

Tracy,

GREAT MIDDLE GREEN FARM AND FLOOD RISK AT DAUNTSEY

Further to our telephone conversation on 29 July 2008, I have read the email that you sent to Tracy Sparrow in our Planning Liaison team in Bridgwater, containing the comments from Vivian Vines about flooding in Dauntsey and the Great Middle Green development site. I have a few general comments as follows:

- 1) The Environment Agency is dealing with two separate flood risk matters here i.e the pre-feasibility study we did concerning the potential for a flood alleviation scheme (FAS) for the village, and the flood risk issues associated with the GMG development site. Each issue, whilst not totally independent of each other, needs to be considered carefully in the context of historic flooding at Dauntsey, which has been noted as a problem since before 1960 and well before construction of the M4 motorway. The small bridge opening at Old Sodom Lane has always posed a throttle to flood flow in the brook.
- 2) The FAS viability hinges around cost/benefit analysis, and will exclusively look at protection for existing property at flood risk in the village. Further EA funded feasibility work will be required in the medium term although I do not personally know what the outcome will be for a flooding scheme getting EA/DEFRA 'approval' at Dauntsey at this time. My colleagues in the Flood Risk Management team in Bridgwater may know more.
- 3) The GMG development site was supported by an independent flood risk assessment (FRA) by the developer's consultants, Lewin Fryer and Partners (now Black and Veatch). We accepted the FRA findings, which quantified the existing flood risks to the site, and showed that the new housing and employment land falls outside the current high risk flood zone. Only the majority of the proposed POS land falls in the floodplain. As a result of accepting the developer's FRA, the EA has not objected to the various planning applications for the site SUBJECT TO various conditions to cover our flood risk interests. If these conditions are complied with in full to our and the LPAs satisfaction, then development of the site will have no bearing on the existing flood risks elsewhere in the village.
- 4) From the EA's perspective, there appear to be two conditional matters outstanding at the GMG site, which could be locally increasing flood risk until resolved on site.
 - i) An appropriate surface water drainage system to attenuate surface water runoff from the site to rates that match or better the original farmyard situation. The EA has previously approved an attenuation pond in principle, located in the north east corner of the POS, yet this is still subject to disagreement by others. An attenuation tank was mentioned to us as an alternative, yet nothing appears to be agreed or constructed at this date. Our advised condition to the LPA clearly seeks approval for any drainage scheme prior to development of the site. As we are not aware what works may have taken place on site without the benefit of an attenuation facility, we can not say if runoff has increased

from the site, increasing flood risk to third parties. We suggest that this is a matter of urgency for the LPA and possible referral for your Enforcement Officer to ensure action on site.

- ii) Compliance with our suggested condition that requires no storage of materials, including soil, within that part of the site shown as high risk floodplain i.e the POS land. We have heard rumours that the developer is stockpiling sub and top soil in the POS area contrary to our advice, the affect of which may displace any floodwaters at times of flood onto adjoining third party land. Again, we suggest that this is a matter of urgency and possible referral to your Enforcement Officer.

- 5) It is unrealistic to expect that the GMG site development could have resolved the historic flooding issues at Dauntsey, but it is reasonable to expect that those risks are not exacerbated by either the developer ignoring flood risk conditions imposed on them, and/or a lack of appropriate enforcement action by the LPA if breach of condition has occurred on site.

The Environment Agency would be happy to assist the LPA with respect to any outstanding flood risk matters or conditions at the GMG site. Please contact Mrs Tracy Sparrow in our Planning Liaison team as required.

John Southwell
Development Control Engineer
Wessex Area
01278 484561

30 July 2008