

**14 October 2014- TRAFFIC CHAOS caused by FLOODED
UNDERPASS AT PERRY BARR**

BIRCHFIELD RESIDENT WRITES TO COUNCIL-11:39am

Dear Councillors

I am writing to you regarding the closure of the Birchfield Rd A34 underpass this morning.

A 10 minute journey for me took over one hour, and thousands others were caught up in the chaos, much more badly affected.

What went wrong? Amey closed off the underpass and diverted all traffic round to the greyhound track by Birmingham City University (Walsall Rd junction Aldridge Rd).

That's fine - except nobody from Amey had the intelligence to phase the traffic lights to allow diverted traffic preference. Nobody from Amey was on site. Instead, they were stuck on the normal phasing of 4 minutes to one minute - hence congestion quickly built up. It is shocking that no traffic management plans were implemented and BBC traffic is showing that there are still severe delays at 11.27am this morning. Why were the traffic police not called to get the traffic moving?

This is a really poor show from the City Council, service providers such as the Police and especially Amey for having no forward planning.

I would like to know what lessons BCC is going to learn from this morning's chaos and why the chaos even happened in the first place (because Amey haven't serviced the drains in the underpass to prevent flooding?).

The COUNCILLOR Replies

From: **Councillor Victoria Quinn**

Date: 14 October 2014 12:02

Subject: FW: Highways meltdown

Thank you for your email. Firstly can I endorse the sentiment you have expressed in your email. To assure you, I have copied below the note I have sent onto all relevant parties within Council teams this morning requesting the fullest investigation into this

situation and appropriate accountability for it.

I have learnt via the subsequent statement issued by Amey, that their drainage teams have in effect been on site since the early hours this morning, and that the drains were cleared 9 days ago although, like you, I share the opinion that this should have been made publically known to all who have been caught up in the gridlock this morning – and well in advance of the 3 hours it took to respond with a statement.

Similarly, I am grateful to you for pointing out the obvious in terms of how traffic signal management should have been taken in hand as well as traffic police deployed and I can assure you that I shall be probing everyone involved for explanations as to why you and others did not feel this happened.

Indeed while drafting this reply to you, I have had a response from Amey, which I also feel able to share with you, copied below.

Please be assured that the experience today is entirely unacceptable, lessons must indeed be learnt and I shall endeavor to reply to you again with the answers which the Scrutiny Committee which I Chair will be set on obtaining when we meet in public session this Friday.

Kindest regards

Councillor Victoria Quinn

Sparkbrook Ward (Labour), Birmingham City Council

Chair, Birmingham Economy & Transport O&S Committee

MEANWHILE the Councillor mails others involved

From: Councillor Victoria Quinn

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 10:46 AM

Subject: Highways meltdown

Tahir, John, Eddie

You will of course be aware of the highways meltdown affecting the North of the city this morning around Perry Barr and A34 underpass blocked back to Walsall which has undoubtedly had the most significant economic impact upon the city, preventing people getting anywhere.

Listening to people who are stuck in it, phone into WM, I am really very concerned indeed that there appears to have been no information at all from either Highways or Amey out to people about what is happening / why / how it is being dealt with - despite BCC having told WM “you are onto it”

It simply isn't good enough to have “been onto it” and no information for 3 hours at this critical time of day and makes the Council and Amey look a nonsense.

Comments coming back from people who are stuck in the gridlock are that it is because of the rubbish. – The litter on and around the A34 having never been dealt

with, blocking the drains and causing the significant flooding.

Whether this is the cause or not, you will all appreciate that it is about public perception at the moment. Litter and Rubbish is perceived publically to be out of control as are our highways and journey times.

I would be most grateful to be able to provide information back about the situation today at the meeting of Birmingham Economy & Transport O&S committee this Friday

(as you will appreciate that all number of Members will be requesting it.)

Further, it would be appreciated if instead of Amey “open/fun days” for members and their friends and families, we could receive some regular detailed information and reaction in regard to highways concerns and maintenance. – This, most crucially within critical periods of gridlock and in under 3 hours.

I look forward to your responses

Councillor Victoria Quinn

Sparkbrook Ward (Labour), Birmingham City Council

Chair, Birmingham Economy & Transport O&S Committee

and the response from AMEY is.....

From: AMEY

Sent: Tuesday, October 14, 2014 11:51 AM

Subject: Re: Highways meltdown

Dear Cllr Quinn,

Our crew attended as soon as we received the alert and we have two mobile pumps operating. As soon as we have removed sufficient water to access the pumping station, we will be able to investigate and rectify the cause. We will reopen the road as soon as it is safe to do so. Our Urban Traffic Control centre is updating traffic news via the INRIX service and we have issued a statement to local media in agreement with BCC Press Office.

We will be happy to give a full report of our findings later this week.