

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)****DATE: 6 DECEMBER 2019****SUBJECT: Member Question****DIVISION: Warlingham****Background**

I'm sure like many Members, I have received an overwhelming number of complaints relating to drain and drain grip issues from across my division. Whilst I appreciate that we have seen torrential wet weather recently, which has not helped the matter, the drains in the division of Warlingham are not in a good condition and long term issues need to be resolved.

Part of our challenge in Tandridge is that we are extremely hilly and leafy in comparison to the rest of Surrey. A further challenge is that due to the way the drainage contract is managed and the location of the equipment, it is harder to react quickly to immediate needs due to travelling time.

We need to keep on top of drain blockages in order to deal with them swiftly and agilely. Failure to clear the gullies long term could result in water pooling in the roads and freezing causing damage to the road surface and result in more cost to repair.

I was disappointed to learn this week when I asked on behalf of one of my Parish Councils whether they could pay for their own contractor to deal with the 9 (out of 12) defective gullies on Station Road Woldingham that the Surrey contract prevents this and Parishes are unable to use their funds to improve the situation.

We need a resolution to these issues in Warlingham division and across the rest of Tandridge.

I would like to ask:

- a) How can we get more routine drain cleaning resource directed at Tandridge in the next month to clear the back log before the worst of winter kicks in?
- b) Can we reassess which gullies are cleaned once and which are done more frequently with input from Councillors and set up a new annualised drain cleaning plan?
- c) Can we get a disproportionate drain cleaning resource directed at Tandridge due to geographical need?
- d) Can we have a dedicated additional resource in Tandridge to address the issues that need resolving (timeframe to resolve all within 12 months)?
- e) Can we change the contract so additional drain cleaning contractors can be paid for and used by Parish Councils?
- f) In the long term can the Council put more money into drains given the vital role they play in keeping the road safe and well maintained?

ITEM 7

Response:

- a) The Local Area Highway Team has the ability to buy in additional resources from the central drainage contractor. However there is limited funding available for all locally funded maintenance works in Tandridge and this funding has already been committed on other works.
- b) The frequency of the cleaning of gullies is optimised based on silt level information that is collected as part of the cyclic gully cleaning programme. There is a client jetter that is centrally funded, and available for local priorities one week in every eleven. An additional week has recently been made available to each Borough and District. However there are limitations to this resource, as any traffic management that is required to enable works to be carried out needs to be funded locally, and it requires officer time to administer and supervise.
- c) The optimised system is driven by the information obtained on silt levels. Therefore local need is already being catered for within the cyclic cleaning system.
- d) The client jetter resource has recently been increased by one week in Tandridge, and is available for local priorities. Unfortunately there are more sites in Tandridge where there are drainage issues than the availability of the client jetter is able to address.
- e) Additional gully cleaning resource can be paid for under the existing contract, using the same contractor. What the contract does not allow is for other contractors to be used, as this can cause confusion with the optimisation system and collection of data.
- f) Decisions on budget setting are made by the County Council's Cabinet and are set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

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