

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 28 APRIL 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.45 PM**

- Members Present:** J Lea (Chairman), , R Jennings, L Mead, A Mitchell MBE, S Neville, Mrs M Sartin and B Surtees
- Other members present:** G Waller
- Apologies for Absence:** Mrs H Brady and Mrs E Webster
- Officers Present** K Durrani (Assistant Director (Technical Services)), S Stranders (Drainage Manager), L Savill (Resident Engineer) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

48. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted there were no substitute members

49. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes of the 24 February 2015 meeting were agreed as a correct record.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

51. PRESENTATION FROM THAMES WATER

The Chairman welcomed four officers from Thames Water (TW) to the meeting. They were there to give a presentation on their work in this area, the problems they faced and to outline some solutions.

The officers introduced themselves to the Panel. They were Mumin Islam, the Local, Regional Government Liaison; Mark Dickinson, their Development Planning Manager; Nigel Fuller, their Fields Operations Specialist and Anne Christie, Customer & Continuous Improvement Manager.

Before the meeting, our officers had sent them examples of problem works in our district and a list of questions from our Councillors. They started by apologising for the time taken for some of the work they had undertaken and for their lack of communication in aspects for the cases provided.

They showed a map showing the boundary of region that they covered mostly around Oxford and North London coming up to Waltham Abbey into Epping Forest District (a copy of their presentation is attached). We noted that they had a duty to provide public sewerage and to clean and maintain sewers. They also had a duty to provide and extend sewerage systems, but did not have the duty to provide capacity to deal with flood or ground water. They also did not deal with rivers or canals. There were

three types of sewer: foul water sewers, surface water sewers and combined sewers (these were mainly in London).

The causes of flooding could be many and complex. It was difficult to identify where the water initially came from. In general, it was noted that the local council and land owners were responsible for surface and ground water flooding; highway flooding was the responsibility of the local council and/or the Highway Agency; river flooding was the responsibility of the riparian owners and the Environment Agency; Thames Water was responsible for surface water sewers and foul water sewers.

On the cases raised by EFDC – they had repaired the problems that caused the flooding at Bower Vale, Epping. At Monkswood Avenue, Waltham Abbey they would be initiating repairs within the next few weeks. They had now stopped the flooding at Orchard Gardens and Mead Court and the drains had been cleared out. Sewardstone Road (junction with Farm Hill Road) could not be traced by their records; the Waltham Abbey Football Club was a private asset; and Horseshoe Hill was not on their records.

They apologised for their poor communication and for delays in responding to incidents. Thames Water was increasing the number of customer representatives in both their clean and waste teams to improve contact. They were also continuously reviewing their communications branch improving how they target communication to areas that needed it most.

They have a “Pollution Tile” project which was investigating issues in their highest risk pollution and flooding locations, their history and any remedial work needed. They would also review up to 200kms of blockage hotspots within the next few months.

They had a ‘Hold/Closed the loop process’, looking at how long it took to do work and to push their contractors to complete their work more quickly.

They were also looking into setting up a team to work with the Council to help in communications. They already hold quarterly North London liaison meetings with the Environmental Agency to discuss any relevant events in their area.

In 2015 they have planned maintenance sewer programme of 260km and currently in Epping Forest District have on-going planned maintenance for over 4,000 meters of network in 20 streets. They were also investigating hotspots for discharge of fats, oils and grease and were working closely with Environmental Health Officers and had a “Bin it don’t block it” education campaign. They were also proactively working with Local Authority’s surface water drainage officers.

To report surface flooding, they have a 24 hour Freephone line on 0800 316 9800 or you could go on their website at www.thameswater.co.uk or email customer.feedback@thameswater.co.uk

They prioritise their calls and have 2 hours for emergencies and 4 hours for operational blockages. If follow on works were needed, dependant on Highways Agency agreement and notice/permit had been granted it would be a 5 to 10 day notice.

As for planning matters – they were statutory consultees in the development of Local Plans but were not statutory consultees on individual planning applications or third party applications. Their team of 5 covered 96 local authorities where they were

responsible for making comments on applications. If individual applications were referred to them they would respond to them, but when they only receive weekly lists they could not guarantee a response. If EFDC really wanted a response they should specifically consult them on individual applications.

It should be noted that even if they knew a development would cause a flood, they cannot prevent it from joining their network without the help of Local Authorities Planners putting appropriate conditions on.

The types of documents that they could comment on were:

- Strategic Plans;
- Local Development Plans;
- Site Allocations;
- Development Strategies;
- Supplementary Planning Documents; and
- Neighbourhood Plans.

They may wish to seek to influence type, scale and location of developments and may seek to safeguard future sites or influence their designations.

They also appraise and comment on new developments in terms of:

- Sewer flood risk;
- Odour impact;
- Water pressure; and
- Asset protection.

They had commented on about 60,000 applications last year. It should be noted that under the Water Act they have a statutory duty to “provide, improve and extend” their network to serve customers and could not refuse connection outright.

They review Local Plans and third party applications to understand their impact. They would also have to develop individual schemes for individual developments. With advanced notice of properly appraised schemes they could deliver some infrastructure through their Business Plan. However, they would need to consider the cost benefits and environmental impact of potential network upgrades. Also network upgrades aren't always straight forward; for example, they would need to consider the environmental impacts, did the design consider cumulative impacts and what consents were needed to build the upgrade, e.g. planning, access highways etc.

They could also ask the planning sections to impose Grampian conditions (A "Grampian condition" was a planning condition attached to a decision notice that prevents the start of a development until off-site works have been completed on land not controlled by the applicant).

The meeting was then opened up for questions from the members present.

Councillor Surtees asked about road works incidents at Ongar, the road works had begun but appears to be spread out over a long period of time. Also some of the works appear not to have been done well. He was told that their contractors tended to set up, do the work and move out as soon as possible. If it was a clean water repair they would have to leave it for some time to test the repair it over the long term, if it was a waste water repair it would be done quite quickly. If the exact location could be provided they would chase it up. Councillor Surtees added that the

temporary traffic lights had gone wrong but there was no obvious number displayed that they could call to report it. He was told that there should be a permit board with contact numbers displayed; all Thames Water sites had one.

Councillor Sartin thanked the officers for their interesting presentation and noted that we were a large rural district with very old areas and infrastructure. How was this dealt with? We also have proposed new developments that fall into the Rye Meads catchment, the area around Harlow; how far in advance did they plan these things? She was told that they did a lot work with the planning sections. The developers would tell people what they wished to hear. They would plot on their maps to plot the impacts this would have. They identified issues within their catchment area and formed a 'view' on how these areas would be best served. They would have an idea on what would need to be done and would firm that up nearer the completion. As for rural areas, we have inherited a lot of good Victorian engineering. We would build up a picture of an area and the problems it had and take this into consideration for new planning applications.

Councillor Neville asked if they could have road-works followed by road-works in the same place? He was told that they were looking into a more integrated approach; more of a one stop way of working, unless of course it was an emergency.

Councillor Lea asked if there were any plans to extend the network capacity for both surface and foul water systems in our district. She was told that there were certain conditions where the network would not cope. They worked to a 1 in 20 event, such as the exceptionally wet weather in the previous winter, where their systems could not cope. Other than that they did plan for local developments as long as they knew about it and where funds permitted.

Councillor Lea asked if there were any plans to extend TWs pumping stations. She was told that all their pumping stations were covered by telemetry and monitored continuously, any problems registered would be investigated and the system re-set. In extreme conditions pumping stations could be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of water, although they could be still working but could not cope with that volume. If the worst happened tankers could be brought in and they could deploy portable pumps.

Councillor Lea then asked if cess-pits were anything to do with TW, she was told that they were not but were asked about outlying villages and putting them on the main sewer system.

Councillor Lea went on to say that after some works have been completed, the filled in works sinks down within days, was this just inadequate making good. The officer from Thames Water said that there were two sides to the company, clean and waste water systems. He could not answer for the clean water, but for waste water it did not pay their contractor to have to come back. There may sometimes be problems with clean water reinstatement.

Councillor Sartin asked that as they were not a statutory consultee, had they put any pressure on the government about becoming one. She was told that they had recently asked for statutory consultee status for developments but were told no by the government. This also did not sit well with their problem that they could not refuse connection to their network.

Councillor Lea noted that we as a Council had good relation with Thames Water. Could our officer's enter into a formal liaison with you? She was told that they would be happy to set up a local liaisons group with EFDC and other local authorities.

Ms Strandens noted that they would only see planning applications that were specifically referred to them, how would Epping do this? TW Officers said that they would let her know. They were producing a 'Town Guide' on this and they would send her a copy. All they asked was for actual planning applications and large scale developments not lists.

Ms Strandens noted that she had referred to examples of poor communication and have noted their response. Blockages had improved but this was not a very co-ordinated way of working. TW officers replied that they had appointed a new contractor recently and that they were still bedding down. There had been problems in the past and they were looking to make this better such as proposing this new liaison group.

Mr Savill noted that there had been problems with telecommunications; all they needed was to get in touch with a network engineer to help us solve our problems more quickly. He was told that he had to go through their contact centre by law, but these new liaison groups would help this. They agreed that their engineers needed to be made available to EFDC officers, but would still need to quote a call reference number to give to the engineer (given by the call centre). Mr Savill noted that once they got a network engineer, things got sorted very quickly.

Councillor Surtees asked if their 'Town Guide' would be available on-line. He was told that it would not be, but they could supply him with a copy.

Councillor Lea asked if works at development sites were inspected by Thames Water. They replied that they did, but not all, as the sheer volume of work would overwhelm them, this also related to their lack of staff. They also asked building control officers to check drainage at new builds.

Councillor Lea then asked if there was anywhere in our district that was over capacity. She was told that they could not think of any area in Epping Forest that was under strain.

The Chairman thanked the Thames Water representatives for attending the meeting; it was a very interesting presentation and a very helpful question and answer session.

52. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel's Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted. They also noted that a possible Crime and Disorder meeting would be scheduled in June for the new Select Committee.

As this was the last ever meeting of this Panel (in its current form) the Chairman thanked her fellow Panel members and officers for their hard work during the past year. In turn the members of the Panel thanked the Chairman for her work over the year.

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Thames Water

Epping Forest District Council Safer, Cleaner, Greener Panel

Tuesday 28th April 2015

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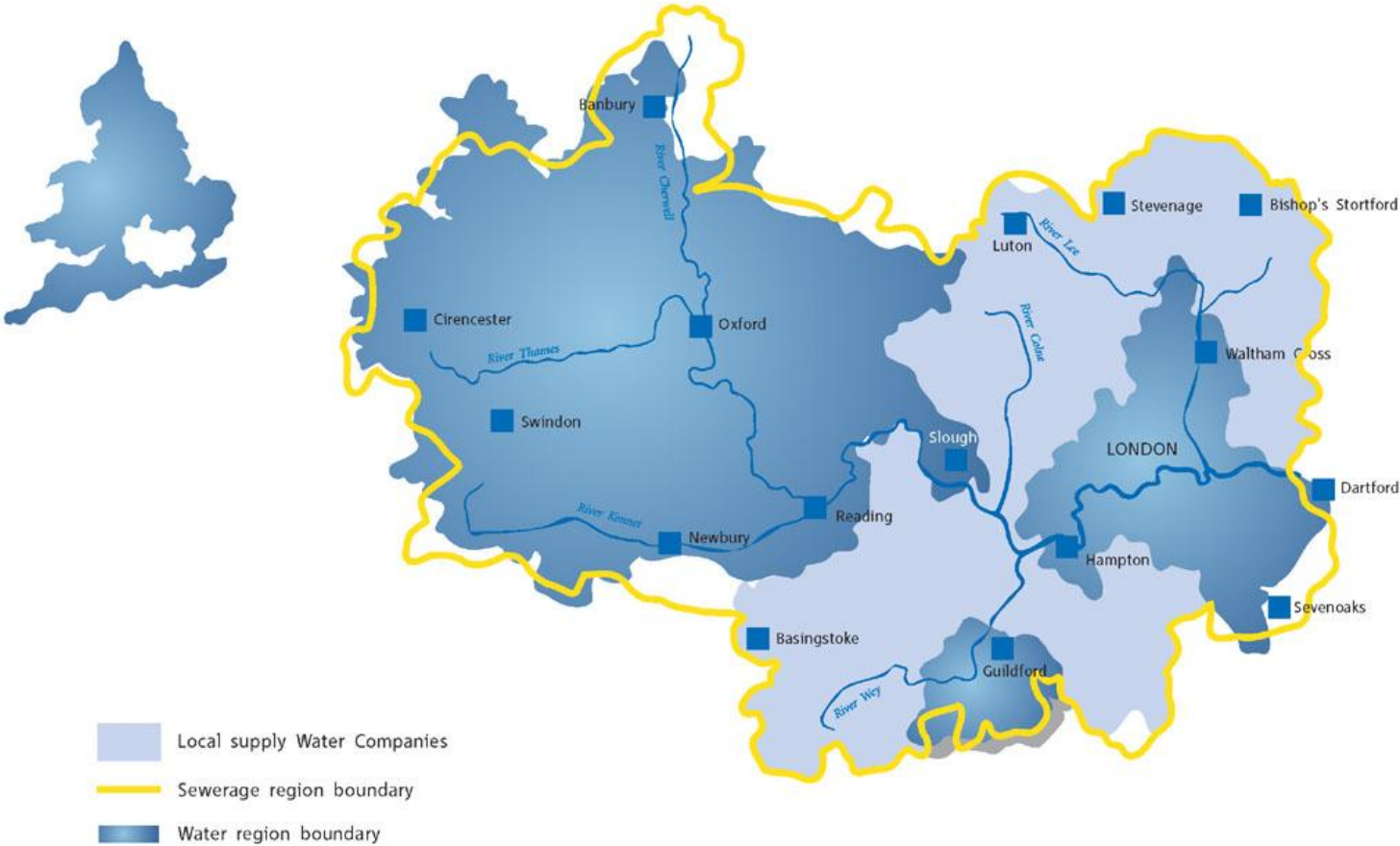
Mark Dickinson – Development Planning Manager
Nigel Fuller – Fields Operations Specialist
Anne Christie – Customer & Continuous Improvement Manager
Mumin Islam – Local / Regional Government Liaison



Minute Item 51

Thames Water – Our Region

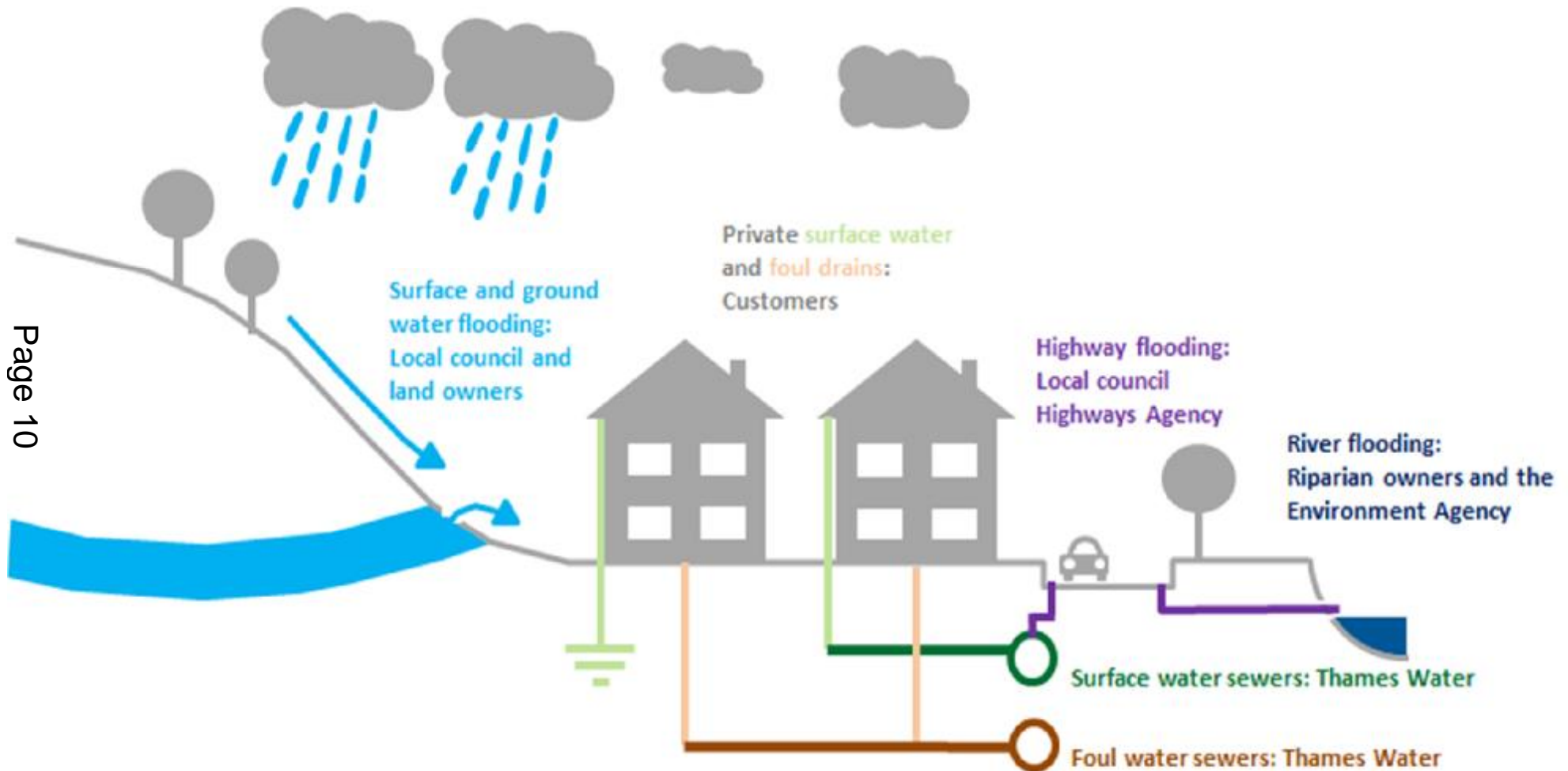
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Thames Water Responsibilities

- Appointed under the Water Industry Act 1991 to be responsible for sewerage
 - Duty to provide public sewerage and to clean and maintain sewers
 - Duty to provide and extend sewerage systems
 - However, do not have duty to provide capacity to deal with flood water
- There are three types of sewer:
 - Foul water sewers
 - Surface water sewers
 - Combined sewers

Root causes of flooding can be complex



Stakeholder responsibilities for drainage

Flooding cases raised by Epping Forest DC:

- Bower Vale, Epping, Essex
- Monkswood Ave, Waltham abbey, Essex.
- Orchard Gardens EN9 / Mead Court, external flooding

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Other areas of concerns raised:

- Sewardstone Road J/W farm Hill Road – EN9
- Waltham Abbey Football Club – EN9
- Horseshoe Hill – EN9

Continuous Improvement

- Communication
 - Increasing the number of customer representatives in both clean and waste teams to improve community contact.
 - Continuously reviewing the communications branch of event team improving how we target communication to areas which need it most.
- “Pollution Tile” project
 - Proactively investigating issues in our highest risk pollution and flooding locations on waste network. This includes two of the areas concerned in Waltham Abbey, EN9.
- “Hold/closed the loop” process
- Reviewing End to end customer journey
- Quarterly North London liaison meetings with the EA to discuss any events in the area

Maintaining our sewer system

- Gravity sewers are designed as self-cleansing and should be maintenance free.
- However, we are aware of problem hot-spots and address these with site-specific maintenance where appropriate.
- In 2015 we have a planned maintenance sewer programme of 260km and currently in the Epping Forest district we have on-going planned maintenance for over 4,000 metres of network in 20 streets.
- Investigating hotspots for discharge of Fats, Oils and Grease working closely with Environmental Health Officers.
- “Bin It Don’t Block It” campaign - our proactive customer education program
- Proactive working with Local Authority's critical surface water drainage areas.

Getting in Touch

Reporting surface flooding:

- Call our 24-hour freephone on 0800 316 9800
- Website www.thameswater.co.uk
- Email customer.feedback@thameswater.co.uk

Response times

- We would prioritise and advise customers accordingly
- 2 hours – Emergency scenarios (e.g. Pollution incident)
- 4 hours – Operational blockages
- If follow on works are raised dependant on Highways Agency agreement and notice/permit has been granted it would be a 5 or 10 day notice (depending on the type of job)

Thames Water and Planning

- We are statutory consultees in development of Local Plans.
- We are not statutory consultees on individual planning applications.
- Where we do have sight of a specific application for development we will assess the capacity of the network to accommodate increased flows, including sewerage network, pumping stations and sewage treatment works.
- Request Grampian-style planning conditions if system is likely to be adversely impacted by increased flows.

Development Plans



- Assess growth and plan for strategic infrastructure improvements
- Types of documents we comment upon:
 - **Strategic Plans e.g. London Plan**
 - **Local Development Plans**
 - **Site Allocations**
 - **Development Strategies**
 - **Supplementary Planning Documents**
 - **Neighbourhood plans**
- Help local authorities influence the type, scale and location of development
- Work with LPAs on evidence base documents, e.g. IDPs, WCSs, SFRAs
- Seek to influence type, scale and location of development
- Propose positive infrastructure and amenity policies
- May seek to safeguard our future sites or influence their designations

Planning Applications



- Appraise and comment upon new developments in terms of:
 - **sewer flood risk,**
 - **odour impact (encroachment)**
 - **water pressure**
 - **asset protection**
- Sites uploaded to Geographical mapping system for appraisal
- Comment on 58688 planning applications last year
- Support councils via council meetings, attendance at planning committees, planning examinations, suggested bespoke conditions.

Why is Development Planning so important for us?

- Under the Water Act we have a statutory duty to “provide, improve and extend” our network to serve customers
- We cannot refuse connection outright.
- Influencing development plans/planning applications is a very important tool to ensure that development is aligned with future infrastructure capacity requirements.
- We are not Statutory Consultees for planning applications therefore we need to be proactive in responding to applications
- Influence Local Authorities with respect to ease of infrastructure provision e.g. water resources & water quality
- Capture of development sites for long term planning & asset protection purposes

Infrastructure Planning

- We review local plans and third party applications to understand the impacts
- The way planning works means we have to develop individual schemes for individual developments
- Drainage networks are complex and extensive, where opportunities exists to deliver more strategic solutions we will do this
- It is generally easier to plan for housing numbers at STW because regardless of the exact location of the development within the catchment you know where the flow will end up.

Ensuring appropriate infrastructure is in place ahead of occupation

- We can deliver some schemes through our Business Plan with advance notice via the Plan led system and in which potential schemes have been properly appraised
- We also need to consider whether the cost benefit and environmental impact of potential network upgrades.
- Delivering network infrastructure upgrades isn't always straight forward. For example:
 - Can the environmental impacts of the network upgrade be mitigated?
 - Does the design consider cumulative impacts and / or betterment?
 - What consents are needed to build the upgrade? E.g. planning, access, highways...etc.

Drainage Grampian conditions

Why are they needed?

- Planning legal advice agrees on the following:
- Foul drainage matters are a material planning consideration
- Foul drainage matters can be dealt with by way of appropriate worded planning condition
- Grampian conditions can be used by the local planning authority if the necessary planning condition tests are met

STW in Epping Forest

Local Authority Area	S.T.W. Catchments	STW Catchment Area (ha)	
Epping Forest	Abbess Roding	110	2%
Epping Forest	Beckton	1910	29%
Epping Forest	Deephams	1590	24%
Epping Forest	Epping (Fiddlers Hamlet)	420	6%
Epping Forest	Matching Tye (closed)	30	1%
Epping Forest	Moreton	70	1%
Epping Forest	North Weald	210	3%
Epping Forest	Riverside	430	7%
Epping Forest	Rye Meads (Within TW)	860	13%
Epping Forest	Stanford Rivers	380	6%
Epping Forest	Theydon Bois	250	4%
Epping Forest	Thornwood	100	2%
Epping Forest	Willingale	160	2%

L/A's that drain to Rye Meads STW

Local Authority Area	S.T.W. Catchments	STW Catchment Area (ha)	
Broxbourne	Rye Meads (Within TW)	860	43%
East Herts	Rye Meads (Within TW)	3040	60%
Epping Forest	Rye Meads (Within TW)	860	13%
Harlow	Rye Meads (Within TW)	2520	100%
North Herts	Rye Meads (Within TW)	450	29%
Stevenage	Rye Meads (Within TW)	2360	100%
Welwyn Hatfield	Rye Meads (Within TW)	2740	46%

Questions?

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