

Culvert Maintenance and Flood Resilience

Motion in the name of Councillors Bernstein, Lancaster, McBriar and Vernon.

Culverts across the Borough of Bury play a critical role in managing surface water, directing watercourses, and reducing the risk of localised flooding. Recent years have seen increasing incidents of heavy rainfall and extreme weather patterns, placing additional pressure on the borough's drainage infrastructure.

It is acknowledged that the Capital funded investment into the Flood Defences around the Borough (eg Dumers Lane in Radcliffe) have proved beneficial however, ~~it is noted that there is an~~ many communities continue to experience flooding concerns linked to blockages, silt build-up, and inconsistent maintenance cycle of local culverts ~~maintenance~~. Residents regularly report uncertainty over when specific culverts were last inspected or cleared, making it difficult to identify risk levels or take preventative action.

~~Although~~ Bury Council has a statutory responsibility as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to manage and mitigate flood risk, and ensuring clear, proactive and timely maintenance of culverts is essential for community resilience and public safety ~~it is acknowledged the vast majority of culverts are riparian owned and thus would require the cooperation of these owners.~~

This Council Believes:

- That regular and transparent maintenance of culverts is vital to prevent flooding, protect homes and businesses, and ensure infrastructure readiness before periods of high rainfall.
- That residents should have confidence that drainage assets across the borough are being proactively managed, with clear records available ~~wherever practical~~.
- That establishing a routine annual summer clearance of all culverts would reduce emergency call-outs, lower repair costs, and increase winter preparedness.

This Council Resolves:

- To undertake and publish a full audit of all culverts ~~within the Borough of Bury~~, including their location, condition, ownership status, and most recent inspection or maintenance date.
- To ~~undertake a communications campaign to remind all riparian owners of their responsibilities in maintaining culverts~~ ~~introduce a standardised annual maintenance~~

~~cycle, ensuring that each culvert is inspected and cleared during the summer months, ahead of the winter rainfall season.~~

- To confirm and maintain the maintenance cycle ahead of amber weather warnings of cleaning trash greens

- To request that the relevant Cabinet Member undertakes a feasibility study (to include the current data gathering exercise on gully silt levels) to consider the purchase of further gully cleaning vehicles to assist in dealing with cleaning culverts

- ~~- To develop a publicly accessible maintenance schedule so residents and councillors can clearly see when culverts in their area were last inspected and when they are next due.~~

- ~~- To request that the relevant Cabinet Member and officers work with the Environment Agency, United Utilities and local communities to identify high risk sites and prioritise them for early action within the annual cycle.~~