

Area North Committee – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008

## 8. Review of Gully Clearing Services in Area North

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### Purpose of the report

To provide some background information, to support Councillors to consider the issues relating to gully clearing arrangements in Area North.

The presentation of this report will take the form of a discussion, with Councillors invited to discuss opportunities for improving local services to residents, and to better understand the difficulties faced by service providers and residents in addressing the problem.

### Recommendation

That Members consider any particular issues affecting their wards, relating to localised flooding or gully cleaning, and to make recommendations for potential service improvements, if identified.

### Background

Members will recall that at the February meeting of the Area North Committee, following discussion of an item on Land Drainage and Flooding Issues, presented by the area Engineer, it was agreed to invite the SCC Portfolio Holder for Highways, the Assistant Highway Services Manager and the SSDC Head of Streetscene to discuss the financing and County Council policy on drainage issues, with a view to closer working to help alleviate localised flooding within Area North.

### Information in support of this discussion

- **Area North Committee**

Extract from Area North Committee Minute – February 2008:

“Members expressed concern that the frequency of clearing of gullies and jetting of roadside drains was affecting localised highway flooding. It was noted that this service was carried out by Somerset County Council (SCC) and that the Assistant Highway Services Manager was due to present his 6 monthly report to the Committee in March 2008. It was proposed to also invite the SCC Portfolio Holder for Highways to discuss the financing and County Council policy on drainage issues, together with the District Council’s Head of Streetscene to consider joint working on this issue. Members were in full agreement with this and the Committee Administrator undertook to invite Councillor Tony Shire and Chris Cooper, Head of Streetscene to the March meeting of the Committee.”

## Area West Gully Review – Scrutiny Working Group

The list below is an extract from the record of a Scrutiny Commission to look at gully cleaning in Area West in 2006.

Information on the progress of the suggestions made, will be provided at the meeting.

Summary of suggestions for future service provision were:-

- one point of contact be established to report problems concerning gully clearing;
- a review be undertaken of the methods of deposit/disposal of detritus cleared from gullies, the view having been expressed that disposal would be preferable;
- communication with Parish/Town Councils regarding the programme of gully clearing be enhanced to assist the local council in trying to get parked cars moved so that they did not obstruct gullies on days when work was to be carried out;
- a guide/map be provided to parishes to enable the easy identification and location of gullies to help them in feeding back information on the condition of gullies;
- there was a need to ensure that requests for information or for an update on the current status of a problem were responded to;
- a comparison be made of the cost of dealing with ordinary call-outs to deal with gully drainage problems and the cost if the same work was carried out locally by a lengthsman;
- a review be carried out of the efficiency of the District Council's machinery for sweeping/trimming verges including where and when it was used;
- the need for better co-ordination of the work in clearing detritus from the roads and the clearing of gullies was identified.

## Corporate Priorities

- To deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers
- To promote a balanced natural and built environment

**Background Papers:** *Notes of Scrutiny Working Group established to review gully clearing services across Area West - 4<sup>th</sup> April 2006*  
*Area North Minutes – February 2008*

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