

Report on Public Meeting with Hannah Wilson, the Pre-Development Planning Manager with Anglian Water Services Limited. Held on 7th March 2018

Introduction

Lavinia Hadingham, our Local District Councillor, kindly arranged for Hannah Wilson from Anglian Water to attend a public meeting in order that the concerns raised by Villagers over the impact of the proposed additional 284 new houses in Fressingfield and 110 in Weybread could be discussed. Ms Wilson gave a presentation on the role of Anglian Water in the Planning process and responded to a wide range of questions.

Role Of Anglian Water

Hannah explained that Anglian Water are not a " Statutory Consultee" within the Planning process and as such cannot formally object to an Application, or prevent a developer from linking into the existing sewerage system. Anglian Water's role is primarily advisory, both to the Developer and the Local Authority. It was explained that Anglian Water try to give advice at the Pre-planning stage and then inform the Local Authority if any Planning Conditions need to be imposed upon the Developer. eg the provision of on- site short term holding tanks to cope with peak flows.

Anglian Water try to work closely with the Local Authority, but on the particular Applications relating to Fressingfield there had not been any specific meetings to discuss the issues. . With regard to the capacity of the sewerage system this is assessed purely through desk top modelling. Data is collected on current flow rates through the system, together with storm conditions and climate change. The impact of additional properties is calculated on a scheme by scheme basis. Normally this is only done in depth once Application is approved at Outline Stage. An allowance of 10% ingress of surface water into the sewer is added to the equation. The **cumulative** impact of all of the potential housing is not assessed. ie the Applications which have not yet been passed at Outline stage are not included.

The introduction of " zonal payments" was explained. From April 2018 a Developer will be required to make a one off payment to Anglian Water for every new property once the water meter is connected. This money will be earmarked for infrastructure upgrades, but there are 2 problems. Firstly, the money will only be available once a property has been completed and secondly, like CIL payments the money can be spent in a completely different area and would not be ring fenced for Fressingfield. Anglian Water would therefore have to make a commercial decision upfront whether to fund upgrades to the sewerage systems. A Developer would not be required to fund major upgrades to the sewerage system.

Issues for Fressingfield

Capacity of the Sewer

A number of Villagers raised concerns over whether the main sewer had sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional houses, especially as there are serious ongoing problem with

the egress of sewage in Low Road. One resident adjacent to Low Road reported problems with showers and sinks not draining away at peak times. If the sewer cannot cope with the existing flows, how can additional flows be accommodated? It was noted that the sewerage system was built in 1946. The design assumption would have been for a potential sixfold increase in the number of properties together with a 10% allowance for the ingress of surface water. An investigation done by SAFE has demonstrated that the proposed additional housing would exceed the original design capacity figure. It has been suggested that the number of houses linking their surface water drainage to the sewer exceeds the 10% rule. If differing percentages are fed into the Anglian Water modelling very different results as to the spare capacity in the sewer would ensue. The only way to establish exactly how many properties discharge the surface water to the sewer is by visual inspection, but Anglian Water has no powers to require that residents seek alternative solutions. The capacity of the of the treatment plant at Weybread was not discussed.

Flooding

It was noted that there had been an historic under reporting of Flooding. Hannah agreed to provide information as to how flooding and the egress of sewage should be reported. Concern was expressed that highways flooding, sewerage and general flooding were dealt with by separate agencies, but these issues are interlinked, particularly as the egress of sewage mainly occurs when the Beck is high. SAFE had requested An Environmental Impact Study from Suffolk County Council, but this had been refused.

It was noted that all of the Applications related to green field sites and the impact the developments would have on surface water run offs was discussed. Hannah explained that in respect of surface water sustainable drainage systems were the preferred system, if these are not possible then discharge to water courses and only to the main sewer if no other solution was possible. The feeling was that inevitably concreting over farm land will lead to more flooding, particularly in Low Road, the lowest point of the village.

Specific Points on Applications

School Lane and Stradbroke Road

Anglian Water have imposed specific conditions upon the Developers which will require additional design work and modelling in respect of the disposal of surface water.

Post Mill Lane

A condition has been placed upon the proposed Post Mill Development in respect of the foul sewage. There is a capacity issue. The Developer is required to undertake further modelling and make proposals for mitigation measures and remedial works. These proposals will then be submitted to the Local Authority which will then decide if the Condition can be discharged. Hannah reported that Anglian Water do inspect works on site and do physically ensure that the approved drainage/ sewerage systems are installed in accordance with the approved Plan .

Conclusion

Hannah agreed to provide a resume of the roles and responsibilities of Anglian Water and she agreed to make contact with the Local Authority raising some of the issues brought to her attention. All present were very grateful to Hannah for answering all questions raised and for being so honest in explaining the limited powers available to Anglian Water in the Planning Process.

Pam Castro - member of SAFE