

Environment and Green Investment Committee

Date: 3 March 2022

Time: 10.00am – 12.30pm

Venue: New Shire Hall

Present: Councillors L Dupré (Chair), N Gay (Vice Chair), A Bradnam, S Corney, P Coutts, S Ferguson, I Gardener, M Goldsack, J Gowing, R Hathorn, J King, B Milnes, C Rae, M Smith and S Tierney

52. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Milnes declared non-pecuniary interest in item 6 as Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing at South Cambridgeshire District Council.

53. a) Minutes of the Environment & Green Investment Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2022 were agreed as a correct record, with the following correction.

On the fourth bullet point on p11 (Digital Connectivity item), a Member commented that whilst she had raised a specific example in her division where there was an issue, she had also raised a broader point regarding connectivity issues being a problem for some urban locations, i.e. they were not unique to rural areas. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to amend the minutes to reflect this point, and ensure that the presenting officer was aware.

b) Environment & Green Investment Committee Action Log

The Action Log was noted.

54. Petitions and Public Questions

The Committee was advised that there would be public questions under items 57 and 58.

55. Low Carbon Heating Programme Update

The Committee considered a report on the Low Carbon Heating Programme. Members were reminded that in 2019, the County Council had agreed to install low carbon heating systems for any refurbishments and boiler replacement in Council buildings. At a meeting in 2020, the Environment and Sustainability Committee had set out criteria for the Council's Low Carbon Heating scheme, which potential projects needed to meet. One of those criteria was that individual projects greater than £500,000 would require Committee approval. Due to unforeseen additional costs, two sites that were being progressed as part of the Programme - Scott House and the Larkfield Resource Centre - were now at risk of exceeding the £500,000 limit of delegated authority.

Arising from the report:

- a Member commented that whilst he had been very supportive of this programme since its inception, he was concerned about the visibility of projects which were approaching the £500,000 threshold, as the increase collectively could be considerable. He asked if the Committee could have an update on the relative overspend of the entirety of the project. It was noted that the overspend was around 8% across the board currently, and agreed that the detailed information would be provided. **Action required;**
- a Member noted the valid reasons for the escalation of costs, especially the acoustic enclosure which would benefit neighbouring properties, and commented that it would be sensible to continue at this stage;
- noting the list of 22 sites completed and in progress, a Member suggested that more should be done to publicise this impressive programme. **Action required.**

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

(a) authorise the required additional spend as detailed in paragraphs 2.6 to 2.12 on the projects to install ASHPs at Scott House and Larkfield Resource Centre;

(b) delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Economy, in consultation with the Chair/Vice-Chair of the Environment and Green Investment Committee, to authorise any further increases of costs on individual projects, as long as the business case for the entire programme as a portfolio remains within the other agreed investment criteria.

56. Development and construction of the Private Wire connecting North Angle Solar Farm and Swaffham Prior Community Heat Network

The Committee considered a report on a Private Wire connection run from North Angle Solar Farm to Burwell sub-station. The Private Wire would sell renewable electricity to the grid through wholesale markets and also supply and sell to the Swaffham Prior Community Heat Project to run its energy centre.

The background to the project and previous approvals were noted. In line with many capital projects being progressed during the pandemic, costs had increased since the investment case was originally approved in March 2021, triggering the need to return to Committee with a revised investment case.

Arising from the presentation, a Member commented that the Swaffham Prior Community Heat Project was incredibly innovative and had attracted worldwide interest. Cost increases were regrettably inevitable given the global economic situation.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note progress with the project;
- b) approve the private wire business case and recommend to Strategy & Resources Committee to approve additional expenditure;

- c) approve purchase of long lead equipment;
- d) approve entering into a contract variation for the existing North Angle Solar Farm project, to cover the private wire;
- e) delegate the implementation of the decisions on the Private Wire including the purchase of long lead equipment to the Executive Director of Place and Economy and Director of Resources, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Environment & Green Investment Committee.

57. Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Committee considered an updated version of the Flood Risk Management Strategy, for approval. It was noted that the report included an Action Plan, which covered flood risk partners in the county.

Following the Committee's approval of the draft consultation document at their November 2021 meeting, the consultation had been carried out, and the responses and key themes raised were detailed in the report.

It was noted that since the November meeting, two Member workshops had been held to discuss the detail of the Strategy. It had also been confirmed that constitutionally, the Strategy was delegated to the Committee and did not have to be approved at full Council.

A Public Question had been received from Swavesey Parish Council. The question, plus the officer response, were noted by the Committee, and can be found at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

The Committee also noted supportive comments from Councillor Neil Gough, who welcomed the Strategy, especially the inclusion of the Cottenham Lode and surface water drainage in Cottenham in the Action Plan.

Arising from the presentation:

- a Member asked if the Council would be working with Parish Councils and Internal Drainage Boards as development applications come forward. Officers confirmed that this was the case, particularly where there were concerns. Additionally, Parish Councils were asked to let the County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, know about any local planning authority issues, if they felt there were significant risks. As Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council was usually involved at an early stage through pre-application discussion, but developers were not obliged to have these discussions. It was further noted that some pre-application discussions were confidential so it was not always possible to share information at that stage;
- a Member suggested that the previous point needed to be communicated to all Parish Councils. Officers advised that they had good engagement with Flood Action groups, many of which were linked to Parish Councils. A Member commented that much was dependent on timing and how planning applications came forward: residents were usually aware of outline development, but drainage issues, including foul and surface water issues did not usually come forward until Reserve Matters were considered at Planning Committee;

- a Member observed that not all ditches were covered by Riparian rights, and queried pre-commencement conditions, which he understood was not within the gift of Planning Committees. Officers gave an example of a pre-commencement condition, but outlined the difficulties procedurally in imposing these;
- a Member asked how officers would ensure that there was liaison with local planning authorities on Riparian rights. Officers outlined the process, and gave an example, where one single landowner was granted Riparian rights rather than multiple landowners;
- referring to wider watercourse management issues, a Member commented it was absolutely critical have coordination and cooperation between different parties such as IDBs and the County Council. It was noted that the Council's response on applications had been adjusted to ensure that Riparian responsibilities were clear. The Member commented that this issue needed to be pursued both formally and informally e.g. through officers in flood management teams, to prevent omissions;
- a Member advised that she had engaged with her District Council on a local flooding issue, as they were the emergency response on a ground water issue, i.e. it was not water lying in ditches, but was a low lying area with a recognised risk of flooding. The Member queried how that would be handled in the Strategy. Officers advised that this was included in the Action Plan under 1.14a, which related to ground water investigations and studies. They also stressed that the Action Plan was a flexible document and areas could be added if they were not currently included;
- A Member queried the misleading reference that there was an ambition across local partners to achieve Biosphere status for the Fens from UNESCO. It was confirmed that Fenland District Council had not agreed to this.

It was resolved, by a majority, to:

approve the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy and supporting Action Plan

58. Sunnica Solar Farm proposal

The Committee considered the proposed technical response to the Sunnica application to the Planning Inspectorate, which had been submitted in November 2021. Relevant Representations had been produced by the Council's technical officers in response to the Sunnica application, which would be submitted prior to the formal consultation deadline of 17th March 2022. The four local authorities (Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, West Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire Councils) would be submitting a Local Impact Report jointly, but would also be submitting independent representations.

The key topic areas, where concerns had been raised as more evidence or detail was required by the applicant, were:

- transport and access
- cultural heritage archaeology
- ecology and nature conversation
- flood risk, drainage and water resources
- socio-economic and land use, including agricultural land productivity and yield

The Chair used her Chair's discretion to accept late Public Questions from Catherine Judkins, an Isleham resident. Five questions which were read out separately on behalf of Ms Judkins, and officers gave a response on each question:

Question 1: "Since there appears to be agreement across the four host local authorities that the level of detail provided by Sunnica in their DCO application is severely lacking, making it impossible to assess the scheme with any confidence, is there scope for Cambridgeshire County Council to include a similar statement to that in the Suffolk County Council representation, in which they state that they are, "Unable to support the proposal as it stands, and considers that development consent should not be granted for the proposal as submitted?""

Officer response: The submission has been drafted as a technical officer response, so we have been clear to establish what information is required to aid in the decision-making process for the Planning Inspectorate under the relevant representations process, rather than move to a planning balancing position of what we could and couldn't support, which to a degree will fall to the Statement of Common Ground, and as we are not the determining authority, that is not our role. Nonetheless, what we have said in paragraph 2.2 of Appendix 3 on page 200 of the agenda pack "The County Council seeks these matters to be resolved ahead of any consent given to the scheme" which is effectively saying the same thing. However, if the Committee feels this does not go far enough, what we could do if Members are minded is to add a sentence into the end of paragraph 2.1 just above that statement to say:

2.1 Cambridgeshire County Council has a number of concerns relating to the quality of the information shared in the Environmental Statement. More evidence is required to allow CCC to fully understand the impacts of the scheme and have a view to whether the mitigation measures proposed are sufficient. There are a number of concerns related to the quality of the assessments and assumptions used. In addition, more detail is needed at this stage of the process to assure the county council aspects of the scheme are deliverable. Suggested additional text in bold: "As such, based on the current information provided and the assessment of the submission by technical officers, members of the Environment and Green Investment Committee are unable to support the proposal as it stands and considers that development consent should not be granted for the proposal as submitted." The County Council seeks these matters to be resolved ahead of any consent given to the scheme.

The majority of Members indicated their support for the additional text in bold proposed above.

Question 2: "The lack of detail on battery compounds is of particular concern. It is appreciated that Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service appears to have taken a lead role on the battery energy storage system (BESS) commentary. But without knowing sufficient details about the BESS – even if in draft form – such as the technology type, the approximate number of cabins, the possible layout of the huge 77 acres of BESS compounds, it is impossible to draft any meaningful Outline Battery Fire Safety Management plan. Local residents are quite rightly concerned at the well known fire hazards presented by BESS which, at present, are inadequately regulated. Without further detail it is impossible to make any judgement as to the safety measures that may be needed, which is of paramount importance given the very close proximity of the proposed BESS compounds to people's homes. Could the County Council include this concern about the lack of detail provided about the BESS in its representation?"

Officer response: Reference to local concerns on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are already included in our draft technical response at paragraph 4.5 and also a section on Battery and Fire Safety in paragraphs 10.3 to 10.6 which has been based on technical advice guided by the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (with engagement with our own Service). My understanding from watching Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Meeting on Tuesday 1 March is that Suffolk Fire and Rescue are broadly content that this area of the application is able to be reviewed and covered appropriately, but the detail of this will be examined in the joint Local Impact Response as confirmed in paragraph 10.6, so I think this is adequately covered.

Following a show of hands from Committee Members, a number of Members did not feel this response was adequate, so it was agreed this point would be debated further once all questions had been presented.

Question 3: "This scheme is vast, and affects 16 parishes: Cambridgeshire: Isleham, Chippenham, Kennett, Snailwell, Fordham, Burwell, Reach, Newmarket (both counties); Suffolk: Mildenhall, West Row, Barton Mills, Freckenham, Worlington, Red Lodge, Exning/Landwade, Newmarket

The extensive cable route connects the four solar PV sites together, and then connects to a new substation expansion, which is to be built by Sunnica Ltd at Burwell National Grid Substation.

Please can this size and scale be reflected in the County Council's report? At present only a few villages are highlighted (under The Proposal). Please could the substation expansion (12m high infrastructure) at Burwell also be mentioned?"

Officer response: It is hard to tell from the question whether this is in relation to the landscape implications specifically, but I have assumed given reference to the 'scale and size' that it is. The Inspector will be aware of the proposal and the proposed route of the cable route and therefore the scale of what is being proposed and the number of parishes this will affect. Nonetheless, in paragraph 2.1 we could potentially add something to the end of the third sentence along the lines of:

There are a number of concerns related to the quality of the assessments and assumptions used, **particularly given the scale and size of the development being proposed.** (additional text in bold)

Following a show of hands, there was not strong support for this response, so it was agreed that this would be debated further.

Question 4: "Clarification sought on: pg. 34, section 9.14.9, does the final statement relate to the whole representation, or just the section 9 points? "

Officer response: Note to avoid any confusion and maintain consistency this is on page 221 of the agenda pack.

This is only related to Section 9 which is the detailed appendix 1 for the 'Detailed Transport and Access Comments' re highway points.

Question 5: "Appendix 5a (relates to cumulative impact), wasn't visible on the publicly available notes. Is this missing?"

This reference relates to the submission documents by Sunnica – none of which are included on the County Council website. So this can be accessed on the PINS website as part of the proposals.

The Committee supported the officer responses to questions 4 and 5.

The Chair thanked Ms Judkins for her Public Questions, and observed three of the four local authorities involved were taking questions on the application in public session.

A Member commended the report but stressed the size of the development, this was by far the largest development of its kind, covering 16 parishes so we need to be factual in our response. Officers agreed that it was a substantial development, and would certainly be one of the largest solar farms in the UK; but would need to check their facts before confirming that it would actually be the largest if approved.

Observing that most Newmarket races were actually started and finished in Cambridgeshire rather than Suffolk, a Member commented that not enough reference was made to visual impact, and he asked whether that section could be further enhanced. Officers confirmed that in relation to Newmarket, the gallops and the landscape impacts on this area, it was their understanding that East Cambridgeshire District Council would lead on this topic area. Furthermore, officers were aware that races start in Cambridgeshire, and didn't just fall in Suffolk, so the County Council would continue to work with partners, which includes East Cambridgeshire District Council, and feed into the Local Impact Report in this regard. For this stage of "relevant representations", the objective was not to go into minute detail, but to set out to the Inspector those areas the consultees agree with, and provide "hooks" for those areas where they did not, which included cultural and heritage impacts of the proposal.

A Member commented that Sunnica's analysis of agricultural land was inaccurate, and asked if more clarification and evidence could be requested on the classification of soil types? Officers advised that additional information on the grading of agricultural land (ALCs) was provided using a recognised process with evidence provided which was to the satisfaction of our in-house experts, which is why it has been accepted as being accurate. However, the productivity and potential yield of that land was questioned, as was the assumption of similar numbers of vehicle movements (paragraphs 7.1-7.3 of the proposed response).

A Member asked if such a sizable development on highly productive arable land should be subject to guidance within the NPPF (the National Planning Policy Framework) and if this could be referenced in the response? Officers responded that it was subject to separate guidance as it was a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), but they would double check the separate NSIP guidance to see if it would be possible to make reference to this matter or not, which could be undertaken in consultation with the Chair if that was acceptable.

A Member queried the Carbon Footprint assessment, given the constituents of the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), the 15 miles of cabling and 1.1 million panels which needed to be transported internationally. Even given a 25 year lifespan, which Sunnica has now taken to 40 years, this did not result in a net zero Carbon Footprint. Officers acknowledged that the embodied/consumption carbon (as compared to the operational/territorial carbon) should be considered to show the whole picture. More strategically, going forward all planning applications need to be considered in terms of both embodied and operational carbon in future.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had taken the lead at an early stage on the fire safety issues, both at pre-application stage and now at the application stage, but Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) had been consulted. A Member raised the issue of potential battery fires, given the known fire risks of lithium iron batteries, and the potential for contaminants to enter into both the atmosphere and water supply. Officers responded that they were satisfied with the respective Fire Services' views and what had been placed in the draft technical officer response adequately highlighted the relevant technical advice received. Reference was also made to paragraph 4.5 on page 203 of the agenda pack to demonstrate that concerns on the impacts on the watercourses and hydrologically linked wildlife sites had not been adequately assessed in the Council's opinion, and paragraph 10.3 also made reference to a concern being raised by the local community over safety in the event of a fire. Furthermore, although SFRS was the lead authority for the purposes of the response, both SFRS and CFRS had provided input into the joint consultation response in relation to the risk characteristics in this regard. Nonetheless, this would be explored further in the Local Impact Report.

In discussing the report:

- a Member thanked Ms Judkins for her questions, and for the Chair for accepting them as a late representation. He stressed the importance of highlighting the sheer size of the site, which was vast, and stressed that all responses must capture the size, significance and impact of the development on local residents;
- a Member commented that whilst most people want to see clean energy coming forward, it was unfortunate that more acceptable alternatives such as solar panels on individual properties were not coming forward;
- a Member suggested that the size and scale of the development should be listed under "key concerns" rather than in the summary, and the number of parishes listed so that it was at the forefront of the Inspector's mind. Officers indicated that they were happy to make an amendment in the appropriate place. A Member suggested that it would be worth checking to see if this was indeed the largest application nationally, to reinforce this point;
- a Member commented that in her professional capacity, the highest crop yields recorded each year came from this area of Suffolk, and she would like to see more attention paid to the productivity of land – stating that it was classified by Sunnica as Grade 2 and 3 ALC was not sufficient, as soil could vary on a very localised basis, both from field to field and even within fields. For those reasons she felt it would be helpful to see more evidence such as productivity records for the land under consideration from Sunnica. She suggested amending section 7 to add "We would welcome evidence of productivity and yield". Officers commented that were happy to add this in but would need to ensure that they had sufficient expertise available to validate such evidence. Another Member suggested that *independent* validation of the land sources should be requested. He noted that land productivity could change with irrigation. Members indicated that they were happy to delegate suitable amendment by officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair;
- a Member stressed the importance of avoiding water contamination, given this area had many watercourses leading in to the river network;

- a Member observed that battery technology was evolving quickly, with more inert technologies coming forward, and it was vital residents were reassured on the fire safety aspects.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (a) endorse the draft Relevant Representations in Appendix 3 for submission to the Planning Inspectorate;
- (b) delegate to the Executive Director (Place and Economy) in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee the authority to make minor changes to the Relevant Representations.

59. SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) in Schools

The Committee considered a report on Sustainable Drainage Systems.

In December 2021, the Department for Education had announced funding for SUDs in schools, including swales, ponds, water butts, etc. The purpose was to reduce surface water flooding, but also increase biodiversity and educational opportunities. Strict criteria had been applied and the turnaround for applications had been very short, but in partnership with the Council's Education Capital team, five schools had been identified that were at risk of surface water flooding and that experience some degree of flooding on a regular basis, and could benefit from a SuDS scheme to reduce flood risk on their own site as well as in the surrounding area. These schools were Willingham Primary School, Swavesey Primary School, Sawtry Infant School, Westfield Junior School (St Ives) and Eastfield Infant School (St Ives).

The Department for Education contribution was reliant on partnership funding and was limited to 50% of the scheme cost, up to a maximum amount of £30,000 per school. Anglian Water also run a partnership funding programme and had expressed an interest in contributing towards SuDS in Schools schemes in Cambridgeshire, with the amount dependent on the overall benefit to the public sewer network. In addition to a financial contribution matchfunding the Department for Education grant, Anglian Water had offered to host interactive sessions for the schools around water and flooding linked to the curriculum. The County Council's contribution would therefore be limited to around £15,000 per school.

Officers advised that all the proposed schemes were in either Huntingdonshire or South Cambridgeshire, but had already discussed extending the scheme to other schools with Anglian Water.

A Member asked about how maintenance of these schemes would be resourced. It was noted that this responsibility typically rested with the schools, and usually the caretaker or grounds maintenance staff would maintain the schemes. This had been made clear in the engagement that had already taken place with the schools.

A Member spoke favourably on the scheme, and referred to an excellent outdoor centre at Stibbington. He commented that whilst children should be taught safe behaviour around water, it was important that they were not brought up to be overly cautious. Officers acknowledged this point and gave examples of successful schemes already in place.

A Member asked if there was a list available of schools identified that could undertake similar projects in future, and it was confirmed that this was available. The Member also commented that it would be good if these type of schemes could be accessed by the wider community on open days, etc.

The Committee noted comments of support from Local Members Councillors Gough and Reynolds.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note the background and opportunities regarding the implementation of SuDS in schools;
- b) approve expenditure of £75,000 from the Environment Fund to unlock partnership funding and implement SuDS schemes in five schools across Cambridgeshire.

60. Finance Monitoring Report – January 2022

The Committee considered the January 2022 Finance Monitoring Report. Introducing the report, officers highlighted that Place and Economy as a whole was forecasting a £436,000 underspend for the year end. On the revenue side, Growth & Development now forecasting £99K underspend, and Waste overspend reduced to £184K. There had been no significant development in capital.

Noting the reduction in the Waste overspend, and that there was less waste than anticipated, a Member asked if any of this could be spent on behavioural campaigns for waste reduction. Officers commented that it was still an overspend and this figure tended to fluctuate throughout the year, in line with waste volumes. Additionally, the Committee was aware of the significant project taking place to reduce odour emissions at the Waterbeach plant. Considerable work was being undertaken to reduce waste and improve recycling through the RECAP partnership. The Member asked if it would be possible to see a breakdown of the budget to support activities undertaken to stimulate behavioural change. Action required.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review, note and comment on the report.

61. Environment & Green Investment Committee Agenda Plan and Appointments to Outside Bodies and Internal Advisory Groups and Panels

The Committee noted its Agenda Plan.

Noting that the Trees and Woodland Strategy was scheduled for July, a Member asked how this tied with the Queen's Green Canopy and the Jubilee celebrations in June. Officers confirmed that there had been close alignment between the ongoing work set out in the Trees and Woodland Strategy, and the Queens Green Canopy project.

On a general point, a Member observed that consultation periods of six weeks resulted in a very tight timeframe for Parish Councils, especially during holiday periods.

Members noted the proposed extension of the remit of the Green Investment Advisory Group to include the Procurement of Utilities, which was within the remit of the Strategy & Resources Committee. It was therefore proposed to have a cross Committee advisory group with four Members from both Committees. Members indicated that they were happy to support this proposed change to the Green Investment Advisory Group.

Public question raised under item 57 by Swavesey Parish Council

The Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy Document on page 32 item 4.6 explains IDBs and states that they have an important role in reducing flood risk and that ‘The role of the IDB in the management of flood risk within Cambridgeshire is vital.’ The Parish Council is pleased to see that this is recognised, as there is a wealth of local knowledge within a local IDB.

The Strategy Document also recognises the status of the Middle Level Commissioners, saying it is a statutory body with powers and duties.... Again the Parish Council is very pleased to see that this is recognised.

The officer report also states:

“3.1 Community groups and the volunteers within them have a wealth of local knowledge and the strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council will work with these groups to raise awareness of flooding”

Looking at the Strategy document, page 85 explains what CCC intends to do to improve communication to residents, some of which we have already seen improve, such as the new Riparian leaflet and warning information about flooding and what residents can do to help stop or alleviate flooding.

Under objective 4 – Ensuring Appropriate Development in Cambridgeshire (page 86), the Parish Council wishes to reiterate that it is vital for CCC to talk to Parish Councils and IDBs where there is one, and take local knowledge into account.

Item 4.1M Contribute to achieving more sustainable development, lists local communities as the partner in this. It goes on to state:

“...Cambridgeshire County Council requires sustainable drainage in all new developments. Cambridgeshire’s flood risk management organisations will continue to work closely with developers to this aim.”

The Parish Council wishes to stress that for this to happen the CCC needs to actively commit to working, right from the start of a development proposal, with the local Parish Council and IDB, not just the developers. We have experienced a lack of this with a recent housing development where the Parish Council believes a greater risk of flooding may occur following the development due to decisions taken against local Parish Council and IDB advice on how drainage for both foul and surface water is being managed on a new development.

Swavesey Community has already seen in the past 18 months, foul and surface water flooding of dwellings, gardens and garages and residents are understandably very concerned over what actions are being taken to stop future flooding and what impact new housing developments in the village will have on the risk to future flooding.

Can the Committee confirm that the above points and concerns will be addressed by this Flood Risk Management Strategy and how the CCC is going to action the policies in order to work with local communities to reduce flood risk and help ensure residents do not experience increased risk of flooding as new development continues to take place within villages?

Officer response:

We thank Swavesey Parish Council for their question and interest in the strategy. We acknowledge the need to engage with communities and Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) as well as developers and endeavour to do this wherever we can. Whilst we cannot require

developers to engage in pre-application discussions, we do encourage developers to engage with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) ahead of submitting a planning application and we also provide advice and guidance on our website which explains our requirements. When we review the Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document over the next year we will look to reiterate the importance of pre-application advice, particularly in those areas with known flooding issues in Cambridgeshire, which will include such as Swavesey.

Whilst the LLFA must work within the boundaries of local and national policy/legislation, through our Community Flood Action Programme we commit to working with communities and IDBs to learn more about their areas from a flooding perspective which can then be used to inform our responses as a statutory consultee to the planning system.