

**Report to Walsall South Area Panel**  
**Gully Cleaning Project**  
**10 December 2013**

## **Introduction**

The panel received a report in March last year on drain and gulley maintenance which discussed the introduction of a major project aimed at improving performance in this area. In response to the panel's resolution for an update this report is intended to provide a summary of progress to date.

## **Report**

### Background

Leading up to the commencement of the project in February 2013, strategic management of gully cleaning required improvement. It was difficult to monitor and check which gullies had been cleared and there was a clear emphasis on reacting to complaints at the expense of routine maintenance. As a result the output was not satisfactory in terms of the numbers of gullies cleaned each day and consequently how often the gullies in the borough were cleared.

At the time of the previous report the council was in the middle of a three month trial period with a specialist subcontractor. This trial highlighted some key facts

- It was clear that a lot of the gullies in question had not been cleaned for some considerable time.
- An average cyclical clean of a gulley costs £10. (The crew are working intensively in one area minimising travel costs and down time).
- In comparison a reactive call out costs in excess of £100 to clean 1 gulley. (over 50% of time is lost travelling between jobs).
- Average productivity for an 8 hour day varies from 9 emergency gulley clean outs compared with an average of 145 achieved by the contractor on a cyclical basis.

It was decided to extend the project with the aim of cleaning every gulley in the borough on an area basis. At the same time detailed location and condition data is being collected which will enhance our ability to prioritise areas of greatest need.

### Progress

- The contractor has cleared over 22,000 of the estimated 33,000 gullies across the borough. This equates to 66% and has involved the removal of 516 tonnes of waste.
- The delivered programme up until the beginning of November is shown as **Appendix 1**.
- The intended future areas for work are shown as **Appendix 2**. Please note that the locations in red indicate those areas that, due to traffic sensitivity, the contractor can

only work in on Sundays. It can be seen that working every Sunday takes us to May to complete these difficult locations.

- Excepting these hard to reach areas the vast majority of gullies will have been cleared by the end of the financial year.
- To try and put the extent of work into context **Appendix 3** shows a screen shot of the mapping system used to log the crew's activities. Each green dot represents a cleared gully.
- Intelligence is being gathered on the drains that were unable to be cleared due to issues such as collapsed pipe work or Severn Trent's main sewer being blocked. (around 500 so far) These are being collated and a scheduled response developed subject to available resources.
- Despite this work falling leaves cause countrywide problems at this time of year especially as they normally coincide with episodes of heavy rain. Leaves can often block an otherwise silt free drain and cause localised flooding problems. Working with the contractor we have identified localised hot spots which receive specific attention when wet weather is expected.
- Additionally we have shared this information with Clean and Green Colleagues and those areas where excessive leaf fall is known to affect gullies receive prioritised road sweeping during the Autumn months and before predicted heavy rain.

## **Recommendation**

There is clearly a strong case for prioritising a strategic, cyclic cleaning regime over and above responding to complaints. Whilst information is useful in directing the contractor we should not divert them from the cyclic programme unless it is absolutely necessary to do so.

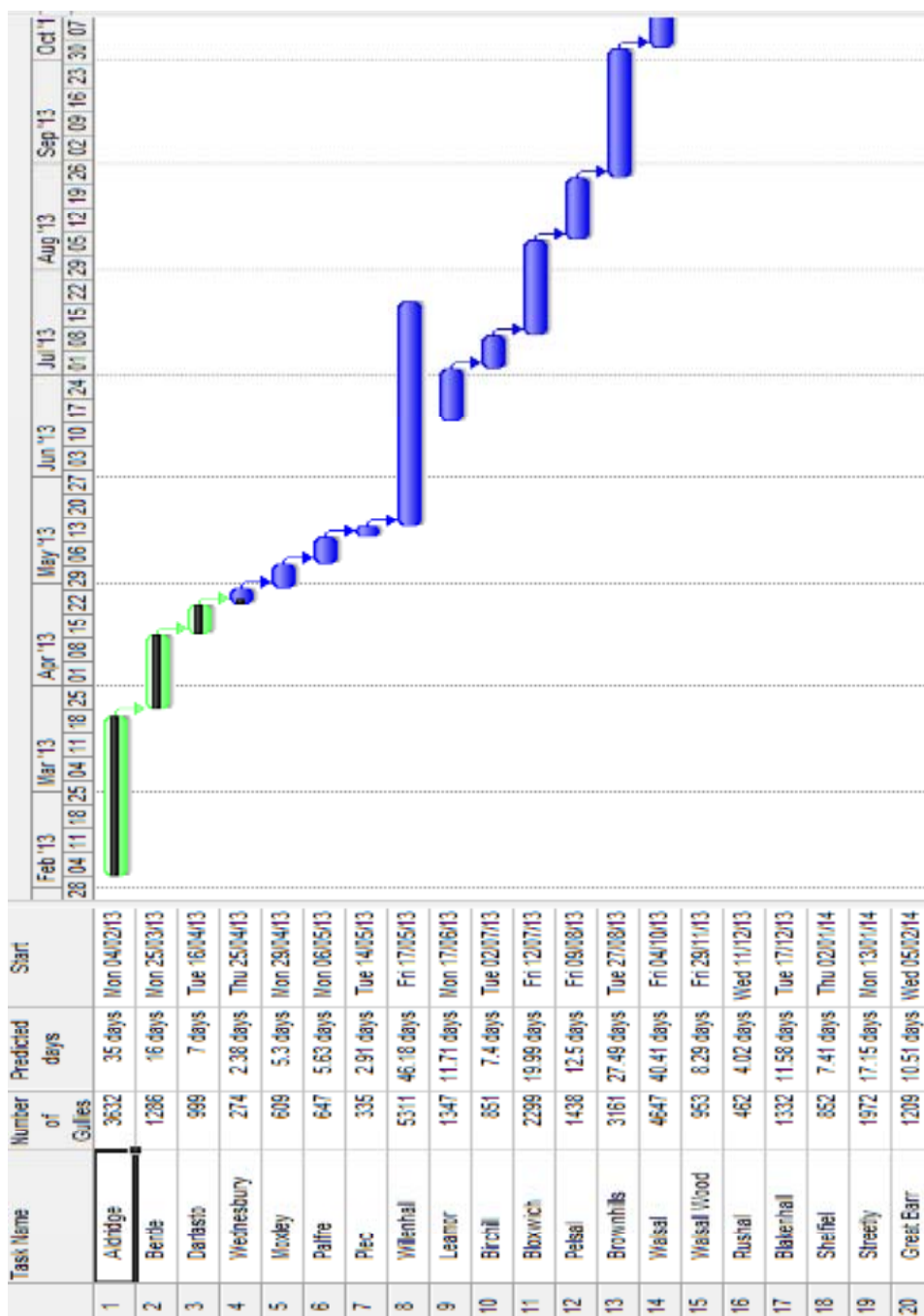
The intelligence being generated through this project will enable us to prioritise areas of greatest need in the future allowing us to make the most of our limited resources.

The Gullies across the borough are receiving more attention than at any time in recent history. Despite this there will still be circumstances where blockages/localised flooding occurs. This can be due to more fundamental problems, requiring excavation and new pipework which are now being identified and scheduled in accordance with available resources. Equally heavy leaf fall at times of heavy rain will always cause difficulties. We have identified and prioritised areas where this can be particularly problematic.

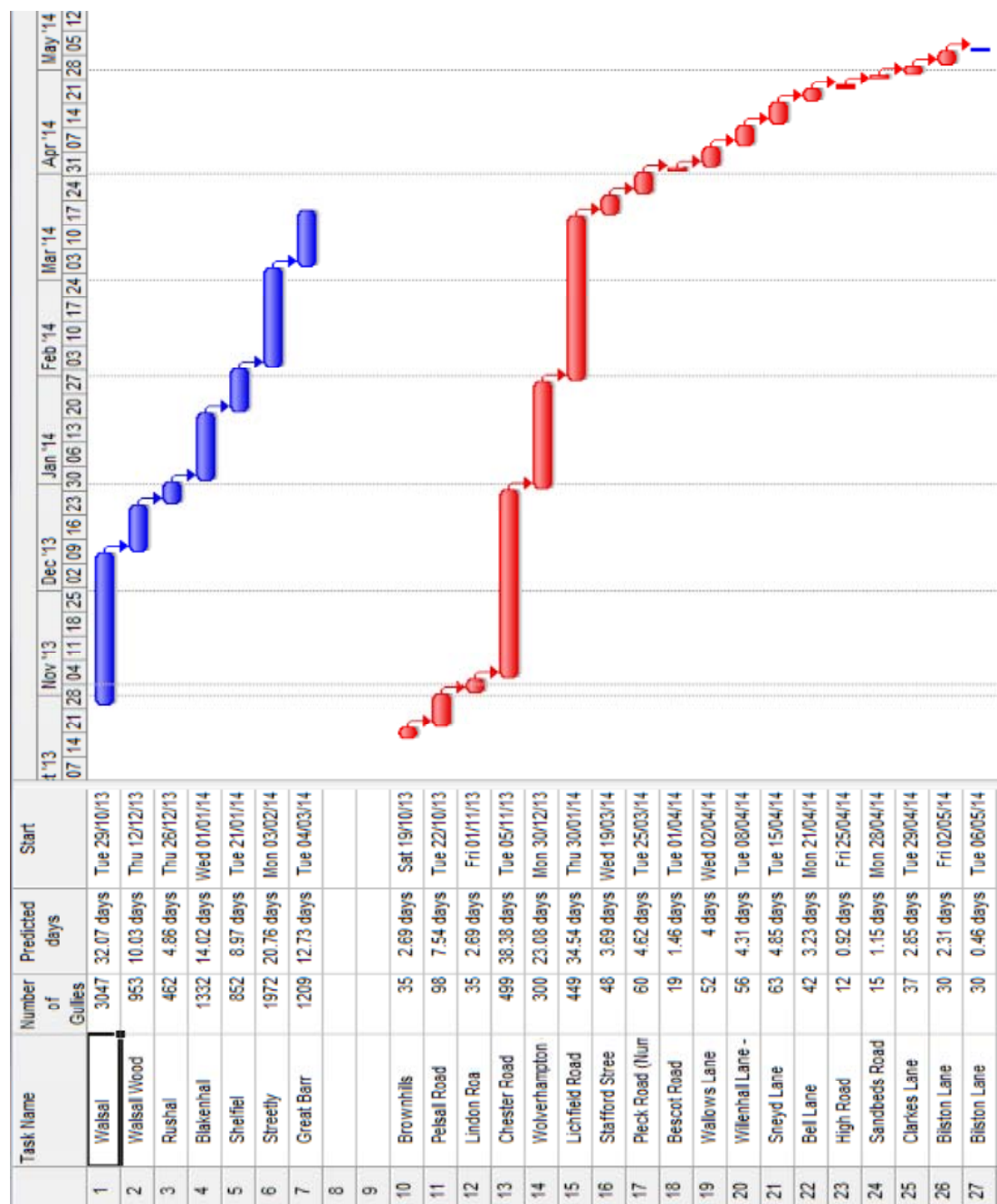
If the panel have particular areas of concern then please pass these to John Roseblade either directly or via your Area Manager.

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## Appendix 1 – Programme from February to November 2013.



## Appendix 2 – Forthcoming areas of gulley crew work



Appendix 3 – Screen shot of the Map showing cleared Gullies.

