

AGENDA 12, ix) PROPOSAL — FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION - Letter to Northumberland County Council — Highways Funding for Ashington

Background

The Government has recently announced record levels of funding for local road maintenance across England. The Department for Transport has confirmed £7.3 billion in capital funding for local highways maintenance between 2026 and 2030¹, with £1.6 billion to be released in 2026/27 alone.² This is on top of a £500 million uplift already provided for 2025/26 — an increase of nearly 50% on the previous year. The funding is intended to move local authorities away from emergency patching and towards longer-term, planned improvement of roads, footways, bridges and street lighting.

As the local highways authority, Northumberland County Council will receive an allocation of this funding and will decide how it is prioritised across the county.

NCC's Highways Transparency Report — June 2025

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Roads-streets-and-transport/June-2025-Transparency-Report.pdf>

This is the report NCC was required to publish to unlock the 2025/26 funding uplift. It contains the most reliable available figures on how the funding is being drawn down in Northumberland:

Capital funding allocated for 2025/26:

- £34,981,000 directly from DfT via the Local Transport Plan, plus £7,000,000 via the North East Combined Authority through the CRSTS settlement — totalling approximately £42 million in capital allocation for 2025/26.

This is a significant uplift compared to previous years. For comparison from the same document:

- 2024/25: £5,445,000 from DfT direct + £19,103,000 via CRSTS + £6,950,000 from NCC itself = £32.8m capital spend
- 2023/24: £28,420,000 from DfT + £4,658,000 from NCC = £28.1m capital spend

Revenue spend (day-to-day maintenance — pothole repairs, inspections, gritting, etc.):

- Revenue spending has been consistently around £10-12 million per year, running at £11,881,000 in 2024/25 and £12,278,000 in 2023/24.

Road condition data from the report: On A roads, the proportion rated as being in good (green) condition is noted as having improved year on year — from 74% in 2020 to 80% in 2024. Although 18% of unclassified roads, smaller, local roads were in the red category in 2024, up from 16% in 2020 — meaning condition on the smaller local road network has been getting worse, not better.

The smaller residential and local streets of Ashington are deteriorating despite overall investment.

¹ This is a 4-year capital settlement from 2026/27 to 2029/30, confirmed by the DfT on 29 November 2025. [Highways maintenance block: formula allocations 2026 to 2030 - GOV.UK](#)

² The Autumn 2024 Budget announced nearly £1.6 billion in capital funding for local highways maintenance in England for the financial year 2025 to 2026. [Highways maintenance block: formula allocations 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

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Potholes filled in Northumberland: NCC has filled between 39,135 and 48,690 potholes per year over the last five years, with 41,950 filled in 2024/25.

The Proposal

That Ashington Town Council write to Northumberland County Council to formally request that Ashington is strongly considered when decisions are made about where this funding is directed.

Ashington's roads have been in a poor and deteriorating state for many years, causing daily frustration and inconvenience to residents, and in some cases presenting genuine safety concerns. This significant injection of central government funding presents a real opportunity to address problems that have long been felt across our town.

The Town Council recognises that Ashington's County Councillors will already be making the case for investment in our area, and this letter is intended to add the Town Council's voice to that effort — demonstrating broad local support and the strength of feeling among residents.

Proposed Action

That the Executive Officer is authorised to draft and send a letter to Northumberland County Council, on behalf of Ashington Town Council, requesting that Ashington receives meaningful consideration in the allocation of highways maintenance funding, and highlighting the longstanding condition of roads across the town as justification for prioritisation. That this letter is sent to Paul Jones, Director of Environment and Highways, Cllr John Riddle, Cabinet Lead for Highways, and Leader Cllr Glen Sanderson.

Cllr David Coyle

Haydon Ward