

**County Council Update  
from County Cllr Anne Wight  
March 2020**

## **Freight Strategy Update**

The Freight Strategy Public Engagement is now running from 19 February until 14 March, 2020.

Attached is a link to the latest news regarding the repair plans for the Brownlow Bridge in Ivinghoe, along with a link to the Freight Strategy survey itself.

Please encourage all residents and stakeholders to participate in this informal consultation as we are hoping for a robust response.

There is a display in Ivinghoe Hub and we have a few hard copies and proposal plans available at the Beacons Community Library for residents who may not have access to the internet.

**Link to news article:**

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/news/lorry-restriction-proposals-for-ivinghoe-freight-zone/>

**Freight Strategy public consultation link:**

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/transport-plans-and-policies/freight-strategy/ivinghoe-area-freight-engagement/>

## **Coronavirus Update**

Just to remind residents concerned about Coronavirus, the current advice for anyone concerned about the virus is on the government website on the link below, which is updated daily.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

**Transport for Bucks —Extreme Rainfall and Flooding**

As several residents have contacted me with issues regarding local gullies and surface water flooding, I appreciate their patience since we are experiencing the worst flooding in 100 years nationally. While our teams are trying to resolve the most urgent issues first—particularly with fallen trees across roads as well as local flooding from recent storms—unfortunately they are currently unable to prioritise some of the maintenance and repair works as a result.

Looking longer term, however, I can say that strategic improvements are already under way and so I thought it might be a good time to update residents on those.

As some of you may know, Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) Network Improvement Team had a busy year in 2019, particularly in one of its key areas of work - drainage improvement schemes. In all, 29 schemes were included in the countywide programme for 2019 – 20 with the team on target to complete this programme in this financial year.

The TfB team work very closely with the Buckinghamshire County Council Strategic Flooding Team on all schemes, aiming to increase capacity and efficiency of drainage.

Ironically the drainage programme was hampered by extreme periods of heavy rainfall that can be attributed to climate change. Scientists say that as the world has warmed by 0.7C, with the atmosphere able to hold 4% more moisture, which means more potential rain. The persistent wet weather started in mid-August and continued throughout the latter part of 2019, with a series of downpours in late November bringing one of the wettest weeks in the last 50 years, causing major disruption.

Over the past few years and with the threat of increasing heavy rainfall, the TfB team developed a matrix to prioritise proposed drainage schemes. The flood management team also advised on flood risk areas in order to include schemes to tackle flooding before they become an issue to residents.

The matrix is completed to score each proposed scheme against a set of criteria which includes road safety, property damage, local reports and time weighting. From this matrix a rolling programme of works is developed with approximately 30 schemes prioritised for delivery each year.

What else has TfB been doing to tackle the wet weather and flooding?

As well as the 29 drainage schemes the highway maintenance teams carry out a range of activities including routine gully clearing to keep the drainage flowing.

Over the last few months of extreme rainfall, it has been a challenge to keep on top of the significant additional reactive work of clearing sites where flooding or standing surface water has been identified. Often, problems lie within

underground drainage pipes, or more recently the issue of a lot of water trying to enter the drainage at once, overwhelming the system.

Even if sufficient capacity exists, gullies and pipes can also become blocked with debris, especially during autumn leaf fall. An additional machine was brought in by TfB for a twelve week period in order to supplement the efforts of the three full time teams in the depots in the North and South of the County. Additionally, new gully machines have been purchased to upgrade existing ones, operating from the depots at Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Amersham. This will double the number of gully emptiers active on the network between April and June, combatting the effects of the winter period and preparing the network for the autumn and winter weather of 2020/21.

A new asset management software system (GullySMART) is now in use to manage over 79,000 gullies in Buckinghamshire. The system combines mobile technology with mapping data, available on a hand held device and building a forward looking profile of required maintenance based upon historical knowledge of attendance and condition. This innovative technology will enable TfB to build a picture of the condition of the gully data, which will ultimately lead to a more focussed 'needs based' approach to the gully-clearing programme, concentrating on those gullies that need more frequent cleansing.

Mark Shaw Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation keeps a keen eye on all work in progress to manage flooding and said: "I am satisfied that this two pronged approach to gully clearing plus major schemes to address the more problem areas of highway flooding will have a significant impact however, we can't get complacent. I am pleased that we will also be adding an additional £1 million to the routine gully clearing programme from April 2020. We will have an extra 3 gully machines on the network between April and June giving us 6 machines to get ahead of ourselves this year, should we experience another wet autumn."

Hopefully that will help to resolve some of the issues we are experiencing in Ivinghoe Division with flooding and surface water going forward.

## **Local Elections**

All local elections have now been postponed until May 2021 due to the Coronavirus situation. The new Buckinghamshire Council is still meant to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, with all currently elected members of the county and all four district councils carrying on for the time being as joint members of the new council. We will keep parish councils informed of any further developments as to how this new council will function once more details become available.