

To: Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

By: Behdad Haratbar – Head of Programmed Work

Date: 18 April 2012

Subject: Drainage Cleansing Update

Classification: Information only

Summary: A report to the Joint Transportation Board on the progress delivering scheduled drainage cleansing - Maidstone District

Introduction

This report sets out details of the move from a reactive to scheduled programme of gully cleansing with specific reference to the progress made within the Maidstone district.

Background

There are some 335,000 highway drains (gullies) within the County's highway network. The intention had always been to move from reactive maintenance to a cyclical scheduled cleansing programme based on a balance of asset and customer needs.

Scheduled gully cleansing began on 1st September 2011, with the initial focus being on high priority areas such as flooding hotspots and strategic roads. Work is programmed on a monthly basis to reflect predefined cleansing frequencies and reports of blocked drains received from Highway Inspectors and Stewards, Members and the public. The programme is updated on a weekly basis to reflect progress and to allow for further reports of blocked drains to be incorporated within the programme wherever possible without compromising efficiency.

On the basis of the 2012/13 budget allocation, the following cleansing frequencies have been adopted:

Type of road	Description	Frequency
Flood routes	Roads known to flood on a frequent basis	Every 3 months
High speed roads	Roads with a speed limit of 70mph, for example A299 Thanet Way	Every 6 months
Strategic	Roads that provide the main connection	Every 12

Type of road	Description	Frequency
routes	between towns and villages across the county.	months
Urban and rural routes	All other roads	Every 12 to 18 months

This equates to cleansing 245,000 gullies per year at a cost of approximately £2,450,000

Progress to Date

After 7 months of scheduled cleansing, some 78,500 gullies have been cleansed countywide. In the district of Maidstone this amounts to approximately 6,500. Details of the programme delivered between September 2011 and March 2012 can be found at Appendix A.

Where it is not possible to clear all of the drains, these locations are marked, reported and are attended to as part of a planned, efficient programme. In Maidstone, it is necessary to make a return visit to approximately 11% of roads. A breakdown of the reasons for return visits and the subsequent action taken is as follows:

Reason for Re-Attendance	Follow Up Action
Additional traffic management required	The location is reprogrammed for attendance with the correct traffic management. Traffic Management needs recorded for future reference
Unable to access gullies due to road width	The location is reprogrammed for attendance by a crew with drainage rods Restricted access recorded for future reference
Gullies obstructed by parked cars	The location is reprogrammed and returned to at the earliest opportunity without compromising efficiency
Blockages in the gullies or pipes	An order is raised for the gully and adjacent pipes to be cleared and the works programmed for completion as part of a countywide programme
Broken/ jammed drain covers	An order is raised for the cover to be freed/ replaced and the works programmed for completion as part of a countywide programme

As part of the scheduled cleansing approach, additional asset information including traffic management requirements and site restrictions are being collected. Furthermore, work is continuing to implement technology which will enable the collection of supplementary information including the exact location of each gully and the volume of debris removed. By recording the volume of debris removed we will be able to determine how frequently each gully requires cleansing to ensure that it works effectively. This enhanced knowledge of the asset will lead to more effective planning and programming and deliver better value for money.

The adoption of a scheduled approach to gully has meant that 60% more gullies have been cleansed over the past 7 months than would have been done had the previous approach continued. We are able to provide improved visibility of the maintenance service and are better able to estimate the cost of delivery, with greater clarity around the level of service that can be delivered within the available budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that members of the board note the content of this report.

Background documents: None

Appendix A - Maidstone Drainage Cleansing Programme: September 2011 – March 2012

Contact officer: Kathryn Lewis, Drainage Manager Highways and Transportation

Tel: 08458 247800