
Decision Session - Executive Member for the
Environment

7 March 2016

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture & Public Realm)

Gulley Management Strategy Review

Summary

1. This report details a review of the City of York Council Gulley Management Strategy, carried out at the request of the Executive Member for the Environment, in order to identify an efficient gulley cleansing programme, based around existing operational resources, as well as a programme of further work to improve the gulley management service.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - agree the proposed gulley cleansing programme set out in paragraphs 11 to 15 below
 - agree a further programme of work as set out in paragraph 16

Reason: To improve the management of York's gulley assets.

Background

3. The 37,000 known gulley assets in the City of York Council area carry out an essential role to drain excess water from our highways. Primarily these assets contribute to the provision of a road network able to safely carry all road users but in times of excessive or extreme rainfall they can contribute to the reduction of surface water flood risk.
4. Following the 2007 floods there has been a significant increase in the awareness of surface water flood risk and we have a Lead Local Flood Authority role because of this. An effective gulley cleaning service should deliver a programme of works that addresses the safe drainage of the highway for all users and a resilient network of drains that can better cope with extreme rainfall and minimises the risk of surface water flooding away from the highway.

5. The current gully cleansing service is undertaken by the Highways department in City and Environmental Services, revenue funding is available for routine proactive and reactive cleansing by our two jetting tankers which are staffed with four personnel.
6. Any gullies that are still defective following cleansing are classed as 'non-runners' and further investigation and additional structural works are undertaken funded through capital budgets and supported by the findings of the Surface Water Management Plan. A further two operatives are allocated to these works. All works are coordinated and managed by two Flood Risk Management Engineers reporting to the Flood Risk and Asset Manager. This funding is also used to investigate wider drainage and surface water flood risk issues away from the gully network, the list of existing investigations is shown in Annex 1.
7. All assets on the gritting route network are cleansed once a year in addition to which reported defects are cleansed reactively, this is a consequence of previous reduced funding decisions where reactive cleansing is used to remedy issues when they arise.
8. City of York Council representatives lead the West Yorkshire Combined Authority drainage group and changes in the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance will identify best practice for gully maintenance.

Review Work to Date

9. This review of the gully management service was carried out to address the following strategic aims:
 - To ensure that all gullies are proactively cleansed
 - To create a risk based programme linked to highway drainage needs and surface water flood risk factors
10. Work during the 2015/16 financial year using allocated capital funding has investigated a significant proportion of the cities drainage infrastructure, this work will continue into the 2016/17 financial year. We have used this to develop an improved asset register and an initial understanding of the condition of gully assets in the city. This information will underpin future gully maintenance works, we aim to develop an intelligent programme based on asset needs not solely driven by previous inspection dates and frequencies. This will support the expectations of the Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice that will be revised later this year.

Proposals

11. Our existing programme prioritises cleansing in accordance with highway drainage need in that it utilises the winter maintenance programme to identify the sections of highway that are most susceptible to the impacts of being poorly drained. There are 13,000 identified gullies along this network.
12. Work has been carried out to identify the additional risks on the highway network associated with surface water flood risk. These risks are set out in Annex 2. There are 1,200 gullies associated with these locations. It is proposed that these should now also be cleansed annually.
13. In order to create a programme of proactive cleansing of all gulley assets, in line with the first strategic review aim, it is proposed that a programme is created covering a number of years:
 - All gritting and flood risk assets to be cleansed annually
 - All other assets to be cleansed on an 8 year cycle
14. Reactive cleansing will remain important to address in year issues and it is proposed to maintain £50,000 – or one quarter – of the budget to ensure that this continues.
15. A private cleansing service is currently operated. This brings in a small surplus but at the cost of preventing a clear and considered deployment of resources. This has impacts on the delivery of the routine gulley cleansing programme. It is intended to continue with the internal gulley cleansing service for other CYC departments – which operates on a recharge basis – but it is proposed to cease the private cleansing service. This will have minimal impact on our customers due to the wide range of private companies that can carry out this service at competitive rates.
16. It is recommended that a wider review is brought to the Executive Member at a later date to identify an effective and efficient service based upon the ongoing asset management work, linkages with partner authorities and will be underpinned by the needs of the Well Maintained Highways Code of Practice. Our current review work with neighbouring authorities and our benchmarking activities with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority will be used to develop the review and its aims.

Consultation

17. This review has been carried out in response to a range of events and an increase in reactive maintenance needs for the gulley service. The review and subsequent report are the first stages of a process to change current operational practices and no further consultation has been undertaken at this stage.

Options and Analysis

18. The principal options open to the Executive Member are to:
- support the findings of the reviewed gulley management programme set out above and the recommendation for further work to develop the service, or
 - change or add to the recommendations following which further work will be undertaken by officers in the next stage of review and brought back to the Executive Member

Council Plan

19. The review of the gulley management service will deliver an enhanced and improved gulley cleansing service, this has strong links with the expectations of a Focus on Frontline Services and will aid the delivery of these aspects of the Council Plan.

Implications

20. **Financial:** Current budgets:
- | | |
|---|------------------|
| Gulley cleansing (proactive & reactive) | £190,000 revenue |
| Gulley investigation and drainage defects | £200,000 capital |
21. The private gulley cleansing service currently brings in c. £10,000 to the department; this loss in income will be factored into the wider review that is currently being carried out.
22. **Equalities:** The review of the gulley management service has highlighted a range of ways in which the gulley cleansing service can be delivered to address wider benefits and will lead to a positive improvement for all residents and businesses in the council area.
23. There are no human resources, legal, crime and disorder, property, IT or other implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

24. Further work to address all risks associated with the final recommended gulley management programme will be carried out as part of the further work recommended in this report.

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**Report
Approved**



Date 23/02/16

Wards Affected:

All



Annexes

Annex 1 List of Current Drainage Investigations

Annex 2 Assessment of Surface Water Flood Risk Priorities

Background Paper

List of additional streets for Gulley Cleansing

Abbreviations

CYC – City of York Council