

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

**Held on Thursday, 1 September 2016 at 2.00 pm in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham**

PRESENT

Councillor E. Gould (Chairman)	Mr T F C Monument
Mrs E J Bishop	Mr D R R Oliver
Mr D M Crawford	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr A.C. Stasiak (Vice-Chairman)
Mr A.P. Joel	Mrs A M Webb
Mrs S.M. Matthews	Mr P S Wilkinson (Substitute Member)

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr P.J. Duigan
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mrs J Hollis
Mr S H Chapman-Allen	Mr J Newton
Mr H E J Clarke	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr J.P. Cowen	

In Attendance

Ross Bangs	- Housing Support Manager
Ralph Burton	- Strategic Property Manager (BDC)
Helen McAleer	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Leanne Neave	- Member Trainer
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Greg Pearson	- Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Officer
Simon Taylor-Avery	- Facilities Manager

52/16 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53/16 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brame. Councillor Wilkinson was present as his Substitute.

54/16 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

55/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

No declarations were made.

56/16 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Councillors Bambridge, M Chapman-Allen, S Chapman-Allen, Clarke,

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Cowen, Duigan, Hollis, Newton and Sharpe were in attendance.

Order of Items

The Chairman amended the order in which items on the Agenda were heard.

57/16 INCREASING SUPPLY OF MARKET RENTED HOUSING (AGENDA ITEM 9)

Councillor Cowen, Executive Member for Income & Prosperity presented the report which proposed that the Council should invest in housing, providing quality private rented homes and generating an income at the same time.

The Strategic Property Manager highlighted the salient points. The purpose of the project was to diversify the council's investment strategy; generate revenue; and reduce the risk of too much investment in one type of property. The safest way to hold housing stock would be through a 100% owned company. The towns of Dereham, Thetford, Attleborough and Swaffham had been identified as hot-spots for growth. Further work would be needed for a full business case if supported by Members and opportunities outside the District could also be investigated.

Councillor Joel asked about the Council's compulsory purchase rights and the Housing Support Manager confirmed that if the Council owned housing stock it would have the right to purchase empty properties in certain cases, but those properties would then become social housing, not private rented.

Councillor Oliver asked how the return on housing compared to other investments.

Commercial property provided a range of yields between 3-11%. Housing would give a gross yield of 5-6%. It was not as strong as commercial stock but the idea was to diversify the Council's holdings which would also diversify risk.

The Executive Member for Income & Prosperity pointed out the social dimension. The Council wanted to encourage more people into good quality housing and remove the stigma of rented accommodation.

Councillor Oliver asked about the possibility of providing a higher yield through quality covenants. He was concerned that the Council might be put in a difficult position if tenants got into arrears.

The Executive Member explained that the project was at an early stage and those details had not been looked at yet.

Councillor Jermy supported the proposals and asked if shared ownership was being looked at. He was advised that the project was focussed on getting a commercial return on private rented accommodation. The Breckland Bridge project was bringing sites forward that could provide shared ownership opportunities.

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Councillor Jermy noted that in some places there were large areas of private rented properties and he asked if the Council would avoid adding to problems by bearing that in mind.

The Executive Member reiterated that only the market potential had been identified at the moment to try and get the maximum return on the Council's money for minimum risk. The report had come to Scrutiny to test Members' feelings, before it was presented to Cabinet in October. If approved at Cabinet the full Business Case would be prepared.

RESOLVED to support the recommendation to Cabinet that:

- 1) a subsidiary company be set up and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to appoint the initial Director; and
- 2) a detailed market research report be commissioned to support the investment / acquisition strategy.

58/16 PRESENTATION FROM ANGLIAN WATER (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Catherine Taylor (Growth & Planning Manager) and Chris Hayton (Planning Manager) from Anglian Water were in attendance.

Ms Taylor gave a presentation (copy attached) which explained:

- Anglian Water's position with regard to development, as they were not Statutory Consultees in the planning process;
- the right to connect;
- how Anglian Water was funded; and
- how to bring growth schemes forward.

Particular reference was made to Dereham due to existing water-related problems and future growth proposals. Capacity problems were caused by surface water being discharged to the system which had been designed to deal with foul water only. Various ways were being sought to overcome the problems including mitigation measures. A new sewage network was proposed to meet the demand from the expected development and that project was at stage two of a five stage process and was expected to be working by the end of 2018.

Anglian Water proposed that a Partnership Working Group should be set up to look at surface water management in Dereham.

The Planning Manager said that a trial Group had been piloted in Essex following flooding of 1200 homes there. It had worked very well and had provided a single point of contact for communication purposes.

Councillor Webb asked for more details of the new sewage scheme for Dereham. She was informed that the Environment Agency had approved discharge to the Rivers Tudd and Wensum and had advised the acceptable ammonia levels. It was also clarified that there would be more works to Mattishall and Swanton Morley, but not to the Dereham treatment works.

With regard to Norwich Road in Dereham, Anglian Water was continuing to look for solutions to the problems there.

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The Chairman asked for a written response from Anglian Water setting out what works had taken place in Norwich Road and what further solutions were being considered.

Councillor Wilkinson suggested that the Working Group should be linked to the Local Plan Working Group and include Officers from Planning.

The Chairman thought it was too late for involvement in the Local Plan as that would be going out for public consultation in September. She felt that Anglian Water should advise on the set up of the Group.

Councillor Crawford hoped the Partnership Group would be for the whole District not just for Dereham.

Councillor Oliver asked for some specific information on the amount of head-room allowed for in pipes when planning for new growth and Ms Taylor agreed to provide a written response to that.

Mr Cripps, a previous resident of Greenfields Road now living off Yaxham Road, had complained about the flooding issues for years and thought that the problems had been caused by builders filling in drainage ditches and trees being removed. He had also noticed that when roads were resurfaced the surface water did not always run into the drains.

The Chairman said that when the Highways Authority was invited to the Commission that question should be raised with them.

Councillor Bambridge asked that the proposed Partnership Working Group should include a representative from the Internal Drainage. He also thought that Anglian Water should pay more attention to local knowledge and listen to the comments of people who were having problems.

Councillor R Richmond was concerned that work had not started on the Mattishall treatment works. He hoped that it would be built with additional capacity to deal with surface water.

Mr Hayton agreed that surface water was a difficult problem. Anglian Water was looking at ways to remove it from the system through management, storage and attenuation.

Councillor Sharpe asked what happened when the existing system could not cope. Ms Taylor advised that blockages were a common problem and they were found and removed as quickly as possible. Various means were used to manage flows including removing illegal surface water connections.

In cases where there was sufficient growth Anglian Water were more likely to get funding, but if the growth trigger point was not reached the problems became operational issues and were managed as previously explained.

Councillor Duigan asked if there was a timeline for the Mattishall

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treatment works. Ms Taylor explained that there was a strict governance process but that projections and updates could be provided.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for People & Information requested that a copy of the Local Plan be sent to Anglian Water for their information.

The Chairman thanked Ms Taylor and Mr Hayton for their presentation and asked Members to refer any further questions through the Scrutiny Officer.

59/16 ACTION PLAN FOLLOWING RECENT FLOODING AT ELIZABETH HOUSE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Executive Member for Place had sent her apologies. The Chairman introduced Simon Taylor-Avery, the new Facilities Manager who had only recently arrived at the Authority. She asked Members to make a note of any questions for the Executive Member to answer at the next meeting.

The Facilities Manager reminded Members of the events of 23 June 2016 when 30% of the ground floor of Elizabeth House was flooded. It had been determined that the problems had been caused by the underground storage tanks overflowing because they could not cope with the amount of water from the downpipes. The submersible pump had also failed.

Since then a drainage contractor had been engaged. The underground tanks had gathered a lot of sludge over the years which had now been cleared. The tanks had been emptied and the pump had been serviced. An alarm had been installed to give warning if the pump failed again. A portable pump had been purchased and a removable flood barrier had been fitted to the main door of the Committee Suite for use when storms were forecast.

There were a number of other options, including digging new drains and buying new pumps but they were expensive and it was believed that the measures already taken were sufficient to prevent a recurrence.

Members were reminded to e-mail any questions for the Executive Member for Place to the Chairman and the Scrutiny Officer in time for the next meeting.

60/16 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT - QUARTER 4 2015/16 AND QUARTER 1 2016/17 (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for People & Information presented the report which was for Members to note. It outlined the Council's overall performance for Quarter 4, which had been 'Fair' and for Quarter 1, which had been 'Good'. The Customer Contact Centre (CCC) had been an area of concern and attention had been focussed on improving its performance. It was likely to achieve 'green' status in Quarter 2.

Councillor Jermy asked if the improvement in performance was a result

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of less calls being received or more effort being put into answering the calls. He also asked how customer satisfaction was monitored.

The improvement was a combination of resolving staffing issues, seasonal variation and improved performance. Work had been undertaken to understand the workflows and the types of calls and the team were currently looking at how to get feedback.

The Executive Director Governance advised Members that a Council-wide survey was taking place for the whole of September to log the calls coming in to the Council.

The Performance Board had done a lot of work and devised a robust action plan to move the CCC from 'red' through 'amber' and soon on to 'green'. They had changed procedures and would be implementing an intelligent queueing system which would offer callers a maximum of five options to speed up their transfer to the right person.

The Deputy Leader explained that a 'smarter' approach was being introduced for the CCC. One call could cover several issues. Callers were also being helped to use the website.

Councillor Oliver asked about the percentage of calls abandoned compared to the average wait time and asked if the latter included people who had waited before abandoning. It was confirmed that calls were only classified once; abandoned calls did not feature in the waiting time numbers.

Councillor Joel congratulated the CCC on their improvement and asked if the new website had helped to reduce the number of calls. The Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager agreed to get that information and distribute it to Members.

Councillor R Richmond said that he had received good feedback from residents who were very pleased with the service they received from CCC staff.

Councillor Bambridge congratulated the CCC staff. He suggested that there should be an automatic answer and recall system to avoid callers having a long wait. He was advised that the new system would include a facility to leave details and be called back.

The Chairman thanked the Deputy Leader and Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager.

61/16 HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Housing Support Manager presented the report. The proposals had been discussed at the previous meeting and more information had been requested. He tabled a flow chart of the existing and proposed process for dealing with an application. He was recommending a change in the process to enable the Team to give more meaningful options to applicants.

Currently an officer took one to two hours to validate each application. Under the new process it was proposed that applicants should be invited to a brief 15 minute interview prior to them submitting their

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application. At that interview a trained officer would be able to advise if it was appropriate for them to enter the housing register. If they were suitable they would apply in the usual way, be automatically banded by the system and able to bid for properties, only at that stage would their application be formally validated.

The new model would free up officer time for other purposes, such as engaging with private landlords. The Team wanted to be able to help people they did not want to be tied up doing no-value admin work.

Councillor Joel asked if the initial interview could be by telephone. The Housing Support Manager explained that he hoped to get the team out into the District to make them more accessible, so that applicants would have a choice of venue, but could have a telephone interview if preferred.

Councillor Bishop asked about people occupying houses with more bedrooms than they needed. She was informed that there were 'swap-boards' on some websites that offered the chance to change accommodation. Information was being sought from the Housing Associations on that issue to bring to a future meeting.

Councillor Jermy asked if a 15 minute interview was long enough and he was advised that other authorities used a similar system. The interview was purely to get an understanding of the applicant's immediate need.

Councillor Jermy said it was a much improved report but he still felt there was not enough information and not enough resource in the housing options scheme.

Having considered the proposed changes it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** the change in the allocations policy.

Councillor Jermy abstained from voting.

62/16 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (AGENDA ITEM 11)

Councillor Wilkinson (Chairman of the Transformation T&FG) said that they would be focussing on the benefits and the impacts of the co-location of the DWP in the Council Offices. A report should be ready for the next meeting.

Councillor Stasiak (Chairman of the Performance T&FG) said they would start by looking at the Council's assets and then move on to review commercial income.

The Chairman asked for verbal updates for the October meeting and a final report for the November meeting.

63/16 OUTSIDE BODY FEEDBACK (AGENDA ITEM 12)

Councillor Sherwood had provided feedback from The Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust which had been circulated to Members.

Councillor Wilkinson advised that the next meeting of the Norfolk Health

Scrutiny Committee would take place the following week.

64/16 SCRUTINY CALL-INS (AGENDA ITEM 13)

None.

65/16 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (AGENDA ITEM 14)

None.

66/16 WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The work programme was noted and the Chairman warned Members that the meeting scheduled for 5 January 2017 which had been cancelled, might still be needed.

67/16 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 16)

The arrangements for the next meeting to be held on 13 October 2016 were noted.

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The meeting closed at 4.40 pm

CHAIRMAN

Update to the Dereham Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1
1 September 2016

Kathryn Taylor
Growth and Planning Manager
Anglian Water Services Limited

Minute Item 58

LOVE EVERY DROP. PUT WATER AT THE HEART
OF A WHOLE NEW WAY OF LIVING.

Contents



1. Funding Structure & Planning Status
2. Growth in Dereham & Growth Scheme
3. Legal position; section 106 Water Industry Act 1991
4. Network mitigation
5. Opportunities
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Funding Structure and Planning Status



Regulators

- Anglian Water Services Limited (“AWS”) are regulated by Ofwat and the Environment Agency (“EA”). Ofwat has a duty to protect customers' interests, ensure that companies carry out their functions correctly and sets water prices.
- Growth Schemes are promoted in 5 year intervals called Asset Management Plans (“AMPS”). We are currently in the early part of AMP6 and beginning to plan for AMP7.
- Growth predictions are based on Local Plans and allocated sites and on developer progression ie when they are likely to occur.

AWS are not Statutory Consultees to planning applications

- AWS are asked to comment on applications and have confirmed there is now no more capacity in the existing network, nor is there capacity in the Dereham WRC (west of Dereham). Management of the flows has been assisted with recent mitigation works to facilitate the Etling View development site but this is management only.

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The Growth Scheme



Growth in Dereham has reached the growth trigger point and a Growth Scheme is now funded for AMP6. Growth in AMP5 stalled in Dereham and funding was therefore not provided for such schemes.

This is a Growth scheme not a flood alleviation scheme.

The scheme is to take flows from new developments to the East of Dereham into a new sewer network and convey those flows for treatment at the most appropriate WRC.

The new sewer is designed and is now approved at stage 2 of a 5 stage governance process. The governance process is to ensure costs and risks are held in accordance with funding.

Discussions with the EA have now confirmed the permit discharge conditions and the discharge point for these additional flows. AWS continue to work with the EA to ensure the additional flows will be acceptable and not cause detriment to the environment.

AWS anticipate the sewer will be in place and operational by the end of 2018.



The Right to Connect



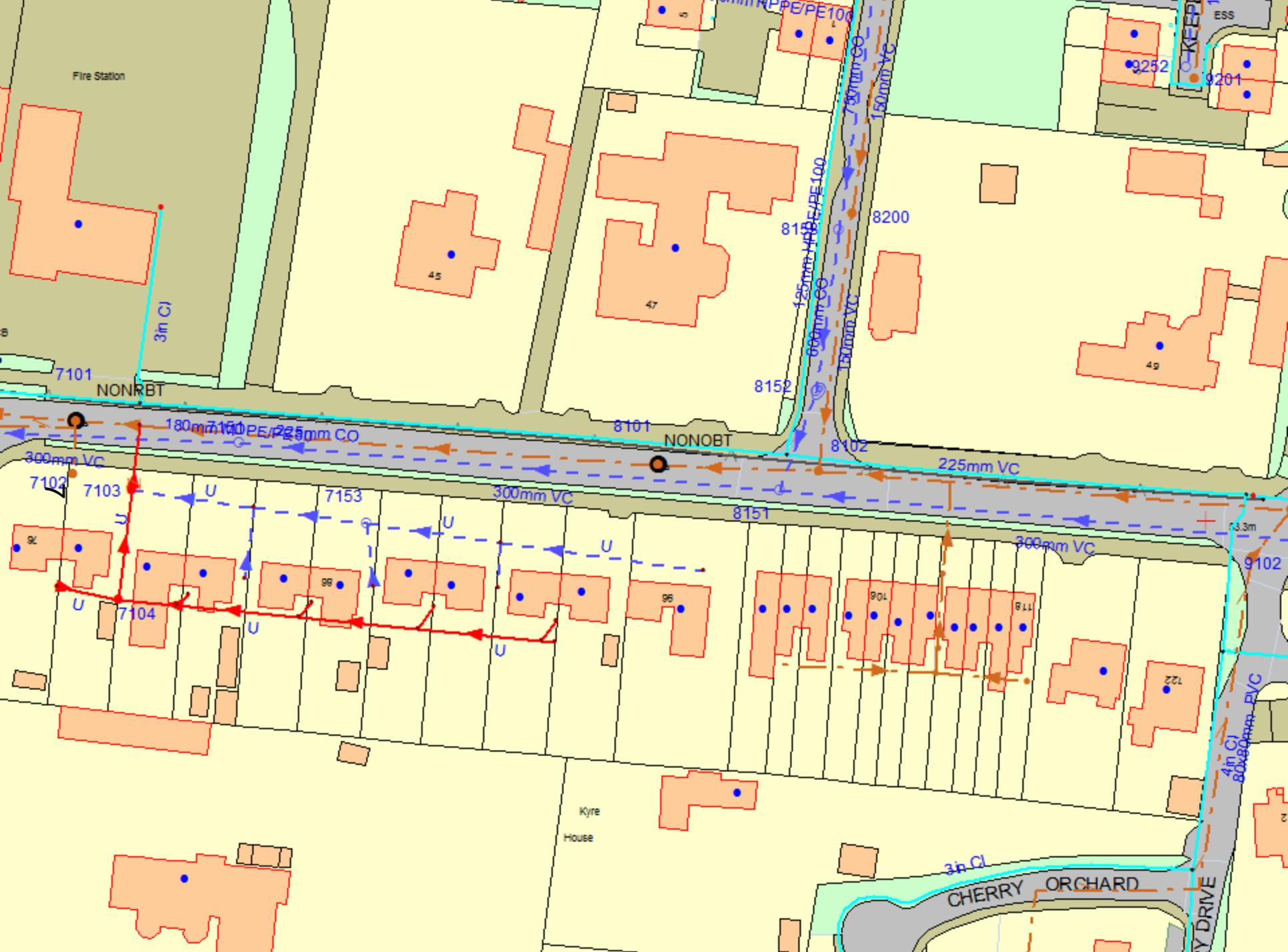
Pursuant to section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991, an owner or occupier of premises has an automatic right to connect to a public sewer.

AWS cannot refuse an application to connect (except on very limited grounds) neither can they impose the point at which a connection is made.

9 If a section 106 notice is served, AWS must make the connection within 21 days.

A section 106 application for the Etling View development was received by AWS in February 2015 and the communication made in March 2015.

AWS can only therefore protect against flooding issues caused as a result of too many connections and limit the flows to its network by means of a planning condition. Planning conditions are intended to align the timing of the connection to the network with the installation of any necessary drainage strategy.



Fire Station

3m CI

7101

NONRBT

180mm PE/PE 100
225mm CO

300mm VC

7102

7103

7153

300mm VC

8101

NONOBT

8152

8102

225mm VC

8200

45

47

49

150mm HDPE/PE 100
600mm CO

150mm PE/PE 100

9252

9201

93.3m

9102

7104

96

96

106

118

122

Kyre House

CHERRY ORCHARD

3m CI

4m CI
80-80mm PVC

Y DRIVE

Opportunities



The Growth Scheme is a holistic approach to reduce the flooding issues. It is going to be brought forward as one solution, not piecemeal solutions.

AWS will work with Breckland Council to understand and manage speculative growth as it comes forward until the Local Plan is approved (estimated spring 2017).

∞ AWS will work with the Lead Local Flood Authority to develop SuDs programmes and manage surface water connections.

AWS may link/transfer some of the existing flows in Dereham to the new sewer, not just new development.

AWS will issue communications to Breckland Council and residents as AWS' growth scheme is delivered, setting out the work as it is completed and timelines.



Recommendation



A commitment to establish a Partnership Working Group with Breckland Council, Lead Local Flood Authority, Highways Agency and the Environment Agency to look at surface water management in the Dereham area.

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