

Blennerhassett

Infiltration Reduction Plan

Last Updated: November 2024



Executive summary

Blennerhassett in Cumbria is currently in the survey stage (see Figure 1) to address infiltration and reduce spills at the Blennerhassett Pumping Station Storm Overflow (ALL0061SO). A desktop assessment concluded that infiltration is likely and reducing infiltration in this area would be significant enough to reduce spill frequency at Blennerhassett Pumping Station Storm Overflow. Surveys are underway to clarify this as well as the exploration of Natural Flood Management to manage rural run off if this is found to be a significant contributing factor in spill numbers.

If groundwater infiltration is found to be a leading cause of spills, interventions will be assessed and this Infiltration Reduction Plan will be updated accordingly. If not, this plan will end at the survey stage and next steps will be processed through other relevant workstreams.

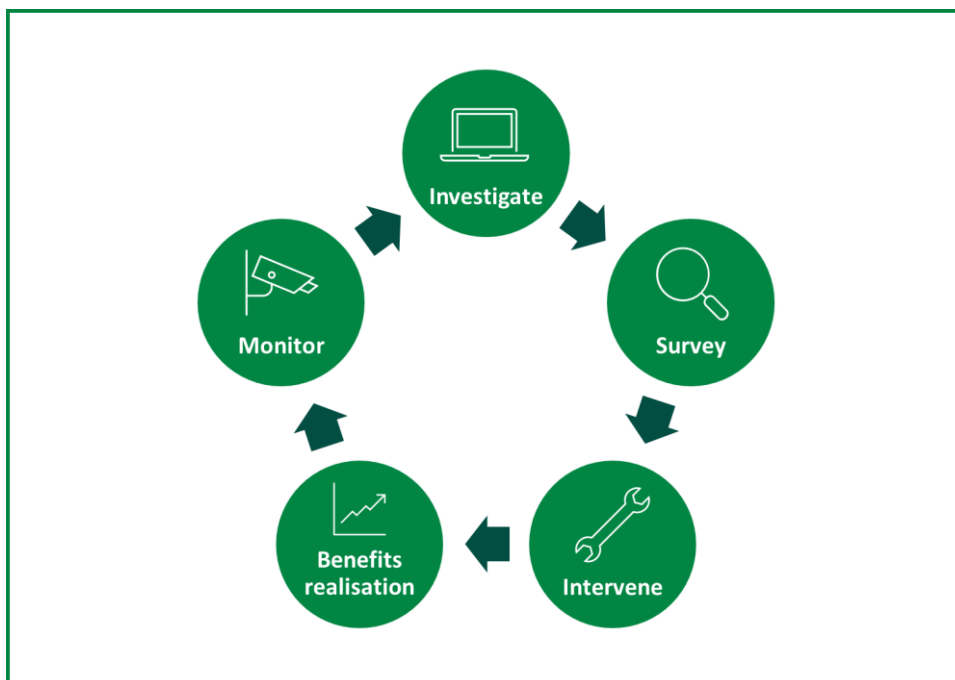


Figure 1: Iterative process to investigate, identify and address groundwater infiltration

Context

Sometimes, water can enter our wastewater pipes that they were not designed to receive. One source of these additional flows can be groundwater infiltration which can occur through pipe defects, leaky joints or issues with manholes. Extra water in the network can cause the sewer capacity to be exceeded, leading to sewer flooding or contributing to storm overflow activations.

As part of our ongoing work to maintain an effective network and achieve Better Rivers for the North West, our Infiltration Reduction Plans demonstrate our efforts to date and next steps to address infiltration and inflows in the catchment. This plan covers the Blennerhassett drainage area and the associated overflow the Blennerhassett Pumping Station Storm Overflow. In 2022, infiltration was identified as a potential leading cause of the storm overflow discharging. The purpose of this plan is to further investigate and address this.

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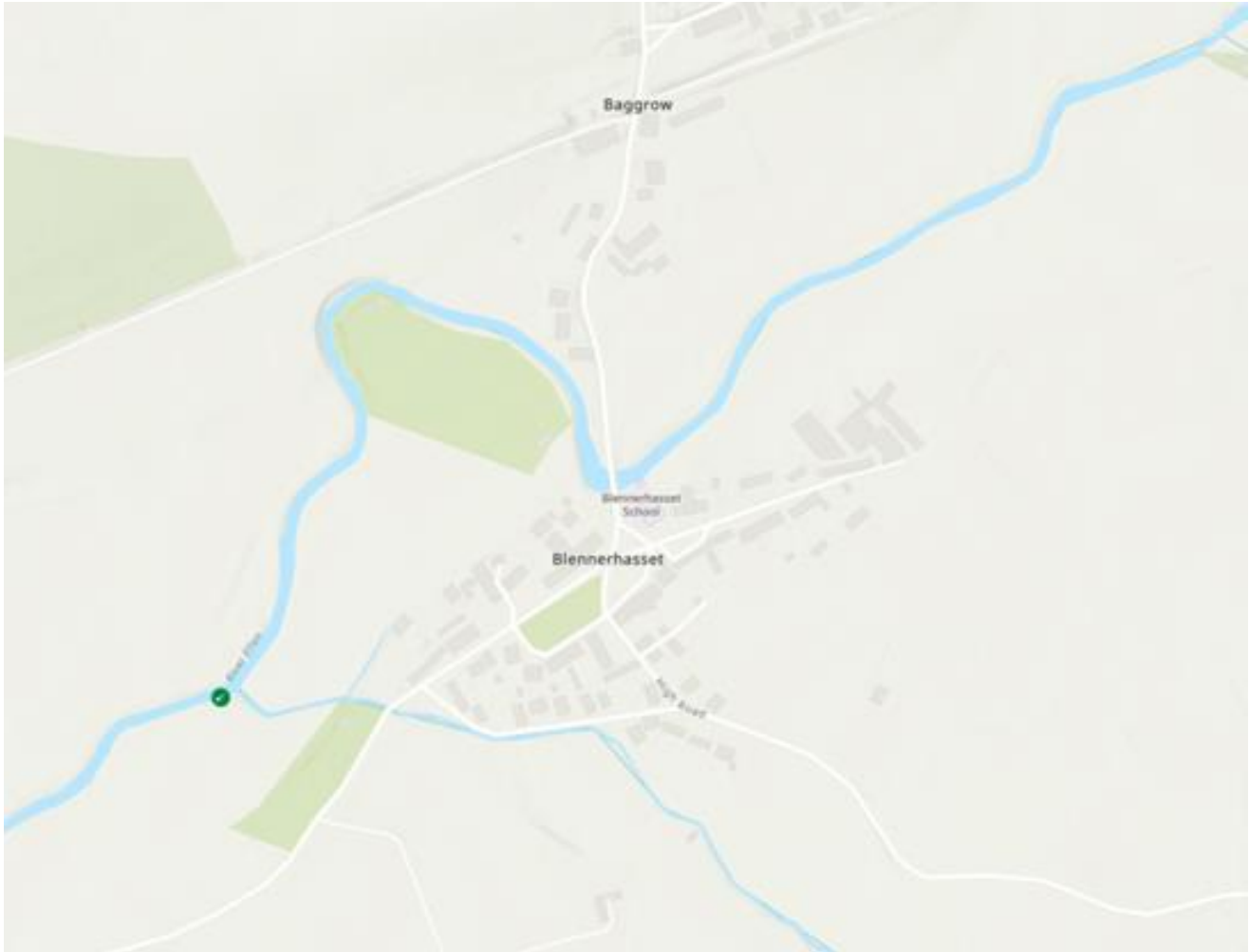


Figure 2: United Utilities – Better Rivers – Storm Overflow Map (October 2024). The green dot marks the Blennerhasset Pumping Station Storm Overflow.

Blennerhasset Village lies on the River Ellen, to which the Pumping Station Storm Overflow spills. It sits at the edge of the Lake District National Park, about 10 miles inland. The area is predominantly rural, featuring agricultural and scenic land.

Investigate

A desktop study was undertaken using available data to understand the extent of infiltration in the sewer network of the drainage catchment. The following data (where available) was analysed to determine the scale and location of potential infiltration:

- Relevant flow and depth data
- Operational information
- MCERTS Data
- Hydraulic models of the catchment
- River Levels
- Groundwater (borehole) data
- Spill analysis
- Topographical and Sewer maps

The assessment concluded that infiltration is likely in the catchment. There were several indicators of groundwater infiltration in the system as well as infiltration driven by rainfall. The assessment also indicated that spills may be partly driven by rural run off and identified areas of the catchment where public sewers cross the local watercourse.

From these findings, it was recommended that CCTV surveys are completed to identify potential infiltration sources. The CCTV survey should also identify if there is infiltration of watercourses into the sewer, where pipes cross them.

The spill analysis suggests that reducing infiltration in this area would be significant enough to reduce spill frequency at Blennerhassett Pumping Station Storm Overflow. The contribution of groundwater infiltration to the modelled baseflow used in this assessment can only be determined following further investigations.

Survey

Comprehensive CCTV surveying of the area is planned for Winter 2024 to identify possible infiltration and inflows to the sewer. This may be extended to Winter 2025 if surveying is not conclusive. The CCTV survey information will then be assessed using Artificial Intelligence to identify outstanding infiltration and inflow issues that need addressing.

As well as CCTV, surface water modelling software will be used to complete a hydrological and topographical assessment to identify opportunities for natural flood management in the catchment to reduce the impact of rural runoff on sewer capacity.

Next steps

Blennerhassett is currently in the surveying stage of identifying and addressing infiltration (see Figure 1). If the CCTV survey reveals groundwater infiltration, interventions will be considered, and the site will follow an iterative intervention regime to monitor the efficacy of the solution. Remedial works at Blennerhassett could include, but not be limited to, relaying sewers, lining sewers, sealing manholes or disconnecting inflows. This would be expected to be completed in 2025.