NORTH
LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE
MEETING – 9 MARCH 2022
WRITTEN ANSWER PROVIDED TO PUBLIC QUESTION

1.	Public question from Alan Bilton
	Question: Over the last 15 years the lower section of Church Street, Ecclesfield, between Mill Road and The Common, has experienced problems of surface water flooding. Sheffield City Council is aware of these problems and I would like to know:- (a) Their view as to the cause of these problems; (b) Why nothing has been done to alleviate the problems; (c) Why, despite meetings and visits from various Council officials, the Council has not communicated with residents; and (d) What can now be done to remedy the situation.
	Response: a) The cause of the flooding to Church Street is thought to be run-off from what is now agricultural land to the Northwest of Church Street and yes, not a new phenomenon. Please see attached plan. The run-off fills the Willow Garth, which used to be part of Ecclesfield Church. The Willow Garth is part of the historic Ecclesfield Priory and as such shouldn't be unduly tampered with, as informed by its current owner, the owner of 115a Church Street when officers visited to explore the problem last year. At times of saturated ground and heavy or prolonged rainfall, the Willow Garth spills into the horse paddock field adjacent to 115 Church Street which is owned by Ecclesfield Church, along with the Church Street Boundary Wall. Water builds up at the back of the Church boundary wall creating a risk of bringing the wall down. In recent years, and to prevent this risk and prevent his property from flooding, the owner of 115 Church Street (also visited by officers) created relief pipes in the Church Wall to allow the water to flood onto Church Street and into the highway gullies. Creation of the pipes has been a matter of concern between the Church and Sheffield City Council as this is essentially an illegal discharge which is overwhelming the highway drainage system, although it is conceded that if the pipes weren't there the Church wall would likely come down with the weight of the water imposed.

	It is understood that this water build up within the horse paddock used to dissipate to a private drain to the rear of 115-123 Church Street, but the volumes these days are too high for this small drain to cope. It is also suggested anecdotally that some of the flow in this area used to feed water features in Ecclesfield Park via an underground pipe, but that route has been long abandoned. The situation may have improved recently due to clearance work on the tributary watercourse to Ecclesfield Pond. This work by the pond's new managers may have helped to reduce the flows into the Willow Garth and exceedance flows from it. b) As is evident and can be seen on the plan, the exceedance flows now go out onto Church Street via the pipes through the wall. The water can build up on the road but is usually short lived, eventually dissipating via the highway drainage system to the Whitley Brook. A solution to the problem unfortunately doesn't fall within normal highway maintenance revenue. A solution will likely require "new works" capital investment to pick up the exceedance flows and transfer them to the Whitley Brook via a new exceedance drain. c) To date, officers have communicated with the Church, the Ecclesfield Pond Managers, the owners of 115 and 115a Church Street, many residents of Whitley Lane and the SCC Community Services North in relation to this matter, and they are happy to further this communication to the community. d) As capital investment is required as indicated in (b), unfortunately this is probably the sticking point, there being little or no provision available from Sheffield City Council/Amey Highway Maintenance under the highway maintenance contract, for what is essentially works to alleviate illegal flows from private land that are overwhelming the highway drainage system. There is also limited opportunity to address this from a flood risk alleviation project perspective, this being a highway flooding issue and not a property flooding issue as such.