

## Staveley with Ings Parish Council

### Proposed Community Clean Water Pilot Project: 'Clean Water, Clean Streets'

(Proposed Final Draft)



#### Location

Staveley lies at the confluence of two rivers, the Gowan and the Kent, in south Cumbria. For many it is the first experience visitors encounter on entering the Lake District National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Staveley is recognised as a Rural Service Centre in the Park's Local Plan but beyond that it is regarded as a fine example of a traditional working village, embracing new opportunities and enterprising outlets for visitors, local businesses and its residential community. At its heart is a thriving, active and cohesive community of some 1700 residents with a real sense of community spirit and a desire to provide safe and enjoyable facilities for both present and future generations. As such, Staveley is well placed to embrace the vision for the National Park as:

*'An inspirational example of sustainable development in action.*

*A place where its prosperous economy, world class visitor experiences and vibrant communities come together to sustain the spectacular landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage.'*

and where

*'Local people, visitors, and the many organisations working in the Lake District or have a contribution to make to it, must be united in achieving this.'*

*(LDNPA Local Plan, 2020 – 2035, Caring for our Vision)*

## The Need for a locally based Project

- Surrounded by steep sided fells, both rivers running through the village rise rapidly after heavy rain across their immediate catchments. This causes local flooding and in times of very severe weather, danger to properties
- In heavy and persistent rain foul waste discharges from several sewerage manholes on to Staveley's streets. The resulting outflow affects roads, footways and paths at specific locations which children and general public need to use, causing a public health hazard
- The foul waste then flows into the nearby rivers, both of which are designated as SSSIs and SACs because of their vulnerability and the species that inhabit them
- The cause of the discharges within the village is known to be restriction in pipe size as foul waste is transported beneath the River Kent to the WWTW, half a mile from the village. The discharges from the combined (foul and grey water) sewerage system are exacerbated by considerable additional surface and ground water entering the system
- The WWTW also discharges untreated or partly treated sewage into the River Kent on a regular basis (over 1300 times, 2018 to 2020) when the inflow limit is breached.



Sewage discharging by Gowan Terrace footbridge and heading for the River Gowan, just 2m away

Partly or untreated sewage spilling regularly into the River Kent, as also shown on page 1



## Impetus for the Project

- **Dissatisfaction and determination locally:** Discharges from the sewerage system are long-standing. Since the Parish Council's regular monitoring began in 2017, there have been 43 recorded unpermitted spillages on to village streets. This is regarded locally as totally unsatisfactory. Real determination to seek improvement is encapsulated as a high priority in our local Community Plan.
- **Our LDNPA identity:** Staveley is part of the National Park. For sewage to spill out in a highly regarded village in a prestigious National Park should not be tolerated and would be considered negatively by the World Heritage Organisation. This is not the *'high quality public realm'* which the Park strives to achieve as outlined in its policy on development and flooding, in which it seeks to increase  
*'the resilience of the Lake District to all types of flood event' ... by reducing 'flood risk in Rural Service Centres and Villages or areas of highest risk ... and the impact of a flood event'*  
(LDNPA Local Plan, 2020 – 2035, Development and Planning)
- **UU vision for community engagement:** United Utilities has indicated clearly its commitment to working in partnership and the need for rural communities to be fully represented in its plans.  
*'We are determined to build a coalition of the willing to improve North West river water quality and catalyse action from many parties.... Building sustainable partnerships is key to delivering stretching long-term targets.'*  
(Better Rivers, Better North West, UU, March 2022)
- **Locally based solutions need community engagement:** In its recently produced Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (June 2022), United Utilities states:  
*'Our commitments include: actively engaging and listening to all our stakeholders to demonstrate we are taking action.'*  
The Staveley community has a proven record of commitment and engagement in environmental concerns and in improving waste and water management.
- **Climate change demands:** That action is required to secure existing and future community development, safety and well-being is undisputed. This proposal offers an exciting and innovative way to address this and has the potential to become a national model for future planning and development. In so doing, it fulfils the LDNPA's aspiration that:  
*'Resilience to climate change and extreme weather events is improved by greater adaptation and mitigation.'* for which measures will be implemented *'over the next ten years.'* (LDNPA Management Plan, Climate Action, 2020 - 2025)
- **Rural experience is insufficiently understood or resourced:** In the pressing demands to provide much needed improvements to waste water systems, there is real concern that rural communities are often accorded lower priority. Good rural practice needs to be understood, explored and developed to address this apparent disparity, as recognised by the cross-party support for the principles of the Levelling Up White Paper (Delivering for Rural England, DEFRA, 3 September 2022)

## **The 'Clean Water, Clean Streets' Project's Main Aims**

To explore, develop and introduce ways in which a local community and its water company (United Utilities), with their associated partners, can work constructively together and offer a model of good practice to ensure that:

- The volume of waste outflow within the sewerage system is minimised
- Foul waste is safely managed, with unpermitted storm spillages eradicated during periods of heavy and persistent rainfall
- Contamination of local water courses from all sources is reduced (Rivers Kent and Gowan, both of which enjoy SSSI and SAC status) in all weather conditions and as supported in principle by ALL partners (listed below)
- Greater community engagement and support is encouraged as proposed by United Utilities (Better Rivers, Better North West)
- Effective partnership management of the processes involved and actions taken is embraced, with an emphasis on informing United Utilities' AMP 8 priorities and by establishing and coordinating investment across all Partners
- Together, partners build constructively on local community knowledge, interest, commitment and good practice to ensure a safe, healthy and developing community within a thriving and diverse environment

## **Our Main Objectives**

- In partnership, to promote good water stewardship and improve ways in which households and businesses both plan for and manage waste water more effectively and sustainably
- To promote and provide regular information, advice and encouragement in good water and waste water management
- To resolve waste water infrastructure inadequacies by determining an Integrated Action Plan with partner support, to include agreed timescales, necessary resources and early appropriate investment
- To determine effective ways in which all partners work supportively to achieve agreed targets, for example by sharing key data and analysis
- To provide opportunities for the local community to be fully engaged in shaping priorities in all aspects of water and waste management and of environmental protection and restoration
- To support the on-going work of the Clean River Kent Campaign (CRKC), focusing on improved water quality to promote bio-diversity, recreational opportunities, healthy and safe livelihoods
- That full account is taken of the impact on the community and the burden on existing flood and sewage infrastructure when considering future development, land management or changes in operational philosophy.

## Partners

### Member of Parliament

- Tim Farron, M.P. (Westmorland and Lonsdale)

### Elected Bodies

- Staveley with Ings Parish Council
- Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, including elected representatives

### Key Delivery Organisations

- United Utilities
- The Lead Local Flood Authority
- Public Health, Cumbria

### Local Government Organisations

- Lake District National Park Authority

### DEFRA-funded Governmental Organisations

- The Environment Agency
- Natural England

### Non-Governmental Environmental Organisations

- South Cumbria Rivers Trust

### Local Community Groups

- Staveley Village Association
- Sustainability and Energy Network in Staveley
- Clean River Kent Campaign

### Academic, Education and Business Partners

- University of Cumbria (*pending*)
- Staveley Primary School
- Local Business representatives

## General Partnership Areas of Activity

- Dissemination of community and partner good practice in water stewardship, clean water management and waste water reduction
- Workshops and practical demonstrations
- Waste water infrastructure improvements
- Reduction of surface and ground water entering the waste water system
- Community and partnership actions related to a healthy community and environment
- Evaluation of progress and achievements
- Dissemination of results

**Potential Partnership Actions and Targets for residential, business properties and the public realm**  
(selection and timing to be determined by the Steering Group)

### **Local good practice**

- Reduction of fat and oils into the waste water system – advice, publicity
- Reduction of wet wipes and similar materials into the waste water system – advice, publicity; (Only ‘pee, poo and paper’ campaign)
- Increased availability and use of water butts – subsidised cost, local fitting service
- Initiate a ‘Better Use of Grey Water’ Project
- Support and extend ‘Understanding your Utilities’ campaign to include issues like, for example, reduction in hot water usage and use of cistern flush sachets

### **Planning and Decision Making**

- Increase in water retention and disposal systems for surface water on private and business premises (eg. SUDS/attenuation ponds: UU to subsidise implementation; porous surfaces on driveways)
- Identify potential links to improve water quality as part of future flood management schemes
- Agree policy on new planning developments to build on local moratorium

### **Environmental Practice**

- Assess NFM initiatives and explore similar new opportunities
- Improve community ecology understanding and prioritise biodiversity (eg. support for future Local Nature Recovery Strategies; initiate/encourage tree planting scheme on private and public land, partnership support of CRKC priorities)
- Explore environmental use of semi or uncultivated land and green spaces
- Improve river management and oversight
- Reduce land and septic tank contamination into the water courses

### **Investment and Resources**

- Agree detailed and costed plan, with timescales, to improve waste water infrastructure (River Kent pipe restriction; WWTW)
- Reduce the volume of surface and ground water in the combined waste water system; increase river discharges from land and surface drainage
- Ensure separation of road drainage from the sewerage system and explore opportunities for using the road drainage network for residential surface water disposal
- Engage with developing flood management schemes to coordinate good practice and implementation
- Initiate regular gully and drain clearance scheme
- Consider employment of a ‘handy person’ to undertake appropriate tasks

### **Publicity and Communication**

- Better communication of environmental and public health issues and of water management
- Agree with UU an early warning public information system for WWTW storm discharges
- Publicise and promote the joint initiative; emphasise links to national concerns and action

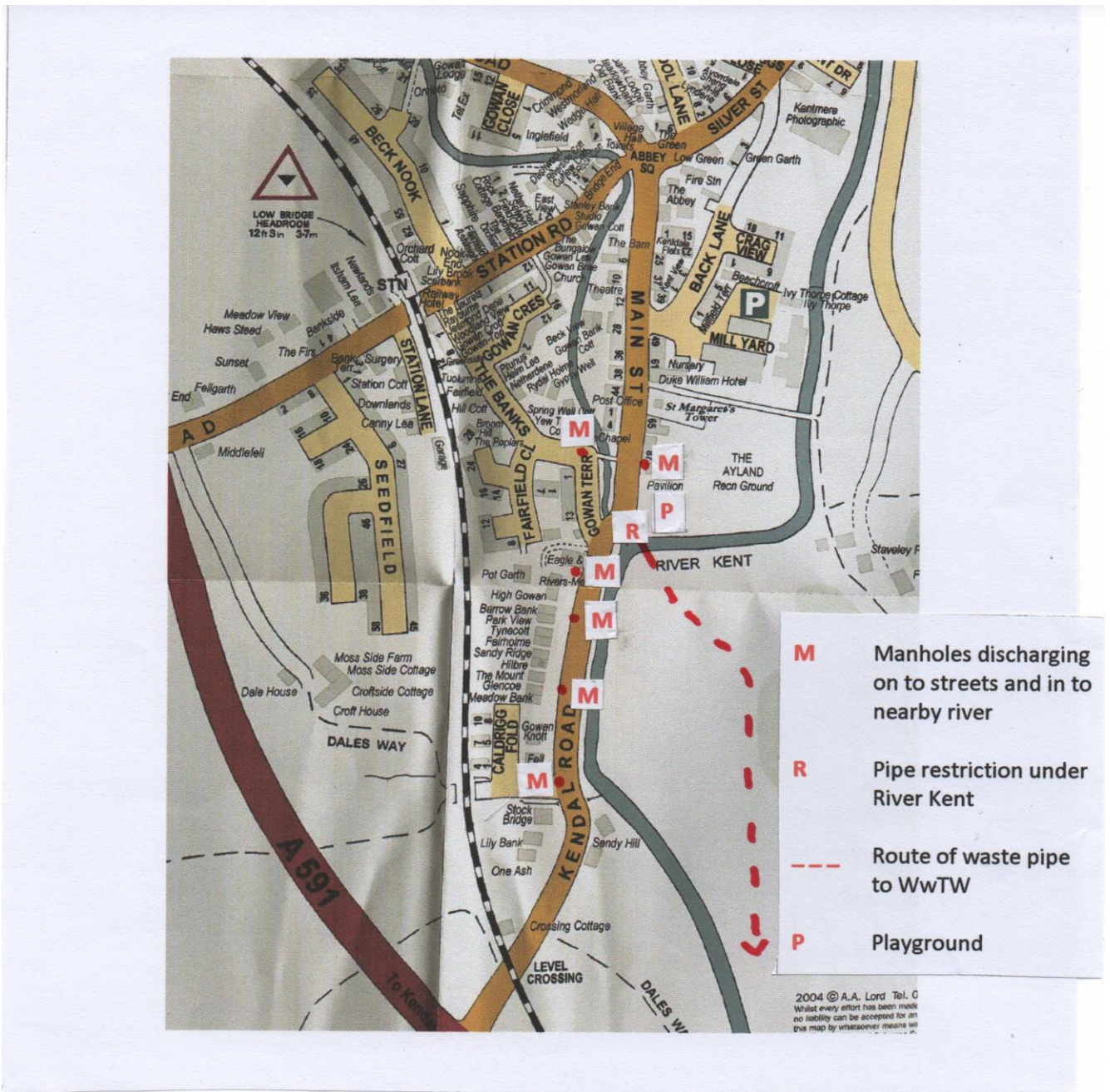
### **Initial Process Outline**

1. Invite senior representatives of all partners to a ‘round table’ discussion to clarify the proposal and seek support and engagement. (As identified and encouraged by the LDNPA and included as an example of Partnership Delivery in its Management Plan, 2020 – 2025)

2. As part of this meeting, agree timescale for individual partner responses to identify, assess and agree potential contributions (as outlined above)
3. As part of discussion, consider the need to resource project management and organisation
4. Agree and set up a representative Steering Group to oversee and manage the project, confirm its status and manage its implementation
5. Steering Group to confirm project aims and objectives and agree its implementation details and targets, timescale, resources, monitoring progress and evaluation etc.
6. Once the projects parameters are agreed, Steering Group to be accountable for project delivery

**Outcomes: Monitoring, Assessment, Evaluation** (to be confirmed by the Steering Group as the project is agreed in detail)

**Appendix 1:** Map of the Staveley village showing sewage discharge and vulnerable flooding locations, waste pipe to the WWTW, proximity of recreation ground and playground (Note: While the map shows the area of the village most affected, it does not show the full sewerage network or potential points of or the wider problem of ingress into the system.)



**References and acronyms**

- SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest
- WWTW: Waste Water Treatment Works
- AMP 8: UU’s Asset Management Period, 2025-30
- LDNPA: Lake District National Park Authority
- DEFRA: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- SAC: Special Area of Conservation
- UU: United Utilities
- NFM: Natural Flood Management
- CRKC: Clean River Kent Campaign

AC, 25.1.23 (on behalf of Staveley with Ings Parish Council)