

NORTH WARD DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, WISBECH

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **6th March 2012**

From: **Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment Services**

Electoral division(s): **Wisbech North**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key Decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To consider a scheme to improve highway drainage in an area of the North Ward in Wisbech as part of the wider economic regeneration of the town.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is recommended to:**

- 1) Support the development of a highway drainage improvement scheme as shown in Plan 1 as a priority within the additional highway investment programme set out in the Integrated Plan, subject to development of the business case and cost scrutiny, including securing funding contributions from the Environment Agency and developers through the Local Planning Authority**
- 2) Ask the Executive Director: Economy, Transport and Environment Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Infrastructure, to develop detailed scheme design and programming, taking account of the potential wider enhancement of the area**
- 3) Support engagement with key stakeholders, including Fenland District Council, Wisbech Town Council, the Environment Agency and the local community in developing the scheme as part of the wider economic regeneration of Wisbech.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A Surface Water Management Plan is being developed for the Wisbech area. Within the town, the Waterlees area of North Ward exhibits flood risk characteristics that have contributed to a lack of investment in the area. The inadequate drainage system and tidal influences of the nearby River Nene are major factors in the assessment of flood risk in the area.
- 1.2 A drainage improvement scheme would improve the local infrastructure of the Waterlees area of the North Ward and contribute to regeneration by upgrading the local streets drainage system to reduce flooding and flood risk. The scheme will enable potential enhancements to the urban area through sensitive design and potential sustainable drainage features.

2. THE PROBLEM

Geology

- 2.1 The North Ward in Wisbech lies on a section of the Terrington Beds which overlies clay strata. The Terrington Beds generally consist of silts and clays with the possibility of small amounts of sand and gravel. As a result the ground conditions provide low permeability values which are not conducive for the soakaway based drainage systems currently installed.

Current drainage system

- 2.2 The streets in part of the North Ward shown in **Plan 1** have a gully and kerb off-let based drainage system which feeds into soakaways. The combination of ground conditions and the current drainage system can result in localised flooding and a long term solution is required to manage the flood risk and to provide a more sustainable drainage solution.
- 2.3 Whilst there are many other areas in Cambridgeshire where highway drainage requires investment to manage flood risk, the North Ward area is one of the largest residential areas in the county with inadequate highway drainage.

3. THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Work has been undertaken to investigate the options for providing a modern fit for purpose drainage system with an outfall to the River Nene to manage the future risk of flooding events. The scheme will need to manage the flood of water to the outfall into the River Nene to provide a sustainable solution for the wider area. As part of the design process, officers are working with the Environment Agency to ensure that it is supportive of the solution. Further work is needed on scheme design and to investigate the potential for sustainable drainage features that can potentially enhance the area. Continued community engagement and close working with key stakeholders, including Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council, will be incorporated into the development and implementation of the scheme. Further work is required on the business case and costings for the scheme to support an application, which has been agreed in principle, for a funding contribution from the Environment Agency.

- 3.2 As part of this work, the option of linking a new drainage system for the area into neighbouring drainage systems was explored but Anglian Water does not consider this viable. Therefore, the solution has been designed around a new outfall into the River Nene.
- 3.3 The majority of the works to provide a new drainage system for the area will take place on the public highway. However, to achieve the outfall into the River Nene, pipe work will need to cross land owned by Fenland District Council and an easement is being sought.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 It had been expected that the scheme would be implemented over an extended time period and a small amount of funding has been allocated in the highways budget for the current year for preliminary activity. However, it was recognised that this approach would have a number of negative implications, including additional cost of works re-mobilisation and effectively putting other street works and repairs on hold until the drainage scheme was completed. The additional funding allocated for highways maintenance for the next five years through the Integrated Plan could enable the scheme to be implemented as a single rolling programme, which could speed up delivery, minimise costs associated with a staged approach over a number of years and deliver much needed improvements earlier. Detailed programming will be developed, taking account of value for money and the additional funding available.
- 4.2 Whilst the scheme would require significant construction work on the streets in the area affected, the end result will not impact negatively on the existing street scene. A number of road repairs have been deferred pending construction of the drainage scheme, which will be able to go ahead after work has been completed. Significant local disruption can be expected during the 12 months that the work would take to complete, although we would of course seek to minimise the impact and engage the local community in the programming of the scheme.

Community Engagement

- 4.3 To help involve local residents in the project and its implications and benefits for their area, a communications and engagement plan will be developed through close working with the local County Councillor (Samantha Hoy) to explain the scope, duration and phasing of the works and involve residents in the development and roll out of the scheme.

5. SUMMARY

- 5.1 The combination of ground conditions and the current inadequate drainage system represents a significant risk to a large residential area close to the River Nene, which is identified as an area with significant economic deprivation. The proposed approach would represent a very significant investment in local infrastructure assets and would provide longer term resilience for the area.
- 5.2 Scheme implementation would have a significant impact on the local community and there is a need to ensure that a well thought through communication and engagement plan is in place.

6. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most

- 6.1 The North Ward area is identified as an area with significant deprivation. Improved fabric of local infrastructure will help to ensure all sectors of the community have safe access to local facilities at all times.

Helping people live healthy and independent lives in their communities

- 6.2 Managing the flood risk in the North Ward area will improve the local environment and minimise any health issues associated with flooding.

Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 6.3 Improving the infrastructure of the area will contribute to attracting investment to Wisbech, providing better opportunities for local people and businesses.

Ways of working

- 6.4 The approach so far has been discussed with the Environment Agency, Fenland District Council and the local housing association. Sustained local engagement will be key to successful implementation and a variety of communication formats will be utilised to achieve this.

7. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

Resources and Performance

Finance

- 7.1 The proposals would be funded from the additional capital investment in highways set out in the Integrated Plan. As mentioned above, there is the potential for contributions to be sought towards the scheme cost.

Performance

- 7.2 No significant implications identified.

Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Statutory

- 7.3 No significant implications identified.

Legal

- 7.4 A legal agreement will be required to provide an easement across District Council land and to facilitate the attenuation tank and pumps on housing association land.

Key Risks

- 7.5 A failure to improve the highway drainage in the area has the following risks:
- a) Higher longer term highway maintenance costs
 - b) Under new flood management legislation, an Increased risk of litigation if flooding on the highway impacts on private property
 - c) Risk of health problems associated with flooding.
- 7.6 A decision to proceed with a scheme would mitigate these risks.

Equality and Diversity and Implications

- 7.7 No significant implications identified.

Engagement and Consultation

- 7.8 Given the impact of the construction work on local residents and businesses, the development of a communications and engagement plan is an essential element of the project.

Source Documents

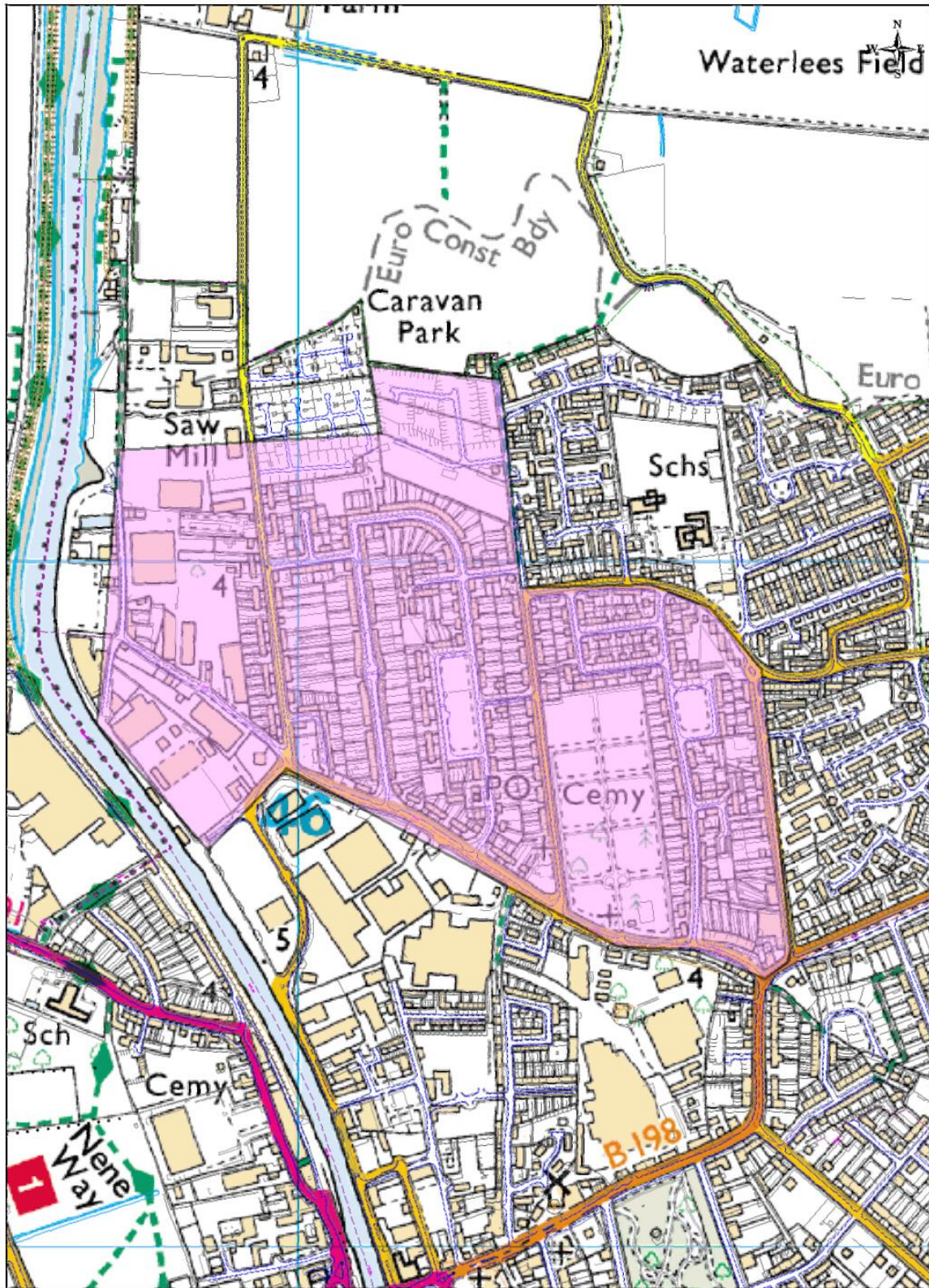
Location

Scheme layout plans

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NORTH WARD: AREA COVERED BY PROPOSED DRAINAGE SCHEME

North Ward Wisbech SW Drainage Scheme



Scale (at A3) 1:5000

Date: 25/08/2011

By: fw288

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