

ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

6TH SEPTEMBER 2004

**SPRINGCROFT, HARTLEY – FLOODING**

**ITEM FOR INFORMATION**

This report advises Members regarding the flooding problem at Springcroft, the petition from residents and the action being taken to address the problem.

Background

(1) Springcroft runs along the bottom of a dry valley, (see plan at Annexe A). Most of the houses were constructed pursuant to a planning permission granted in 1955 and the remaining four at 1 - 4 Manor View were constructed pursuant to a 1968 permission. At the lower (northern) end a pair of properties obstruct natural overland flows, and this is where the flooding problem occurs. This appears to be primarily a highway drainage problem, however land drainage flows appear to be contributing.

(2) Local residents submitted a petition containing fifty-three signatures to Council on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2004, requesting that action be taken to resolve the problem. Council resolved to refer the petition to the Environmental Select Committee.

Flooding

(3) It is said that flooding has occurred on three occasions since March 2004. Photographs of flooding events in 1984, 1985, 1995 and 1998 have been provided. Doubtless others have occurred but have not been recorded. It appears that overland flows from the catchment and inadequate highway drainage are causing the problem.

(4) There is an unmade private road (Manor Drive) which crosses the uphill (southern) end of Springcroft. This is said to generate silt as flows from the catchment pass along it on their way to Springcroft. It is possible that this silt has blocked the soakaways serving the highway drainage system.

Highway Drainage

(5) The highway drainage system has six deep bored soakaways. However these seem to be performing poorly, and may have been affected by silt as cleaning around 1995 appears to have brought little benefit.

(6) Although recent correspondence suggests that the problem goes back some thirty years, this Council was not aware of it until April 2004 following a letter from Hartley Parish Council. KCC were, presumably, aware of it prior to the handover of rural roads in 1999, but did not identify the problem to SDC at that time.

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Investigation

(7) The Council's Highways Unit is preparing a brief for Babbie, requesting them to investigate the six deep bore soakaways and measure their capacity. They are also being asked to review the catchment and assess likely flows and silt generation. The outcome should be proposals for improvements. It may also be necessary to review the catchment with a view to identifying any non-highway works required, particularly in relation to silt control, as silt would adversely affect the life of any new soakaways. It is hoped that this work could be undertaken during the autumn.

(8) Potential solutions could include works to reduce flows and silt from the catchment, restoration of soakage capacity, perhaps by installing new soakaway boreholes, and provision of a positive flood route so that excess water can escape down the valley and disperse in the woodland beyond.

Costs

(9) Any highway works identified would be funded by Kent Highways, subject to approval. Non-highway related works would be a matter for relevant land-owners at their discretion. Although the Council has powers to carry out land drainage works it is unlikely these could be exercised in the current financial circumstances.

Sources of Information

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