

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)



DATE: 21 JUNE 2019
SUBJECT: Public Question: Whyteleafe roundabout (A22 Godstone Road) flooding
DIVISION: Caterham Valley

Background

Whyteleafe Village Council requested in April 2019 that the soak-away and gullies at Whyteleafe Roundabout (A22, Godstone Road, CR3 0EE) be cleared as the frequency and severity of temporary highway flooding had escalated over prior months.

Whenever the highway floods, it presents a danger to drivers and adds to the amount of congestion particularly during the busiest times of the day. The sections of road prone to flood are shown in the images below.

In response to our request for action (ref no 1187844), the Local Highways Officer stated firstly:

"I have checked the County's highway drainage details and can confirm there is a soak-away as you have identified in the middle of the roundabout. There is no set cleaning programmes for soak-aways but as this soak-away is located within a wetspot location it therefore does receive the highest frequency of cleaning with our records showing it was last cleaned in January 2019.

The gullies around this roundabout were last cleaned in May 2018 and are currently scheduled for cleaning once per maintenance year and I would assume they would be addressed around the same time this year although the new cleaning programme has yet to be issued to the Local Highway Office.

Regretfully due to the limited access to the specialist equipment we need to undertake soak-away and gully cleaning, the Local Highway Office are unable to supplement the current cleaning regime"

In response to an email from the Village Council repeating that a problem exists and that the gullies have not been cleared for over a year the Highways Officers added:

"the team that oversee the gully cleaning contract are currently reviewing the cleaning schedule and therefore dates are not available to the Local Highway Office at this time.

The cleaning criteria may not remain the same as in previous years. If there are changes, it could mean that the gullies are cleared anytime within the 2019/20 maintenance period. I would hope these gullies will be addressed earlier in this maintenance year than later but regretfully the Local Highway Office have no control over this"

The Council understands the challenges facing Highways Officers during these stricken times but a lack of a coherent and effective plan for this particular site is hard to comprehend.

Question:

Clearly, the frequency of clearing around this location (Wetspot TAN065) is inadequate and thereby causing a danger and inconvenience to the public so Whyteleafe Village Council would like to know:

a) will resources be urgently directed to this location to remedy the current problem in light of the evidence provided and

b) will the Local Committee agree to a substantive review of the frequency of gulley and soak-away clearing for this particularly site, in this financial year, so that an adequate program of clearing can be agreed and implemented in future financial years (and published for monitoring purposes).

Image 1:*Image 2*

Example of flooding several hours after a period of heavy rain on 13 May 2019

One vehicle negotiating the flood water with the following vehicle having to take avoiding action due to the erratic behaviour of the first.

Response:

1. The gullies on and around the Whyteleafe roundabout were cleaned as part of the cyclical gully cleaning programme on 13th and 15th May 2019. The contractor recorded that silt levels before cleaning were at 50%, with one gully on the north-west side of the central island at 75%. All gullies were recorded as operational on arrival and operation on leaving. As noted in the background information above, the soakaway was cleaned in January 2019.

The local highway office only has access to specialist equipment required to clean gullies and soakaways once every 6 weeks. This resource is used across the district and the list of sites that are awaiting investigation far exceeds the level of resource available.

Water accumulates on the carriageway during periods of heavy rain which suggests that the issue is related to the capacity of the existing surface drainage system. However, this is a temporary issue and the water dissipates after a period of time. Signs that the road is liable to flooding have been installed on the A22 on both approaches to the roundabout to warn drivers of possible standing water on the carriageway.

The Whyteleafe roundabout is registered as a wetspot and scores 84. The wetspot score is made up of a number of factors such as flood frequency, extent and depth, road congestion, speed and priority, impact and property flooding. A high scoring wetspot would score 150+, a medium score is 50-150 and a low score would be less than 50. All current medium and high scoring wetspots are reviewed at least annually, with this wetspot last being reviewed in November 2018.

There are a number of wetspots in Tandridge that score considerably higher than Whyteleafe roundabout. Work is prioritised at those wetspots which score highest, which means that this wetspot is unlikely to be prioritised for works in the near future.

2. The frequency of gully cleaning under the countywide cyclical programme has been optimised by looking at the priority of the road and the average recorded silt levels of the road to determine a suitable frequency. As a result of this optimisation, the gullies at the Whyteleafe roundabout have been assigned an annual cyclical cleanse frequency. The gully cleaning data shows that the gullies are operational, with average annual silt accumulations of 50%. Given that issue with water on the carriageway occurs after periods of heavy rainfall, additional cleaning of the gullies is unlikely to resolve this problem.

The divisional Member has a capital maintenance allocation which could be used to carry out a drainage investigation and capital works at Whyteleafe roundabout. The divisional member could decide to discuss with the Tandridge Maintenance Engineer the feasibility of using his allocation to fund this work and if it is a priority in his division. It should be noted that the capital allocation cannot be used for only investigation, which is a revenue function. Following investigation, capital works would need to be carried out and completed this financial year. Until the investigation has been completed it is not known what, if anything, could be done or the cost of any solution identified. Also, the cost of the traffic management that would be required for carrying out work on the A22 would need to be met from the member's capital maintenance allocation. Officers and the divisional member could also work with the village council to explore whether the village council would be able to support any work, for example through match funding.

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