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AIA
ASPHALT
INDUSTRY
ALLIANCE

Reporting on the asphalt industry

Issue 44 | Spring/Summer 2020

ALARM SURVEY 2020

Still no silver lining

RACE FOR PERFECTION

Special surface standards at Silverstone

COPING WITH THE PANDEMIC

The asphalt sector's response to COVID-19



KEY ROAD WORKERS GO EXTRA MILE



There is no doubt that we find ourselves working in strange and unprecedented times.

Early in the COVID-19 crisis the Government recognised those working in road maintenance as key workers; fundamental to keeping the country functioning.

It is disappointing that it has taken a national crisis for this to be the case, but our sector has gone above and beyond to respond, showing its adaptability, professionalism and determination to go the extra mile (see pages 8 and 9).

It is also good news that the Government has pledged its continued commitment to road investment, although the sums allocated are unlikely to be sufficient to address the results of decades of underfunding.

Our Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey, now in its 25th year, reveals that the legacy of stop-start investment has done little to improve the resilience of the network and that one in five local roads are now classed as being in poor structural condition (see pages 10 and 11).

While the industry adjusts to new COVID-related working practices, investment continues apace in developing innovative materials and processes, which will offer performance, sustainability and health and safety benefits for years to come (see pages 3 and 6).

The Local Government Association has suggested that local authorities will need up to four times the level of funding the Government has allocated to date to deal with the spiralling costs of the pandemic. While it is clear resources need to be prioritised in the short-term, looking ahead it is important that local roads maintain their share to help support economic recovery and regrowth.

Rick Green
Chair, Asphalt Industry Alliance

WELCOME FOR CHANCELLOR'S £2.5 BILLION ROADS PLEDGE

■ Chancellor Rishi Sunak

announced a further £29.5 billion funding package to upgrade England's roads over the next five years in his Spring Budget.

The pledge included £27 billion for the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) between 2020-21 and 2024-25 as well as an extra £2.5 billion for local road maintenance over the same period.

Local authorities in England are now set to receive an additional £500 million a year, via the Potholes Fund, enough, according to the Treasury, to 'fix up to 50 million potholes', though 'local authorities can use the funding to carry out longer-term road resurfacing works to prevent potholes from appearing in the first place'.

Rick Green, Chair of the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), said: "This additional funding will certainly be welcomed by hard-pressed local authorities but the £500 million extra a year, divided across English local authorities,



Chris McAndrew

is still a fraction of the amount needed to deal with decades of underfunding, the effects of extreme weather events such as the storms of recent years and an ageing network." (See ALARM report pages 10 and 11).

The Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, subsequently reiterated

the Government's commitment to road investment as part of its vision to support the country's economic recovery post COVID-19, as well as to achieve its levelling up goals.

"We've been accelerating infrastructure upgrades to make sure that, as we gradually reopen our society, everyone can benefit from smoother and safer journeys," he said.

His comments supported the announcement of a £1.7 billion Investment Fund, including the £500 million allocated to the Potholes Fund, to improve roads and repair bridges, as well as support the installation of priority bus lanes and walking projects to help maintain the improvements in air quality experienced during lockdown.

ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES SET OUT

■ **The Department for Transport** (DfT) has published its *Road Investment Strategy 2* (RIS2); its plan for England's strategic network of motorways and major roads from April 2020 to March 2025.

It confirms that £27.4 billion will be provided over that period to Highways England to be invested in operations, maintenance, renewals and enhancements.

The plan follows the first *Road Investment Strategy* (RIS1), which covered investment in England's strategic road network from 2015 to 2020, and includes the DfT's vision for the shape of the network in 2050.

The foreword to the document from Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, and Roads Minister Baroness Vere, states that the strategy is focused on road users but also on the communities living close to major routes and towards the natural, built and historic environments. It continues: "Only where existing roads are simply not up to the job the country asks of them are we asking Highways England to develop wider, realigned or, in a few cases, wholly new roads to keep people and goods moving."

In addition to a list of enhancement schemes, RIS2 outlines commitments on decarbonisation, environment, and air quality.



POWERED RAKE GETS THUMBS UP

■ A power-assisted exoskeleton has been developed to help improve the health and wellbeing of road workers.

The Exopush, created by Colas and French developer RB3D, has interchangeable rake attachments and is designed to give power assistance to operatives when levelling off materials. Its use helps protect the back and upper body from stress, offering an increase of up to four times the pull/push force of the individual, reducing fatigue and lost time at work due to musculoskeletal problems. Its design also boosts productivity.

An electric 'mover' helps push or pull the tool, while the weight is taken by a harness and links to the ground through a 'force leg' and footplate under the boot of the operator. The kit weighs 8.2 kilogrammes, has a run time of five to seven hours, and takes just two minutes to assemble.

"We took delivery of two Exopush units last Autumn for training and trials," said Colas Regional Operations Director Michael Holmes.

"The health and safety benefits are significant. It improves posture, alleviating pain and the risk of muscle strain, while its power assistance allows the rake to glide across the asphalt quickly and easily,



reducing fatigue. First deployment on live sites started at the beginning of this year and the response from operatives has been extremely positive so we now have plans to roll it out to our asphalt laying teams across the UK business."

IN BRIEF

□ **The European** Asphalt Pavement Association (EAPA) has announced that Malcolm Simms is the *EAPA Asphalt Advocate of the Year* for 2020.



Malcolm, who is Director of MPA (Mineral Products Association) Asphalt, 'received' the award during EAPA's General Council Assembly meeting in March, which was held online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

EAPA Secretary General, Dr Carsten Karcher, said: "This award represents Malcolm's contribution to all of EAPA's activities, on behalf of MPA Asphalt, over a number of years."

Malcolm responded: "It is a great honour to receive this award. I view my involvement in EAPA as 'part and parcel of the day job' but hope I have helped build on the collaborative efforts to promote the essential nature, and benefits of, asphalt in road construction and maintenance.

"When possible, I look forward to meeting up with the EAPA team to receive the award."

TOP COURSE SET TO RETURN IN 2021

■ **Highways engineers**, technicians and those in associated disciplines can build their knowledge and understanding of road materials by attending the annual residential *Asphalt Materials and Flexible Pavements* course at the University of Newcastle.

Jointly developed by the University in conjunction with the Mineral Products Association (MPA), this popular course provides an important understanding of 'all things asphalt' for the design, construction and maintenance of road pavements. It is recognised across the sector in continuing to provide relevant training to address ongoing competency and learning requirements for both those in the supply chain and clients.

The course is promoted and verified for CPD in conjunction with sectoral professional institutes (CIHT, IAT and IHE) and was scheduled to run in **September 2020** for its 47th consecutive year.

However, given the ongoing COVID-19 uncertainties and the typical numbers of delegates the 2020 course has been cancelled.



Co-Course Directors, Roger Bird of the University and Malcolm Simms of MPA Asphalt, commented: "We do not want concerns over safety and health to detract from the overwhelmingly positive learning experience that delegates usually enjoy while on the course.

"There is always plenty of interaction during the week in Newcastle, both in and out of the lecture theatre, with new connections from different job roles and regions being made. It is only right that we cancel the course for this year, but we continue to plan for the years ahead."

Potential delegates can still find details about course content and how to register interest and receive updates at: <https://bit.ly/2wAWtln>

□ **The Chartered** Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) has published its *Improving Local Highways: The Route to a Better Future* report, which outlines a four-point strategy to create a vision, funding and focus for improving the local road network over the next 10 years.

It calls for £15 billion additional funding over the next 10 years for local road schemes – a figure in line with requests made by the Asphalt Industry Alliance over the last two years – which would allow local authorities to maintain and improve the safety and quality of their highway network. The report also claims the package would allow active travel along the network to be financed, which would encourage decarbonisation and healthier lifestyles.



■ **The £1.5 billion** A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, Britain's biggest road-building project, has reopened to traffic eight months ahead of schedule.

The upgraded road will shave up to 20 minutes off journeys and strengthen links between the Midlands and the East of England – vastly improving access to and from the UK's largest container port at Felixstowe.

Essential work on the 21-mile upgrade has continued throughout the Coronavirus

outbreak, with new sections of road opened as quickly as possible, to ensure vital goods were able to travel through. Several measures were also put in place to ensure work was completed safely and in line with Public Health England's advice.

The planned opening was set for December 2020 after major milestones – including laying the scheme's millionth tonne of material and the completion of a new 12-mile bypass to the south of Huntingdon – were reached ahead of target last year.

IN BRIEF

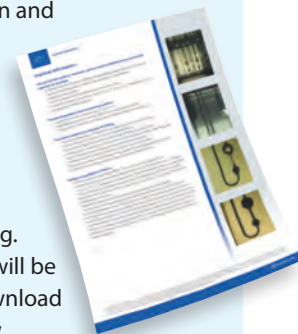
□ **Eurobitume** has developed guidance on the long-term storage of bitumen to support customers during the current operating environment.

The guidance covers best practice procedures for storing bitumen for up to one month or longer periods. Information on the ongoing monitoring required during shut down, plus the steps needed to return to safe operations are also included. In addition, Eurobitume has expanded its range of bitumen and bituminous binders technical information sheets (TIS).

The additional TIS include two on viscosity testing as well as a supplementary one in the ageing/lab procedure series on the short-term ageing process.

TIS sheets are increasingly used by laboratory personnel as well as within education and training, where a growing number of institutions are now preparing for web-based distance learning.

All documents will be available to download at: <https://www.eurobitume.eu/nc/publications/documents/>



NEW EUROBITUME BOARD LINE-UP

■ **Three senior officers** have been appointed to the board of Eurobitume to champion the efficient, effective and safe use of refined bitumen in road, industrial and building applications throughout Europe.

Frédérique Cointe, EAME Asphalt Technical Manager for ExxonMobil, has taken over from OMV's Markus Spiegl as the association's new President.

Elected as Vice-President, **Christophe Jacquet** (centre) has been on the board since 2017 and brings additional



experience to the role having already served as President in 2018.

Dave Foster, Country Business Manager for Shell UK and Asphalt Industry Alliance committee member, has been appointed Treasurer. The trio were appointed at Eurobitume's virtual Spring Meeting in Brussels.

REGISTER FOR SHARING BEST PRACTICE 2020

■ **The Asphalt Industry Alliance's** popular **Sharing Best Practice** event is moving online for 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis. Aimed at local authority highway engineers, the webinar will follow a similar format to previous events and will run from **10am until 1pm on Wednesday October 14**. To register your interest in this free event, email your name and contact details to: info@asphaltuk.org

□ **The MPA** has launched a suite of operational guides designed to support members in keeping employees, contractors, suppliers and customers safe as site operations adapt to becoming COVID secure.

Drawing on expert industry advice and prepared by the MPA's Health and Safety Committee, the downloadable materials include eye-catching posters building on the *10 Rules of Engagement* approach.

The resources will be updated as new guidance and information emerges. To review or download go to: www.safequarry.com

ASPHALT SECTOR SUPPORTS EU'S GREEN GOALS



A MANIFESTO setting out the role that the asphalt sector can play in helping the European Union (EU) achieve its 2050 sustainability goals was presented at a meeting attended by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), representatives of the European Commission and industry delegates.

A European Green Deal – Asphalt Road Industry's Contributions to Climate-Neutrality and Preservation of Europe's Natural Environment has been developed by the European Asphalt Pavement Association (EAPA). It details the sustainability benefits of asphalt use in highways and outlines how it can contribute to the aims of the EU's Green Deal, as set out

by the incoming President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.

The manifesto also defines the three pillars of the sector's strategic approach: decarbonisation of road transport; sustainable construction and maintenance; and research and innovation. In addition, it sets out policy changes that would further enhance asphalt's contribution towards a climate-neutral future, which include:

- Vehicle CO₂ emissions should be included within road maintenance strategies and procurement policies.
- The re-use of materials from existing carriageways to build new roads and maintain existing ones should be further

encouraged to optimise both the circular economy and road quality.

- Introduction of common procurement protocols which enable innovative, rather than lowest initial cost, solutions in tendering processes, with reasonable shared risk.

EAPA's membership includes the Mineral Products Association (MPA) and Asphalt Director Malcolm Simms took part in the session held at the European Parliament. He said: "Although the UK is set to leave the EU, it's important that we continue to share thinking and best practice as we all work towards a lower-carbon future."

EAPA's manifesto can be downloaded at: <https://bit.ly/2X1GgzH>

BETTER ROADS AHEAD FOR PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



THE ALL PARTY Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Highways has been renamed the **APPG for Better Roads** to reflect its work in advocating the safety, environmental, social and economic cases for a properly maintained and sustainable network.

The new group is set to be ratified in the new Parliament and will continued to be chaired by Sir Christopher Chope, MP for Christchurch.

A planned event to highlight the findings of the AIA's ALARM survey to Parliamentarians and launch the APPG's own inquiry into the role of local roads in supporting the country's future economic, sustainability and social cohesion goals, was postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is proposed that this will be rescheduled as soon as the Parliamentary diary allows.

Commenting on the APPG Sir Christopher said: "The COVID-19 crisis has impacted us all – even the All Party Parliamentary Group for Highways. The relaunch of the group

following the General Election had been planned to coincide with the findings of the latest ALARM survey (see page 10) on the state of local roads.

"The immense maintenance backlog revealed in the ALARM survey has not however gone away, even if local highway authorities have had a window of opportunity to carry out maintenance while traffic levels were reduced. One adverse consequence of COVID-19 may be that local authorities believe that they have lost valuable income, so can no longer afford to meet their maintenance obligations. It is therefore essential that the Government's policy of encouraging more walking and cycling should be linked with a requirement that local authorities invest in repairing the roads and pavements so that the danger to vulnerable groups caused by potholes and dangerous surfaces is addressed immediately."

The planned APPG led inquiry will examine the importance of local roads and the potential cost to productivity and social cohesion of not investing sufficiently in the network.

ASPHALT RANGE REDUCES IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY

HANSON UK has launched a new range of asphalt products which can lower emissions associated with asphalt production and laying.

The company has carried out successful trials for its Reduced Emission Asphalt (REA) using Shell Bitumen FreshAir, a specialist binder, which can be used across all Hanson products and does not affect the engineering properties of the bitumen or the asphalt. It works by acting directly with some of the chemical compounds affecting air quality, as well as odour-releasing molecules, helping to cut and minimise the release of specific gases and particulates into the air during production and paving.

"REA is particularly beneficial for applications in ultra-low emission zones and other areas with poor air quality," said Gareth Day, Hanson UK Asphalt Managing Director. "It can help minimise impacts during the road building phase – particularly in tunnels, where ventilation is an issue, and urban areas – as well as during production."



A new asphalt range can lower the emissions associated with production and laying

SPECIALIST ASPHALT FOR CAMBRIDGE

SPECIALIST ASPHALT has been used at the University of Cambridge's £1 billion scheme to create a new sustainable district on the outskirts of the city.

The North West Cambridge Development is a collection of new homes, shops and schools aimed at addressing the escalating housing shortage in the city.

Once complete it will include 3,000 homes, plus accommodation for 2,000 postgraduate students and 100,000m² of academic and research and development

space. There will also be a range of community, retail and leisure facilities along with sustainable transport provisions, such as cycle ways.

To ensure the development is in keeping with the surrounding countryside, planners were keen to avoid the use of traditional black asphalt for road surfacing.

Instead, materials that would produce a more natural aesthetic, as well as being durable enough to withstand the high levels of traffic expected at the site, were

preferred. "The task proved challenging as many of the decorative asphalt solutions currently available on the market, although capable of achieving the desired look, were not robust enough to meet the technical performance required," said Mark Barter, Sales Director, Aggregate Industries.

"It was on this basis that a bespoke product solution using our SuperColour® Exposed Golden Gravel formula was specified. Our team carried out extensive skid resistance testing for the scheme prior to installation, to ensure it can meet exacting safety requirements."



A bespoke asphalt has been used in a sustainable development by Cambridge University

IN BRIEF

☐ **A research** project is underway to investigate methods of converting a steelmaking by-product into a high-grade, skid resistant road surfacing material.

The Materials Processing Institute, in collaboration with Tarmac, British Steel, Glass Futures Ltd and PWS road building services, has secured a £118,000 research project, supported by a government grant awarded by Innovate UK as part of the Transforming Foundation Industries initiative.




TRACK RESURFACING SETS QUALITY STANDARD

Resurfacing at Silverstone required a high level of logistical planning

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH and the introduction of advanced technologies enabled the completion of a complex resurfacing project at Silverstone racetrack in Northamptonshire.

Working with motorsport track experts Dromo, Tarmac undertook the challenge to resurface the circuit to the stringent requirements needed to meet the extreme demands of racing: in addition to high levels of grip and durability, variations in surface profile must be kept to an absolute minimum and drainage needs to be optimised to reduce the risk of high-speed aquaplaning.

"Material selection was essential to providing the surface quality required," said Tarmac's Regional Technical Manager

 ...a surface that sets a new benchmark for precision and quality using the latest innovative technology."

Tim Smith, Regional Technical Manager, Tarmac

Tim Smith. "Greywacke gritstone from our Bayston Hill quarry, which has already been used at the Abu Dhabi and Bahrain Formula 1 circuits, was identified as the most suitable aggregate source due to its ability to provide optimal grip."

The quarry manufactured the aggregates to the tight grading and shape specification. It was then washed to ensure a high level of consistency before being combined with a bespoke, highly modified bitumen manufactured by Shell.

Silverstone's tight corners require quick camber changes over short distances. In order to deliver a seamless, smooth base on which to surface, every inch of the track was laser-scanned to create a 3D digital terrain model, allowing the difference between the existing surface and the new model design to be accurately calculated at any given position. "The scheme necessitated a high level of logistical planning and advanced technology," said Tim. "Ensuring continuity of supply of 350 tonnes of asphalt per hour from our Elstow and Harper Lane plants was critical. To achieve this, all the aggregates needed were moved to the plants ahead of supply and we set a

maximum time limit of three hours between mixing and laying to ensure perfect quality, with delivery vehicle management being key."

Asphalt management

Tarmac's logistics teams used advanced software to manage the location of each truck and its asphalt management system supported the coordination of around 70 delivery vehicles and multiple supply plants by accurately calculating the most efficient way of completing each shift.

Asphalt feeder machines were used on site so there was no break in material supply to the three paving machines that operated in echelon formation to ensure there were no longitudinal joints in the surface. Specialist oscillating rollers were then used to provide the smoothest possible finish.

"The team worked around the clock and committed over 7,000 working hours on site to get the track race ready," added Tim. "More than 16,000 tonnes of bespoke asphalt was needed to resurface the 5.5km circuit and the result is a surface that sets a new benchmark for precision and quality using the latest innovative technology."



Bayston Hill Quarry has supplied aggregate for use at three F1 circuits



Those responsible for our roads have been given key worker status by the Government, but how big a challenge has it been for the industry to continue to keep us moving in these uncharted times?



COPING WITH COVID

EARLY ON IN THE GOVERNMENT'S response to the COVID-19 crisis, it included those 'working to keep roads operating' within its list of key workers. It made it clear that essential maintenance work should continue and was a welcome step towards giving the sector some long-deserved recognition for the role it plays in keeping the nation moving.

Highways England, which has responsibility for the Strategic Road Network, followed suit, stating that its work is an integral part of the UK's COVID-19 response, with its workers and suppliers supporting the vital emergency services and facilitating food distribution.

Similarly, the Department for Transport (DfT) set out that, while there would be a need for local level decisions, its approach was that "local authorities should collaborate with their contractors and supply chain to

maintain business as usual operations".

And, in an open letter to the sector, Roads Minister **Baroness Vere** said: "Despite the many obstacles authorities and contractors are experiencing because of COVID-19, it is important that local highway authorities, those associated with highway infrastructure maintenance and construction works, road network surveyors, and the wider supply chain, including builders' merchants and asphalt plants, all work together to help improve and upgrade our highway networks for all road users."

Many asphalt plants remained open, albeit working below capacity, and an increasing number are now returning to service. Producers have responded quickly to the need for material to get new hospitals up and running, as well as supplying local authority customers who are bringing forward maintenance work to capitalise on

Hanson Contracting has stepped in to help complete a hospital in South Wales

significantly reduced traffic levels to carry out the work safely and with less disruption.

The sector is responding well during this crisis – showing its resilience, adaptability, professionalism and determination to ensure that the country can stay connected.

Companies across the sector have also contributed directly with donations of PPE including gloves, masks, coveralls and sanitisers, and used 3D printers to create protective health shields for frontline health and care workers.

Aggregate Industries donated the asphalt required for the Nightingale hospital at London's ExCeL and allocated teams from Spadeoak, its specialist contracting division, off other projects to help complete the roadworks that allow full access to the site.

Meanwhile, a team from Hanson Contracting stepped in at short notice to help complete part of the £350 million Grange University Hospital in Llanfrechfa, South Wales, a year ahead of schedule. The team was on site for three weeks, working under strict health and safety guidelines to lay the asphalt needed to help get part of the hospital ready for patients. The efforts of all involved meant that 350 beds were released to the NHS to cope with the peak of the virus.

Tarmac's Harper Lane asphalt plant in Hertfordshire is among a network of critical plants operating to serve nationally strategic infrastructure including the M25, where the company is working with ConnectPlus to provide essential road maintenance services.

Where carriageway maintenance is required, Tarmac is no longer implementing junction to junction closures but has reverted to configuring traffic management to ensure a minimum of one lane always remains open 24 hours a day. This will help guarantee that essential supplies and emergency workers will not be diverted away from the quickest and most direct routes without compromising site safety.

On the local road network, North Somerset Council is just one of many continuing with critical maintenance and repair work as well as improvement schemes.

Cllr James Tonkin, the council's executive member for highways, said: "Our highways service has a vital role to play in making sure essential workers and deliveries can get around safely, which is why we're continuing with roadworks where it's safe for us to do so.

"We're working alongside our partners to ensure we are aligned with the latest Government advice to protect both our staff and the public."

In addition, Cllr Tonkin requested of those travelling: "Please be kind to our workers out on the roads at this difficult time. It's difficult for them too, but they do have an essential role to play in keeping our road network safe, making sure essential workers and deliveries can get through and preparing for us to get back to normal as quickly as possible when this is all over."

The health, safety and wellbeing of workers is vital, and the industry has been adapting the way it works to ensure it complies with Government guidelines.

Colas has responded by forming a COVID-19 Risk Management Group to

“...it is important that local highway authorities, those associated with highway infrastructure maintenance and construction works, road network surveyors, and the wider supply chain, including builders' merchants and asphalt plants, all work together...”

Baroness Vere
Roads Minister



Chris McAndrew

coordinate its approach and actions to manage the risks associated with the pandemic – a measure taken by several other companies in the sector.

CEMEX UK's National Technical Centre in

the local community, including nearby charity, Myton Hospice. We know how important it is to prevent the spread of the virus, so all of the team are very proud to have this opportunity to help."

Tarmac has hired a significant amount of additional transport to take colleagues to site in a way which adheres to the social distancing guidelines provided by the Government and public health bodies.

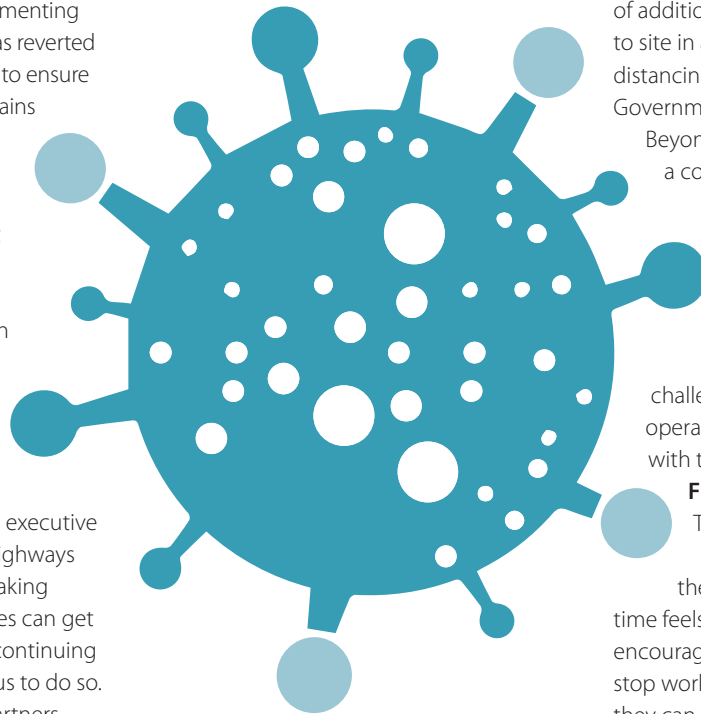
Beyond this, it has also introduced a company-wide COVID-19 safety standard.

"It sets out robust measures and commitments to guide teams through assessing, managing and mitigating any potential risks during this challenging period and managing all operational activity in strict accordance with the required protocols," said **Paul Fleetham**, Managing Director of Tarmac Contracting.

"Fundamental to this remains the principle that if anyone at any time feels uncomfortable or unsafe, they are encouraged and empowered to immediately stop working and raise these concerns so they can be addressed."

Baroness Vere's letter concluded: "We are relying on an army of workers in many different industries to keep public services running and meet the needs of the country. In particular, I want to thank the thousands of highway maintenance and construction workers, and the streetworks operatives, who are all vital to the resilience of our road network.

"You are doing an outstanding job under extremely challenging circumstances. Thanks to your dedication and commitment, the strategic and local road networks remain open. And as a result, crucial supplies of food, life-saving medicines, fuel and other goods can move around the country, while health and other emergency workers can travel to where they are needed most."



Southam, Warwickshire, is now producing hand sanitiser to World Health Organisation specifications that can help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Mike Higgins, CEMEX's National Technical Manager for quality and product development and head of its newly formed LabExperts operation, said: "We are perfectly set up for creating a central supply of hand sanitiser. While the chemistry is not complex, you do need a controlled laboratory environment with the right equipment and the ability to test every batch.

"We have a good supply of raw materials in place and are confident we will be able to manufacture as much hand sanitiser as the business needs, while also helping to support

This year's **Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance** (ALARM) survey reports that one in five local roads are now classed as being in poor structural condition due to a continuing lack of sustained investment in the network.

THERE'S STILL NO SILVER LINING...

NOW IN ITS 25TH YEAR, the independent survey, carried out by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), highlights a repeat pattern of short-term cash injections to stem accelerating decline, followed by years of underfunding.



The ALARM survey aims to take a snapshot of the general condition of the local road network in England and Wales, based on information provided directly by those responsible for its maintenance. The data received from local authorities provides a means of tracking any improvement or deterioration and the qualitative feedback received provides context.

"We recognise that this year's ALARM survey was launched at a time of unprecedented challenges and, understandably, resources need to be prioritised accordingly," said AIA Chair, Rick Green.

"However, local roads keep our key workers and emergency services moving and will continue to be needed to keep communities connected and support the economy when 'normal' life resumes. The stop-start approach to funding that we have seen over the

Average Highway Maintenance Budgets
DOWN 16%

£826.6m
Carriageway
BUDGET SHORTFALL



past 25 years is wasteful and has done little to improve the overall condition of this vital asset. In fact, it has just contributed to a rising bill to put things right."

Green shoots not sustained

ALARM 2020 findings show that the green shoots of improving conditions reported the previous year have not been sustained. Local authorities reported cuts to their overall budgets and this had a knock-on effect for highways maintenance pots – down by a reported average of 16% in England and Wales – as cashed-strapped authorities made increasingly difficult decisions on how reduced funds should be allocated.

The proportion of highway maintenance budgets spent on the road surface and structure itself has also fallen, as local authorities have had to spend more on other parts of the asset, such as bridges, cycleways and drainage works, to cope with the effects of an increased incidence of extreme weather events on an ageing network.

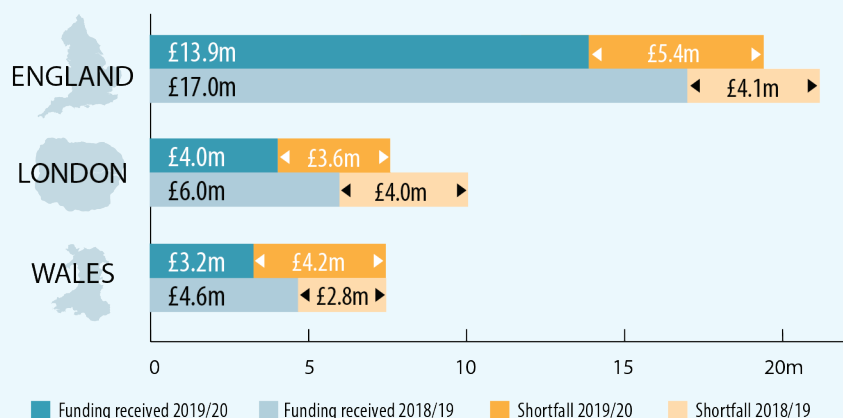
This has led to a widening funding gap in the amount needed to maintain the carriageway to target conditions with the shortfall now reported to be an average of £4.9 million (£5.4m in England) for local authorities across England, London and Wales, up from £3.9 million last year.


Less funding for the carriageway inevitably means less maintenance, and this is borne out by ALARM 2020's reported reduction in pothole repairs, downward target adjustments, increasing one-time catch-up costs and declining structural road conditions.

This year's survey highlights that there are 7,240 **fewer** miles of roads reported to be in GOOD structural condition, with 15 years or more of life remaining, and 1,100 **more** miles


Budget shortfall

Average annual carriageway maintenance budget received and average shortfall (£m)






**A One-time Catch-up
would take 11 years
to Complete and Cost
£11.14bn**



**One Pothole
Filled Every
21 Seconds**





of roads classed as POOR, with less than 5 year's life remaining, bringing the total in this category to 42,675 miles. And, in the middle, there is a continued increase in the number classed as ADEQUATE, with between 5-15 years' life remaining, suggesting an ongoing slide towards mediocrity.

But these numbers don't tell the whole story, as many respondents expressed concerns about the 'rising wave of amber': the number of roads currently classified as ADEQUATE that will soon tip into the POOR category.

A step in the right direction

"The March 2020 Budget announcement

suggests the Government recognises the important role local roads play in keeping communities connected and the economy thriving," said Rick Green. "The pledge of an extra £2.5 billion for English local roads over five years – if still able to be implemented – is a step in the right direction.

"However, £500 million extra a year for English local authorities is not even enough to plug the £616 million reported shortfall in 2019/20 annual carriageway maintenance budgets (England only), up from £467 million reported the previous year. It only represents a fraction of the estimated £11.14 billion that the ALARM survey reports is needed across England, London and Wales

to bring the local networks up to a level from which they can be maintained cost-effectively.

"Additional investment in our local roads will help underpin the Government's levelling-up strategy and social cohesion goals, as well as complementing its ambitions for more sustainable modes of transport. The country is dealing with unprecedented challenges due to the spread of Coronavirus but, looking ahead, a well-funded, well-maintained local road network will remain key to supporting recovery and regrowth."

The full 2020 ALARM survey is available to download at www.asphaltuk.org



The latest *RAC Report on Motoring*, substantiates the position painted by ALARM 2020 from the perspective of road users, with almost half (49%) of drivers saying that the condition of local roads has deteriorated over the last year, primarily as a result of potholes and other road-surface problems.

The online survey carried out each year by the RAC, asks a representative cross-section of UK drivers for their views on a range of motoring topics, tracking their biggest concerns.

"Drivers continue to believe roads are in poor condition and do not represent value for the tax they pay," says **Nicholas Lyes**, Head of Roads Policy, RAC.

"More than eight in 10 drivers – 83%, or the equivalent of 31 million people – say that the quality of roads should be better given the amount of tax they hand over to the Government every year. And, almost as many (77%) favour having at least a chunk of their motoring taxes ring-fenced to fund local road maintenance."



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RUNWAY RESURFACING PROJECT MEETS STRICTEST REQUIREMENTS

OVER 25,000 tonnes of asphalt were supplied by CEMEX and laid by Colas at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire as part of a five-month project to resurface the runway.

RAF Coningsby is one of the UK's Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Stations which protects UK airspace, so a key requirement of the runway resurfacing project was to ensure that the base remained operational throughout. The site is also home to two combat-ready squadrons, the permanent home of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight and the training station for Typhoon pilots.

A quality surface

To ensure Typhoons could be scrambled in case of emergency, Colas resurfaced a short section of the 2,744-metre long runway each night. There was also the requirement that all plant, equipment and personnel could be removed from the runway within eight minutes, so that aircraft operations would not be compromised by runway works if a QRA situation arose.

Initially the project involved replacing the surface course material, however, once work had commenced, it became clear that




the binder course layers also needed to be replaced. CEMEX provided a Porous Friction Course to meet the Ministry of Defence's complex asphalt specifications, supplying up to 450 tonnes per shift from its nearby Lincoln coating plant, with the hardstone supplied from its Roan Edge Quarry in Kendal, Cumbria.

CEMEX Area Manager for Asphalt, James Playford, said: "Meeting the requirements of this project required exceptional teamwork and coordination. Our dedicated approach paid off with the plant running day and night throughout the project, and every single order fulfilled to time."

Colas Procurement Manager, Steve Bryant, added: "CEMEX's collaborative approach ensured they met the intricacies of this project in the constrained timeframe. The finished runway is a quality surface that will play a key part in this site's defence work."



 Meeting the requirements of this project required exceptional teamwork and coordination."

James Playford, Area Manager for Asphalt, CEMEX

DIARY DATES 2020/21

6-11 TBC Sept: MPA/Newcastle University Asphalt Trials and Pavements Course, Newcastle
<https://bit.ly/3cLQEIS>

15 Sept: 2nd South West Highways Alliance Conference – Highway to Zero Carbon, STEAM Museum, Swindon
www.highwaytozerocarbon.co.uk

30 Sept-1 Oct: Strictly Highways 2020 event, Winter Castle, Blackpool
www.lcrig.org.uk/events/strictly-highways-2020



14 Oct: AIA virtual Sharing Best Practice event 2020
www.asphaltuk.org

4-5 Nov: Highways UK 2020 – Roads for a connected Britain – NEC, Birmingham
www.highways-uk.com

12 Nov: New Civil Engineer (NCE) Future of Roads conference, Victoria Park Plaza, London
<https://bit.ly/2LAi7ej>

26 Nov: Westminster Briefing Tackling Potholes in your area
<https://bit.ly/2X3K1Vb>

23-24 March 2021: 54th IAT Annual Conference: 'Asphalt Vision', Titanic Quarter, Belfast
www.iatconference.co.uk

15-17 June: Traffex-Parkex event, Hall 5, NEC, Birmingham
www.traffex.com

16-18 June: 7th Eurasphalt & Eurobitume Congress, Madrid, Spain
www.eecongress2020.org

(Dates subject to change due to COVID-19)

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