

Potholes

3 April 2013

Introduction

In January 2013 Cheshire East Council launched its “war on potholes” which will be boosted by a £25 million cash investment over the next two years. Residents and drivers in Cheshire East are encouraged to help us to win this war by reporting potholes by website or phone.

Frequently Asked Questions

1 Why are there so many potholes in the roads at the moment?

Potholes usually occur where an area of the road surface has broken up and fallen out. They usually form during the winter months as a direct result of repeated freezing and thawing of moisture that has seeped into cracks within the surface.

In addition, the extremely wet weather that we have experienced over the past 12 months has also contributed to accelerated deterioration.

2 Why can't we prevent potholes?

Cheshire East Council's £25 million investment in its highway programme seeks to interrupt the current cycle of decline in the condition of our roads by early, large scale, targeted investment aimed at restoring the overall condition of the road network. By using a combination of different types of treatment this will mean fewer potholes appearing in the roads in future years, but this is of course dependent on the weather.

3 What is Cheshire East Council doing about it?

We are committed to delivering frontline services and putting customers first, which is why we had made this significant commitment to improving our road network. We are striving to make Cheshire East a place with a strong and resilient economy.

Cheshire East Highways (CEH) has a blend of treatments available to try and keep up with the significant deterioration on the network. Since April 2012, we have repaired 46,000 potholes, through:

- Traditional pothole repair teams.
- Velocity Patcher which can deal with larger volumes and is ideally suited to the rural road network.
- Patching repair teams that carry out more substantial repairs, and
- Wholesale resurfacing that form part of an annual programme.

CEH has implemented a planned approach to improving the road network.

- Unsafe potholes are prioritised (see no. 5 below) and fixed within 24 hours or within five working days on minor rural roads.
- Those that are not deemed unsafe are fixed as part of a planned programme with either the velocity patcher or traditional methods
- If a stretch of highway features a significant number of potholes then we will place the road into the resurfacing programme.

CEH has the resources to repair up to 50,000 potholes during 2013.

4 Why is it taking so long?

CEH is responsible for 1700 miles of road throughout the Borough. Following the adverse weather conditions during last year and throughout the winter, there is a large backlog of potholes to catch up on.

It is not ideal to carry out repairs in wet and freezing conditions, so this does slow down our teams. Additionally potholes aren't the only issue that the Highways Team is responding to; the Borough has experienced significant rainfall and flooding through the year so we are also carrying out a drainage repair programme. The drainage programme will allow us to deal with the root cause of a number of problem sites prior to surfacing works commencing.

In the first few months of 2013, we received in excess of 9,000 reports on potholes in Cheshire East.

The best time to repair the roads is after the winter when the weather is a little warmer. Ideally asphalt and other hot materials shouldn't be laid when the temperature is below 4°C, it is for that reason that we try to complete our major surfacing programmes before the end of October each year.

5 How do you decide which potholes to repair?

Each individual pothole is visited by a highway inspector who carries out a risk assessment for the particular area it is located in e.g., outside a school, hospital, medical centre, shopping area, is it on a high or low speed road and how large is it. He will then allocate a response time to repair the pothole which reflects the hazard posed to highway users. Urgent repairs are identified by marking the defect with white spray paint.

6 Why can't the whole road be resurfaced rather than patching?

Urgent pothole repairs generally provide a temporary repair solution that removes a possible danger from the highway as soon as possible with the minimum of inconvenience. If more permanent works are required at a later date, these can be carried out when weather conditions are more suitable and will allow for safe and sensible traffic management.

7 How much is it costing?

Cheshire East Highways is investing £23 million in improving the road network throughout Cheshire East over the next two years. In addition to this we have been allocated an extra £2 million from central government.

8 How can I report a pothole in my street/area?

Whilst we carry out regular inspections on the roads we are responsible for, we know that potholes and defects arise between these inspections. To report a pothole visit www.cheshireeasthighways.org/ReportIt

or phone **0300 123 5020**

9 Will I know when it is being fixed?

Once you have logged a defect you will be given a reference number.

Over the next couple of months we will be re-vamping the "ReportIt" system, the software will then allow users to Report It, View It and Track It in real time.

10 I've damaged my car on a pothole in Cheshire East, can I claim for my repair bill?

Further information can be found on the Highways page on the Cheshire East website.

<http://www.cheshireeasthighways.org/Highway-Maintenance/Making-a-Claim.aspx>

or

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