

HIGHWAY FLOODING

Roads and paths are usually drained into **highway drains** that run alongside them.

In rural areas roads usually drain into ditches along the edges of the roads. In heavy rain or storm conditions or following periods of prolonged rain these drains can also sometimes find it difficult to cope with run-off from roads and paths and this may result in flooding.

In rural areas keeping drainage ditches clear and free of obstructions is the responsibility of the landowners whose land they flow through (known as **riparian owners**). Excess water usually gradually drains away into the adjoining land. Landowners are encouraged to maintain land ditches and avoid reducing capacity by culverting. This ensures good flow and reduces the risk of flooding. Improvement work on land drains is carried out by the **highway authorities, local authorities and landowners**.

Highway drains are the responsibility of the highway authorities, who maintain them and attempt to keep them clear so that they can cope with run-off. Excess water build up in urban areas is sometimes diverted away from the highway into 'soak-aways' near to the drains and then gradually into the ground.

New developments can increase run off due to an increase in the numbers of roads, driveways and hard landscaped gardens and some are now built with balancing ponds to compensate for the loss of land for rainwater to soak in to.

Developers are also now encouraged in some areas to avoid too much hard landscaping in new housing estates and also to include 'green open space' which can absorb some of the run off from roads following periods of heavy rain.

