

[News story: Long-lasting repairs to stop potholes](#)

Utility companies could be better held to account for poor road repairs that cause potholes or dangerous road surfaces.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has today (6 March 2019) launched a consultation on increasing the guarantee on utility firms' roadworks, so that if a pothole forms as a result within 5 years, the company must return to bring the road surface back to normal.

The [Specification for the reinstatement of openings in highways consultation](#) will propose increasing the minimum guarantee from the current 2 years to up to 5 years, and will also introduce new asphalt standards, to keep roads pothole-free for longer.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Potholes are the biggest enemy for road users and this government is looking at all options to keep our roads in the best condition.

Road surfaces can be made worse by utility companies, so imposing higher standards on repairs will help keep roads pothole-free for longer.

The proposals also allow for new innovative surfacing to be used, such as asphalt with a high bitumen content that is easier to compact to the required density. This makes it less prone to potholing.

This consultation, which will last 8 weeks, follows a number of other interventions by the government to help improve road surfaces.

Last month, the Department for Transport [announced real-world tests of new road surfaces and technologies](#) in eight areas to see which emerging innovations provide long-term solutions to improve journeys.

The £22.9 million Live Labs projects will be delivered by councils – including Kent, Staffordshire, Reading, Suffolk and Solihull and Birmingham – and if successful, could be adopted by other authorities.

These schemes include expanding the test in Cumbria of plastic roads, using kinetic energy off Buckinghamshire roads to power lighting and using geothermal energy to keep car parks and in Central Bedfordshire bus stations from freezing over.

In the [Budget](#) in November, the Chancellor announced an additional £420 million for road maintenance for 2018 to 2019 financial year. This brings the total funding for pothole repair and roads maintenance up to £6.6 billion

from 2015 to 2020.

Last year, the Department for Transport [announced councils across England could introduce Lane Rental schemes](#) – where utility companies are charged up to £2,500 a day to dig up busy roads – to reduce the duration of roadworks and speed up traffic.

The government is also [investing up to £10 million in Street Manager](#). The data opened up by this new digital service should enable motorists to plan their journeys better, so they can avoid works and get to their destinations more easily.