

**REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES  
MANAGER**

**TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Report Author: Gareth Aspey**  
**Tel. No: 01282 661057**  
**E-mail: Gareth.Aspey@pendle.gov.uk**

**DRAINAGE (GROUNDWATER) ISSUES AT STONEYBANK ROAD AND  
WENTCLIFFE DRIVE, EARBY**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide background information to the Policy & Resources Committee relevant to the request from West Craven Area Committee to allocate funding for investigation ongoing drainage issues in the area of Stoneybank Road and Wentcliffe Drive, Earby.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Policy and Resources Committee consider allocating a Supplementary Estimate of £20,000 to enable investigative work into the root cause of the issues to be undertaken and temporary solutions to be installed at relevant properties along Wentcliffe Drive.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- (1) To enable a thorough investigation into wide scale drainage problems along Stoneybank Road and Wentcliffe Drive to be undertaken in order to fully evaluate potential engineering solutions and support impacted residents within the area.
- (2) In the absence of engagement from other parties, the Council is the most likely agency to be able to coordinate an effective response for the benefit of impacted residents throughout the area.

**ISSUE**

- Multiple locations in the Stoney Bank Road and Wentcliffe Drive areas of Earby are seeing an increase in saturated areas believed to be caused by groundwater rising up to the surface.
- Impacts are mainly being seen within external areas of properties (mainly front and back gardens), footways and highways throughout the area.
- These issues remain regardless of weather conditions.

- Residents report an increase in the amount of saturation around Wentcliffe Drive over the past 18 months.
- During winter 2020-21, numerous incidents occurred where residents were injured leaving their own property on foot during icy conditions due to frozen areas where their property meets the footway. Residents have also reported that garden areas are becoming unusable.
- Some residents have been served notices from LCC relating to the discharge of water from their properties impacting LCC's assets. This has caused the affected residents some confusion and distress, as they feel the issue is beyond their control.
- Yorkshire Water have conducted investigations into reported leaks at properties along Wentcliffe Drive, though to our knowledge only 1 property has been found to have a fault. This matter is under further investigation.
- Discussions with local land owners and residents have identified a number of potential reasons behind these increased impacts including the ceasing of water being pumped from the ground higher up the hillside to supply Elslack, infilling of reservoirs above Earby and, more recently, groundworks being undertaken in and around the area of Wentcliffe Drive including the installation of ground source heating by Together Housing.
- A trial hole investigation, funded by Pendle Council's Land Drainage budget, was undertaken during September 2021 at land off Bailey Street, Earby. This established the presence of significant ground water flows within the bedrock at a depth of around 3metres. This water, when found during the excavation process, quickly filled the trial hole, indicating a significant presence. The ground has since been reinstated to its original condition.
- Groundwater issues normally rest with the riparian owner of the land above where the issue originates (i.e. the respective property owners), however given the number of properties affected by similar issues in this area, it is clear that this is an extensive problem which would likely prove impossible to solve at an individual property level.
- Whilst in this case the Council does not have a statutory obligation to investigate, it is extremely unlikely that any other partner agency would take a holistic approach to understanding the problem. It is hoped that the Council leading such an investigation as that proposed would be able to achieve the engagement of other stakeholders and partner agencies, both to understand the problem and formulate appropriate engineering solutions.
- A preliminary site meeting has been held with a specialist contractor (Betts Geo) has indicated geological factors may be behind these groundwater impacts including the type of rock and the presence of geological fault lines. It is recommended that these are investigated further, initially through a desktop study, walkover of the surrounding hillside and further historical investigation into works within the area. A quote of £2,250 has been received by the Council from Betts Geo to undertake this study. The results would inform further invasive investigation into these issues and give a better idea of the likely extent of the problem, potential causes and the likely consequences should the situation continue to develop – such consequences could include increasing instability of the ground as well as continuing deterioration on and around the highway.
- Ground Investigations recommended by the desktop study are likely to include the need for boreholes and groundwater monitoring at targeted locations to enable the tracking of groundwater movements through the bedrock. Currently, it is estimated funding of around £12,000 would be required for these works. This work would likely be necessary to enable the identification of potential engineering solutions.
- Should the above investigation works be undertaken, it is likely that further significant investment will be needed to develop schemes to improve the situation. Should the investigation reach this stage, relevant findings will be shared with partner agencies and

stakeholders to encourage engagement in generating the required solutions. It should be emphasised that the Council has no responsibility for funding any further work.

- In order to improve pedestrian safety in the area for winter 2021-22, it is proposed to undertake temporary property level resilience works adjacent to the footway on Wentcliffe Drive. These works may require consent from LCC Highways due to the likely need to discharge water into the highway drainage network. Funding of £5,750 would allow installation of these assets at affected properties (likely to be in the form of ACO-channels of similar).

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** None

**Financial:** Allocation of a total up to £20,000 of funding to undertake initial investigations and install temporary resilience measures. This additional unbudgeted expenditure will be met from the General Fund Revenue Budget and will place a further pressure on the overall budget position and Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Legal:** The Council has no legal liability for this issue. Should the proposed investigation and works be approved, land and asset owner permissions may be required ahead of implementation. Relevant parties will be appropriately consulted when identified.

**Risk Management:** None

**Health and Safety:** Whilst there is no health and safety risk to Council assets, there are identified concerns for residents within the curtilage of their properties and along the footway and highway in certain areas of Wentcliffe Drive.

**Sustainability:** None

**Community Safety:** None in addition to those related to H&S above

**Equality and Diversity:** None

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – location plan identifying impacted areas on Wentcliffe Drive, Earby

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**