



**BLACKBURN**  
*with*  
**DARWEN**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Highway Maintenance  
Gully Cleaning Strategy**

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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# Gully Cleaning Strategy

## Introduction

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, as the Highway Authority, has a statutory duty to maintain the Highway in a safe condition. Much of the damage caused to a highway network is a result of the actions of water, be it erosion damage or the actions of freezing and thawing. The Highway Authority must therefore implement measures to ensure that it operates a sufficient and adequate highway drainage system, in order to minimise these effects. It is essential therefore, that highway gullies are fit for purpose.

## Strategy Statement

This document provides the framework for the Highway Gully Cleaning operations of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. There are limited resources available which need to be managed efficiently in order to ensure that the maximum number of gullies are cleaned, and the drainage network is maintained as efficiently as possible.

## Aim

The Council aim to clean all gullies situated on the adopted highway network within the Borough at least once every 5 years.

## Definitions

### Critical Gullies

Critical gullies are further defined by two classifications.

**Grade 1:** Any gully which if blocked ( or not working) would result or contribute to the flooding of a property is classified as Grade 1.

**Grade 2:** Any gully which if blocked (or not working) would result or contribute to ponding of 25% or more of the carriageway width, or significant ponding of a pedestrian area or footway is classified as Grade 2.

### Non-critical Gullies

Any gully which if blocked (or not working) **does not** result or contribute to the following problems, and the next working gully downstream is capable of taking the additional flow, is classed as non-critical:

- Flooding of property;
- Ponding of 25% or excess of the carriageway; and
- Ponding of a pedestrian area or footway.

## Maintenance Regimes

### Planned Maintenance

An annual gully cleansing schedule will be produced at the beginning of each financial year (April). The schedule will be drawn up with the aim of ensuring that every gully will be attended to at least once every 5 years. To ensure that there is an element of maintenance throughout the network each year, the schedule will be based on the premise that each ward will be attended for an average of 2 weeks per year.

In amber or red flood warning event, if possible within the time constraints imposed, all critical gullies will be inspected and cleaned as necessary prior to the event.

## Reactive Maintenance

Gullies reported by members of the public or Councillors, as being blocked, will be inspected within 10 working days. If it is a Grade 1 critical gully and a flood warning is in place case it will be inspected within 2 hours. As a result of the inspection, if work is considered to be necessary the following timescales will apply:

- Grade 1 critical gullies will be cleared within 10 working days unless a flood warning is in place in which case it will be cleared within 2 working days, where resources permit.
- Grade 2 critical gullies will be cleared within 10 working days.
- Non-critical gullies will be cleared as a part of the planned maintenance when the gully wagon is in the same Ward.

If a gully is found to be defective, a repair request will be registered as discussed in Non-working Gullies.

## Footway Gullies, Back Street Gullies & Other Assets

Critical gullies will be attended to the timescales above.

Non-critical gullies will be included in a low level maintenance programme which will be implemented as resources allow.

## Non-working Gullies

Gullies found to be not working after being cleansed will have their connection jetted for a maximum of 10 minutes to attempt to clear any blockage.

If the connection is cleared there will be no further action.

If the connection remains blocked, a repair will be requested with highway maintenance. If the blocked connection is from a critical gully, the repair will be actioned within 10 working days. Non-critical connections will be added to the highway maintenance programme and actioned on a priority basis.

## Severe Weather

Immediately prior to and during severe weather events, planned maintenance maybe suspended to allow resources to concentrate on the critical areas. In these instances the Council will endeavour to maximise the effects of the gully cleaning operation, to prevent flooding of properties.

During severe weather events such as flooding and snow, the planned maintenance programme will be postponed, in order that the resources can be used to undertake the required clearing works associated with these types of event.

This course of action is likely to extend the period of the 5 years cleansing cycle, but the Council will endeavour to keep to the 5-year cycle.

## Rationale

The number of recorded gullies within the Borough means that a 5 year cleansing cycle is the best that can be achieved with the resources available. Any prolonged periods of severe weather, be it flooding or snow, would in all likelihood extend this 5-year cycle.

## Review

This strategy will be reviewed every 2 years, taking into account the resources, technologies available at the time and additional assets from new developments.

# Appendix

## Reactive Maintenance Flow Chart

