

## Appendix A

Highway Questions raised at Area North Committee 26<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Question	Reply
One point of contact be established to report problems concerning gully clearing.	Highway Service Contact Centre 0845 345 9155
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.	The disposal of detritus is carried out in accordance with Environmental Agency requirements whereby disposal is to a licensed landfill site after allowing the material to drain and reduce the water content.
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.	The Area Highway Manager produces weekly reports to all Parishes & District Councillors on current Highways work. Each Parish should have a designated Councillor to liaise with the Highway Authority.
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.	All gullies have been mapped & it is the Highways intention to provide a copy of their area to each Parish.
There was a need to ensure that requests for information or for an update on the current status of a problem were responded to.	The Area Highway Manager produces weekly reports to all Parishes & District Councillors on current Highways work. They were also looking at providing feedback to customers complaints.
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.	It is cheaper to have a lengthsman carry out the clearing of an isolated gully in the first instance, if there is a lengthsman service operating in that area.
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.	See reply below from Chris Cooper, Head of Streetscene, SSDC.
The need for better co-ordination of the work in clearing detritus from the roads and the clearing of gullies was identified	Each Parish should have a designated Councillor who liaised with the Highway Authority. This worked particularly well in Shepton Beauchamp.
Have any studies been undertaken on the expense of water damage to road surfaces in relation to the cost of buying a new gully cleaner?	No, none.
Is SSDC benefiting from the Highway savings due to the improved streetcleaning service	Any savings achieved within South Somerset due to the improved streetcleaning service were ringfenced to be spent elsewhere on Highway services within the SSDC area.

## **1 - The effectiveness of sweepers**

It is true that sweepers are mostly effective when sweeping against a hard edge (kerb, wall, etc) - obviously they leave a clean 'channel' we don't sweep against soil banks (unless they are collapsing over the road) as you just erode the bank as you sweep and the bank re-collapses over the road. Instead we use the centre brush (fits under the sweeper) and sweep the middle of the road, if this is required. The sweepers can also be fitted with a weed ripping brush to remove heavy accumulations of weed and soil - although this is slow as we remove such a weight of debris. To my knowledge there is no 'magic machine' that would improve on this!

## **2 - Where and when the machinery is used**

This is day - to - day business and constantly gets reviewed to see how to maximise its benefit. We have started a fundamental look at sweeper operations vs mileage travelled to identify further improvements. This review will also cover hours and times worked by the drivers for maximum benefit. When we complete this review, we'll monitor and review again, etc, etc

## **3 -Country verges**

The issue here related to mowing country verges rather than high amenity cuts in urban areas which is what we do. The issue at the time I believe followed the change in cutting regime carried out by Highways reducing mowing from 2 cuts to 1 cut. We had a reduction in contribution from Highways for verge maintenance, but reduced one of our other highway maintenance operations rather than reduce mowing in order to keep the quality of service to the customer. I don't remember any change resulting in maintenance of country verges following this - the problem simply hasn't 'grown back'!

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