

Please see attached questions from Local Council for the above discussion on highways issues. An agenda for the meeting will follow in due course.

We would welcome Cllr Hume and Mr Ciaburro dealing with the following list of questions.

- 1 We are conscious that there have been complaints in the past and we would welcome Cllr Hume explaining how he feels matters will be improved for the future.
- 2 Is there a defined specification for repairs to road surfaces?
 - (a) Can we have a copy?
 - (b) Who wrote it?
 - (c) How was it determined?
 - (d) How does ECC check that it has been adhered to?
 - (e) Is work checked before payment is authorized?
- 3 We understand that where utility companies dig up roads and do not repair them satisfactorily they are made to come back and do it at their cost. What is the position with regards to ECC repairs, which appear quite often to need repairing within 4-6 weeks of the initial repair, particularly in the winter months. Can ECC please confirm that where contractor's re-attend it is at their cost and not ours.
- 4 Is there a standard of performance when issuing specifications to Highways sub- contractors and can we see a copy?
- 5 What key performance indicators do ECC impose on those Contractors. Are there financial penalties placed upon them.
6. Are there any published statistics of overall performance of the Highways Dept.
7. How are repairs prioritized?
- 8 What arrangements are in place for cross-border issues to be dealt with, such as with Hertfordshire County Council and the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest.
- 9 We have been told in the past that there are always staffing problems.
 - (a) What is the financing and staffing of the ECC Highways Dept and is it adequate. If not, what action is being taken to fill vacant posts.
 - (b) Do you use Agency staff, how expensive are they, and are they cost effective?
- 10 ` How is the funding split between the various Districts. This used to be on a per kilometer basis and this would seem grossly unfair, in particular for Epping where

usage is far higher per kilometer of road, having regard to its close proximity to Central London.

11 Having regard to the number of pot-holes and other areas where repairs seem to recur year after year, what analysis has been carried out with regards to Quality Control and Best Value.

12 Are there any penalties placed upon Contractors for not dealing with instructions in a proper or timely manner.

13 From our perception the system does not appear to be working as well as when Epping Forest District Council were acting as Agents. Have similar complaints been made by other Districts where the Highways Department have taken back overall control.

14 Consultations with Town and Parish Councils appear to be breaking down. At least one Parish has been told that in future they will not be advised of temporary road closures on the basis that an advert would appear in the Public Sector Notices column of the local paper. Whilst this might satisfy the legal requirement, from a practical point of view very few people look at the Public Sector Notices and the knock-on effect in rural communities can be quite severe, particularly at the time when parents are taking children to school.

15 The Northern part of EFDC has recently had disruptions caused by the works on the A414. The standard of diversion signs appears to be nothing more than confusing. Fortunately hold-ups are only 5-10 minutes, even in rush hour, and a diversion via the M11, M25 and A12 would appear to be somewhat long-winded.

16 Is there a defined policy to concentrate on main roads and ignore side streets and roads running through housing estates? Whilst this might be a better utilization of funds allowing through traffic to flow at a faster rate, it does not help rate payers who live on the estates and have to suffer the consequences of roads not being repaired and re-surfaced.

17 Signage is certainly a problem, we have experienced a number of instances where signs have been stolen and have not been replaced. Whilst we appreciate there is a cost implication we do feel that the time taken to replace the missing signs is more than would be acceptable in any performance standard indicator.

18 The concept of not dealing with matters in a timely fashion is somewhat frustrating. We are sure that all Parishes have their pet problems, but to receive a letter from the Highways & Transport Department a month after they were written to, and to say that the concerns are being investigated, and to then suggest that ECC will endeavour to effect repairs within 28 days of completion of the investigations, without giving any indication as to how long the investigations themselves will take, is not acceptable.

19 We would very much like to improve communication between Parish and Town Councils and the Highways Department and ECC. There is rarely any feed-back, and as mentioned above, frustration ensues.

A system was run quite successfully with EFDC whereby Parish and Town Councils would send a monthly list of requests for repairs - could this system not be re-instated on a county basis with a limited time period for repairs to be completed.

20 There is general concern over the state of pavements, and how damaged pavements are repaired. If cars and lorries park illegally they might get fined or clamped, or even removed. Can the staff dealing with such matters check that the vehicles have not damaged the pavement, and take appropriate action to make the perpetrators pay for the damage caused.