STOCK BECK FLOODING, KENDAL

SECTION A: RECOMMENDATION OF CABINET MEMBER

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Local members, together with representatives from the Cabinet and Local Committee, have met with a local Action Group and undertaken a site visit to better understand the causes of local flooding in the area around Stock Beck, Kendal. This paper outlines initial actions proposed to support the Group.

2.0 POLICY POSITION, BUDGETARY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS AND LINKS TO CORPORATE STRATEGY

2.1 Improving coordination of agencies to respond more effectively to natural and man made emergencies is a key priority (d) within Theme E of the County Council’s Corporate Strategy.

2.2 A scheme developed by South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) to mitigate flooding has been estimated at £3.2m. The County Council wishes to help identify all feasible options for, and potential contributors to, flood alleviation.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the County Council support residents in securing a successful flood alleviation scheme for this area and where possible act as a catalyst to deliver solutions which will mitigate flooding within the area.

Lawson Short
Cabinet Member for Environmental Issues and Protection
SECTION B:
ADVICE OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR –
ECONOMY, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Stock Beck is a small stream which rises in the hills to the east of Kendal. As a result of the large catchment and steep slopes the beck is subject to frequent flooding at times of heavy rainfall. Where the beck meets residential development it is culverted. After heavy rainfall, water ponds in the area at the head of Whitbarrow Close and housing there is subject to flooding. Water is culverted from there under local highways and school grounds. Where water exits culverts, there is further flooding: at Castle Park School and adjacent housing. The beck is then culverted under Sedbergh Road. The Lowther Park area to the west of Sedbergh Road is also subject to frequent localised flooding. In total 300 households are affected.

4.2 This has caused considerable distress to local residents and is a subject of continuing anxiety. A local Action Group has been constituted to press for remedial works. This consists of local residents and representatives of Castle Park School.

4.3 On 4th March, the Action Group invited local members and Cabinet representatives to tour of the area. The Action Group indicated a number of reasons behind the periodic flooding. Many of these problems are longstanding. Some flooding may be the result of capacity and design limitations of local culverts. The development on land subject to extensive flooding (Lowther Park) was also noted. More recently problems were seen to have increased because of additional run off from Network Rail land plus run off as a result of United Utility Works replacing a reservoir adjacent to Paddy Lane.

4.4 Through the site visit, Members were able to gain a fuller understanding of all the issues associated with local flooding. There was a clear appreciation of the need for greater collaboration between different agencies (United Utilities, Network Rail, DEFRA, Environment Agency, SLDC and this Council) to alleviate the flooding risk to residents and local facilities.

4.5 In addition to its community leadership responsibilities, the County Council has significant interests within this area including a number of local roads and culverts, Castle Park School and the site of the former Roundhills school. It may be that as a result of collaboration with other agencies specific capital schemes will be identified to mitigate future flooding.

Possible remedies

4.6 South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) has engaged consultants to prepare a flood alleviation scheme with an anticipated cost (including a flood storage reservoir, culverted watercourse, tunnel and interceptor sewer) understood to be in the region of £3.2m. This includes ‘sunk’ costs including design work and purchase of land by SLDC.

4.7 The District Council has not yet agreed to progress this scheme, nor identify any contributions from potential partners including the County Council, Environment Agency, United Utilities and Network Rail, each of whom has an interest in the area. DEFRA have confirmed a 45% contribution towards the estimated project costs of £3.2m.
More active planning of remedial work would allow a collaborative approach. However the Council is now in a position to support the Action Group in a number of ways:

a. by identifying a single person - the Area Support Manager - as the Council’s lead officer for the project;
b. by confirming the County Council’s willingness to support joint working to find a solution to this persistent local problem;
c. by clarifying the Council’s legal liabilities as highways authority and land owner; and
d. by supporting SLDC to identify possible short term and staged actions to reduce flooding risks.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 While recognising the lead role being played by SLDC, as land drainage authority, this Council could take a more proactive role to find a solution to this persistent local problem.

5.2 Members may, however, wish not wish to be engaged in the project at this stage.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Members are encouraged to endorse our participation in this important local project.

Stuart Pate, Area Support Manager for South Lakeland
18th March 2005

APPENDICES

1 Map of area affected

IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: None
Financial: None at this stage
Electoral Division(s): All
Executive Decision

Key Decision

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?  N/A

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?  No

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?  N/A

N.B.  If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting - unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and the Head of Member Services has obtained the necessary approvals.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
[including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

Lawson Short, Cabinet Member for Environmental Issues and Protection

Contact:  Stuart Pate Tel 01539 773435 stuart.pate@cumbriacc.gov.uk