

Environmental Information Regulations – Response - 26976

I made a FOI regarding your obligation on Inspecting & clearing kerbside drain gullies , in your response there was NO mention of inspections so please clarify if you carry out any Inspections ?.

The cleansing visit for gullies includes inspection and recording findings onto our asset record. All streets also have a more general inspection by Highways Assessment Officer (HAO) on a yearly, 6-monthly or in busy town centres, monthly basis. This does not focus on checking inside gullies but HAOs can report visible issues with drains if they come across them.

The gully cleansing crews can record a range of findings such as silt level, operational or not operational on arrival, operational or not operational on leaving, slow running, unable to cleanse due to parked vehicles or other obstructions or where the grating cover is stuck fast or broken.

Cyclic cleansing of gullies is a quick routine activity; the crews target is to cleanse around 120 units per day. Cyclic crews do not have the equipment or time to carry out more complex works such as jetting, freeing up stuck gratings, digging out very hard material that cannot be extracted by their vacuum hose. The cyclic crews record status, so we know what percentage of our gullies are not operational at any time, but we have to prioritise which sites require further action most urgently.

Over the past 2yrs XXXX reported several blocked kerbside drain gullies , your response, don't meet criteria , So 153,000 drain gullies across suffolk according to SSC statement , also in the statement 111,000 approx cleared each year, so why are there still blocked Gullies in Newmarket?

Where we receive reports about blocked gullies the Highways Assessment officers will assess the situation and where it meets the criteria in our Highways Maintenance Operational Plan (HMOP) they will arrange reactive jetting. Some issues may not meet these intervention levels in those cases no immediate action will be taken.

Where reactive jetting is arranged, they use a larger higher-pressure vehicle and include jetting along the pipes, and this can often relieve blockages beyond the reach of a standard gully truck.

In some cases where the reactive crew identify more complex issues such as pipe collapse these cannot be resolved by reactive jetting and may remain blocked despite the jetting. If the flooding is serious those are put forward for potential future drainage improvements, which are carried out on a planned and prioritised basis depending upon the impact of the flood waters. It can be several years before funding and resources allow us to tackle less urgent drain repairs.

The Suffolk HMOP can be found via the following link.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/v2.2-hmop-2021-final-live-october-20233.pdf>

There is also a quick guide giving more information about our cyclic and reactive services.
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/cyclic-and-reactive-drainage-quick-guide.pdf>

When are the Gullies going to be cleared in your work schedule. In closing please supply dates the Gullies in Nat Flatman St, All Saints Rd , Granary Rd & Vicarage Rd Newmarket were last cleared.

With regard to next visits to Newmarket those will be in August 2026 for gullies on an annual cycle; August 2027 for gullies on the biennial cycle.

Nat Flatman Street

- Visited 18/08/2025 (a gully had a vehicle parked over)
- Return visit to target the remaining gully. 24/08/2025 (unit still parked over)

All Saints Road

- Visited 17/08/2025 (5 gullies reported as vehicle over)
- Return visit 24/08/2025 all 5 cleansed.

Granary Road

- Visited 14/08/2025 and 18/08/2025 (a gully had a vehicle parked over)
- Return visit to target the remaining gully. 24/08/2025 (unit still parked over)

Vicarage Road

- Visited 17/08/2025 (2 gullies reported as vehicle over)
- Return visit 24/08/2025 (1 cleansed 1 reported as stuck cover)