



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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Date of Meeting: 21 April 2008

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Public

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Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

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Inside/Outside Policy Framework

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**Title:** River Petteril Erosion Control, near Petteril Bank Road

**Report of:** Director of Community Services

**Report reference:** CS 17/08

**Summary:** This report requests Executive approval to commence a capital project to strengthen the bank of the Petteril on Council owned land at Harraby, thereby preventing the river from undercutting of the West Coast main line.

### Recommendations:

1. The Executive approves the release of funds from the approved Capital programme (2008-09) in the sum of £82,000 for purposes of a riverbank stabilisation project on the Petteril.

**Contact Officer:** Phil Gray

**Ext:** 8578

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS.**

- 1.1 The City Council is the 'riparian owner' (that simply means it owns the riverbank and riverbed) on land near Upperby Bridge with the river Petteril running through it. To the western side of the site the boundary is formed by the embankment of the West Coast main line. Natural erosion creates the bends, shingle banks and steep banks along the course of the Petteril. In recent years these natural processes have been accelerated by increased rainfall and storm events, particularly in winters, causing the rate of riverbank erosion to speed up.
- 1.2 The erosion has moved the river Petteril ever-closer to the railway embankment, and in the winter of 2006-07 several metres of land was lost to the river. Already in 2008 a further metre has gone, so the river is now only 3 metres from the railway embankment. As the owner of the land the City Council must decide how to respond to this situation, as to ignore the problem will inevitably result in the railway embankment being undercut by the river.
- 1.3 An engineering solution to this problem is possible if action is taken quickly, and a cost estimate of £82,000 has been provided, to procure and install a suitable system of riverbank protection. The funding is contained within the approved capital programme for 2008-09, and the project has been approved by the City Council's Capital Board at its meeting on 19.03.08.
- 1.4 A location plan and photo's are attached to this report.  
The solution is to use a civil engineering construction process not only to stabilise approximately 70m of the 1.3m highriver bank , but also to gain some land back to its original line of 2 years ago. This should increase the distance of 3.5m , from the rivers edge to the Railway boundary fence, to 6m and preventing further erosion. After consultation with the Environmental Agency, one of two solutions would be carried out, as chosen/designed by an independent Engineering consultant. These are:-
- a) Either traditional stone filled Gabion baskets and mattresses, combined with reinstatement of soil & grass behind or –
  - b) A sloping embankment utilising pre-planted coir matting, pallet's and rock rolls.
- Both of these alternatives were used at the recent Sheepmount Bridge project and approved by the E.A. As such they are available to be seen in situ.
- 1.5 The design Consultants, tender process and Contractor will be procured in accordance with the CCC Constitution Contracts Procedure Rules/Standing Orders.

- 1.6 Works associated with the river banks can only be carried out between May & the end of September, each year.

If approved by Executive, the consultant procurement process, design, tendering and contractor award / mobilisation will take approximately 3.5 months with 2 months work on site.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Consultation to Date.**

- a) Carlisle City Council Capital Board
- b) Network Rail (NW Engineering Department)
- c) Environment Agency
- d) Council staff in Legal and Property Services
- e) Upperby Neighbourhood Forum – Expressed concern at meeting of 24/01/07

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive approves the release of funds from the approved Capital programme (2008-09) in the sum of £82,000 for purposes of a riverbank stabilisation project on the Petteril.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The erosion control project will stabilise the riverbank in the longer term, protecting the interests of the City Council as riparian owner, and also preventing the undercutting of the West Coast main line. Whilst the railway embankment is the responsibility of Network Rail, it is the officers opinion that the reputation of the City Council would be severely damaged in the event of disruption to the railway, caused by erosion on the adjacent Council land.

In spending this money now, the Council will save cost in the future. A long-term, engineering solution to the erosion problem will protect the Council's investment in projects such as the Petteril Valley cycleway.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – No staffing implications. Financed from approved capital budget.
- Financial – This project was approved as part of the 2008/09 capital programme. The report requests the release of the capital budget of £82,000 to enable the scheme to progress. A full business case has been prepared and was considered and approved by the Capital Projects Board on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008.
- Legal – The Council has powers under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area, provided it has regard to its Community Strategy when determining whether to exercise these powers. It also has power under Section 2 of the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 to construct or carry out works on land for the benefit or improvement of its area.
- Corporate – Failure to protect our own riverbank has a limited negative impact on our own site management. However, the reputational risk to the Council if the West Coast main line is disrupted could be significant.
- Risk Management – As owners of the land we are responsible for the river bank upkeep. Eventually, as the past 2 winters have shown, the land between the River and Railway boundary may be eroded thus requiring more substantial works at greater costs, in the future. Meanwhile any rights of way would be progressively restricted and eventually lost.
- Equality and Disability – It will be important to protect our own land holding which has a public footpath crossing it.
- Environmental – There may be some minor visual impact from the engineering, but this is outweighed by the long-term protection of the riverside environment. Engineering works will be scheduled to avoid migration and breeding of fish species.
- Crime and Disorder – Minimum impact.

- Impact on Customers – Residents will be able to continue to enjoy the riverside environment of the Petteril Valley. Possibly the most important benefit of this scheme is the protection afforded to the West Coast main line and those residents and businesses that rely on its safe operation.







**LOCATION PLAN OF RIVER PETTERIL PROBLEM AREA**

