



**COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN
22 DECEMBER 2004**

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Cambridgeshire
District Council**

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**COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM:
3 January 2005 to 7 January 2005**

Monday 3 Jan 2005	Bank Holiday Cambourne & Cambridge Offices and Contact Centre Closed (all re-open at 8.30 am on Tuesday 4 January 2005)		
Tuesday 4 Jan 2005	10 am	Site Visits	
Wednesday 5 Jan 2005	10 am	Development and Conservation Control Committee	Council Chamber
Thursday 6 Jan 2005	10 am	South Cambs Magazine Editorial Panel	Swansley Room
Friday 7 Jan 2005			

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES NEWS

Carol Tyrrell joins us on 4th January as maternity cover. Carol comes to us from the MOD in Bath, having spent a number of years in the Royal Navy. She is moving back to Cambs from Dorset and would be delighted to meet members and staff so do drop by and introduce yourself.

DEBATING COMPETITION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: CHANGE OF DATE

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the semi-finals of this year's Debating Competition for Young People will now take place on **Tuesday 15th February 2005** and not Tuesday 8th February as stated in the Members' Bulletin. The final will still be held on **Tuesday 1st March 2005**. Apologies for any inconvenience this change may cause.

The first rounds for this year's competition are now complete. Young people debated the introduction of a tax on fatty foods. The matches this year were all of an extremely high standard.

We would like to ask Members to be involved in the competition by volunteering as judges for the semi-finals and finals of the competition. No previous experience of judging a debating competition is required.

Ideally we would like Members to volunteer for both the semi-finals and finals. These will be held on Tuesday 15th February 2005 and Tuesday 1st March 2005 respectively. Both rounds will be held in the Council Chamber at South Cambs Hall. The topic for the semi-finals will be "*I propose that the number of women in Parliament should be increased through positive discrimination*". The motion for the final will be "*I propose that voting in elections should be compulsory*". We would like to welcome as many Councillors as possible to participate in the debating competition this year, either by acting as a judge or by asking the teams questions as a member of the audience.

To volunteer as a judge, or for more information on the Debating Competition, please contact Geoff Hinkins, Community Projects Officer, on 01954 713354 or Geoff.Hinkins@scambs.gov.uk, or Susannah Harris, Community Development Officer, on 01954 713355 or Susannah.Harris@scambs.gov.uk.

LOCAL PLAN NO 2 PAPERWORK FOR COLLECTION

Councillors Agnew, Bullman, Burling and Quinlan still need to collect their Local Plan No 2 paperwork from the Members' Lounge. This document is too large and too expensive to post and has been waiting for collection for six weeks. Please can you come to the office to collect? Your co-operation would be much appreciated.

NEW ADVISORY GROUPS

Cabinet on 9th December 2004 agreed to set up two new Advisory Groups: Housing for Older People and Information & Communications Technology.

Housing for Older People

The Housing for Older People Advisory Group will advise the Housing Portfolio Holder and provide guidance on the Action Plan produced by the recent Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing,

including considering the effect of changes to sheltered schemes on Right to Buy. This Advisory Group will not exceed nine members and will be politically proportionate. To allow for informed debate, volunteers should have knowledge of existing sheltered schemes in their villages. To volunteer to serve on this Advisory Group, please contact your Group Leader as soon as possible. Group Leaders, please forward names to Democratic Services before 4th January 2005 so Cabinet can make appointments on 13th January 2005.

Information & Communications Technology

The Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Advisory Group will advise the Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder on e-government issues and the Contact Centre / CASCADE project. To volunteer to serve on this Advisory Group, please contact Democratic Services before 1st February 2005 and Cabinet will make appointments on 10th February 2005.

TRAINING COURSES

Speed Reading

There are still a few places left on the speed reading course being held on Thursday 3rd February 2005 from 9 a.m. till 12.30 p.m.

If you would like to improve your reading speeds and learn techniques for handling large amount of written information, this could be just the course for you. The course will be led by Ian Johnson from EERA and was well received the last time it was run.

If you would like to attend, please contact Susan May (susan.may@scams.gov.uk) before 24 December 2004.

Planning Policy Training for Members – why is it important?

Why should you come to the briefing on planning policy on 13th January at 2.00 p.m.?

Planning policies guide development proposals in all our villages and the countryside. They are the starting point for determining the thousands of planning applications received each year.

Planning policy is one of the few issues reserved for full Council alone to make decisions. Planning policy can have significant implications for the district as a whole as well as in specific localities. Yet plan-making is a lengthy process compared to many of the Council's activities and as a consequence meetings are infrequent, decisions are cumulative and there is a need for Members to have an eye to the 'big picture' when they are making decisions on plans.

Plan-making can also be particularly challenging as Members will often be asked to take a district-wide perspective and to make decisions about accommodating future residents of the District who do not yet have a voice to be heard.

This briefing session should go some way to help Members prepare for this important role and in particular the series of meetings between January and June 2005 on the policies and proposals for South Cambridgeshire's first Local Development Framework.

The present planning challenge facing South Cambridgeshire is enormous – we have been asked to accommodate one of the highest levels of growth in the eastern region over the next 15 years, now prescribed by the Government's Regional Planning Guidance and the County Structure Plan, as well as to protect and enhance the character and environment of the district.

This growth will inevitably impact on all our villages whether they are near to the development areas or not. The Council has the opportunity to steer the way in which it happens through the policies we create in our new Local Development Framework.

In addition to these challenges, there has been a sea change in the legislation on the plan-making system and this training offers Members the opportunity to get to grips with its complexities.

Be prepared for this most important series of decisions affecting the District for years to come!

Please let anyone in Democratic Services (democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk) know if you are able to come along at 2 o'clock on Thursday, 13th January 2005 for this briefing.

You do not need to respond if you have already put your name down.

CALL IN ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Thursday 6 January 2005 at 5 pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Friday 7 January 2005**.

Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Democratic Services Section to determine whether any relevant amendments have been incorporated.

The call in procedure is set out in full in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, 'Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.

DECISIONS MADE BY THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Elsworth Parochial Church Council: Holy Trinity Church, The Causeway	Agreed to offer an additional grant of £5,000 (total grant of £10,000) to Elsworth Parochial Church Council towards the cost of repairing the roofs, parapets and tower of Holy Trinity Church, The Causeway, Elsworth, using traditional materials and methods in accordance with the approved grant policy.	The total cost of the works is £191,319. A provisional offer of £5,000 was made in June 2004 towards the works, which were then costing £107,000. A grant would meet the aims of the grant policy, encourage the use of local materials, and enhance the appearance of this historic building and the conservation area.
Cam Catchment Sustainable Farming Project: Contribution towards Partnership Scheme	The Conservation Advisory Group on 15 September 2004 and the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder expressed strong support for the continuation of the partnership, the Conservation Manager to progress. Agreed that £4,000 to be made available from the Heritage Initiatives budget for 2004/05.	The scheme would provide clear environmental benefits within the farmland landscape of the Cam catchment, the majority of which is within the South Cambridgeshire district. Strong partnership forged between the UK Farmland & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), English Nature and the Environment Agency with other organisations will provide help in kind. The scheme would increase awareness amongst farmers and the wider public on best practise land management techniques.

		The scheme would strengthen the Council's links with the farming community.
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DECISION MADE BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Adoption Of Southern Loop Of Award Drain: Home Farm, Longstanton	Agreed to: (a) adopt the 337 metres of new watercourse, subject to the payment of an agreed commuted sum to cover future maintenance, and legal agreements on access maintenance strips and suitable covenants; and (b) advise the Development and Conservation Control Committee to attach an appropriate condition to any approval for the balancing pond and associated infrastructure, requiring the agreement of this Council, of a scheme for the long-term management and maintenance.	As per the recommendations of the Land Drainage Advisory Group on 14 December 2004.

DECISIONS MADE BY THE RESOURCES AND STAFFING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Boundaries of Rural Settlements	To approve the Council's Rural Settlement List and authorise its publication.	Qualifying hereditaments situated in a Rural Area, designated as Rural Settlements, are eligible for relief from payment of the Non-Domestic Rate. Local Authorities must review their list of Rural Settlements annually and publish them, indicating where necessary the boundary of each settlement.
Hardship Relief: Harston	To refuse the application by a company for relief from payment of the Non-Domestic Rates under section 49 of the Local Government Act 1988, in respect of its property in Harston.	Whilst the payment of Non-Domestic Rates will reduce the profit margin of this company it will not cause hardship and any such award would not be in the interests of the Council Taxpayers of this District.

DECISIONS MADE BY OFFICERS AND REPORTED FOR INFORMATION**Community Development Manager**

Applicant	Decision and Reasons
Friends of Fulbourn Hospital and the Community	Awarded £1,000 from the Grants to Voluntary Organisations budget towards the cost of Christmas presents to improve the morale amongst patients.

Conservation Manager

Subject	Decision
The Village Lock-up, St Peters Street, Litlington	Awarded an additional 50% Historic Building Grant G/5/04 of £250 towards the cost of repairing the brick roof and surfacing with tar coating.
Barn, Charnock House, 30 Church Street, Gamlingay	Awarded Historic Building Grant G/22/04 of £2,115 (25%) towards the cost of re-roofing using salvaged pegtiles and slate, making up any deficiency with Cambridgeshire Gault pegtiles and Welsh slate.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting held
on
Wednesday, 8 December 2004

Present: Mrs JM Healey

Officers:	Cameron Adams	Strategic Development Officer
	Christopher Bethell	Planning Officer (Tourism & Monitoring)
	Nick Grimshaw	Conservation Manager
	Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE was in attendance, by invitation.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Iain Green, Environmental Health Officer and Clare Roberts, Tourism Officer.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 2004 were approved as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

The Coton Countryside Reserve – Minute 3.1

The Conservation Manager reported that he had received the details of the Coton scheme a day before this meeting. An update was expected shortly.

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) – Minute 8.1

The Head of Community Services announced that he met with Simon Megicks of Cambridgeshire Constabulary and it appeared possible that the Government were initiating another round of grants for the deployment of PCSOs.

4. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE CONSERVATION ADVISORY GROUP

The Conservation Manager referred the Meeting to the recommendations made by the Conservation Advisory Group.

4 (a) Foxton Dovecote Meadow, Village Green Space

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio

AGREED

- (a) to adopt the, "*Foxton Dovecote Meadow Management Plan, November 2004*", as the basis for the development of the Foxton Village Green Space.
- (b) to authorise the release of funding of up to £5,000 from the Heritage Initiative Fund to Foxton Parish Council to support the implementation of the management plan, on completion of the lease of the site to Foxton Parish Council.

4 (b) Outline of the work of the Wildlife Trust in South Cambridgeshire

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio

AGREED

- (a) to support the work of the Wildlife Trust and establish a prioritised one-year pilot study of County Wildlife Sites (CWS) from 2005/06, funded from the Heritage Initiative Fund, with results reported to the Conservation Advisory Group by February 2006.
- (b) to seek additional funding within 2006/07 (*via a Continuous Improvement Plan bid during 2005/06*), subject to the results of the pilot CWS study, to support an appropriate three year service level agreement to support the Wildlife Trust's work on both managing wildlife sites and surveying County Wildlife Sites.

4 (c) Management of roadside verges for biodiversity enhancement.

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio

AGREED to initiate further action by officers to

- (a) Consider the potential enhancement of maintenance regimes for protected roadside verges with the Biodiversity Partnership, as a basis for the development of future revised management regimes with the Assistant Director of Environment and Transport at Cambridgeshire County Council.
- (b) Explore alternatives for the potential biodiversity enhancement and revised management procedures for non-protected Roadside Verges with the Director of Environment and Transport at Cambridgeshire County Council, where there is an opportunity via local partnerships to change the current management regime without compromising highway safety.

It was understood that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had set up a Grounds Maintenance Task and Finish Group which had discussed grass verges.

4 (d) Sawston Hall

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder

AGREED to support the proposed development in principle, subject to final agreement on a number of specific issues including design, materials and impact on the tree belt.

4 (e) Parish Paths Partnership (P3)

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder

AGREED

- (a) To authorise the continuation of funding support to the Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme for a further 3 year period from 2005/06 at the equivalent of the 2004/05 grant sum, subject to establishment of the Council's mid-term financial strategy.
- (b) To instruct the Conservation Manager to seek to develop linkages between the P3 schemes and strategic open space projects which will both enhance the

network and meet the objectives of the Community Strategy.

4 (f) Duxford Imperial War Museum - Conservation Area

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder

AGREED to consider the designation of a Conservation Area for Duxford as a matter of urgency.

4 (g) Buildings at Risk

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder

AGREED

- (a) To authorise the publication of "South Cambridgeshire Historic Buildings at Risk List" on the Internet site, on a six monthly basis to identify vacant buildings and encourage wider interest in their restoration and re-use.
- (b) To seek to maintain appropriate budgetary resources to enable the authority to intervene where necessary and meet its responsibilities under the acts.

4 (h) Historic Environment Champion for South Cambridgeshire

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet formally recognise and promote the 'historic environment champion's' role, as a key component of the Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning portfolio holder's role, so that the opportunities presented by the enhanced partnership working with the ODPM and English Heritage can be fully realised.

4 (i) St. Denis Church, East Hatley - Grant Application Results

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder **NOTED** the progress that had been made and hoped that the grant from English Heritage would allow the necessary works to be carried out.

5. TOURISM UPDATE

The Planning Officer (Tourism & Monitoring) announced that improvements to the Council's website would allow service users to access the database on visitcambs.org from our site. It was understood that the "Where to Stay Guide" which Clare Roberts was working on, was close to completion.

Concern was expressed that the tourism budget could be under threat from planned budget cuts for 2006/07. The Head of Community Services stated that there would have to be redundancies among his staff if suggested cuts went ahead. It was agreed that all portfolio holders and lead officers should be aware of the consequences of these cuts. The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder asserted that the Members should be informed of the amount of income that tourism brings into the District compared to the tiny amount of funding the Council allocates to it. The Planning Officer (Tourism & Monitoring) agreed to write an article for South Cambs Magazine using simple statistics to explain the importance of tourism to the District.

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder praised the setting up of web kiosks at the Trumpington Road Park and Ride site. The kiosks and the improvement to the web-site had already been paid for.

Rowing Lake

DS announced that a £20 million development was proposed between Milton Country Park and Waterbeach that would include an Olympic size rowing course, angling and cycle and footpaths. This would be a tourist attraction. It was expected that the planning application would go to the Development and Conservation Control Committee early next year.

Performance Venue at Northstowe

It was suggested that Northstowe could be an idea location for a performance hall, providing there was adequate parking.

6. REPORTS FROM THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Local Authority Cross Media Campaign – Feasibility Study

The Strategic Development Officer reported that the consultants' brief would shortly be finalised. The revised date for appointing the consultants was scheduled for either late January or early February 2005. The focus on the campaign, which will address the environmental aspects of sustainability, will be upon changing the public attitudes and behaviour.

Energy Supply Company (ESCO)

The Strategic Development Officer reported that he had received a favourable response from Peter Studdert, Director of Sustainable Communities of Cambridgeshire Horizons (CH) concerning their possible contribution towards a feasibility study to assess the potential for establishing an ESCO at Northstowe.

British Gas Cavity Wall Insulation Scheme

The Strategic Development Officer reported details of a meeting he had recently held with British Gas regarding their pilot scheme involving Braintree District Council where householders living in the District receive a £100 rebate on their council tax bill if they install cavity wall insulation. Braintree District Council pays £50 of the rebate with British Gas paying the remaining £50. The Strategic Development Officer also reported he will discuss the possibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council providing a similar scheme with Iain Green, Environmental Health Officer (energy and promotions).

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder praised the articles on sustainability in South Cambs Magazine and hoped to see an article on Police Constable Support Officers in the next edition.

7. VERBAL REPORTS FROM THE CONSERVATION MANAGER

The Conservation Manager reported that there was a meeting on 21st December concerning the acquisition of grants for the development of green spaces and bio-diversity from the ODPM. It was understood that the Conservation Manager and the Cultural Services Manager were likely to attend this meeting.

8. REPORTS FROM THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Creating a New Community at Northstowe

It was noted that public workshops regarding building a community at Northstowe would be held on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th January. The meeting praised the design used on the flyer advertising this event. Stakeholders would be invited to these workshops and there were enough spaces for 50 on the Friday and 70 on the Saturday.

The Head of Community Services agreed to contact Nick Hammond from the Wildlife Trust to discuss the Northstowe development.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Police Investigation in the Litlington Area

The Head of Community Services reported that a police investigation was under way following the disappearance of 21 year old traveller, Fred Moss. Cambridgeshire Constabulary had deployed 250 staff in this operation, which was taking the form of a murder investigation. These events had put Travellers and the local community under considerable strain and the Police had welcomed the Council's assistance.

10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The next meetings will be held on:

- 26th January 2005
- 9th March 2005

The Meeting ended at 4.10 p.m.

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE
ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT
AREA JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 13th December 2004
2.30 p.m.**

**Council Chamber
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
CAMBOURNE**



South Cambridgeshire
District Council

DECISION SUMMARY

ACTION BY

Declarations of Interest – None Received.

1. MINUTES 27TH SEPTEMBER 2004 AND 8TH NOVEMBER 2004

Agreed to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 27th September and 8th November 2004 subject to the following amendment:

8th November 2004

Minute 162, First Paragraph, Page Three, Third Sentence – delete “after 7.00p.m.”

Michelle Rowe
(01223) 717293
michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

2. PETITIONS RECEIVED

- a) Speed Control Measures on Twenty Pence Road, **Cottenham**
Received a 69-signature petition requesting an extension of speed control measures on the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham.
- b) Request for a 30mph Speed Limit accompanied by appropriate Traffic Calming in Ermine Street and better signage throughout **Caxton**
Received a 185-signature petition for urgent measures to both prevent traffic using Caxton village as a shortcut alternative to the newly constructed bypass and also to assist in reducing the speed of traffic through the village by introducing a 30mph speed limit accompanied by appropriate traffic calming in Ermine Street and better signage throughout Caxton.
- c) Objection to One-Way System for Station Road, **Histon**
Received a 288-signature petition objecting to a proposed one-way system for Station Road, Histon.

Michelle Rowe
(01223) 717293
michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

3. A14 VILLAGE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

Agreed:

- i) to note the progress made, and
- ii) to note the measures proposed for Phase 2 of the traffic calming scheme in Histon and Impington.

David Brace
(01480) 375663
david.brace@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

4. JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

David Lines
01223 833717
david.lines@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed:

- i) to re-affirm that the number of schemes submitted for consideration from this budget should be restricted to two per Parish;
- ii) to approve the priority list for scheme implementation next financial year, subject to budget allocation; and
- iii) to inform all Parish Councils that submitted bids accordingly.

5. A1307 FROM THE A11 TO SUFFOLK COUNTY BOUNDARY – ROUTE SAFETY STUDY

Russell de Ville
01223 717749
Russell.deville@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed:

- i) to note the details of the route study model; and
- ii) note the issues raised.

6. ACCIDENT REMEDIAL SCHEME: JUNCTION OF HIGH GREEN AND HIGH STREET, GREAT SHELFORD

Amanda Mays
01223 717565
amanda.mays@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to approve construction of the proposals as set out in Plan 1.

7. ODSEY TRAFFIC CALMING SCHEME

David Lines
01223 833717
david.lines@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed:

- i) to note progress made in developing the scheme; and
- ii) to approve the construction of the scheme, subject to the successful resolution of outstanding issues.

8. AREA JOINT COMMITTEE – AGENDA PLAN

Michelle Rowe
(01223) 717293
michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed:

to note the Agenda Plan for the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee, and the new start time for meetings commencing in the new municipal year.

Members of the Committee:

County Councillors: T J Bear, J E Coston, P D Gooden, S F Johnstone & J E Reynolds
District Councillors: Dr D Bard, J D Batchelor, S G M Kindersley, D S K Spink and R Summerfield
CALC Councillors: G Everson, M Farrar, J McGregor and M Williamson

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Land Drainage Advisory Group held on
Tuesday, 14 December 2004

Councillors:	EW Bullman	Mrs SA Hatton
	RMA Manning	MJ Mason
	EJ Pateman	A Riley
	J Shepperson	Mrs HM Smith
	NIC Wright	

and Councillor SGM Kindersley (Environmental Health Portfolio Holder). Also in attendance were Mr Geoff Burrows, Senior Partner, Wormald Burrows Partnership; Mr James Dodson, Swavesey Internal Drainage Board; Dr Ned Grace, Longstanton Parish Council; and Mr Owen Pitt, Development Control Engineer, Environment Agency.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors SM Edwards and Dr JR Williamson and from Tony Ross of the Environment Agency.

14. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor MJ Mason, seconded by Councillor EW Bullman, and there being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor J Shepperson be elected Chairman of the Land Drainage Advisory Group for the 2004-05 municipal year.

15. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor Mrs SA Hatton, seconded by Councillor A Riley, and there being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor MJ Mason be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Land Drainage Advisory Group for the 2004-05 municipal year.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2003 were approved as a correct record.

18. ADOPTION OF SOUTHERN LOOP OF AWARD DRAIN: HOME FARM, LONGSTANTON

The Drainage Manager explained that the proposed new watercourse was a widened and deepened ditch which would "loop" along the southern side of the existing award drain in Longstanton and connect at each end to sections of the Council's award drain. The report proposed that the District Council adopt the ditch subject to a commuted sum from the developers to be used for upkeep and maintenance.

Mr Geoff Burrows, senior partner for Wormald Burrows Partnership, acting on behalf of the Home Farm developers, Persimmon Homes, explained that deepening and widening the existing ditch would produce a central green area in the development and provide substantial extra capacity and balancing volume within the northern end of Longstanton, dropping the water level by about 600 mm in any given storm. He acknowledged that his clients expected to pay a reasonable commuted sum to the District Council for maintenance.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that:

- Maintenance strips of sufficient width to accommodate vehicles would be constructed on either side of the ditch and a bridge or culvert would provide access across, the maintenance strips likely to be of Type 1 granular or grasscrete,

- capable of supporting vehicles yet allowing grass to grow through;
- Some planting would be done in the central green area but not so much as to restrict access for maintenance vehicles;
- Homeowners would not have individual property rights over the green area or the ditch: these would be administered by a management company to which residents would make contributions;
- Plans had always shown the ditch in its proposed position;
- The existing section 106 legal agreement with the developers did not contain provisions for access to the watercourse: if the Council agreed to take over maintenance, a suitable legal agreement would need to be included as part of any new planning consent;
- Although the southern part of the green area appeared to be losing open space because of the drain, the northern part would also be losing approximately 7 metres for maintenance access; however, the advantage would be additional drainage for all of Longstanton;
- The existing drain had been classified as a Critical Ordinary Watercourse (COW) after the 2001 flood event and although it was possible the Environment Agency could adopt it if it met the main river criteria, they would not be considering it any time during the next two years;
- Creating a flood plain on the open green space would involve the movement of an enormous amount of material, as the plain would have to be lowered by a couple of metres to have any effect, although this would not bring any additional safety benefits; and
- The Environment Agency felt that water should not rise above the sides of the channel even in a 1 in 100-year storm event.

Members expressed concerns about the safety of young children playing in the vicinity of the drain, although it was noted that watercourses were not uncommon near developments through East Anglia. Fencing was not recommended as it restricted access to maintenance and emergency vehicles. Grips could be cut into the drain sides to assist children climbing out, although this was likely to encourage more children climbing in and would affect maintenance. Water levels in the ditch would be very low most of the time and parents would have to caution their children about the danger during and following periods of heavy rain.

Members were also concerned about the prospect of maintaining an access bridge. The Drainage Manager explained that the County Council usually maintained structures along watercourses and that they could be asked for advice or the maintenance could be sublet to them if the District Council chose to adopt the bridge. Members preferred a stone or concrete bridge to the proposed wooden bridge and the Drainage Manager advised that a box or pipe culvert could also be considered. Councillor A Riley noted that although the Parish Council was likely to manage the open space, it was uneasy about bridge maintenance due to possible costs. The Advisory Group acknowledged that it was premature to make a decision on bridge maintenance.

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder asked that there be a specific covenant prohibiting development on the maintenance strips.

The Land Drainage Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER** to

- agree to an adoption of the 337 metres of new watercourse, subject to the payment of an agreed commuted sum to cover future maintenance, and legal agreements on access maintenance strips and suitable covenants; and
- advise the Development and Conservation Control Committee to attach an appropriate condition to any approval for the balancing pond and associated infrastructure, requiring the agreement of this Council, of a scheme for the long-term management and maintenance.

19. LONGSTANTON HOME FARM DEVELOPMENT: CONSTRUCTION OF A BALANCING POND

The Development and Conservation Control Committee on 3 November 2004 considered an application for a balancing pond to serve approximately 500 houses and a business park on land at Home Farm, Longstanton, and requested that the Advisory Group give detailed consideration to the surface water and land drainage aspects of the application. The Advisory Group was not being asked to consider maintenance issues for the balancing pond.

The Drainage Manager clarified that the planning application related to the 500 homes and the business park, not a certain percentage of the development. The Environment Agency and the Middle Level Commissioners had both considered the plans and pronounced themselves satisfied with the proposals. The Drainage Manager also supported the proposals providing that the District Council had proper access. He noted that the widening and deepening proposals for the award drain would not represent a huge change to the Council's existing maintenance work.

Councillor A Riley, local member for Longstanton, agreed that he was reassured that the balancing pond would be adequate for Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the development. Mr Burrows explained that computer modelling had demonstrated that the system could accommodate more than a 1 in 100-year +20% storm event: the amount provided for overall in the balancing pond was far in excess of any likely occurrence.

Mr Burrows also explained that the balancing pond was a reservoir unlike others as it was designed to react to the depth of flow within the watercourse itself, "creaming off" the depth to reduce water levels elsewhere. If it were properly managed, it would bring substantial benefits to the downstream system. It would not generally be operated under normal storm conditions as water would be taken to the Great Ouse as quickly as possible; however, if a second 1 in 100-year storm event occurred while the Great Ouse sluice gate was raised, the reservoir would then accommodate the additional water.

Mr Owen Pitt, Development Control Engineer with the Environment Agency, clarified that:

- His authority had granted consent for the balancing pond under the Land Drainage Act because the reservoir would affect drainage levels elsewhere;
- PPG25 defined flooding as a material planning consideration and the Town and Country Planning Act nationally accepted standard criteria was a 1 in 100-year storm event; and
- It was unlikely that the balancing pond would ever be filled, even taking climate change into account, as watercourse restrictions within Longstanton itself would prevent the levels from going above the 1 in 100-year storm event.

Mr Pitt further explained that the Environment Agency could not maintain the balancing pond as the authority did not have permissive powers to do works on ordinary watercourses, just on main rivers. Only the local authority had power to maintain ordinary watercourses.

The Development Control Quality Manager confirmed that the agricultural land within the bypass area was not part of the outline planning permission for the Home Farm development. He explained that the balancing pond was a separate planning application, although related to Home Farm, so was not constrained by the existing section 106 legal agreement. The Council had the capacity to require negotiations of an additional s106 and appropriate commuted sums should it consider maintenance of the balancing pond.

The Advisory Group noted that the Council had not accepted similar maintenance responsibilities elsewhere, but that if asked to consider the balancing pond, would look at the issue in greater detail at a future meeting before making a recommendation.

The Land Drainage Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONTROL COMMITTEE** that the planning application be approved subject to:

- (a) agreement with the Council on suitable maintenance procedures for the future; and
- (b) payment of a commuted sum to the Council to cover the increase maintenance costs along the award drain as a result of the proposed development, to be secured by a section 106 agreement.

The Land Drainage Advisory Group requests that the Development and Conservation Control Committee note the legal reasons preventing the Environment Agency from maintaining the balancing pond.

20. DIVERSION OF LONGSTANTON AWARD DRAIN

The Drainage Manager invited Members to discuss the available mitigation measures to address flooding problems in the Longstanton area. He noted that the Longstanton Parish Council had suggested the option for diversion of the floodwaters, which would cost the District Council £190,000-200,000.

Members felt that the only realistic option at this time was to allow further proposals on the Northstowe development to emerge before committing the Council to substantial expenditure. If this failed to provide a solution, full Council could then be approached for the necessary increase in the Land Drainage budget. Councillor A Riley, local member for Longstanton, felt that over-specifying the balancing ponds in the Northstowe development, coupled with the Portfolio Holder's agreement to adopt the southern loop of the award drain, could create sufficient improvements for Longstanton residents.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer explained that the issue would be considered in more detail in subsequent meetings. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder felt that there was potential for the Council to put more pressure on developers to contribute their own funding towards solutions by indicating the Council's planning obligations with regards to flooding.

Mr James Dodson of the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board reminded Members that his authority would have concerns if any of the proposals increased the water flow into the Board's area.

The Advisory Group was **MINDED TO SUPPORT** the option to allow further proposals on the Northstowe development to emerge.

21. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor NIC Wright, local member for Papworth and Elsworth, asked that the Advisory Group invite the Cambridgeshire County Council and the Environment Agency to discuss Covell's Drain, Fen Drayton, at its next meeting, subject to the agreement of the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder.

The Drainage Manager agreed to provide Advisory Group Members with a map detailing the Council's awards and those belonging to Swavesey Internal Drainage Board within the area covering Fen Drayton to Longstanton.

The Meeting ended at 12.00 p.m.
