

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

Report to:	Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	01 September 2020
Subject:	Highways Gully Cleansing, Repair and Surface Water Flooding Update

Summary:

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

Actions Required:

The Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the detail contained in the report and recommend any changes or actions.

1. Background

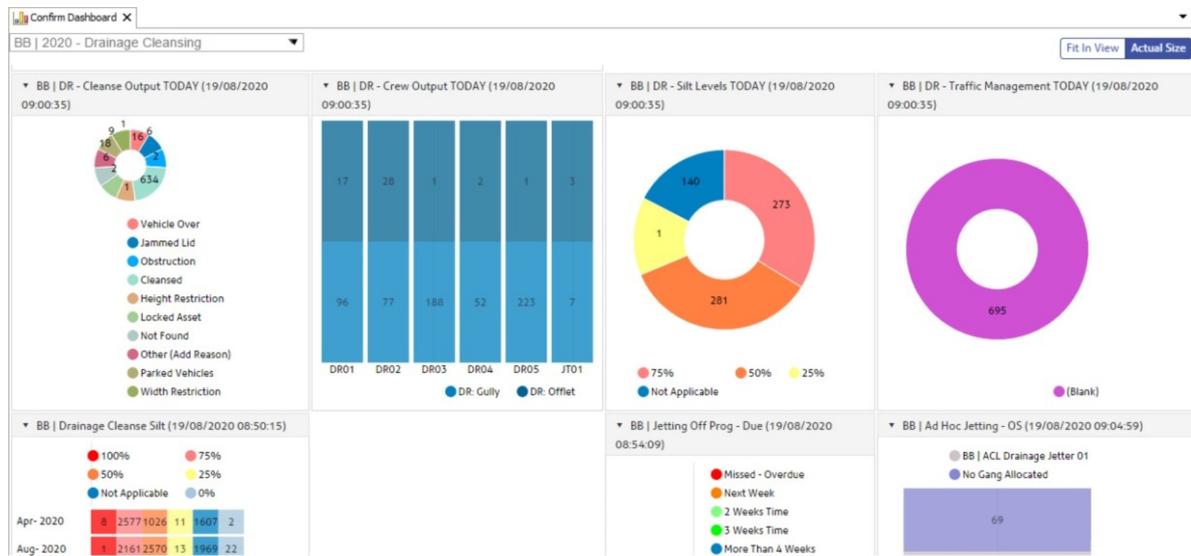
There are 185,000 highway drainage assets including gullies, catchpits and offlets. These are currently all cleaned annually on a cyclic programme, from a budget of £1.1m

The new Highways Term Maintenance Contract with Balfour Beatty embraces the use of technology and data. The 185,000 drainage assets are recorded on an electronic mapping system and the contractor uses a GPS hand held devices on site to locate each asset. This allows for proper management of performance through real-time data, as well as the gathering of information for a more strategic approach.

The contractor records a number of factors for each asset - such as silt levels, broken lids, blockages, access issues, traffic management requirements or changes to location. This data is sent to LCC live from the field onto our digital asset management system so officers can monitor progress and deal with issues found immediately. There is the potential for faults found on the cyclic cleanse such as jammed lids or broken gully pots to automatically generate repair jobs for civils crews. The focus is to complete the full programme with accurate and consistent data to enable a future targeted approach to drainage cleansing.

With the accurate information we are gathering from this year's cyclic cleanse, we will be able to develop a true targeted cleanse, and Balfour Beatty are actively

working with us to facilitate this. A targeted approach could lead to certain areas having multiple cleanses per financial year due to the levels of silt found, but other areas only needing a cleanse every few years as they are almost self-cleaning.



Screen capture of drainage management dashboard in Confirm

In addition to the cyclic cleanse, there is an annual budget of £250,000 for jetting and investigation works for any issues found or reported. This includes off-programme jetting where sites require a more immediate response and cannot wait for the cyclic programme. The £250,000 allows for one drainage tanker to be available for 48 weeks of the year to carry out jetting of blocked gullies, Offlets, manholes, etc. across the County. 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 which is unrealistic. The same tanker will, subject to availability, carry out full investigation works into blocked pipe issues. If can't be not solved 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. Demand on this resource means that we have traditionally had a backlog of issues to resolve.

Local Highways Teams respond to public enquiries about flooding through Fix My Street or reported to the Customer Service Centre. If flooding is reported as a risk to life/property, or flooding is over half carriageway width, Network Resilience will respond as an emergency. If it is reported as less urgent, a Local Highways Officer will determine if the issue can wait to be resolved on a cyclic cleanse or if earlier intervention off-programme is required.

Since April, Local Highways staff have been more agile, equipped with tablet devices to view public fault reports out in the field as they come in live. This allows them to take photos and attach them to the reports there and then, as well as capture info. Officers are instructed to ascertain whether the issue is severe enough to warrant off-programme cleaning, where they can raise a job for this from site, or if it can wait to be cleansed on the cyclic programme. The decisions they make are communicated through the Fix My Street system (and email notifications) and this system is constantly being improved to give accurate updates.



Photo from tablet device on site where flooding was reported on 17th August and a job was issued on 19th August to carry out jetting, investigation and any required civil works for repairs from gully to outfall to two gulleys. Note that water had subsided but officer determined there is still an issue.

Balfour Beatty's emergency crews are also equipped with tablet devices, so they are being instructed to capture photos of flooding when they arrive on site as they are often some of the first responders to emergency flooding events. This information can then be shared with the Floods and Water Management team as it may be useful to establish if properties were flooded and aid in section 19 investigations.

One of the roles of Local Highways Managers is to Chair Local Floods Board Meetings to discuss partnership issues with the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, District Councils and water companies. The Local Highways Managers are also starting to work more closely with the internal drainage boards on enforcement issues such as maintenance of dykes and ditches.

This year, Highways have access to additional funding for Community Maintenance Gangs, which have been set up to respond to a variety of local issues which aren't normally covered by either the reactive or planned budgets. Part of this allocation was for 3 additional drainage crews, subcontracted through Ajet who are a local supplier. When the off-programme jetting that Local Highways Teams can order isn't sufficient to solve a problem, or more detailed investigation is required, these teams 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.

Finally, Highways allocates £300,000 of Capital funding for drainage minor improvements which are beyond the scope of the reactive gangs the Local Highways Teams have access to. These schemes are mainly delivered through the Highways Works Term Contract with Balfour Beatty. These are small scheme scale works that typically include:

- Replacing sections of damaged highway pipes
- Installing additional gullies where ponding occurs
- Increasing the capacity of the drainage system over small lengths

The funding allows for around 30 small drainage schemes a year across the County.

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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