

## Report to Committee AEWRA- Sub-committee Flooding

At the January 2016 meeting it was decided to form a sub-committee to report on flooding in the wards. At the last meeting, July 2016 it was decided to prepare a report.

Having been a flood victim himself a member wrote to object to a planning application that he believed will now increase further the existing flooding as it is now approved.

On the 25 April he wrote to EHDC Planning department Re:55428/001 the following **Objection.**

Dear Sirs

Thank you for the notification of pre-decision amendments by email. Please note, as already advised my initials and my address are as above.

You will know from your file that I have already made representation on this matter and my comments for public display were not able to be forwarded as your portal was closed before the close of business on the prescribed deadline date, 18th February 2016.

I have noted certain statements had been made in the application that I am able to challenge as I have a material interest, my house and many others were flooded on 26th August 2015. This is significant because on that day, although heavy, the rainfall according to the Environment Agency was above normal it does not appear as one in thirty year event.

The applicants consider that the land is agricultural and therefore may be awarded status as surface water being 100% attenuated. Your consultee Roger Burton is aware that this is not the case as stated in his representation and then Objection.

Percolation tests have established that the ground where 'overland flow' and naturally attenuated surface water flow from the ordinary water course in Upper Anstey on that part of the site, failed the test. To take tests on higher ground where it appears there is more chalk than clay and then to average them would appear to impair the result in favor of the application.

The proposed site is nominated as Flood Zone 1 by the Environment Agency's initial assessment which dealt with fluvial flooding and controversially the Applicant's Flood Risk Assessment is based on this. This is because they (EA) have no record of flooding contrary to EHDC consultees report and duty under the WFM ACT 2010. Local knowledge (see objections to 55428/001) has voiced this very clearly. On land whereupon water is attenuated in this and the case of Chase Field Farringdon would now be seen as Flood Zone 3b and would not have passed the sequential test qualifying it as sustainable and therefore it would not be included in the Alton Neighborhood plan. Ian Ellis (EHDC Planning 1995) claimed after the Farringdon event that it would not happen again because we now have Flood Risk Assessments. The Hampshire County Council as Leading Flood Authority are now consultees on drainage in this matter, no longer the Environment Agency and are aware and have record of the flooding events relating to this proposal and their statutory duty to ensure that the proposal is sustainable as claimed. I see nothing in

the scribbled notes that have been belatedly added to this application to encourage me to believe that Headwaters of the River Wey can be attenuated by the SuDS System let alone fully retained as proposed in part of the application. Please take note of the well qualified comments of the objectors which is based on local experience and knowledge.

It can be seen that surface water from Upper Anstey lane flows down an ordinary water course and was attenuated both sides of the road at the bottom. Over recent years due to neglect the higher grip (ditch) on the westernmost side has been blocked and the lower one where exceedance would naturally proceed into the Highway Authorities gullies and then into the Thames Water Utilities assets (the main sewers) has also been allowed to silt up.

It has been noted recently that many of the pot-holes caused by the scouring by flood water have been filled by the Highway Authority. The effect of heavily polluted (clay) run-off and the residue of scouring has caused many of the gully-drains to be blocked resulting in reduced capacity and in consequence flooding throughout the catchment area.

Recent surcharging of the foul sewers in the catchment area has been investigated and where it was considered to be caused through abuse by use, it is now believed to be caused by lack of capacity due to insufficient maintenance. This is still being argued but what is clear is that Anstey Lane is a main route for TWUL assets serving the catchment to the north. Many of the side gullies are still blocked after eight months. This is the responsibility of HCC Highways who in 2014 changed their maintenance strategy from an annual clean, more frequent where flooding occurs to every three years, apparently to save costs.

It is understood that in recent years the overland flow from the north of Marlfields has flooded the nursing home. Where the flow has been redirected it now floods Wooteys School where attempts have been made to attenuate the flow causing flooding to the footpath and exceedance proceeding through the Wootey and Poundgate Estates as indicated in the Environment Agencies surface water predictive mapping.

You will recall the record of my conversation with the principle case officer regarding the flow from exceedance at the bottom of Upper Anstey lane where it is on the HCC homes (as recorded as fact in objections in this matter) where again I understand as fact that flooding has occurred in the Convent and at Anstey Park. The TWUL asset map indicates that storm water from the Manor Estate flows via the Convent into Anstey Lane where the sewers are now overloaded.

I do not believe that the information to date supplied in the application sufficient to determine that it is 'feasibly' sustainable as defined. We must now rely on the Planning Committee's interpretation of Roger Burton's advice as consultee which I know in the case of Chase Field they failed to do understand with results that were catastrophic. The potential flooding in this case will be far worse as the catchment basin is far larger than the Lavant stream.

**ENDS**

## **Alton neighbourhood Plan 2011 to 2028.**

Local planning is based on a process explained in the Alton neighbourhood Plan 2011 to 2028. There is a paradox where, in the plan, see page 27 below, it shows the site above indicating flooding from overland flow, an ephemeral ordinary water course and a functional flood plain. All these factors indicate to us that there is a breakdown in the planning and maintenance process which already causes serious flooding within the catchment.

## 6. Plan policies - Housing

The Community Questionnaire provided an initial set of views from residents. It found that the main concerns with regard to new housing development were: adequate infrastructure (a major concern for 91%); environmental impact (87%); traffic generation (80%); and impact on the landscape and skylines (74%). Residents felt strongly that infrastructure (roads, schools, etc) must keep pace with and be in place for housing growth. Residents also commented frequently on the potential for water run-off from slopes around the town to impact development sites.



*Evidence of rain water run-off leading to flooding from high ground in North Alton across Gilbert White Way*



*Evidence of rain water run-off leading to flooding from high ground in North Alton*

Residents were asked about specific larger SHLAA sites. There was (net) support for development at only one (Lord Mayor Treloar), although opposition to another was relatively modest (Borovere). The scale of the allocation to Alton means, of course, that other significant sites must be identified for development. Selecting them, however, took particular account of residents' views about infrastructure, environment, traffic and landscape, including where impacts could be minimised or mitigated. It also took account of views expressed at a further community engagement exercise in November 2014, when more useful information about preferences was generated in response to a presentation on emerging site allocations.

Since 2010 the government has enacted the Flood Water Management Act 2010. Lead Local Flood Authorities (HCC) have a duty to carry out functions which relieve flooding.

## Maintenance

Hampshire County Council have a duty to clean the Gully drains. We have correspondence confirming that in 2007 the gully drains were being cleaned four times a year because of the run-off. This abated the flooding until 2010 where HCC records show the area flooded "multiple times a year" contrary to the Flood Risk Assessment accompanying the application on Cadnam Farm. Notwithstanding the flooding, following guidance in 2013 the Highways department changed their cleaning programme in 2014 to every three years!



One of many drains monitored since 26/8/2015 that has remained completely blocked.

## **Flooding events**

When we reported the flooding events at the March 2015 meeting members were concerned that the flooding of people's homes was trivialised by Councillors' response. Victoria Road, Geales Crescent, Anstey Lane, Anstey Road have experienced serious flooding on further occasions. Councillor Phillips is a District Councillor on the planning committee and a consultee on the Molson Coors site (Anstey Road) which has flooded and is known to attenuate flood water contrary to the FRA submitted thereon.

Councillor Phillips is reported in the local paper (15th July 2016) as being so angry that he stripped off to show his support for the victims. This sub-committee is at a loss to explain how the EHDC Planning Committee missed the opportunity to deal with the matter as minuted after the May meeting prior to consent being granted. EHDC are clearly aware of the issues but have actively chosen to pass the applications we have seen.

## Surface water flooding

Flood Upper Anstey Lane 5hrs after flood at approx 2am 23/6/2016.



Flood defence with adjacent detritus from exceedance from functional flood plain (Blains Farm) opposite. Linked to multiple floodings recorded with HCC on the Manor Estate.

We have pointed out contrary to the Flood Risk Assessments by developers the predictive flood mapping by the Environment Agency is geographically very accurate but the reoccurrence rate is hopelessly optimistic.



Anstey Park is a functional flood plain, while pleasantly maintained it is not effectively managed as a sports ground. It has a greater potential to attenuate flood water where exceedance floods Anstey Road.



Scouring (23 June 2016) in the lane adjacent to Woodbine cottages Anstey Road indicates part of the water course predicted in the Environment Agency predictive mapping. The flow of detritus is showing evidence of flood water entering the Molson Coors site where anecdotal evidence contradicts the FRA in the outline planning consent for 85 houses.



Geales Crescent 26th August 2015- overloaded surface water sewer and overland flow from Spencer Close. The foul sewer also surcharged flooding multiple properties.



Property Geales Crescent 26th August 2015 surcharging foul-sewage



Property Manor Estate sand bagged.



2016 - Geales Crescent. Surface water sewer clear. Foul sewer <40% capacity due to congealed fat and scaling. TWUL have no record of cleaning the main foul sewer since 1997 (adoption). The lateral drains (from the home to the main sewer) have been cleared on multiple occasions. AEWRA members that have been flooded are awaiting reports from TWUL as to cause.

## **Conclusion**

Flooding is occurring throughout the wards and is of concern as apart from the damage and risk to health and safety many victims are elderly and vulnerable particularly in the key areas. We will through our liaison with EHDC seek to improve reporting of flooding incidents, we will continue to monitor TWUL and HCC maintenance of their assets. Ward, Town, District and County Councillors have a duty to act on behalf of the electorate. The recent planning consents on functioning flood plains has been questioned by many members. We will continue to question councillors over the findings of this report. The spectre of future flooding is very real.