

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	08 March 2021
Subject:	Highways - Gully Cleansing, Repair and Surface Water Flooding

Summary:

This report sets out the reactive, cyclic and planned aspects of highways drainage maintenance including low-level flooding response.

Actions Required:

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail contained in the update and recommend any changes or actions.

1. Background

Drainage Cleansing

There are 190,000 highway drainage assets including gullies, catchpits and offlets across the county that Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for. These are scheduled into two programmes, one that is for routine maintenance and the second that requires specialist traffic management.

Of the 181,000 in the routine programme, 142,000 have been attended to date and the 39,000 remaining assets will be attended by the end of April 2021. The actual programme did not start until the end of April 2020, due to initial Covid-19 restrictions, and will have been completed within twelve months. This is significant progress on previous contracts and we now have full traceable data on all assets attended within a twelve month period.

There are 9,000 assets requiring specialist traffic management, such as stop/go, lane closures or traffic lights. These have been arranged into specific routes and a programme started in December that will continue into the summer. This picks up all junctions, roundabouts, level crossing and sites in busy urban areas. These are problematic sites and having a clear programme for these will remove a number of on-going minor issues.

To date, there have been 6,025 defects recorded and this represents around 4% of those visited. These are recorded into four types;

- jammed lids
- broken or missing ironwork
- damaged pots or chambers
- blocked connections.

Our contractor takes photos of the broken/missing lids and damaged assets when they raise them as defects. This will help the local teams assess whether it needs immediate attention, or can be planned for a later date. This has been a fantastic real time improvement, which helps to manage the coordination of our resources in dealing with the emergency works as the main priority.

We currently have nine tankers on this contract working in Lincolnshire on a daily basis. There are seven on routine cleansing, one completing the traffic management sites and one doing jetting works on blocked assets.

When the public report blocked drains or flooding through the Customer Service Centre or on the LCC website/Fix My Street, the Local Highways Team are refining the response provided. The first step is to inspect the report on site and the following steps will be provided:

1. If the gully is simply blocked, and is either due very shortly on cycling programme (or isn't causing anything other than a minor nuisance) a status will be selected which gives the message "We have assessed your report and the drain will be cleaned on the next programmed schedule."
2. If cyclic cleansing isn't expected shortly, and there is an issue which warrants more immediate intervention, then an off-programme jetting job will be raised from site. The customer will receive updates to inform works are scheduled.
3. If more significant drainage works than off-programme jetting are required then a job will be raised for AJet to investigate/dig down to carry out remedial works.
4. In areas where none of the reactive options are appropriate, either because the issue is very low priority and risk, or because longer term works and investigations with partner authorities are needed which may take over four months, a status will be used where the member of the public is notified of "no immediate action proposed" but this is backed up with a bespoke explanation from the officer.

This should help move away from the previous status updates where references to cyclic grass cutting and annual gully cleansing were used.

De-Watering Bay

The purpose built Sleaford Dewatering facility is now fully functioning and offers alternative solutions for dealing with waste water at a local waste transfer centre.

We now have five crews based at Sleaford and have six new local employees from the Sleaford and surrounding areas, with a further four to be in place by 1 April 2021. The reduction in travel time for the five crews offers an estimated saving of 1.5 hours travel per crew per day. This is a significant carbon footprint reduction, offers an increase in productivity, reduces costs and gives a greater ability to react to emergency flooding events



Drainage Improvements

For the financial year 2020/21 and 2021/22 we have been allocated additional funds for dealing with drainage as detailed within Fig.1. We have also made some significant progress in delivering works against the variety of funds.

Fig 1 - Drainage funding 2020/21 and 2021/22

Works Description	Budget	Expenditure
Minor Drainage Improvements 2020/21	£300,000	£436,000
Minor Drainage Improvements 2021/22	£600,000	0
Development Drainage Funding 2020/21 and 2021/22	£2,000,000	£355,000
Community Maintenance Drainage Gangs 2020/21	£1,000,000	£975,000
Community Maintenance Drainage Gangs 2021/22	£1,000,000	0
Total Budget Allocation	£4,900,000	£1,766,000

Minor Drainage Improvements

Highways have a budget of £300,000 for drainage minor improvements, which are beyond the scope of the reactive gangs the Local Highways Teams utilise for repairing the highway. This financial year we have delivered 30 schemes costing £436,000, which are small scheme scale works that typically take less than a week to complete and include:

- Replacing sections of damaged highway pipes
- Installing additional gullies and manholes where ponding occurs
- Increasing the size and capacity of the drainage system over small lengths
- Repairing bank or ditch slips

The funding for 2021/22 has been increased from £300,000 to £600,000 to deal with more local issues that occur during each period of severe weather.

Development Drainage Funding

This year there was a successful Invest to save bid approved by councillors of £2.2million pounds and allocated to the Floods and Water Team. This includes £2m for works and £0.2m for specialist design resources. A programme of works has been developed in collaboration between the Floods and Water Team, the local Highways teams and the asset teams to pick up known schemes.

The start to the works was delayed whilst agreement on the proposals was authorised was agreed. We have delivered seven schemes to date to the value of £355,000 and the remaining budget will be spent within 2021/22. Our contractors have identified additional resources for delivering these works and we are also in the process of bringing in additional specialist drainage engineers to complete all investigation and design work.

Community Maintenance Gangs

The additional three Community Maintenance drainage gangs have been responding to a variety of local issues, not covered by either the reactive or planned budgets. Funding has been made available for this to continue in 2021/22, which offers an opportunity to continue dealing with known issues and offer and improved customer service.

When the off-programme jetting cannot solve a problem, these gangs will carry out a more detailed investigation. They are set up with CCTV equipment and tools to carry out minor civils repairs or root cutting, etc. We have been focussing the programme of works for these crews on longstanding highways drainage issues which were exposed during the 2019 floods and are not necessarily just down to blocked gullies.

To date these crews have attended and dealt with an additional 115 sites, with a further 125 designed and being planned over the coming months. We will continue to adjust this programme as more detail is collected from the recent heavy rainfall that has been experienced and remediation work is identified and agreed.

Jetting Works

This year we have recorded around 1% of the assets as having a blocked connection which gives a target of around 8 issues a day to solve and is not always achievable. The tanker will, subject to availability, carry out full investigation works into blocked pipe issues and if these cannot be solved immediately, then this becomes a proposed minor scheme or improvement. When we enter periods of wet weather the same resource is involved in clearing localised flooding or ponding issues on the highway along with a number of other tankers that we have access to. Demand on this resource means that we have traditionally had a backlog of issues to resolve.

Flooding Response Data and S19 Investigations

The benefits of the Confirm Connect system mean that ER crews attending flooding reports as first responders are able to capture photos on site and document extent and severity of flooding, which can then be used to inform follow up response as well as Section 19 investigations by the Floods and Water Management team where internal property flooding has occurred. We have mapped all flooding and drainage reports through the CSC and Fix My Street for the last 10 years and are currently overlaying this with the S19 data from the Floods and Water team to ensure that the two sets of data do correlate, and also to inform the prioritisation of the various levels of work identified in this report.

2. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions to the Executive Member for Highways, Transport and IT. They are also asked to consider and comment on the collaborative working across directorates and with partners.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out??

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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