

ECC ROADS COMPLAINT

To: Gavin Jones
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From : Peter Fox
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Note: Due to a very long history of failing to reply, delay, misdirection, ridiculous excuses and lies from the Highways department, I will deal with the Chief Executive and all replies will be treated as coming from his office.

Reference : ECC-ROADS-16-002

Reporting date : Feb 1st 2016

Location : Chalks road, Witham

Issue : Chronic surface break-up leading to potholes.

Evidence: These photographs were taken on 24th January 2016.





Photo 1 faces West. It shows a rapidly expanding pothole and large sections of crazing between the pink lines. Photo 2 from the same position faces east showing incipient potholes. Photo 3 shows detail of the pothole. From the surrounding debris and state of the adjacent surface it is clear that this is growing quickly.

Background: Chalks Road is a two way residential street, on a bus route and is the only access¹ to a sizeable estate based on Church Street and St. Nicholas Road. The road was completely resurfaced relatively recently. Perhaps less than 10 years ago.

¹ There is a narrow one way egress through Church St. to Chipping Hill.

Discussion: The crazing on the surface has been visible for two to three years. Obviously it wasn't going to get better. Photo 1 gives an idea of the extent, which is practically the whole length. The centre crazing and side crazing shown are typical. There have not been any actual potholes until this winter. Photos 2 and 3 show the inevitable progress from wet-patch to hole. Note that we haven't had any frost or snow yet. The quantity of ejecta shown in photo 3 tells how quickly the hole is being formed.

- The situation is inevitably going to be a cascade of fast forming holes.
- The 'wait and see' period is over.

Action to be taken :

- a Given the scale of the problem, and the rapidity with which the surface will break up once started, and worse in wintery conditions, and as Chalks Road is an only access, a reactive patch after months of complaints policy is not acceptable.

Therefore an alternative management plan is required. This should have three parts:

- .1 Rapid response patching. Furthermore, given the way the area around the actual hole is broken (see photo 3) a splot of tar in the hole is not going to work, so a method that doesn't require second and third visits needs to be used.
- .2 Short term crack sealing (or other preventive measure) to reduce or eliminate the waterlogged situation seen in photo 2.
- .3 Long term remediation.

- b Nominate a manager responsible to residents of the area for the plan in a above.

- c Investigate the causes for the poor quality of the resurfacing.

- d [FOI request]

- Date of complete resurfacing
- Any contractual conditions relating to fitness and lifespan relating to resurfacing

- e [FOI request]

When available (please let me know the timescale) I'd like a copy of the Management Plan 'a' above. Where 'cost' arguments are used I would like to see the figures.

Advice to chief executive:

You have inherited a dysfunctional and incompetent Highways department which hasn't heard of 'a stitch in time saves nine'.

The Chalks Road example is an opportunity to start fixing your organisation. Holes will keep appearing but failure to deal with them is an organisational issue. The issues raised here should be a simple fix for a competent Chief Executive.