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Epsom’s potholes. We’re not alone...

24 September 2025



‘Sink holes happen’ was the blunt message from a Surrey highways officer when asked if the council had the budget to repair five crumbling suburban roads.

In fairness, council budgets are often in flux with authorities never knowing how much funding they will receive from the central government and whether they will get any extra pennies from grants.

But that has not softened the blow for Walton residents who say they are “disappointed” after finding out five battered neighbourhood roads might not be resurfaced until 2028.

Almost 300 people signed a petition calling for urgent repairs to Cottimore Avenue, Cromwell Close, Fairfax Crescent, Monks Close and Stuart Avenue. Residents claim the roads in Walton are riddled with cracks, potholes and uneven pavements that pose a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Residents say the situation has gone on for decades – with complaints about the roads dating back to the 1990s. But people say their calls for Surrey County Council to act have been repeatedly put aside and pushed back despite rat run traffic and speeding issues. One resident even claimed that it has been at least 40 years since the roads were last resurfaced.

Residents said they are worried the delays will only get worse once Surrey is broken into unitary councils in Local Government Reorganisation. “It seems the problem is simply being passed on to the next authority,” said Paolo Orezzi, lead petitioner. “The road will simply deteriorate and it will increase the cost liability.”

But highway bosses have said the streets will not be resurfaced any time soon at a Highways, Transport and Economic Growth meeting on September 23. Instead, they have been given a flatteringly modest ‘medium priority’ rating in the county’s road maintenance list meaning it is unlikely the work will be complete before 2028/29.

Even then, the plan is not to fully resurface the roads but to ‘fine mill’ the concrete beneath the tarmac.

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This is a cheaper process but residents fear this will not go far enough.

Highway officers defended the decision pointing to the sheer scale of the challenge. “We manage 5,000km of roads across Surrey,” an officer said. “There is no doubt the roads would benefit from work but we have to prioritise based on budgets, emergencies and needs. Unfortunately, we can’t give firm timescales beyond next year- things change, sinkholes happen.”

Cllr Rachael Lake, who said she has been backing the residents’ calls for years, recalled: “I was standing next to a crack where the tarmac had totally worn away. You could actually get a child’s foot stuck down it. It was dangerous.”

The Conservative member for Walton said she was prepared to use her entire £120,000 allocated budget to fix the roads following residents accusing her of not looking after them. But Cllr Lake claimed highway officers would not even let her put the five worn out roads on a waiting list to be resurfaced.

Lead for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, Cllr Matt Furniss relented and asked officers to reassess the five roads in question, speak to residents and see if anything can be done with Cllr Lake’s allocated budget to get the roads on the list. Cllr Furniss added: “We can potentially do it next year but I am not promising anything.”

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Pothole stock image. Credit Kathryn Anderson

Emily Dalton LDRS

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