

Council

24 April 2023

Questions from Members of the Council for Written Reply

1. From Cllr Alison Stammers to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Our Borough roads are beset with numerous deep potholes. Traffic going over them causes stone and chippings to be repeatedly thrown up on to the road surface and adjacent pavements causing a slip/trip/injury hazard to pedestrians and potential damage to vehicle paintwork and windscreens. In Albany Road, I understand such debris recently contributed to a resident breaking an ankle some two weeks after the debris being reported. The debris is not routinely removed from the road or pavements during the lifetime of the pothole, nor when it is filled in. It seems to be missed under the street cleaning regime. Can the Portfolio Holder assure us that more will be done routinely to clear our roads and pavements of this debris as well as to expedite the filling in of the countless potholes?

Reply:

I apologise for the state of our roads, as a motorist it is not a situation which I wish to see. The combination of rain, frost and snow weather this year has created severe problems on the country's roads and indeed on many on the Continent and unfortunately, Bromley, like every council in the country, is suffering from multiple potholes.

As London's largest borough we have 537 miles of road, equal to Bromley to Zurich.

The condition of the highway network is carefully monitored through regular safety inspections and specialist condition surveys to identify reactive and planned maintenance respectively. When defects are identified which meet the Council's investigatory levels reactive works are arranged to maintain the highway in a safe condition, based on either a 2 hour, 10 day or 35 day completion time depending on priorities. Unfortunately, the severe weather during the winter resulted in a high number of defects, and our contractor, Riney, does have a backlog of works which is due to be completed by the end of May. We have 13 teams dedicated to repairing potholes and some 70 or more are being dealt with every day and these are being tackled on in a systematic way with the most serious potholes being dealt with first. I have agreed that the teams should continue throughout the summer months.

You will appreciate that potholes and other defects continue to deteriorate, especially in wet and cold weather, which increases the risk to road users until repairs have

been completed. In order to minimise the risk caused by older defects our contractor has been asked to focus all resources on clearing the backlog of overdue works, with 10 day jobs being a priority. This should allow all current overdue jobs, in addition to emergencies, to be completed by the end of April, although as orders will continue to be raised by our Highway Inspectors the overall backlog is unlikely to be cleared before the end of May. Riney are responsible for managing and planning all reactive repairs to make the most efficient use of their resources, and while I recognise that you have concerns for Albany Road, I hope you understand that we're unable to provide precise timeframes for individual jobs, but please rest assured that Riney have been asked to work across the borough and have no reason to avoid any particular areas.

The Government announced in the Budget that there would be an additional £200M for potholes, however this fund is not available to London councils as the government negotiated a separate grant for Transport for London (TfL). Many of the roads in the borough are either Transport for London roads – A20, A21 and A232 or are designated principal roads where the funding is from TfL. In the past few years we have only received £280,000 for planned maintenance and this has been for two specific roads. Despite this, we continue inspect these roads and have repaired them where necessary.

Our Officers are not able to give precise timeframes to individual jobs at this moment but have asked for the oldest reports to be completed as a priority.

Any debris in the immediate vicinity of potholes will be cleared as part of the repair, but any other loose material will be cleared as part of the regular street cleaning regime.

The Council has an annual programme of footway and carriageway resurfacing, details of which are included in the regular committee reports. The initial 2023/24 programme was approved by me in January and can be found here - <https://cde.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50102541/Planned%20Highway%20Maintenance.pdf> . These schemes are due to be completed during the spring and summer. A further condition survey is due to be completed during the next two months, which will allow the remaining carriageway resurfacing projects to target those of our busiest roads that have been damaged by winter weather.

2. From Councillor Mark Smith to the Chairman of Development Control Committee

Could you please confirm how often the four respective Plans Sub-Committees have met in this municipal year?"

Reply:

2022/23 Municipal Year:

	Meetings held	Meetings cancelled
Plans 1	4	2
Plans 2	5	1
Plans 3	2	4
Plans 4	5	1
Total	16	8

3. From Councillor Mark Smith to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Recent press reports have confirmed that the Levelling Up Secretary (Michael Gove) has written to all local authorities in England expressing concern about elderly and vulnerable people being excluded if pay-and-display parking machines are scrapped.

In the light of this, could he confirm what steps are being taken to ensure that, in the Cabinet Minister's own words, "there are alternative provisions for parking payments available so that no part of society is digitally excluded" and that high street parking is not "solely available for those who have access to a mobile phone"?

Reply:

A full equality impact assessment was independently verified. Motorists wishing to park in paid for bays can use an app on a smart phone, call on a non-smart phone or ring from a home landline.

Before the changeover 75% of motorists were already using RingGo and the report to the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee last November outlined why expenditure on new machines at a cost of nearly £1 million could not be justified.

4. From Councillor Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

In the light of the motion on the agenda, will he publish a list of all roads which have -

1. A permanent 20 MPH
2. Part-time 20 MPH

Reply:

I have asked Council Officers to compile a list of full and part time 20 mph limits for circulation to all members to include those which are advisory and well as those which are mandatory.