



**Minutes of a meeting of Thatcham Flood Forum Steering Group  
held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2014, at 7.00 p.m.  
in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber, Brownsfield Road**

Present: Iain Dunn (Chairman)  
Mel Alexander (Thatcham Town Council Officer)  
Brian Barnes (Local Resident)  
Bob Hewitt (Stuart Michael Associates Ltd)  
Peter Lavarack (Local Resident)  
Leo Pieri (Local Resident)  
Brian Woodham (SWMP Funding Group Chairman)  
Bryan Lyttle (Planning and Transport Policy Manager, West Berkshire Council)

**1. Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Nick Townsend.

**2. Discussion with West Berkshire Council's Planning and Transport Policy Manager**

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Bryan Lyttle, Planning and Transport Policy Manager, West Berkshire Council. Bryan had been invited to attend the meeting to discuss three matters:

- Reference to the Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham when considering planning applications
- The feasibility of incorporating flood alleviation works into future developments in the area
- The effects of the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood Water Management Act 2010 regarding Sustainable Drainage

Bryan began by explaining that national policy on flooding related only to sea and river flooding, not ground or surface water flooding. However, West Berkshire Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment did include ground water emergence flooding.

Bryan confirmed the following information:

**2.1 Reference to the Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham when considering planning applications**

- Planning policy is guided by the National Planning Policy Framework's requirement for a "presumption in favour of development".
- Developers' suggestions for flood mitigation are taken into account when applications for development are considered.
- Thatcham has been ruled out for large scale development.
- Siege Cross Farm is liable to significant ground water emergence.

**2. Discussion with West Berkshire Council's Planning and Transport Policy Manager continued**

- When considering Housing Site Allocations, flooding issues will be taken into account.
- Government targets for planning applications, from receipt to issue, are currently 8 weeks for minor applications and 13 weeks for developments of 10+ dwellings.
- Government retains the right to take decision making away from Planning Authorities should the above deadlines not be met.
- West Berkshire Council's Highways department works closely with the Planning department with regard to applications. Highways can also obtain advice from other bodies before submitting comments.
- The Environment Agency are consultees on planning applications.
- Applications that are likely to exacerbate the problem of flooding will not be granted permission, subject to such information being supplied to West Berkshire Council.
- Developers can appoint their own Building Control Officers, they do not have to use West Berkshire Council's.
- Decisions made by West Berkshire Council are reliant on receiving accurate information from consultees.

**2.2 The feasibility of incorporating flood alleviation works into future developments in the area**

- How would alleviation works be funded? Section 106 Developers' Contributions are only relevant to new harm, not existing. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) [due to be introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015] requires a contribution of £75 per m<sup>2</sup> for developments of 10 units or more. 10% of the CIL collected will be automatically transferred to the relevant Town and Parish Councils twice a year.
- It should be possible to incorporate flood alleviation works into development schemes, dependent on individual schemes.

**2.3 The effects of the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood Water Management Act 2010 regarding Sustainable Drainage**

- It would take an "event" to properly assess the effectiveness.

A general discussion ensued and the following points were noted:

- The Environment Agency (EA) is instrumental in objections to development applications. If no response to consultation is received from the EA the application can progress to the next stage.

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**2.3 The effects of the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood Water Management Act 2010 regarding Sustainable Drainage continued**

- The flooding event of 2007 was taken into account when West Berkshire Council produced its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and when consulting with the Highways department the most recent and up-to-date information is reported.
- The Surface Water Management Plan for Thatcham (SWMP) is not a statutory planning document, therefore, land identified in the SWMP for flood alleviation works does not mean that land is exempt from development, however the SWMP would be taken into account as a material consideration.
- West Berkshire Council Officers were utilised during the most recent flood events across the district. They received training from Stuart Clark (West Berkshire Council, Highways department) and his team and therefore understand the issues of flooding.
- It is advisable to engage with developers in the very early stages, during the pre-application consultation. Information provided at this stage will be recorded and can be challenged if not pursued by developers.
- West Berkshire Council has a single point of contact at each consultee, therefore it is dependent on the consultees to seek additional advice prior to responding.

The Forum thanked Bryan for attending the meeting and for his valuable advice.

*Bryan Lyttle left the meeting.*

**3. Rainsford Farm CCTV footage**

Prior to the meeting, Bob Hewitt had studied the CCTV footage taken of the Rainsford Farm syphon and talked the Forum through the areas on interest. Bob agreed to provide screenshot images of these areas of interest for the Forum to pursue with the relevant agencies. The Chairman thanked Bob for his input.

*Bob Hewitt left the meeting.*

**4. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

***Due to time and no other agenda items being of an urgent nature, it was agreed to close the meeting and defer all other matters on the agenda to the next meeting.***

**5. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014, commencing 7 p.m. in the Thatcham Town Council Chamber.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_