

Report: Paddock Wood TC P and E Committee Extraordinary **Meeting with Southern Water 10th October 2018**

Present: Town Cllrs M Flashman, C Williams, D. Sargison, R Steward, R Turk, S Hamilton (Also Cllr for TWBC and KCC) E Thomas (also TWBC Cllr)

Borough Cllrs C Stewart (also Deputy Clerk) , A Gooda, C Mackonochie.

Approximately 50 Paddock Wood residents.

Paul Kent and Mike Tomlinson from Southern Water.

Apologies were received from Cllrs R Moon and D Henshaw.

Chairman's introduction. Cllr C Williams thanked the many residents for attending and explained that the reason the meeting had been called was that residents have been expressing their concerns regarding the surcharging and overflowing of the foul drainage system in Paddock Wood for many years, in particular since 2014 when it became evident that there was an intention to build another 1000 houses in the town. Hillreed have now begun construction on the Mascalls Court Farm (MCF) site and Berkeley Homes are expected to commence shortly on Mascalls Farm (MF). The situation for Paddock Wood is now critical.

Representations from residents

Mrs Jones from Warrington Avenue reported that she has experienced the flooding of her front garden with water containing sewage, toilet paper and other waste for at least 10 years. Initially she reported this to Southern Water and on occasion they attended and cleared the waste away. However now she sees no point in contacting them as they have done nothing to fix the problem and she clears it up with a hose herself once the water level has dropped. The effluent comes from the manhole cover in the centre of the road opposite her property which lifts in wet weather. She expressed her fears that the foul water will eventually enter her property which is a bungalow. During recent incidents the water level has been just 7 centimetres from flowing over her front step and into the hall. Both she and her neighbour experience their toilets backing up when the weather is wet and therefore cannot flush them at this time for fear they will overflow. She finds this very stressful as she is not a young person and dreads the prospect of having to deal with the aftermath if her property is flooded. Her concern is that Southern Water's (SW) agreement to attach 60 properties to the system will be the action that tips the balance and causes her home to be ruined.

Mr Sherwood from Le Temple Road said that any trip in the electricity supply causes the Le Temple pumping station to trip and the adjacent roads are then flooded with effluent. He and his neighbours have around a dozen complaint sheets to SW detailing when the pump has broken down and there was sewage and toilet paper in the road. This is a health hazard as the children cycle through it. This is not just in wet weather but happens regularly. He and his neighbours sometimes have other people's sewage coming up in their down stairs toilets. Some of his neighbours have had non-return valves fitted to prevent their downstairs toilets from backing up. He and his neighbours would fit these themselves but are concerned that they would be liable if that affected anyone else. SW said that they would look at doing this for them. Mr Sherwood has advised both SW and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) that these problems have occurred ever since the Green Lane development was added to the system with no works to the network other than the connection. He feels this is completely unacceptable and that the Chief Exec of Southern Water would not accept this in his area.

Mr Alfieri from Church Road said that the answers from Southern water are negative and not proactive, they demonstrate no joined up thinking and are simply firefighting the problems on an ad hoc basis as they crop up. The town is now looking at 900 additional houses and it is no good saying that 60 can be accommodated now when you know for certain there will be another 300 on that estate alone. Throughout the Site Allocations process in 2014 it was clear that SW did not have capacity in their network. It is too little, too late. TWBC should not be absolved of blame for this situation, they failed to enforce the conditions to prevent it. They have not tied up developers and infrastructure providers to put in the infrastructure that is clearly needed. This is a sad situation and is being addressed way too late.

Mr Kent from Bullion Close noted that SW acted fast enough when the centre of Tunbridge Wells flooded earlier this year and work is already underway with SW and KCC to divert surface water into the River Grom to address the problem. PWTC have been asking for a survey of the network since the Green Lane development was completed and have been denied. Homes and the primary school are experiencing backflow. A proper on the ground survey of SW assets should be done.

David Diggin of St Andrews Road said one of the solutions identified by SW of excavating the whole of Church Road and Green Lane and installing oversize pipes to retain the peak flows was hugely disruptive and environmentally unsound and that a new perimeter trunk sewer is the only solution.

Mark Noterman of Green Lane thanked PWTC for the work that they have done continuously on this matter for several years but said that TWBC are guilty of a dereliction of their duty to the residents of Paddock Wood in partially discharging the two drainage conditions in this way.

Questions from residents and Councillors: Replies from SW/others to questions and representations

Questioner	Reply
Mrs Jones	SW-Paul Kent (PK) replied that on a wet day 60 dwellings contribute an insignificant volume of waste to the network. If they are proved wrong in this assessment they will impose different conditions in future. He said that the complaints received by Southern Water via their call centre and on line do not tally up with the level of incidences that are being reported by PWTC and residents at this meeting. The complaints that they have received relate to flooding caused by blockages and there is no evidence that there are problems with the capacity of the network. Claire Stewart said that Mrs Jones had made SW aware of this problem repeatedly over the 10 years and it is unacceptable that no action has been taken to remedy it in that time.
J Corse -Dimmock Close- If the 60 dwellings are connected as proposed in July 19 will there be additional cesspit drainage until SW do their upgrade?	SW-Paul Kent 60 can be added, after that improvements will be needed. The developer will have the choice either to stop building or tanker away the effluent. They may also opt to install cesspits, but these may well be unpopular with purchasers.
Resident of Allington Road. How many houses	PWTC-Carol Williams- 72 additional are in the

<p>on other sites outside the main ones have received planning permission but are not yet built?</p>	<p>pipeline but TWBC have advised her that these do not have to be considered until applicants start building. (This includes the 34 flats at the Hop Pocket and a block of 10 in Church Road.)</p>
<p>CLlr R Turk- Surely the fact that there is sewage in gardens means that there is no additional capacity in the network. The overflow means it is full. It is unarguable evidence.</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent- Complaints received by SW to date do not match what PWTC are telling them. The complaints are to do with blockages and if there are capacity issues these are not being fed into the complaints system. CLlr C Williams-This is why PWTC did another resident survey. Lots of residents have repeated incidents but do not have the patience and time to go hold on the SW complaint line each time. The latest short survey indicated that there are now more roads affected than those identified in the survey that Warrington Road Action Group (WRAG) carried out 4 years ago.</p>
<p>D. Corse -Dimmock Close. If SW say technically there is capacity are they admitting that they do not understand the interaction between surface water and foul flows. This will impact on people's lives and SW have known about it since well before 2014.</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent- On a wet day 60 dwellings contribute an insignificant volume of waste to the network. If we are proven to be wrong, we will ask for different planning conditions in the future.</p>
<p>D. Corse -Dimmock Close.. Until July of this year SW said there was no capacity in the network to accommodate the new houses. How will you now monitor the effect of the added 60 houses?</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent- Will monitor the system once they are connected. It is not up to the developers to resolve SW issues.</p>
<p>Resident of Allington Road. There is a known problem in Allington Road and Bramley Gardens as the system there is pumped out twice a year. Surely this should be fixed before further connection are allowed. Have SW surveyed this area with CCTV?</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent- Are aware of the problem, it not a capacity issue. There has been no CCTV survey.</p>
<p>D Corse -Dimmock Close. How many extra houses will have to be accommodated by autumn 2020?</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent-1000 houses plus a primary school. Also the new TWBC Local Plan will allocate more housing to Paddock Wood and SW are looking to how they will provide capacity going forward</p>
<p>C Godsave-Warrington Road. Has had an extensive correspondence with SW, Greg Clark MP and TWBC. The Site Allocations inspector stated that PW was taking a disproportionate number of houses and that they should only be permitted if the requisite infrastructure is in place. None of his concerns re the absence of this have been addressed.</p>	<p>SW-Paul Kent-SW are engaging with TWBC in preparation of their new Local Plan which will allocate more housing to PW.</p>
<p>Mark Noterman- Green Lane. Expressed thanks</p>	<p>Claire Stewart-PWTC at that time expressed</p>

<p>to PWTC for the continuous work that they have done to keep the pressure on Southern Water and TWBC to fix the existing problems and ensure that more are not created. On 23rd of March TWBC planning were saying that no connection would be approved and now they have allowed the connection of 60 houses. PWTC.</p>	<p>their strong objection to the partial discharge of this planning condition to allow the connection of 60 homes. They do not feel that a 'partial' discharge of a planning condition is tenable.</p> <p>SW-Paul Kent. It is clear that there are some misconnections between the surface and foul drainage systems. These will be addressed but SW cannot deal with matters that are not submitted to them as complaints. Cllr C Williams commented that surely the WRAG overflow survey and the PWTC overflow survey should be treated as complaints.</p>
<p>Peter Trent. It is clear that SW have no clear understanding town wide of what is causing flooding. There has been no CCTV condition survey and no on the ground survey of the SW systems for over 40 years. This means that problems caused by tree roots, collapses and blockages are unknown and go unaddressed. Without this knowledge the base data set is unverified and is therefore unfit to model capacity.</p>	<p>SW-Mike Tomlinson. SW has the paper public sewer records and knows of problems caused by infiltration of groundwater. SW have done a winter flow survey for their Drainage Area Plan (DAP) along side the rainfall data. Peter Trent replied that the sewer records are unverified and the dimensions of long stretches of pipe are acknowledged as unknown in correspondence from SW to TWBC. MT – SW are checking if the modelling matches the sewer plans and this is part of the ongoing preparation of the DAP which should be completed in February 2019. Cllr C Williams stated that the diameter of 635 metres of rising main that takes about half the town's flows from the Station Road pumping station up to the treatment works is unknown. MT Admitted that SW are possibly remiss in not updating their sewer records. They will come back with findings in spring of next year.</p>

SW-Paul Kent – At the invitation of Cllr C Williams gave an overview of the possible foul drainage solutions for the new developments in Paddock Wood. Questions were raised during the summary. (as noted)

There are different potential solutions

The three development sites can be looked at individually.

Bigger pipes. If existing pipes are removed and replaced with wider dimensions this will increase capacity.

A new main trunk sewer around the edge of the town connecting directly to the treatment works removing the new flows from the network.

<p>D. Corse queried whether it would not make more sense to go directly for a new trunk sewer so that the whole 1000 new houses could be accommodated, and leeway created for future development.</p>	<p>SW- PK Costs of these will differ and the calculations have not yet been completed.</p>
<p>Claire Stewart asked how residents felt about the proposals to create holding tanks under Ringden Avenue and to install wider pipes under Green Lane that would hold back sewage until level had fallen.</p>	<p>SW- PK replied that these problems are not unique to Paddock Wood, it is normal to use attenuation to manage peak flows.</p>
<p>Cllr R Stewart wanted to know why these measures were not being installed on the developments that they would serve.</p>	<p>SW-PK commented that the Station Car Park pumping Station required a hydraulic solution.</p>
<p>Peter Trent asked if when SW spoke to a full solution for the developments being available in 2020 did they mean it would be found or actually constructed.</p>	<p>SW- PK The answer to this was not clear. (PWTC Following up) In the meantime the developer would have to tanker away the foul water produced by the homes over and above the 60</p>
<p>Peter Trent asked if the drainage network on the actual site would be adopted by Southern Water.</p>	<p>SW-PK replied that if it was up to SW standards they would have to adopt under a Section 104. He does not know if an application has been received.</p>
<p>Cllr D Sargison asked what SW would do if the 60 dwellings tipped the system over capacity.</p>	<p>SW- PK On a wet day 60 dwellings contribute an insignificant volume of waste to the network.</p>
<p>Cllr D Sargison How much more evidence do SW need as the Le Temple pumping station tripped when there were short power cuts, too much rain, too much sewage? SW are plastering over the cracks, do SW think that cess pits and tankering away is an acceptable solution? Is there a chance that developers will sue Southern Water for failing to provide infrastructure? Will the solution be piecemeal for the other estates?</p>	<p>SW- PK Legally developers have the right to connect but do not have the right to discharge. Tankering away would only be an interim solution and it is up to the developer to decide if they wish to use that.</p>
<p>C William stated that there is a known problem in the town centre, both pumping stations have continuing problems. The only acceptable solution is a new trunk sewer connecting directly to the treatment works. SW should just get on and do that rather than sending additional funds looking for alternative solutions.</p>	
<p>Peter Trent asked if the proposed storage solutions for the other two developers will definitely go ahead or are they subject to change? Is there any funding Identified for Paddock Wood in AMP6 or Amp 7 ?(Budget periods 2015-2020 and 2020-2025)</p>	<p>SW- PK No – no budget is identified, Paddock Wood would is a background scheme. If developers go ahead individually there will be 3 separate solutions.</p>
<p>J Corse- is the proposed solution for the end of 2020 for all the developments or just the</p>	<p>SW- PK Cannot answer that question. However, if an individual solution for Mascalls</p>

current one?	Court farm is pursued this will preclude a holistic solution for Paddock Wood.
D Kent. SW state that they need certainty to invest, they should be looking at the new local plan which will allocate thousands more house to Paddock Wood.	SW- PK It is important to SW to have dialogue with TWBC on future allocations.
Mark Noterman. Can the treatment works cope with the other two developments.	SW- PK No. It needs additional capacity built on.
CLlr Hamilton said that planning conditions are law and have to be complied with.	J Corse replied that this is obviously not the case as Condition 15 of the planning permission for the Mascalls Court Farm development has not been complied with. But the development has been allowed to proceed.
Peter Trent. In a consultation response to TWBC in March 2016 regarding Mascalls Court Farm SW stated that there is inadequate capacity in the network to accommodate the proposal which would increase flows and existing properties and land would be subject to greater risk. So, what will happen in June 2019 when the first phase of 175 houses in completed?	SW- PK We do not believe that it will be worse.
Denis Sherwood. Some neighbours have non-return valves which have been installed by SW to stop toilets backing up.	SW-MT SW will look at installing for some other householders if information is provided to them by the residents via PWTC>
CLlr Hamilton referred to meetings that happened with stakeholders to discuss flooding in 2014 and said that the current situation should not be allowed to repeat in the future.	

CLlr C Williams thanked all the residents for attending and for making all their points so reasonably and thanked Southern Water for attending to answer questions. Paul Kent undertook to return to another meeting in February to update the town on progress.

Chairman