

**HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**  
**COMMITTEE – 6 JUNE 2024**

**QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 34**

**Question asked by Mr John Mclelland**

“The underpass at the north end of Main Street, Lockington, where the road passes below the A50, was built during the construction of the new rail line to the Rail Freight Interchange, part of the East Midlands Gateway development.

The original access from Lockington to the A50 was closed, to make room for the new freight railway line, the road now links to Hemlock Way, north of the underpass, leading to the Hilton Hotel and Junction 24 of the M1.

The design of the underpass is built into the concrete casting of the underpass framework. The road dips below the underpass and is drained from a single drain point, leading to a pump system at the southwest corner of the underpass. From here the water is pumped to the north side of the A50 towards the M1.

The design was agreed between Roxhill (the developer at the time) and LCC Highways and we believe would not comply with the existing LCC highway design rules.

Since the implementation of the new road there have been annual, if not more frequent - incidents of flooding at the underpass. After regular requests by the Parish Council remedial work was completed in early 2023. Other actions were put in place to improve the management of the drain system. The frequency for routine cleaning of the gullies was changed from 20 months to 10 months. The pumps were put onto an annual maintenance schedule.

On 28 April 2024, the underpass flooded to such a depth that it became hazardous for vehicles to pass through it. This was reported online to Leicestershire County Council as Enquiry Reference 952218. On 9 May 2024, a complaint was submitted online to LCC because of the lack of update to the original report. On 10 May 2024, the Highway Control Manager replied, saying that a number of enquiries had been received and that works had been raised to resolve the issue.

Tankers attended the site on 16 May 2024; the water was cleared and road was finally re-opened some 19 days after the start of the incident.

As a Parish Council we are concerned that this latest issue did not receive the priority that it deserved. If the problem had been addressed sooner and more effectively, the road could've been cleared quickly and damage to vehicles and personal distress could have been avoided, as well as the obvious inconvenience to regular users of the route.

If flooding does occur in future and the road has to be closed, more effective measures should be put in place to prevent vehicles from attempting to drive through the underpass. We are also concerned that, despite the remedial work last year, this underpass remains vulnerable to flooding and we feel that more active measures could be put in place to address this.

Given the weakness of the design and the resulting regular flooding of this new road since constructed, what additional steps will LCC Highways take to further improve and resolve this situation and its impact on the amenity and safety of the local community?"

### **Reply by the Chairman**

A combination of the drainage design and pump failure has led to flooding issues at this location. The 'gully' in question, which is located at the lowest point on the road, is not a conventional highway gully, as conventional highway gullies have a sump at the base of the pot which retains any silt and debris. This gully has been 'pipe formed' in the concrete structure of the under bridge and, as such, does not have a sump, therefore, due to the build-up of silt, is prone to blocking.

Currently, two pumps operate daily to manage the surface water and groundwater runoff from the surrounding area. The operation of the pumps and gully under the bridge are the main concerns at this location. When there is considerable and prolonged rainfall pump failure (overheating) can occur due to the sheer volume of water coming into the system. Therefore, when the pumps do fail (which happens occasionally) and the gully becomes blocked with silt, there is no way of clearing the blockage which then leads to flooding.

In 2023, the Council installed additional gullies on either side of the bridge with the purpose of collecting the silt, thus reducing the risk of blockages in the drainage system. At the same time, the Council investigated the pipe gully to determine if a sump or more gullies could be added at that location. Due to the concrete construction neither of these options were possible.

The frequency for servicing the two pumps has been increased from annually to a six-monthly service schedule to ensure they are fully operational. The gullies at this location are on the Priority 1 schedule, meaning they are attended every 10 months.

It is worth noting that this site did not flood during Storm Henk in January 2024 when many other areas across the county unfortunately did.

In conclusion, while further civils works are not feasible as a precautionary measure, the Council has installed advance flood warning signs and will further consider adding water depth gauges as it has at other locations.

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