

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6 October 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager – Planning and New Communities

CAMBOURNE - DRAINAGE

Purpose and Background

1. This matter is being reported to the Planning Committee
 - (a) at the request of the Planning Portfolio Holder, following assurances given to Full Council on 22 April 2010 that it would be kept under regular review by Members, and
 - (b) because at the last Planning Committee on 1 September 2010, and following the information that there had been fresh flooding problems during the week commencing 23 August, Members indicated they wanted to see a fuller report setting out what action is to be taken by the Developers to achieve an early and permanent resolution of the drainage issues. Members also requested that they should be advised of the legal measures available to the Council in seeking to ensure the early and permanent resolution. It is intended that if Members having received the latest update, wish to hear details of the legal measures which are available then this will be dealt with in closed session either at the meeting on 6 October or at the next Planning Committee in November.

Update as at 23 September 2010

2. Officers have continued to liaise with representatives of The Cambourne Consortium, its Resident Engineer and Anglian Water and the Senior Planning Officer was present at a meeting on 3rd September at the offices of Anglian Water attended by representatives of both AW and the Engineers acting for the Consortium to review what had happened in the week of 23 August and to look in particular at the telemetry information held by Anglian Water.
3. The new Action plan was received by the Council on 21 September and a copy is attached as **Appendix A**. Various key passages from the Action Plan are set out below for ease of reference;

“.....During 26/27 August 2010 a large number of the manholes within the foul sewer system were inspected for leaks or high flows. These observations identified ‘hot spots’ and areas requiring further investigation some of which indicated the strong possibility of cross connections from garage areas and courtyards etc. within development sites....

....iv) Cross (rogue) connections

The possibility of cross connections from Surface Water pipework based on the identified ‘hot spots’ will form the core of the investigative work contained

in this Action Plan. The likelihood of cross connections is greatest on pipework and manholes or inspection chambers on the smaller upstream drainage networks.

These tend to be on private property or in communal areas and are not adoptable. Investigation of these networks will involve initial contact with the property owners and the use of teams equipped with bowsers and coloured tracing dye....

....The testing procedure involving bowsers of water and coloured dye would be undertaken by 4 teams with two operatives and an engineer to identify manholes etc to be checked and to maintain comprehensive records. Water and dye would be used to check the flow pattern through the drainage system and to confirm or otherwise whether water from surface water run-off areas eg roads footways, garage areas and courtyards or roof drainage pipework is connected correctly. Multi linked systems would use several colours of dye to identify these routes....

...Phase A1 Test sites are: Lower Cambourne- LC01, LC02, LC05, LC08, LC11, LC13, LC15.
Great Cambourne- GC12, GC14, GC17, GC23, CR01.

A2 Test sites are (if not eliminated following a rainfall observation survey)

Lower Cambourne- LC03, LC04, LC06, LC07, LC09, LC10, LC14, LC16.
Great Cambourne – GC06, GC08, GC13, GC14, GC15, GC16, GC19, GC20, GC21, GC22, GC24, GC25, GC27, GC28, GC29, GC30, GC31, CR03

A3 Test sites in Upper Cambourne (if other causes of 'High Flows' not discovered)

- UC01, UC02, UC03, UC04b, UC07, UC08.

Plus also (if not eliminated after a rain event) - UC05, UC06, UC10, UC12.

4. It is considered that the key difference in the work proposed under this latest Action Plan, and the work previously carried out, is the recognition by the Engineers of the real prospect of what they refer to as "Cross (rogue) connections". This, in effect, is viewed as an acknowledgement that the continuing problems encountered in the week at the end of August are likely to be in part the result of "...water from surface water run-off areas eg roads footways, garage areas and courtyards or roof drainage pipework..." not being connected correctly. Previously, attention was focused on survey and repair work to the main sewers themselves and whilst the work that has been carried out has undoubtedly have been of benefit (as evidenced by the fact that individual properties were not flooded on this occasion and as has happened previously) there is further investigation and work required. It is clear therefore that there remains an underlying problem that, to date, has not been tackled in terms of proper and sufficient investigation of "... water from

surface water run-off areas eg roads footways, garage areas and courtyards or roof drainage pipework.” The Council has been advised that the testing work to include these areas will commence on 4 October and is expected to take up to 6-8 weeks to complete. As indicated above the testing procedure will involve “... bowsers of water and coloured dye undertaken by 4 teams with two operatives and an engineer to identify manholes etc ..” The District Council has insisted that it should be able to have its own representative(s) present during any parts of the testing works and this has been agreed.

5. In the previous Updates, there was a note as follows:

“...it remains acknowledged both by MCA Developments and Anglian Water that ultimate success of the works will only be tested once there has been a prolonged period of rainfall...”

What the incident in late August has shown, however, is that the prolonged period of rainfall has demonstrated that the works carried out to date have only been part of the work necessary to provide the permanent solution. It appears the revised Action Plan has started to grapple with the fact that there is a more fundamental problem and that early testing is required to be able to move forward to the next step of further works.

6. Further updates as to the testing now proposed will be presented to the October and November meetings of the Planning Committee.

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

- (revised) Action Plan received from Maurice Gordon (WSP –Resident Engineer)

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