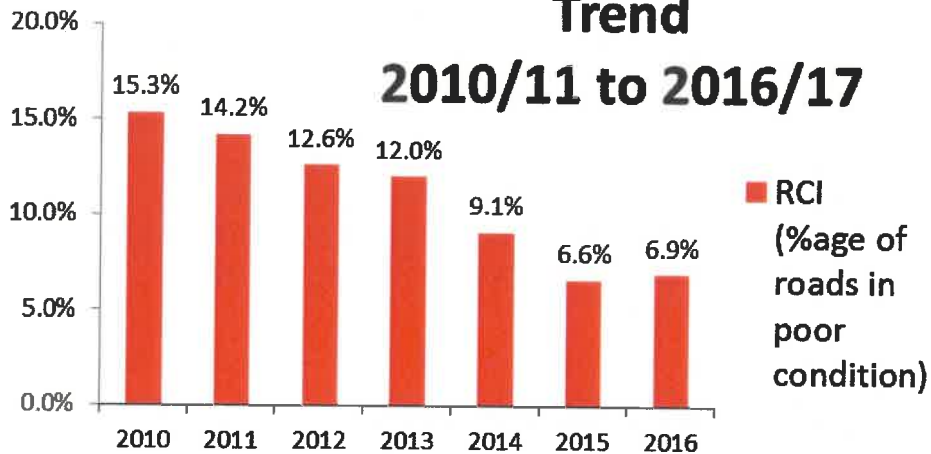
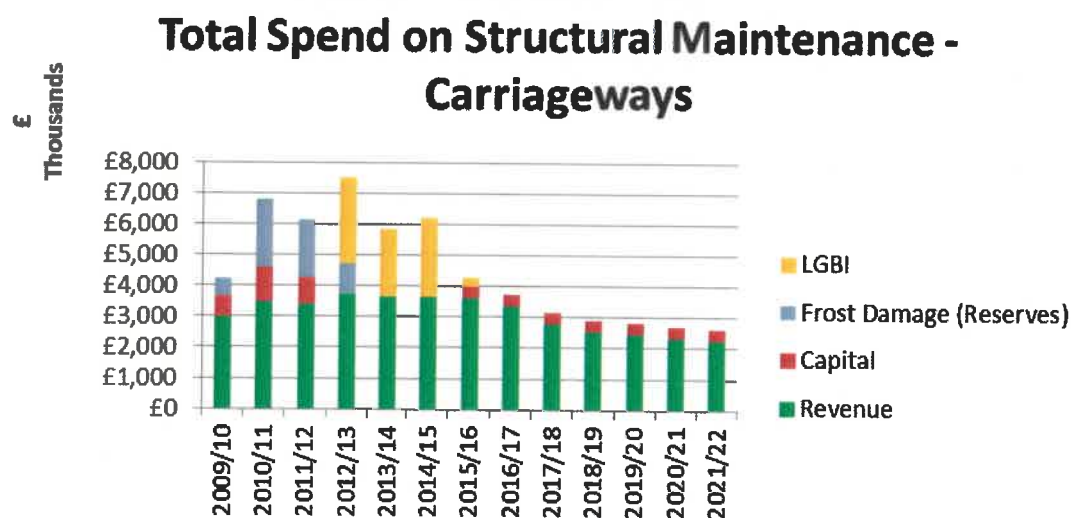


Figure 1: Road condition trend in Pembrokeshire



	Resurfacing	Surface Dressing	Total Surface Treatments
2012/13	£ 2,790,000	£ 2,380,000	£ 5,170,000
2016/17	£ 435,000	£ 2,170,000	£ 2,605,000
2020/21	£ 360,000	£ 1,740,000	£ 2,100,000

Figure 2: Total Spend on Structural Maintenance - Carriageways

Pembrokeshire has adopted a strong approach to Highway Asset Management. We have an electronic highway management system, Highway Safety inspections are done on tablet, works ordering is electronic, and work is ongoing to migrate away from paper based systems completely. Inventory and condition data underpins the Highway Asset Management system: comprehensive knowledge drives prioritisation and allocation of resources.

There is currently evidence that the condition of local roads in Pembrokeshire is now beginning to deteriorate as operational budgets are being reduced year on year. This

deterioration is currently being managed through local scheme prioritisation based on functional network hierarchy and by adopting a lifecycle planning approach to ensure timely intervention and informed choice of materials thereby providing value and sustainability. The procurement of local road resurfacing work via regional Engineering frameworks is considered to be delivering value to us and also aids the local economy. As noted, the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) investments between 2012 and 2015 arrested much of the deterioration and delivered improved condition but the underfunding of investment in local authority roads is again becoming evident as condition declines and is therefore becoming a concern. The projected condition of Pembrokeshire's roads (derived from modelling based on continuation of 2020 / 21 investment levels) is shown in Figure 3 below.

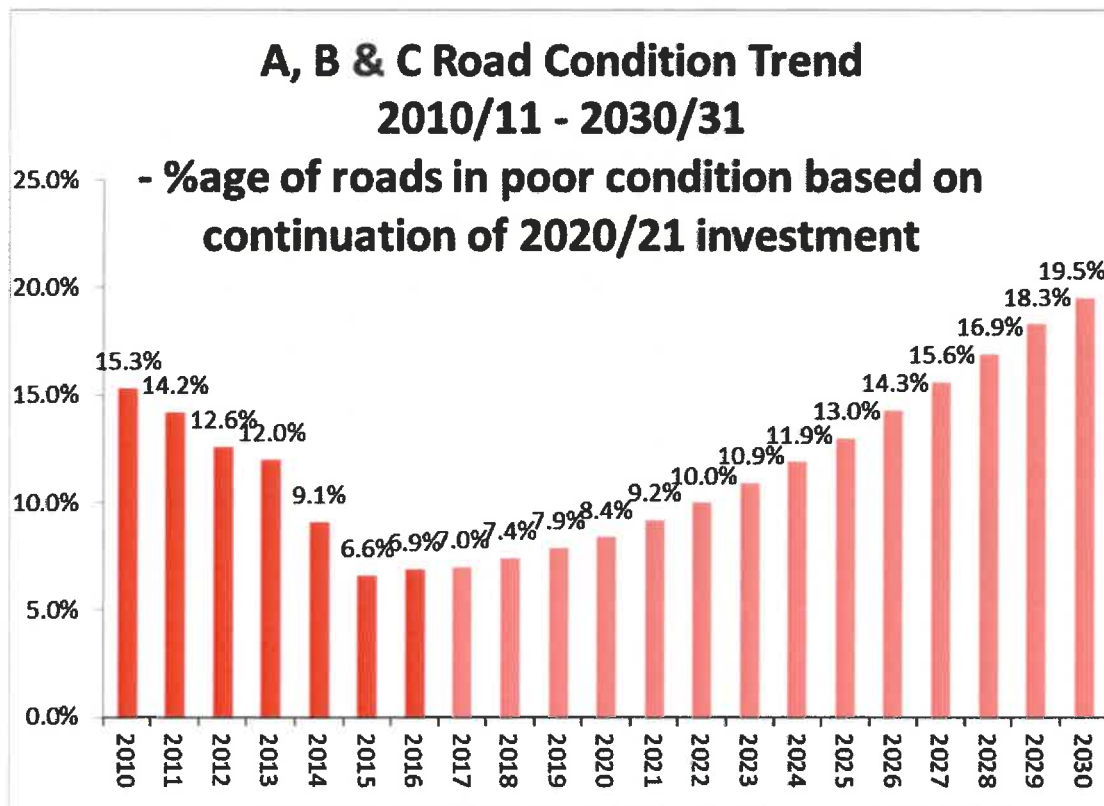


Figure 3: A, B & C Road Condition Trend 2010/11 - 2030/31

It is also highlighted that the volume of traffic in Pembrokeshire has seasonal variations, particularly associated with tourism; this exceptional impact is not recognised directly in any funding formula in terms of additional funding to deal with this. Furthermore, the Authority has been successful in hosting a number of road based athletic events, such as Ironman, Long Course Weekend and others smaller triathlons and duration events such as CarTen (Cardiff to Tenby). Many of these are national – in some cases internationally recognised events – and road condition is critical toward the success of them.

2. *Whether major enhancement projects on the local road, trunk road and motorway network are prioritised, funded, planned and delivered effectively, and provide value for money.*

Pembrokeshire use a regional contractor framework approach, developed with our neighbours. This has been highly successful in ensuring monies are spent promptly and in a compliant manner, and uses a number of local and regional suppliers.

In terms of prioritisation of major enhancement projects the Joint Transport Plan for South West Wales (2015-20) provides a scheme list. Of these, St Davids Sustainable Access Improvement (Glasfryn Road), the Southern Strategic Route and Haverfordwest Masterplan have been completed or substantially completed, and the Fishguard Town Centre Access Improvement is under construction. The major county highway project currently being developed is the Newgale Adaptation Plan including a TRA487 Newgale Bypass which is required due to rising sea levels and resulting flooding. The major planned Trunk Road scheme in Pembrokeshire is the TRA40 Llanddewi Velfrey Improvement. A key issue in pushing forward these major schemes is the availability of funding, and the low levels of Local Transport Fund grant funding have been a barrier to delivery. In addition, the annual funding cycle (lack of 3 to 5 year programme) and limited funding for pre-works development work have also stymied works.

In terms of the Mutual Investment Model, this may help in terms of bringing forward some of the major enhancement projects, such as the Swansea City Deal Metro concept, or large highway / infrastructure schemes. However, for highway maintenance and condition schemes, these should be annual programmes anyway, rather than single, one-off enhancements, and we do not consider that these lend themselves to the MIM Model. As already noted, a further factor that would help enormously in terms of planning and delivery of road condition improvements is 3 to 5 year budgets for additional highway maintenance.

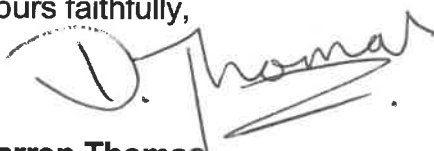
*3. Whether Wales is adopting a sustainable approach to the maintenance and enhancement of its road network in the context of key legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013*

Funding for Active Travel routes have been allocated by Welsh Government which will allow the design of identified schemes in the 10 Active Travel towns in Pembrokeshire. The realisation of these projects combined with other cycling and walking projects outside the towns will help encourage more people to a healthy, sustainable lifestyle.

However, whilst the effects of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are yet to be fully assessed, the success of the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 is becoming evident through the increased numbers of cyclists using the minor rural local road network. This increased use is placing additional demands on local Highway Authorities; maintenance standards that previously were adequate for the needs of the local traffic are no longer always sufficient to satisfy the requirements and expectations of cyclists. This is placing additional new pressures on budgets that are already becoming over-stretched. The numbers of 3<sup>rd</sup> party insurance claims received from cyclists using the local rural roads has increased significantly in the past few years.

I hope this feedback is of assistance.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darren Thomas', written over a white rectangular box. The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

**Darren Thomas**  
**Head of Highways & Construction**