

Thank you for your enquiry and I'm pleased to hear that you are encouraging members of your group to report potholes. We do employ Highway Inspectors whose job it is to gather information on the condition of all the streets in Leeds, and when they find a pothole they report them so they can be made safe. However, it's worth pointing out that with over 12,000 streets in Leeds it's impossible for our small team to pick up every pothole instantly, so we welcome input from the public

In terms of the repair of potholes the picture becomes much more complex. There have been a few studies about how best to carry out repairs both in terms of materials and methods used. The current strategy the government are promoting is 'Prevention is Better Than Cure', whilst I believe and accept this, the reality is that we are still faced with an under investment in the highway infrastructure and because of this continue to contend with large numbers of reactive repairs.

It would take me a long time to detail all the information regarding repair strategies and materials used in detail so I've summarised things for you below which hopefully might help.

I would define a pothole as a localised defect which is greater than 40mm (approx. 1.5 inches) in depth.

If the defect is in the normal vehicle wheel path we need to deal with them urgently.

The minimum treatment we will do is to fill the hole with tarmac to remove the hazard.

The tarmac used could be deferred set material, this is basically tarmac with an additive that slows down it's curing time, which means we can use it for a few days even when it's gone cold. The downside is that in heavily used areas it can pluck out leading to a repeat failure.

We sometimes used bagged pothole repair materials, these are available from a number of suppliers and tend to be very expensive,

usually 10 to 20 times more expensive than tarmac bought in bulk. Some of these products are extremely good however, and work well in all weathers and under high stress conditions (roundabouts, braking areas etc) but because of the expense we only use them when we feel there is no practical alternative.

We try to repair as many potholes as we can using hot tarmac, this is our preferred method. To do this we have truck mounted hot boxes to keep the tarmac warm, this makes it easier to lay and compact and gives it the best chance of sticking in the hole. In fairness we have only started using this method over the last twelve months or so but it does appear to be helping in reducing the number of repeat failures, which is really good news.

Where we have areas that have failed on a number of occasions and you get the classic picture of a group of potholes in the same area we try to programme a patch repair. This is where we remove a defective area and then lay a new area of tarmac.

On top of this reactive type of work we use the information gathered by the Highways Inspectors to help us prioritise which streets we need to refurbish/ resurface, which in turns helps us to produce our planned maintenance programme.

In a typical year we:

- Attend to around 20,000 highway defect reports, each report might contain several potholes or broken flags etc.
- Carry out approximately 2,500 patch/ minor surfacing repairs
- Refurbish around 300 streets through planned maintenance
- Spend around £20,000,000 on highway maintenance which includes reactive repairs, planned maintenance and preventative treatments such as surface dressing.

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