

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Land Drainage Advisory Group/PFH
Environmental Health

AUTHOR/S: Chief Environmental Health officer

31 October 2006

CAMBRIDGE SPORTS LAKES

Purpose

1. To inform Members of the implications of the proposed Cambridge Sports Lakes development on the Council's award drains in the parish of Milton and to obtain the approval of members on the design proposals.

Background

2. The Cambridge Sports Lakes development is a proposal to create a multi-sports park on land between the villages of Milton and Waterbeach. The proposal involves a very substantial body of water in excess of 3 km in length that will be used for rowing and other water sports. The new lakes will be linked to the river Cam via a short canal that will enable the lakes to provide off-line flood storage capacity during flood conditions along the river Cam. If approved, the project will have a major impact on the drainage system for the area including four of the Council's award drains.
3. The developers have been in discussions with the Council and the Environment Agency over a number of years and have produced detailed planning statements on the operation of the canal and lakes and the general drainage for the area. A preliminary Flood Risk Assessment has also been provided for the development.
4. Milton Parish Council have been in discussions with the developers over several years and have expressed concern on the future operation of the local drainage systems both above and below ground.
5. Planning Committee considered the application for the development on 6 September 2006 and decided on a deferment of its decision to allow further information and clarification to be provided on a number of issues. Drainage is one of the most important of these and a detailed Flood Risk Assessment is being developed by the applicant to address the concerns.
6. Under the Council's Land Drainage Byelaws, it will be necessary for the developer to obtain Byelaw approval in order to progress the scheme.

Considerations

7. The new development will interrupt the flow in all of the award drains that run through the site. It will be necessary, therefore, to have a suitable agreement in place to cover the Council's future legal responsibilities should a flooding incident occur.
8. At the junction of award drain No. 291 and the proposed canal, a clash of levels occurs. At this location the developers have proposed the use of a siphon to divert the flow in the award drain below the new canal. This siphon would form part of a substantial structure that would probably be 35 to 40 metres in length. Ownership

and responsibility for repairs would remain with the operators of the development but cleaning and silt removal responsibilities will rest with the Council as part of its duties under the award legislation. This is likely to increase the Council's costs and a suitable commuted sum would be required from the developers to cover the increased maintenance requirements.

9. The impact of the proposed siphon both upstream and downstream of its location will also require investigation. The developers have agreed to carry out the necessary modelling works on the watercourse so that the impact of the siphon can be assessed. They have also agreed to pay the costs of the checking works that the Council's consultants would be required to undertake.
10. Advice on the remaining aspects of the drainage system will be provided by the Environment Agency
11. The proposed canal and the associated siphon are a vital part of the development. It is unlikely that the project could proceed without the new siphon arrangement. It would, therefore, seem unreasonable to refuse Byelaw consent provided that all the above requirements are addressed.

Options

12. The following options are available:
 - (a) Refuse consent to interfere with the award drain system
 - (b) Allow consent subject to all the above considerations being addressed.

Implications

13. **Legal:** The Council's Legal section have advised that suitable agreements can be put in place to ensure the Council's future legal obligations are covered if the development proceeds.
14. **Financial:** The development proposal will increase the Council's maintenance costs particularly in the area of the proposed siphon. The developers have agreed to provide a suitable commuted sum to cover these costs.
15. **Risk Management:** There is a risk that at some time in the future, the Sports Lakes project might cease operations. This is a concern that has been expressed in the past by local residents and the parish councils. However, the operation of the private drainage systems within the confines of the site will remain the responsibility of the site owners. This is the situation that exists on all privately owned land throughout the country.
16. There are no other Staffing or Equal Opportunities implications.

Consultations

17. Discussions have taken place with the Environment Agency, Milton Parish Council, the Planning section and a number of local landowners. It appears that the proposed development is generally welcomed but there is great concern that all of the drainage issues are addressed.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

18.	Affordable Homes	None
	Customer Service	None
	Northstowe and other growth areas	None
	Quality, Accessible Services	The proposed development will provide additional sports facilities that are likely to be welcomed in the area.
	Village Life	The proposed development has the potential to cause flooding problems in the locality and it is vital that the drainage design is given adequate attention.
	Sustainability	A positive aspect of the development will involve the additional off-line storage for the river Cam during flood conditions.
	Partnership	This is a further opportunity to work in partnership with the Environment Agency

Conclusions/Summary

19. This is a very substantial development proposal and impacts upon two parishes. There will also be a significant impact on four of the Council's award drains in the area. However, the changes will not have an adverse affect if the proposal is given adequate technical consideration and is undertaken within the confines of the Council's Land Drainage Bye-laws.

Recommendations

20. It is recommended that Members advise the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder to approve the drainage scheme for the development subject to suitable legal agreements and the payment of a commuted sum to be agreed by officers of the Council.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None

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