

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environmental Services Portfolio Holder 16 March 2010
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate
Manager - Health & Environmental Services / Corporate
Manager New Communities

SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE – NIAB DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

1. To consider the future management maintenance and adoption of the proposed sustainable drainage system (SuDs) that will serve the NIAB development in the North West Quadrant.

Background

2. The NIAB site covers 50.8 hectares in area, 48 of these hectares are within City Council administrative area, and the remaining 2.8 hectares within South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC). Two planning applications for the development were submitted in January 2007:
 - (i) An application to Cambridge City Council for up to 1593 dwellings, a primary school, community uses, and local centre.
 - (ii) An application to SCDC for one of the main access roads (onto Histon Road) together with landscaped areas and a balancing pond.
3. Both applications are expected to be considered by the Fringes Joint Development Control committee in April.
4. Since the planning applications for the NIAB site were received, the Council has put forward an additional allocation within the Site Specific Development Plan Document (DPD), north-west of the NIAB site (to be known as NIAB 2) to make up the Councils shortage of housing land. The Inspector has considered this site and indicated it should be allocated for housing. Full Council adopted the Site Specifics DPD on the 10th January 2010, confirming the inclusion of NIAB 2.

Maintenance and Management Responsibility for SuDS

5. Within the public realm the SuDS infrastructure consists of a number of 'green swales' i.e. semi natural, largely surface features that ensure the effective infiltration, conveying and storing water. Their management and maintenance is much closer to that associated with soft landscape and parks than to conventional underground drainage systems. Issues that may arise include clearing obstructions, containing vegetation growth, ensuring public safety and managing actively the biodiversity potential. As a matter of principle SuDS and open spaces should be subject to consistent management regimes.
6. Anglian Water normally takes on the responsibility for conventional drainage systems, but this is not the case with SuDS, the responsibilities for which are still being discussed. It is fair to say that with this innovative approach to drainage come some uncertainties or risks, such as: unknown costs of replacing SuDS at the end of their

design life, dealing with the cost implications on expiry of the 30 year S106 payments; risks involved in a split approach – if another party neglects their duties, it is likely to have an impact on our award drains.

7. These risks can be mitigated and may in reality be more perceived than real.

NIAB Development

8. The NIAB development proposes a mix of different sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), which are designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques. It involves the use of various swales, infiltration trenches and a balancing pond. These will eventually outfall to the Council's award drain number 164 in Impington. The detailed design is likely to demonstrate that the risk of flooding in the downstream section of the watercourse is reduced. Most of the swales and infiltration features are located in the City Council administrative area, but the proposed balancing pond is located within South Cambridgeshire, as shown on Plan 1.
9. The City Council has had discussions with the applicant about the management and maintenance of the sustainable drainage facilities. In November 2007, the City Councils Community Services Scrutiny Committee, agreed to take on responsibility for the management of SuDS (principally in the urban extensions) as part of its overall role in managing open spaces, subject to financial resources being provided through S106 agreements. The City Council has provided the applicant with their indicative costings for the ongoing management and maintenance of the drainage facilities. The applicant has indicated that in principle they are content with the management costs but have not agreed to contingency costs. As the NIAB development crosses local authority boundaries, officers from both Councils agree that having one single management body for the swales, infiltration trenches and balancing pond with associated open space would be the most appropriate option.
10. In principle, the City Council has agreed to take on the management and maintenance of the balancing pond (within South Cambs District) that would serve the NIAB development provided sufficient S106 contributions are secured for its management and maintenance.
11. SCDC's Drainage Manager is satisfied with this approach so long as the implications for the Impington Award Drain are recognised and addressed.

NIAB 2 Development

12. The NIAB 2 site is likely to result in the relocation and increase in size of the balancing pond from the entrance to the NIAB 1 to a site further to the north towards the A14.
13. Whilst the City Council have indicated that they will be prepared to take on the management and maintenance of the balancing pond that serves the NIAB development, they have not provided any indication as to whether they would be prepared to manage and maintain a larger balancing pond which would serve the NIAB and NIAB 2 development. This is a matter, which will need further consideration and discussion with Cambridge City Council over the coming months to inform future pre-application discussions for NIAB 2.

Implications

14. Financial	None provided sufficient S106 contributions are secured through the S106 for the NIAB developments.
Legal	Legal advice and resources will be needed in the usual manner for the S106 agreement.
Staffing	Officer time will be required to take forward future discussions with the City Council and applicant about appropriate provision for NIAB 2.
Risk Management	Ensuring there is an appropriate management regime in place with sufficient funding to minimise risk of future drainage problems on and downstream of the site
Equal Opportunities	No equal opportunities implications have been identified at this time.

Effect on Strategic Aims

15.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
	An appropriate management regime for this important aspect of infrastructure will ensure drainage problems downstream are minimised.
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
	A well-planned development with appropriate management regimes for all aspects of the public realm including drainage helps foster a sense of civic pride.
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.
	Residents living in housing on this site, including affordable housing, will support the local economy.
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.

Considerations

16. The NIAB development and NIAB 2 development will have implications for the Council in the following ways:
- There will be an impact on the Council's Award drain and higher levels of maintenance will be necessary, involving additional clearance works and vegetation removal on a more regular basis.
 - The balancing pond(s) will require maintenance in the future and a suitable adopting authority will be required to maintain this facility in perpetuity.
17. The maintenance impact on the award drain has been assessed and this can be addressed through the payment of a suitable commuted sum to the Council by the developers. The Council's Drainage Manager is in the process of negotiating sufficient management and maintenance contributions for the NIAB development through a Section 106 payment.
18. With one or two exceptions, South Cambridgeshire has not traditionally taken on the management balancing ponds within the district, however the outflows from the pond (from both NIAB and NIAB 2) will impact on the award drain and the lack of control

over the pond could have implications on the Council's statutory responsibilities under the terms of the Histon and Impington award.

19. On the other hand, adoption of the balancing pond is well within the scope of the current awarded watercourses maintenance regime and could be undertaken as part of the routine works provided that sufficient funding is secured through the Section 106 Agreement.

Recommendations.

20. It is recommended that:
- (a) That South Cambridgeshire District Council support Cambridge City Council as the preferred body to manage and maintain the drainage system at NIAB 1 (swales, infiltration trenches and balancing pond with associated open space) subject to appropriate contributions.
 - (b) That SCDC's Drainage Manager has discussions with Cambridge City Council and the applicant to agree and approach to a co-ordinated management and maintenance regime for the site (NIAB and NIAB 2) as a whole.

Background Papers: None

Contact Officers: Michelle Crees – Senior Planning Officer
Pat Matthews – Drainage Manager.