

How do we know where the potholes are?

To ensure that the roads in West Berkshire remain open and in a safe and useable condition, the Council carries out routine safety inspections. Under this system, all roads are routinely inspected by qualified inspectors. The frequency of inspection is dependent on the type of road and the traffic using it. From these inspections, all defects needing attention are recorded and repaired in accordance with the Council's Highway Safety Inspection Procedures (April 2017). It is of course possible for potholes to appear between inspections and reports from the public are very helpful in this respect enabling us to deal with the defects as quickly as possible



How do I report a pothole?

Customers can now log issues online using the Report a Problem link on the Council's website under Most Requested Services on the Home page. It's quick and easy and the benefits are:-

- You can log an issue on the web at any time that suits you
- You will be given a case reference number on screen plus a confirmation email will be sent to your chosen email address
- Reports go directly to the appropriate Council team where they can be assessed and prioritised
- Emails are sent out as the case is updated and a final email will be sent when the case is closed
- You can easily alert us about lack of progress on your case or provide additional information

Please use this web link to report a Pothole using Report a Problem:

www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem

Alternatively, residents who do not have access to the internet can call the Council's Customer Service team on 01635 519080.

We are committed to being accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please call Transport and Countryside on Telephone 01635 551111.

West Berkshire Council Transport and Countryside

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Pothole Guidance

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Following the severe winters of 2009 and 2010, when the UK experienced the worst weather in 30 years, the Department for Transport sponsored a Pothole Review in April 2012 called 'Prevention and a Better Cure'. The Council has prepared this guidance leaflet to set out West Berkshire Council's policy in identifying and repairing potholes on its road network.

Here are answers to the questions that are most often asked about potholes.

What are potholes and why do they appear?



There is no agreed definition of a pothole. However a pothole could be described as an isolated failure in a road, footway or cycleway that has caused a sizeable hole. The principal reasons for pothole formation are water, freeze-thaw and traffic and therefore are more likely to form during or after poor weather conditions. On ageing

road networks which make up the rural network in West Berkshire where the surfacing has become brittle over time, potholes can form with little or no advance warning.

How do we decide which potholes to fix first?

Safety is always the priority. When it's not possible to carry out an immediate permanent repair because of other hazards like prevailing weather conditions, flooding etc, we will temporarily 'plug' the pothole to remove the immediate hazard. Otherwise, we aim to complete a 'right first time' repair.

Highway defects such as potholes fall into one of the following categories:

- **Defects that are considered an immediate danger or hazard** are made safe within 2 hours from the time of ordering the repair either by carrying out a temporary repair or signing and guarding. Fallen trees across the road, spillages and failed sections of road would normally fall within this category.
- **Defects that are not considered an immediate danger or hazard but could become so in the short term** are made safe within 24 hours from the time of ordering the repair either by carrying out a temporary repair or signing and guarding.
- **Defects which do not present a safety hazard or have received a temporary repair** are prioritised for permanent repair either as part of a larger improvement scheme or a patching repair programme.

What is the difference between a temporary and a permanent repair?

A typical permanent repair would see a rectangular area cut out of the road around the pothole with a diamond bladed saw giving the repair clean, flush sides. The hole is cleaned out and painted with liquid



bituminous binder. The hole is then filled with a hot bitumen-bound material which is raked and compacted.

A temporary repair is a short term measure to make the road safe which involves using a proprietary cold repair material to fill the hole until a permanent repair can take place. Some of the proprietary products used in West Berkshire are designed to be used during wet and cold conditions with minimum compaction.

Are temporary repairs a false economy?

No. Emergency repairs are inevitably of a temporary nature but should remain in place until a permanent repair can be carried out. This approach follows best practice and is not a false economy as the priority is to make the road safe for users until the permanent repair can be made.

Will you have to close any roads while you carry out pothole repairs?

Every effort is made to avoid road closures as we know how inconvenient they can be. We generally use traffic control measures such as Stop/Go boards or temporary traffic lights. However, in the case of narrow rural roads where speed limits may be higher or the works are on a bend, a road closure may be the only option available that will ensure the safety of the workforce and road users. On urban roads where speed limits are 30mph or below and where it is possible to complete the work by sectioning off an area of the road, closures are less likely.

When a road is closed, every effort is made to inform road users and residents in advance using warning signs on site. We also aim to carry out the repairs outside peak hours in order to keep disruption and inconvenience to a minimum.