

11 July 2023

[REDACTED]
Clerk to Staveley with Ings Parish Council
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22 June 2023 and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

As you rightly say, I am aware of the issues that the village of Staveley faces with regard to the public wastewater sewage system. It is unacceptable that there are so many releases from the storm overflow at Staveley Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and that is why I can confirm that it is on our plan for investment in AMP8 (2025-2030).

The project is listed on the Water Industry Environment Programme (WINEP) which is a list of projects with a water quality driver that the Environment Agency (EA) has directed must be completed. Delivery of the WINEP is a metric on the EA's Environment Performance Assessment (EPA), of which we are currently rated as a four star company; the highest ranking.

We do report all of our data to the EA on an annual basis as well as when requested; this includes reporting all of our storm overflow spill records. Where we suspect that a release may have caused environmental damage, or if a release is outside of our permit conditions, then we will self-report this to the EA. Although unacceptable, I would like to outline some of the reasons why Staveley WwTW does release diluted effluent to the environment as frequently as it does, and the process we are currently going through to ensure that, whatever the solution is, it is sustainable for the future.

Staveley WwTW serves Staveley village only, which is a small area. As we see across much of the North West, the sewer pipes in Staveley are combined which means they take both wastewater and rainwater. During wet weather Staveley experiences two problems:-

- WwTW - dilute releases to the River Kent at the WwTW due to extra surface water and groundwater, which does not need to be treated, overwhelming the system;
- Village – external sewer flooding due to our sewers becoming hydraulically challenged during heavy rainfall. This is exacerbated by additional surface water connections into the sewer network.

Unfortunately, the hydraulic sewer issue in Staveley is more difficult to resolve as this needs to be prioritised along with other hydraulic sewer issues across the North West and, currently, there is not a capital solution planned for the village. However, there are other ways we can manage the sewer flooding risk in Staveley to minimise the impact when it rains.

Over the last six months we have been working with Westmorland and Furness Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, to identify where these surface water connections are and to identify how they could be removed. Removing surface water creates capacity in the sewer network to deal with rainwater during storm events which reduces the risk of releases from storm overflows and flooding from sewers. We have shared the initial findings with the Parish Council through our regular liaison meetings; the headline from this is that we have identified large areas of catchment land which are connected into the combined sewer. The Council has submitted a request to DEFRA to support financing a solution to remove these connections.

We will also be more present in the village over the coming months as we raise awareness of how residents can help keep the sewers in Staveley free flowing. This will involve talking to residents about how we can stop the block, and also how to reduce the amount of rainwater entering the combined sewer.

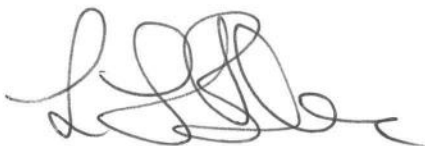
For the WwTW, as well as looking for surface water connections, we are also undertaking engineering studies to identify the most desirable solution for the site to reduce releases from our storm overflow to an average of ten per year; this is the requirement on the WINEP. The study has made some recommendations for some small changes to the hydraulics at the WwTW which would benefit releases and so we have immediately made these changes. This study is also looking at the sewer pipe from the river down to the works and how we can best remove groundwater which is infiltrating the sewer due to the amount of water which is running around our sewer.

To confirm, our regulatory commitment is to reduce the number of releases from the storm overflow at Staveley Wastewater Treatment Works to an average of ten per year, to be completed during AMP8 which is between 2025 and 2030. This is a priority for United Utilities as we agree the number of releases coming from Staveley WwTW is unacceptable.

Sharma Jencitis, our Area Stakeholder Manager, will continue to keep the Parish Council updated through your representative, Arthur Capstick, as the scheme options are developed and timescales become more specific. I have also agreed to come and meet with members of Staveley with Ings Parish Council at the end of September, after committing to do so during the recent Cumbria Your Water Your Say event.

I really do hope that this response is useful and reassures you that we are committed to playing our part to address the issues the village of Staveley faces with regard to the public wastewater sewage system and, should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Beardmore', written in a cursive style.

Louise Beardmore
Chief Executive