MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 9 JULY 2012

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT
Andreas Constantinides, Patricia Ekechi, Nneka Keazor, Dogan Delman and Ertan Hurer

ABSENT

OFFICERS:
Bob Griffiths (Assistant Director - Planning and Environmental Protection), Gary Barnes (Assistant Director Highways and Transportation), Aled Richards (Head of Development Services), Mike Hoyland (Senior Transport Planner), Lydia Dye (Planning Case Officer) and Ian Russell (Senior Engineer) Jane Creer (Secretary)

Also Attending:
Applicant / Agent Representatives:
Graham Cowell (Environment Agency, NE Thames Manager)
Steve Whipp (Environment Agency, Senior User-Client)
Mike Gara (Environment Agency, Project Manager)
Roland Grzybek (Halcrow, Project Director)
Windsor Young (Volker Stevin)
Mike Ferens (MMA – land agent)
Ward Councillors:
Councillors Terence Neville and Glynis Vince (Grange Ward)
Councillor Jon Kaye (Highlands Ward)
And approximately 150 members of the public / interested parties

1 OPENING

NOTED

1. Councillor Delman as Chairman welcomed all attendees to the meeting and introduced the Panel Members, the applicant’s representatives and Council officers.

2. The purpose of the meeting was to provide local residents and other interested parties the opportunity to ask questions about the application and for the applicants, officers and Panel Members to listen to all the comments.

3. A decision on the application would be made by the full Planning Committee at a future date.

2 OFFICERS’ SUMMARY OF THE PLANNING ISSUES
NOTED

1. Aled Richards, Head of Development Management, advised that a printed summary of the proposals had been left on each chair.

2. The application had been submitted over a month ago. Over 1200 local properties had been consulted directly, mainly along the construction traffic routes and adjoining the sites. The plan provided showed the extent of the consultation letters sent. Notices had also been put up on sites. To date, 30 letters of objection had been received.

3. Comments made at this meeting would be noted, and the Environment Agency would also be working on further consultation.

4. Most of the concerns raised so far related to pedestrian access to sites, noise and disturbance, potential damage from construction vehicles and loss of use of Enfield Golf Course and Cheyne Walk Open Space.

5. Comments received from statutory consultees so far were summarised:
   ● Ecology officers had raised concerns in respect of the biodiversity assessment which dated from 2008, and had requested another survey. This would have to be carried out between July and September so would affect the progress of the application which would not be able to be presented to Planning Committee until October at the earliest.
   ● The Conservation Advisory Group had no objections and felt that the merits of the scheme outweighed any adverse impacts on Conservation Areas.
   ● The Friends of Bury Lodge Park had raised concerns about implications for children’s safety and wildlife.
   ● Grange Park Residents’ Association had raised concerns about site noise, emissions, HGV movements, and site access.
   ● Highlands School had raised concerns about levels and routes of site traffic and the health and safety of pedestrians walking to school.
   ● McMullen brewers had raised concerns around the Jolly Farmers pub site.
   ● Thames Water had raised no objections, but required additional information in relation to Deephams sewage works.
   ● Transport for London had no objections.
   ● National Grid Electricity Network had no objections.
   ● Western Enfield Residents’ Association had raised concerns about flood risk to properties and damage to roads in its area.

6. The main planning implications to be considered were traffic issues, access to sites during construction, extent and duration of construction works, construction noise and disturbance to neighbouring amenity, and flood risk to properties adjoining the flood storage areas.

7. Updated plans were displayed at the rear of the hall.
8. The consultation period finished on 23 July, but Enfield Council took a pragmatic approach and would welcome written comments right up to the date of the Planning Committee, which was likely to be in late October.

3 PRESENTATION BY THE APPLICANT / AGENT

NOTED

1. Steve Whipp, Senior User – Client, Environment Agency, introduced the project members present and gave an illustrated presentation on the proposal, including:
   a. In 2000 there was severe flooding in Edmonton when 192 properties were flooded internally and some people were not able to return to their homes for over a year. This was a quite rare event, but the impact was severe.
   b. The objectives of the scheme were a significant improvement to flooding risk, improvements to the environment, and achievement of a benefit – cost ratio of over 6. Maps were available of the benefit areas.
   c. The main elements of the scheme were described:
      ● Enfield Golf Course would be used for temporary storage of flood water. For the vast majority of the time the course would be unaffected. The design was environmentally sensitive to minimise loss of trees. The structure would be safe to operate and be as simple as possible. The routes over the embankment would also tie in with the greenway path. There would be no change in flood risk upstream of the golf course.
      ● The aim in the Montagu Road area was to stop water going into houses and through the cemeteries. A new culvert would smooth the flow. Water would be contained at Montagu Road Recreation Ground.
      ● Artist’s impressions had been produced of how sites would look after the scheme.
   d. Proposed routes for construction access to the sites were set out. Concerns were acknowledged about the route to Enfield Golf Course and vehicles would avoid peak times and school arrival and leaving times. Salmons Walk only had entrances from Plevna Road and Montagu Road; a compound would be established on the recreation ground. At Bury Street West there would be fairly minimal works for about 3 weeks, accessed through the existing Council depot.
   e. Access to the public had been taken into account at all sites.
      ● The full 18 holes would be playable at Enfield Golf Course with a temporary tee at a slightly shortened 9th hole.
      ● At Cheyne Walk there would be pedestrian access at all times to the allotments and open space with a segregated pedestrian route so people would be safe, and vehicular access at evenings and weekends and in special circumstances by arrangement.
      ● At Barnabas Court there would be pedestrian and vehicular access to the sheltered housing at all times and there would be a vehicle marshall on that entrance.
      ● Salmons Walk was a constrained site and to protect members of the public access could not be allowed during the works, but an alternative route would be signed, and post scheme there would be improvements.
At Montagu Road, access to current play areas, community centre and sports field would be maintained during the works and the minimum space possible would be occupied on the recreation ground. Temporary traffic lights would be required while the culvert was constructed on the edge of Montagu Road.

The site at Bury Street West was currently closed to the public so there would be no change in access and there would be no impact on the Council depot operations. The volume of traffic would be minimal.

The planned extent and duration of the works were set out with advice that the embankment construction would be the busiest time. At Enfield Golf Course and Cheyne Walk the works would last about one year. The work at Salmons Walk would be the most difficult and take longest because of the constrained access. The Montagu Road culvert would take 7 months to construct, but the limits to traffic would not be in place the whole time.

Works would use construction best practice, for which they had won numerous construction awards, and operate under the Considerate Contractors Scheme.

Standard construction working hours would be operated ie 8.00am to 6.00pm on weekdays, and Saturday mornings.

Plant and design had been chosen to minimise disturbance as much as possible. Modern anti-noise anti-vibration construction machinery with appropriate silencing mechanisms would be used.

Impact assessments would be carried out before and after the works. No structural damage to properties along the routes was expected, and evidence to illustrate was available from previous construction projects. The levels of construction traffic constituted a very low risk.

This project had been worked on for a long time and there had been a great deal of consultation including exhibitions, newsletters and presentations and meetings with the public and interested groups.

During construction, an approach used successfully on other projects would be followed, including a dedicated community liaison officer in place, local schools engagement, a 24 hour hot line and regular progress updates.

The scheme had been included in Defra’s funding announcement and was important nationally.

Questions could be sent to Steve Whipp and Mike Gara via email at salmonsfas@environment-agency.gov.uk.

4 QUESTIONS BY PANEL MEMBERS

NOTED the following questions and observations from Members of the Panel:

1. Councillor Delman asked about the possibilities of diverting water from Salmons Brook to the New River or Pymmes Brook earlier to remove the need to store water; or if there must be water storage could it be held elsewhere? It was advised that potential diversion culverts had been considered, but were very expensive because of their length and not practical. Use of the New River also risked contamination of the water supply. If Pymmes Brook and Salmons Brook were running full, the New River as a man-made channel had a limited capacity to accept flood water.
The same applied for Sadlers Mill Stream. The main policy document for all flood alleviation schemes was called ‘Making Space for Water’ and the aim was for storage and attenuation on a natural flood plain.

2. Councillor Constantinides mentioned the positive suggestions made during consultation, especially by Enfield Golf Club members and asked whether any ideas had been taken up. He also asked about the overall project timing. It was confirmed that there had been previous consultation and exhibitions and it had been tried as far as practicable to incorporate previous consultations. The first part of the project to be finished would be Enfield Golf Course, then Montagu Recreation Ground and finally Salmons Walk.

3. In response to Councillor Hurer’s queries, it was advised that normal working hours defined as acceptable were 8:00am to 6.00pm and that construction hours would be written into the contract and would be agreed with the Local Authority. HGV movements would be avoided at school hours. Discussions had been held with the Golf Club regarding alleviation of more frequent flooding and making the course more playable than at the moment post scheme. In an extreme event the intention was to inundate the golf course to protect other areas.

4. Councillor Ekechi asked about minimisation of disturbance and noise and the hours of construction work. It was advised that early in the morning and late in the evening, contractors would be just setting up and finishing. While work was progressing there would be liaison with local communities and collection of feedback. There were statutory limits on noise and vibration. There would also be a Section 106 Agreement with further constraints which the applicant would be bound by.

5. In response to Councillor Keazor’s queries regarding the total timescale for the scheme, it was confirmed that the works at Enfield Golf Club would be likely to take just over a year, and works at Salmons Walk and Montagu Road around one and a half years. There were two sets of allotments near the scheme. A beneficial side effect would be that allotments at Cheyne Walk would flood less frequently and at Salmons Walk the allotments would receive protection from the wall along Salmons Walk.

5 QUESTIONS BY WARD COUNCILLORS

NOTED the following questions and observations from Ward Councillors:

1. Councillor Glynis Vince, Grange Ward Councillor, questioned whether any benefits would be brought to Grange and Highlands wards. On 9 and 11 June there had been flooding in parts of those wards, especially at the golf course / Cheyne Walk / Slades Rise areas, but not in Edmonton.

   It was advised that the recent flooding had a chance of occurring at any time from river water escaping when the water was high, but there were no
homes in that flood plain. In Edmonton, flooding to people’s homes could be expected in 1 in 20 years. The consequences on open spaces were a lot less: within days they could be used again and there was no permanent impact. The whole scheme would cost just over £15 million.

Councillor Vince understood there could be 40 traffic movements a day, and 54,000 tonnes of clay to be moved, and she asked whether the condition of residential properties had been surveyed.

It was advised that the busiest time during construction would be when bringing in materials for the embankment when there would be up to 40 vehicle movements a day in total in and out. Outside that busy period there would be a lot less movements. 54,000 tonnes of clay was the total for the whole project, and the golf club site would involve about half that amount. Potential for property damage was very low risk: previous experience in Uxbridge had shown that such traffic did not cause structural damage. Surveys were proposed just before the start of construction, so were not done yet.

Councillor Vince remained concerned that the roads involved in this project were narrower, and that even outside school run times, Worlds End Lane and Bincote Road had a constant flow of traffic.

2. Councillor Jon Kaye, Highlands Ward Councillor, highlighted that flooding occurred often 3 or 4 times a year in the Links Side / Slades Rise / Taunton Drive vicinity. He considered that the residents in these roads would not be helped and any flood alleviation scheme should be more comprehensive.

It was advised that there could be multiple sources of flooding, including from drains and roads, not just from the river running full. In low frequency events this scheme would alleviate flooding to these properties. This scheme was designed to mitigate against a single event such as happened in 2000. In such an event the works at the golf club would deal with the flow more quickly.

3. Councillor Neville, Grange Ward Councillor, questioned the proven need for the scheme at this time. There had been major repair costs after the event in 2000, and work done then may have contributed to flooding not recurring in the years that followed or during recent rainfall.

It was advised that in an event on the scale of that in 2000, flooding would still have occurred without a larger scheme in place. Comparison should be made with a situation similar to that in 2000 which is what this scheme was designed for. The works would alleviate such flooding. Levels at the Edmonton Green gauge showed that events this year in April and June were 1 in 6-9 month events compared to the greater than 1 in 20 year event experienced in October 2000.
Councillor Neville raised concerns about traffic and lorry movements and the compliance and supervision of contractors.

It was advised that vehicle movements and their monitoring had been planned. Subject to receiving planning consent, the busiest period would be from March to July 2013. There would be a vehicle marshall at the junction of Uplands Road. There would be contractual constraints and statutory constraints in respect of the number of vehicles and noise, etc. All vehicles involved with the project would have identification stickers and a contact number for a hotline for any issues to be reported. There was no commercial relationship in this case, the Environment Agency used framework contract arrangements and it was in the interests of the contractors to perform well.

Councillor Neville remained concerned about the effect of heavy lorries going in at such frequency on roads which were not built for such traffic.

Councillor Neville also highlighted concerns raised by residents regarding contact with the Environment Agency. There had been a seeming lack of openness, and a dripfeed of information and residents had lost confidence in the applicant’s credibility.

The Environment Agency advised that they took consultation seriously and tried to give adequate and correct responses, though these may take time and could not be expected by return of email.

6 OPEN SESSION - QUESTIONS AND VIEWS FROM THE FLOOR

NOTED the following comments and questions were received from local residents and other interested parties:

1. The headteacher of Highlands School clarified that an objection had been raised by Highlands, Merryhills and Grange Park schools combined in respect of the volume of traffic, and about the quality of the documentation as there was no summary of the project in clear language and no easily-understandable map. He questioned why the vehicle route from the A10 had to approach Green Dragon Lane via Bincote Road and Worlds End Lane, passing three schools. Highlands School in particular had students in the sixth form who came and went throughout the day. He considered that temporary changes to traffic islands in Green Lanes would be a cost worth bearing to avoid these schools. These roads were difficult to negotiate at the quietest times and heavy lorries would cause chaos.

It was advised that the traffic routes had been carefully considered and the route chosen was the best, least-intrusive option. On busier roads, the increase in traffic would be less obvious.
2. Other residents also expressed their concern about the large numbers of children who used the local roads to go to and from school and the heavy lorry use of those roads.

3. In response to a resident’s queries about potential alternatives including a reservoir elsewhere, it was advised that it was best to store flood water as close as possible to the area to be benefited. Between this location and Edmonton, there were very few green spaces, and they had other uses, and the best choice was this natural flood plain.

4. A resident raised particular concerns about the current condition of Cadogan Gardens roadway and likely severe damage resulting from construction vehicles, and that heavy lorries would exacerbate the frequent flooding experienced due to broken water pipes in Worlds End Lane, Green Dragon Lane and Eversley Park Road.

5. The Enfield Golf Club Chairman considered that the scheme would jeopardise the survival of the club, and had concerns about the design of the scheme. The Chairman of the Panel recommended that detailed concerns be sent to Development Control Team in writing.

6. A local resident highlighted recent flooding on 9 and 11 June when gardens were flooded, sewage came up through manhole covers and residents had been unable to use toilets for a night, and that Thames Water must also be involved in the decision.

7. A resident who had previously worked as a Flood Defence Manager offered the opinion that use of the New River could be a potential alternative. He also highlighted the importance of maintenance and proactive management of water courses and culverts and questioned what maintenance had been carried out following the flooding in 2000. In respect of the flume construction at Enfield Golf Course, earth banks in flood conditions generated large amounts of silt, and he considered there was a need for a mechanical structure there. He requested a deferral of the planning decision to give another 6 months for full discussions involving residents, schools and Enfield Golf Club.

In response, it was advised that emphasis was put on maintenance of culverts and inspection of assets, including use of CCTV. The Council also had a regime for cleaning culverts. It was confirmed that the EA had permissive powers to carry out maintenance.

8. A resident of Uplands Way expressed surprise at the lack of acknowledgement of the preliminary flood risk assessment which showed the flood zones which had a risk of dangerous fast-flowing water in Grange Park. Putting in the bund would extend those zones and put Grange Park residents at risk and this was a misconceived project.

It was advised that the preliminary flood risk assessment was undertaken to look at other sources of flooding not from rivers. The areas marked in
Grange Park were open space, allotments and golf course land on the natural flood plain where flood risk would be expected to be high. These areas did not have roads and were not going to be used by residents or emergency services in floods. This scheme had been carefully designed so that it would not increase the flood risk to local properties. The embankment would be lower than properties by Enfield Golf Course and water would come over the embankment before it had any influence on upstream levels.

9. A resident in Links Side echoed concerns raised by neighbours and reiterated their experiences on 9 and 11 June when their rear gardens were flooded as water did back up. Residents wanted to know if their homes were going to be affected. They had found the documentation to be poor and uninformative, and would like to see better maps which demonstrated what areas were going to be affected.

10. A resident of Slades Rise also expressed that people with properties that backed onto the brook felt they had been ignored and that no-one had assessed their properties. There were a lot of elderly residents who did not have email and were very concerned about insurance and flooding. If the scheme did not work who would compensate these residents?

It was advised that Links Side homes, under current flood mapping, were not at high risk of flooding. Gardens and open spaces would experience flooding, but that was of a different order to flooding of houses.

11. A resident highlighted that gardens were considered part of people’s homes, where they relaxed and played, and their importance should be recognised.

12. Residents reiterated that gardens in Slades Rise and Links Side areas flooded regularly, once or twice a year, and the public footpath was put out of use because it was flooded.

13. A resident of Uplands Way considered that damage to roads would be inevitable from the proposed numbers of heavy lorries. She requested an independent survey funded by the Environment Agency be carried out on the roads before the individual condition surveys of houses.

It was advised that a visit would be made to look at the possibility of undertaking a survey prior to lorry movements. In their building surveyor’s opinion the likelihood of damage was very low.

14. Residents expressed ongoing concern regarding the worth of the scheme as no flooding had been documented in Montagu Road since the 2000 flood.

It was confirmed that flood alleviation schemes nationwide were assessed using predictive flood risk mapping and government guidance, with the same process followed on all schemes on an economic basis and
cost/benefit assessment. The assessment criteria could be viewed on the Defra website.

15. Residents queried why other reservoirs in the Chase Side area and at Hogs Hill could not be used for flood alleviation.

It was advised that Hogs Hill reservoir had been considered in a previous scheme but did not offer a similar storage area, and that was why it had been removed from this scheme.

16. A golf club member expressed that there may be other ways of holding water within the course which were better than the current proposals, and that there had been responses from the EA in the last 48 hours which were not in the public domain at present. Discussions should continue between the club and the EA and therefore the application was not yet in a position to be determined and should not be presented to Planning Committee until all the issues had been agreed as far as they could be. Discussions should also cover the flume design. As the vast majority of works would be on Council-owned land he would also like to see terms and conditions and minutes of discussions between the Council and the EA be put in the public arena.

It was confirmed that the EA had been liaising extensively with the golf club and looking at their proposals, including on the flume design, and would continue to do so. Enfield Golf Club had been given a set of terms in July 2011. Discussions with the Council’s agent had also gone on for some time. Minutes and correspondence which were not confidential or commercially sensitive could be made available.

17. An attendee highlighted effects of landscaping at the golf course and that widening the channel through the course and removing left-over earth and tree debris may help solve the problem of a head of water building up and backing up to Slades Rise / Links Side. Also, the main issue was the protection of people’s homes from flooding elsewhere in the borough, and sometimes it was necessary to suffer for a few months for a bigger cause. He supported the scheme, which he felt would benefit a lot of people.

18. In response to concerns raised about current problems experienced with sewerage pipes, it was advised that the issue was recognised within the scheme and it was intended to have lock down manhole covers. The Council’s Head of Development Management also confirmed that a detailed assessment of the proposals had been made by Thames Water.

19. The Enfield Golf Club Chairman considered that it would still have been preferable to include Hogs Hill reservoir in the current proposals. The golf club had concerns about the flume design and wished other designs to be considered. Greater protection for the golf club was required as it would rapidly lose members if the course may be made frequently unusable. He would like other experts to examine the proposals independently.
20. Other residents supported an independent assessment and consideration of other solutions, and a deferral of this application in the meantime.

   It was advised that a number of independent reviews had already been done, and that the golf club had also used an independent consultant who agreed that this solution was optimum.

21. An attendee re-iterated that many local residents, particularly in Windmill Gardens, Links Side, Slades Rise, Slades Close and Taunton Drive all felt susceptible to flooding and should be given greater consideration. Water was coming from a number of sources upstream and use of Hogs Hill reservoir could help to deal with that.

22. In response to Councillor Neville’s queries regarding ultimate accountability, it was advised that the EA had a unit which analysed all flood risk schemes and prioritised them on a cost-benefit basis. There was a Large Project Review Group made up of senior officers and decisions were ultimately agreed by the Chief Executive, Paul Leinster, whose full contact details were available on the Environment Agency’s website.

7 CLOSING OF MEETING

NOTED the closing points, including:

1. The Head of Development Management advised that any further comments should be sent to the Council’s Planning Department, and would be received up until the date of the Planning Committee meeting to which the application would be presented for decision.

2. It was not expected that the application would be presented to a Planning Committee meeting until October 2012 at the earliest, as an ecology assessment needed to be carried out. It was expected that a special meeting of the Planning Committee would be convened at a large venue because of the level of public interest in this application.

3. Notes taken at this meeting would be appended to the Planning Officers’ report to be considered by the Planning Committee.

4. Full details of the application were available from the Council’s website www.enfield.gov.uk (Application Ref P12-01082PLA).

5. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the Planning Panel meeting. The Chairman suggested to the Environment Agency that they should consider producing alternative schemes with costs so that the public is convinced that the proposed scheme is the only viable one.