

Problems with Flooding and Sewerage in Fressingfield

"Anglian Water would not permit the discharge of surface water from a new development or hard standing area to connect to a dedicated foul water sewer"

- (Growth and Planning Services Team at Anglian Water 11 May 2017)

John Shepherd Way(Road) - 1432/17 " -Surface Water Disposal -The proposed method of surface water drainage submitted is acceptable to Anglian Water. --The connection point for the surface water would be to manhole 9651 - at a rate of 17.5 litres per second"

- (Nigel Minter at Anglian Water 8th August 2017)

Application 3872/16 " Should infiltration or attenuated discharge from the ditch not be possible Anglian Water have confirmed they would accept restricted discharge rates of 5 litres per second into their network."

-(Plandescil Report 17th August 2017- Confirmed by Anglian Water 27th October 2107 - Mark Rhodes Report.)

" our overriding objective is to ensure there is no detriment to existing customers as a result of the development. "

-(Hannah Wilson- Anglian Water 20th April 2017.)

" Flood risk should be managed and not be increased elsewhere by the development "

-(NPPF July 2018)

"Without an adequate system for surface water drainage, this is causing flooding on the road. Surface water is also getting into the foul sewer system, which is not designed to cope these levels of flows and therefore causing manholes to pop and sewage to overflow . I would recommend that the lead local flood authority need to ensure a suitable drainage system for the surface water is implemented and Anglian Water need to remove surface water inputs from their foul sewer to relieve some of the pressure."

-(Rachael Storr- Environment Agency 18 May 2018)

There seem to be a number of paradoxes and conflicting advice in these statements. Certainly if more surface water is allowed into the sewer the sewerage system problems will be exacerbated.

This paper points out the short comings of the current strategy and seeks clarification and answers about factors which may contribute to the current problems.

Background History

There is a long standing problem with flooding and sewage egress, but it appears to now be more prevalent with four episodes in six months at the beginning of 2018.

In 1988 the problem was discussed between our then MP Michael Lord and Anglian Water CEO Peter Bray. The Chief Local Authority Medical Officer was involved as was the Local Government Ombudsman (correspondence on this is available).

Egress of sewage only occurs at times of heavy rainfall suggesting that the system is filled with excess surface water. If more surface water is allowed into the sewerage or Beck the situation will be made worse.

Current Situation

There are some considerable concerns about flooding and sewage egress in Fressingfield. I understand that SCC is primarily concerned with flooding whereas Anglian Water have responsibility for the sewerage system.

The problem in Fressingfield is that the two aspects are intimately related. Surface water flows downhill to Low Road (the Lowest point of the village) towards the Beck, sometimes the Beck overflows and causes flooding and with, or without flooding of the Beck the manholes lift and sewage and water flood onto the road and private gardens. Because of these inter- relations a number of agencies are involved and it is difficult to get clear answers to questions.

Agreed Points

What is agreed, I believe , is that :-

1. Low Road is at the bottom of 4 steep inclines.
2. The soil in Fressingfield is impervious.
3. Flooding in Fressingfield is a long standing problem.
4. Manhole covers "pop" and this has been a long standing problem.
5. There is a single sewerage system which takes both sewage and some surface rain water.
- 6 Zonal Payments, as with CIL payments, are not necessarily spent on the village from which they emanate.
7. Sewage from Fressingfield is pumped to the Weybread treatment plant.

Questions

1. Why is there flooding and egress of sewage in Low Road (4 times in a six month period 07/12/17; 12/03/18; 30/03/18 and 3/04/18)
2. Are these problems due to overload, particularly surface water entering the system.
3. How many properties in Fressingfield have an abatement on their sewerage bill because they do not discharge surface water to the sewer?
4. How many new build properties and developments in the last 30 years been given permission to discharge surface water to the sewer.
5. Currently there are 2 major approved schemes, not yet built. We believe that the Chapel scheme (3872/16) has permission to discharge to the sewer. Does the Red House Farm Application (4410/16) also have permission to discharge to the sewer and, or via ditches to the Beck?
6. There are 3 major Applications outstanding (1432/17; 1449/17; 1648/17) Will any of these be permitted to discharge surface water to the sewer or Beck?
7. All of the drainage strategies appear to be reliant on desk top modelling. How robust are these and what are the levels in confidence? Obviously such modelling is not fool proof because a change of strategy has occurred on 1449/17 after further extensive modelling.
8. Will Application 1449/17 be remodelled now as we believe there is a revised site layout increasing the area of hard standing? Jason Skilton (SCC)wrote on 9th July " If the layout has changed Area Plan 1152-02-003 will need to be changed as would the FRA/drainage strategy".
9. Why does the cumulative impact study include only the three Applications outstanding and not the two already approved, but not yet built?
10. Is it correct that the desk top modelling allows for 25% ingress of surface water and is it true that a small inaccuracies in this assumption will significantly affect the outcome figures?
11. Have Pre-Planning assessments been updated as plans for developments have changed?. For example a nursing home was in the original John Shepherd scheme(1437/17) , but this has been omitted and an additional 49 houses added?

12. Is it true that the soil conditions and topography in Fressingfield make sustainable drainage systems difficult to achieve and discharging into water courses increases the risk of flooding in Low Road (Anglian Water Letter 20th August 2018)

13. Is there capacity in the pipe work going to the Weybread, particularly beyond the proposed additional 110 houses for Weybread. Can the system cope with a possible additional 372 houses. (54 in Fressingfield approved, but not yet built; 208 under consideration in Fressingfield; 110 in Weybread.) How is this capacity assessed objectively and if only part of the Applications were approved what is the cut off point in terms of the number of houses?

14. Surface water on the proposed Post Mill site flows to the ditch. I understand that the it is proposed that the flow is attenuated, but if there is very heavy rain the system is designed not to flood the housing estate but will cause the water to flow to the Beck and flood Low Road. The ability of attenuation mechanism to cope with extreme weather conditions has not been evaluated. I note that the drainage consultant for the scheme has included a disclaimer that he will not be liable for any subsequent flooding.

15. I understand that detailed modelling of the drainage strategy and its approval by the Planning Authority is not required until after Planning permission has been given. What happens if modelling subsequently shows there will be flooding of the buildings and off site flooding.

16. Is it true that the permitted capacity of the Weybread treatment plant is assessed on dry weather and not total flows and is this how compliance is achieved? There are massive fluctuations particularly when storm water enters the system. Is this of significance in the total overall assessment of the realistic capacity of the treatment plant?

Summary

There are serious problems with the sewerage and flooding in Fressingfield.

These are compounded by the topography and the poor infiltration of the mainly clay soil.

The egress of sewage is probably due to overloading of the sewerage, especially by surface water which has been historically allowed to enter.

Additionally, foul water from extra dwellings will place a further load on the system.

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Further information on these issues available on the SAFE web site under "home page " and " lobbying"

fressingfieldhousing.org