

**Subject:** Levitts Road, Bugbrooke. (PEM 435203)

Thank you for your recent email on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2010 regarding your concerns about the condition of Levitts Road in Bugbrooke.

Like many of our highway assets, the condition of a significant amount of the road network is far from perfect and we too have real concerns about this situation which is something the County Council is striving to improve throughout the county.

Against this background, the two recent bad winters have exacerbated this situation and taken their toll on the county's roads: The ingress of water is a major contributory factor in road deterioration and the resulting freeze/thaw action does cause significant damage. Prior to January this year, the number of safety defects reported each month was around 2,000. However, since the beginning of February this has increased massively to over 10,000 and presents the County Council with a real challenge.

After this event, most of our efforts were aimed at managing this risk and our resources had been fully employed in the short term by undertaking temporary repairs to ensure these defects are made safe. These repairs have to be done on a temporary basis because the severity of the defects demands short response times. There can be problems with their durability, especially when the surrounding carriageway is not in a good condition.

I thought it might be useful to provide you with a bit more general information to help explain our approach to highway maintenance within Northamptonshire:-

Our Highways Service Provider, MGWSP, undertakes regular safety inspections to identify the worst defects and reactive or emergency repairs are undertaken where necessary to deal with these, depending on the likely risks involved. Safety inspectors have guidelines to assist them in identifying safety defects and those that breach the County Council's intervention levels are rectified, according to the severity, with varying timescales which could be up to 6 months.

Although we undertake our own regular inspections, it is helpful for the public to be able to report faults such as potholes and other highway defects that they find themselves. Members of the public can report defects through our Street Doctor service by telephone on 0845 601 1113 or online at [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)

In addition to safety inspections and repairs, MGWSP, undertake annual programmes of planned maintenance schemes consisting of repairs and resurfacing to roads (and footways). These schemes are based on the results of network condition assessments that identify defective lengths of roads (and footways). These lengths are categorised and prioritised in order of deterioration on a countywide basis and used to develop the maintenance schemes programme.

To put this into context, the County Council is responsible for over 4,000 kilometres (or 2,500 miles) of road in Northamptonshire equivalent to an area of over 23 million square metres. With typical resurfacing costs of £25 per square metre and current spend levels it would take at least 60 years to get round the whole network – and this wouldn't include fixing any underlying structural problems or sorting things like kerbs and drainage.

MGWSP have currently ranked Levitts Road 140<sup>th</sup> out of 605 nominated schemes which at this time, does not rank in our current programmes.

I can understand that this is not what you wanted to hear but until such time as we are able to undertake a scheme, MGWSP will continue to attend to any safety defects as appropriately to keep the road in a safe condition.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact us. I trust that my response explains the County Council position.

Yours sincerely

**Stephen Matthews**

## Highways Assistant Engineer