



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

Report to:	<b>Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>07 March 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Highways - Gully Cleansing, Drainage Repair Schemes 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 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 (LCC) is responsible for which are all visited on an annual basis for routine cleansing.

We now have live data from the field on every asset that is visited and can identify issues with performance via a mapping system. For the financial year of 2021/22 I can report the following data to date:

- 135,000 have been cleansed in the routine programme
- 12,500 have defects and require follow up work
- 3,500 have damaged ironwork and require follow up work
- The remaining assets are planned to be cleansed over the coming months.

We have 12,000 assets requiring specialist traffic management that have been arranged into specific routes which 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 several on-going minor issues that have not been dealt with historically.

All of the defects that are identified during the routine cleansing 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 helps the both the Network Resilience and Local Highways Management teams assess whether it needs immediate attention or can be planned for a later date.

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

### **Customer Transactions**

When the public report blocked drains or flooding through the Customer Service Centre or on the LCC website (integrated with Fix My Street), the Local Highways Team will 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 (next month or two) 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/or 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, and then completed. As even full jetting often doesn't solve the drainage issues, we are adapting our automatic reporting so that a "works are complete" message doesn't go out after these works as it can be misleading.
3. If more significant drainage works than off-programme jetting is required, then a job will be raised for AJet to carry out CCTV investigation, root cutting or minor repair 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 4 months maximum, 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 on the site-specific actions required.

### **Minor Drainage Improvements**

We now have an annual £600,000 budget for minor drainage improvement, which is for small scheme scale works that typically take less than a week to complete and include a variety of works as detailed below:

- 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 was increased from £300,000 to £600,000 to deal with enables problematic small schemes that occur during each period of severe weather to dealt with. We have several drainage gangs working in the County and a programme planned which will spend the full allocation this financial year.

### **Minor Works Gangs**

We continue to run a full programme of drainage investigation works by Ajet in 2021/22 who have been responding to a variety of local issues not covered by either the reactive or planned budgets.

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 recent flooding events and are not necessarily just down to blocked gullies. With changing weather patterns and an ageing drainage asset, new problems are continuously coming to light which feeds this programme.

Since April 2020 these crews have attended and dealt with 365 sites, with a further 144 designed and scheduled for the rest of the year. We will continue to adjust this programme as more detail is collected from any heavy rainfall events where remediation work is identified and agreed. For 2022/23, our contractor is expanding the number of these types of drainage gangs available in order to shorten the wait times for things to progress.

### **Development Drainage Funding**

In 2020/21 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.

We have programmed schemes to the value of £1.4m on various minor drainage schemes across the County from the £2.0m allocation, with the remaining budget planned to be spent in early 2022 on larger and more complex schemes.

Our contractors Balfour Beatty have identified additional resources for delivering these works. Additional specialist drainage engineers have now been employed to complete all investigation and design work on the more complex schemes, that our Technical Services Partnership design team is overseeing.

### **Flooding Response Data and S19 Investigations**

The benefits of the mobile version of our asset management system mean that emergency crews attending flooding as first responders can 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 to inform the prioritisation of the various levels of work identified in this report. So far in 2022 we have only received 284 drainage reports and 33 flooding reports for the whole county, which is very low for this time of year.

## **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) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Not applicable.

## **4. Background Papers**

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

This report was written by Richard Fenwick, County Highways Manager, who can be contacted on 01522 550452 or [richard.fenwick@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:richard.fenwick@lincolnshire.gov.uk).