



Asset Management Case Study

Local Authority	Nottingham, Derby and Leicester City Councils
Region	East Midlands
Sector	Highways
Theme	Highways Asset Management
Benefits	Reducing the impact of urban flooding through improved knowledge and management of the highways drainage system.
Publication Date	November 2010

Key Lessons

- Key to managing delivery of a multi authority project is establishment of a project management approach with a Project Board and project plan, commitment by each council through senior officer membership of the Project Board, a lead authority and a single project coordinator.
- External expertise and capacity from a project support consultant is helping to drive the project, but dedication of internal staff time is essential and also provides development opportunities.
- Data collection and analysis systems should be extensively evaluated before purchase.
- A joint project provides opportunities for fostering good relationships between authorities on other matters.
- The 3 cities are typical of many local authorities who have inadequate records of their highway drainage network.

Summary

Nottingham, Derby and Leicester have similar problems with urban flooding and inadequate knowledge of their highway drainage systems and of other watercourses. The project to share expertise, pool costs, collect drainage inventory, and improve drainage maintenance will improve identification of flooding hotspots and development of drainage improvement programmes to reduce flooding.

It is intended that a guide to urban drainage management will be produced which will be of use in all predominantly urban areas.

Background

The three cities have similar problems with urban flooding, inadequate knowledge of their drainage systems and limited drainage expertise following loss of drainage agencies several years ago. Flash flooding has occurred in all three cities in recent years, not necessarily near watercourses, and the causes are not yet fully understood.

Drivers for Change

The desire to reduce urban flooding through improved knowledge and management of drainage systems the need to produce effective surface water management plans and improved service provision.

Improvement Action

The joint 'Element 2' submission to DfT describes in detail the authorities' proposals for collection of targeted drainage inventory and for analysis of the data to help with resolution of drainage related flooding hot spots over a two year programme, see [www.helg.org/asset management](http://www.helg.org/asset%20management). Reward funding of £700,000 was awarded.

The cities were aware of their success early in 2009, but the project began following receipt of the reward funds in November 2009. A Project Board of senior officers from each city was established and a project team meets monthly to oversee and coordinate project activity and to provide challenge and support to each other. A Board member usually attends project team meetings to provide linkage and support. The principal change from the submission is that cities have not yet appointed drainage champions. Whilst these may still be needed later, existing staff resources are being used and developed at this stage.

A revised project plan was developed and approved by the Board and a support consultant appointed. The project plan will be used to monitor and manage the project over the period.

Nottingham is the lead authority for administrative purposes and holds the project funds. Initial allocations have been made to each city to allow work to commence and the rest will be allocated as required. The Board have yet to determine how to use the interest on the remaining funds.

A baseline report has been prepared setting out in detail each city's position with drainage inventory, data management systems and drainage improvement priority systems. Information is shared between the cities to ensure each is aware of what is available via a project website. The website contains all the project management and technical information the cities are sharing.

Early activity is mainly inventory collection from existing records. Available information on surface and buried drainage systems is being transferred from incomplete paper records to map based GIS systems.

Preparation is underway for an inventory collection contract to fill inventory gaps. The cities are sharing information about data collection equipment and detailed content of the inventory they require. Portable data collection devices are being extensively tested such that accurate information on visible drainage assets such as gullies can be collected by drainage maintenance teams, which is both efficient and able to build ownership of the data. Footway gullies and slot drains will also be collected as many were installed in response to localised flooding and blockage would be critical. It is important that local maintenance staff are involved here as well. Links required to other council highway management systems are also being considered.

Single contracts will be let for equipment and for collection of any further data required, eg underground surveys, to achieve economies of scale.

