

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.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2. 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.

3. 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.

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7. 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.

The Meeting ended at 12.00 p.m.
