

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

Report to:	<b>Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>14 December 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Highways - Gully Cleansing, Repair and Surface Water Flooding</b>

**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 report and recommend any changes or actions.

## 1. Background

There are 185,000 highway drainage assets including gullies, catchpits and offlets across the county for which Lincolnshire County Council is responsible. These are currently all cleaned on an annual basis on a cyclic programme with a budget of £1.1m. There are also a number of assets that we link into that are the responsibility of Anglian Water and Severn Trent water.

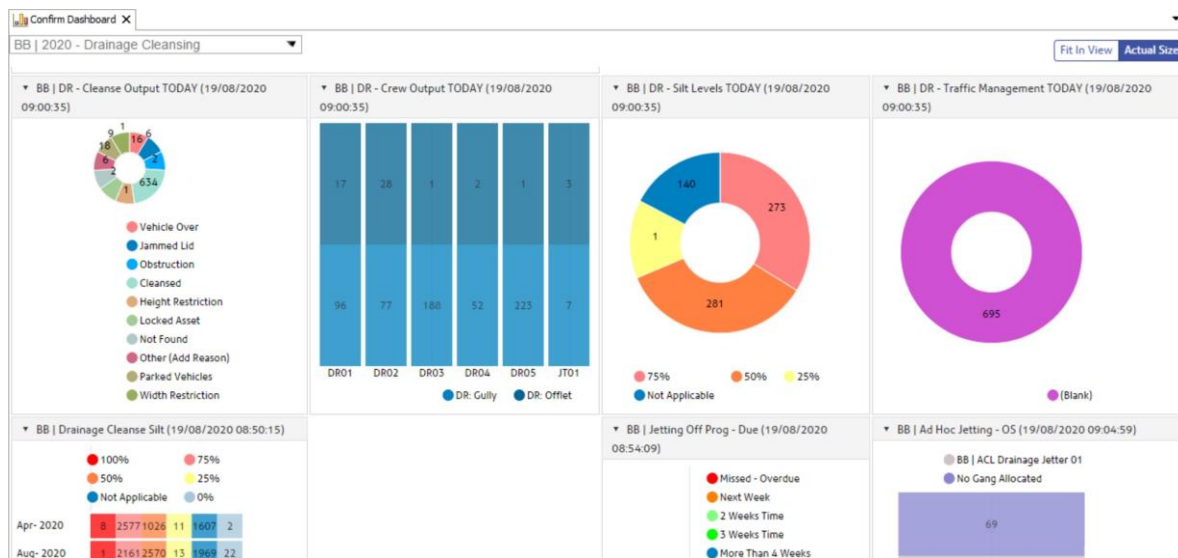
We have historically experienced issues with some drainage assets not being cleansed in accordance with agreed programmes and timescales. Due to the size and scale of the operation, it was not always possible for these to be identified and remedied in timely manner. One of the areas the new Highways Term Maintenance Contract focused on was to address this issue and Balfour Beatty have embraced the use of technology and data to provide a much improved service and we currently have six crews working across the county.

The 185,000 drainage assets are all recorded on an electronic mapping system and the contractor uses a GPS hand-held devices on site to locate each asset. This allows for direct management of performance through real-time data, as well as the gathering of information for a more strategic approach.

On site, the contractor records a number of factors for each asset, such as silt levels, broken lids, blockages, access issues, specialist traffic management requirements or changes to location. There is now 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 and deal more rapidly with dangerous apparatus.

All recoded data is sent to LCC live from the field onto our digital asset management system so officers can monitor progress and deal with any issues found or investigate why assets have not been cleansed. We have developed specific traffic management routes so that these can be done in a cost effective manner and ensure that disruptions are timed to reduce traffic delays to a minimum.

The focus this year is to complete the full programme with accurate and consistent data to enable a future targeted approach to drainage cleansing. 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; such as those on estate roads. We will however, ensure that this is fully tested and checked to ensure any problematic areas do not see a decrease in levels of cleansing.



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 cleanse. 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 eight 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.

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 17 August and a job was issued on 19 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 three additional drainage crews, subcontracted through Ajet who are a local supplier. When the off-programme jetting that Local Highways Teams can order is not 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.

Highways also has an allocation of £300,000 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, or in partnership with the internal drainage boards. These 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

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

This year there was a successful Invest to save bid approved by councillors of £2.2m (£2m works and £0.2m design) to address some of the backlog of drainage and flooding issues across Lincolnshire. A programme of works has been developed in collaboration between the Floods and Water Team, the local Highways teams and the asset teams. The agreed schemes we are now delivering vary in size from £15k to over £100k. The start to the works was delayed but additional resources have now been identified and works are being delivered with a planned spend by the end of next financial year.

<b>Drainage Funding Works 2020-21</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spend</b>
Drainage cleansing works	£ 1,100,000	£ 1,100,000
Jetting and investigation works	£ 250,000	£ 250,000
Minor drainage schemes	£ 300,000	£ 300,000
ITS Funding - Drainage works	£ 1,000,000	£ 390,000
ITS Funding - Drainage design	£ 100,000	£ 30,000
ITS Funding - Community Drainage gangs	£ 1,000,000	£ 1,000,000
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£ 3,750,000</b>	<b>£ 3,070,000</b>
<b>Drainage Funding Works 2021-22</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Spend</b>
Drainage cleansing works	£ 1,100,000	£ 1,100,000
Jetting and investigation works	£ 250,000	£ 250,000
Minor drainage schemes	£ 300,000	£ 300,000
ITS Funding - Drainage works	£ 1,000,000	£ 1,610,000
ITS Funding - Drainage design	£ 100,000	£ 170,000
ITS Funding - Community Drainage gangs	£ -	£ -
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£ 2,750,000</b>	<b>£ 3,430,000</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£ 6,500,000</b>	<b>£ 6,500,000</b>

Table showing drainage funding available for 202/21 and 2021/22 with the anticipated spend profile

## 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, as defined in Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972, were used to a material extent in the compilation of this report.

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