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## **MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF COUNCILS IN WALES HAVE LESS CASH TO SPEND ON FIXING POTHOLES THAN FIVE YEARS AGO**

Data obtained by Cycling UK shows 69% of local authorities in Wales have less budget for road maintenance than they did in 2016/17, when adjusted for inflation

- Cycling UK's Pothole Watch campaign runs from March 1 to 7, highlighting the need for investment in local roads and calling on the public to report road defects
- Only one Welsh council in eight filled every reported pothole within its target time
- As overall highway spending increases, maintenance of local roads, which account for the majority of journeys, is getting left behind
- Latest estimates suggest the cost of fixing Wales's pothole problem is £722m

More than two-thirds of local authorities in Wales have seen their budget for road maintenance fall in real terms over the past five years, according to research published today by Cycling UK.

The figures, released to mark the national cycling charity's Pothole Watch campaign, which runs from March 1 to 7, highlight the lack of funding to deal with the ever-worsening state of Britain's roads, meaning that just one in eight councils are now able to meet their own target repair times for fixing potholes. The charity is calling on the public to report holes and other road defects they spot while out on essential journeys by using the interactive map on its Fill That Hole website, [www.fillthathole.org.uk](http://www.fillthathole.org.uk).

Out of 13 Welsh councils that responded to Cycling UK's Freedom of Information enquiries about pothole maintenance budgets, nine (69%) reported a decrease in budget from 2016/17 to 2020/21, when adjusted for inflation. The total road maintenance funding allocated to the responding councils has risen by just 2% between 2016/17 and 2020/21, well below the rate of inflation (approximately 9% over the same period).

Of eight councils in Wales that responded to further requests on pothole repair targets, just one (Isle of Anglesey/Ynys Môn) stated that it repaired 100% of reported potholes within its self-imposed target times over the past five years. Half of the responding councils met their targets less than 75% of the time, with the worst performer being Caerphilly, meeting its target for 55% of reported potholes.

The most recent data from the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) show that in 2020 it would have cost £722m to bring roads up to standard across Wales. While this is an improvement on the figure of £797.5m the previous year, the pothole problem will not go away if local authorities continue to see their funding shrink.

With 68% of journeys in the UK being less than five miles, Cycling UK says while local roads are the backbone of our transport network, investment is continuing to stagnate in favour of spending on major routes, with predictable results. As well as causing £1.25bn worth of damage to vehicles across the UK each year, potholes put the lives of vulnerable road users in danger: since 2016, 10 cyclist deaths and 178 serious injuries have been attributed to road defects in Great Britain.

“Our findings sadly confirm that the Welsh Government’s investment in pothole repairs is doing as much good as a sticking plaster on a broken leg” said Keir Gallagher, campaigns manager at Cycling UK.

“Potholes affect all road users, but they’re particularly dangerous for people cycling. With a majority of councils in Wales seeing their pothole budgets shrinking in real terms over the past five years, the next Welsh Government must commit to addressing the pothole repair backlog on our local roads, as part of a wider shift towards a highways investment strategy focused on enhancing the provision for cycling and walking”

While Cycling UK would like to see proper government funding to allow local councils to maintain our roads properly, Mr Gallagher is also calling on the public to do their bit in alerting them to problems in the first place. “On average, there is one defect for every 110 metres of road in the UK. Reporting and getting those potholes fixed by your local authority is easy using the Fill That Hole’s interactive map and app, at [www.fillthathole.org.uk](http://www.fillthathole.org.uk).”

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**For more information, please contact the national Cycling UK press office. Due to the restrictions caused by the coronavirus outbreak, currently the main press office number (01483 238 315) is not being monitored. If you would like to speak to a member of the press office during working hours (0900 - 1700) please call Rob Kingston on 07880 424 912 or email [robert.kingston@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:robert.kingston@cyclingsuk.org). Out of hours, call 07786 320 713 or email [publicity@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclingsuk.org)**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. Cycling UK, the UK’s cycling charity, imagines a world where the streets are free of congestion and the air is clean to breathe, where parents encourage their children to cycle to school and everyone shares the exhilaration of being in the saddle. For more than 140 years, we’ve been making our streets safer, opening up new traffic free routes and inspiring more people to cycle more often. [www.cyclingsuk.org](http://www.cyclingsuk.org)
2. Cycling UK has been running its pothole reporting tool Fill That Hole since 2007, and it is available online and as an app in the Google Play and Apple App Store via [www.fillthathole.org.uk](http://www.fillthathole.org.uk).
3. Full statistics from local authorities responding to Cycling UK’s FoI requests can be found at [https://www.cyclingsuk.org/sites/default/files/document/2021/02/pothole\\_foi\\_data\\_2021.xlsx](https://www.cyclingsuk.org/sites/default/files/document/2021/02/pothole_foi_data_2021.xlsx).
4. Images can be downloaded at <https://www.skyfish.com/p/cyclingsuk/1885393>.
5. Research from Kwik Fit put the cost of vehicle repair bills across the UK at £1.25bn in the year to March 2020: <https://www.kwik-fit.com/press/cost-of-potholes-rises-to-over-1-billion>.
6. Six local authorities in Great Britain filled 100% of reported potholes within their self-imposed target times over the past five years: Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn), Lambeth, Na h-Eileanan Siar, Halton, Hounslow and North Tyneside.
7. Across Great Britain as a whole, the 10 worst performing local councils for pothole repairs were as follows:

Local authority	% of potholes repaired within target time
Bristol	15%
Cumbria	43%
West Lothian	43%
Renfrewshire	47%
Barnet	50%
Staffordshire	50%
South Ayrshire	51%
Birmingham	52%
Derbyshire	52%
Bolton	53%

8. In Wales, the eight local councils responding to requests about pothole repair times are ranked as follows, worst to best:

Local authority	% of potholes repaired within target time
Caerphilly/Caerffili	55%
Ceredigion	56%
Carmarthenshire/ Sir Gaerfyrddin	60%
Newport/Casnewydd	70%
Neath Port Talbot/Castell-nedd Port Talbot)	78%
Torfaen/Tor-faen	85%
Conwy	87%
Isle of Anglesey/ Ynys Môn	100%