

**ST IVES AND THE HEMINGFORDS FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME
(Report by Head of Environment & Transport)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Environment Agency has now published the 'Preferred Option Consultation' in respect of the St Ives and the Hemingfords Flood Alleviation Scheme. The Council is invited to submit its comments on the proposal by 14 January 2005.
- 1.2 The proposal is substantially that reported to Cabinet at their meeting on 15 July 2004 at which time the justification for the measures and the proposed scheme were supported in principle by the Cabinet.
- 1.3 Local members discussed the various options with the Environment Agency at a meeting on 12 August 2004 and generally supported the proposal now being consulted on.

2. PROPOSED SCHEME

- 2.1 The scheme will provide protection against a 1 in 100 years flood event to substantial areas of St Ives, Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbots and Greenfields within Fenstanton parish. In total some 600 homes south of the river will be protected and a further 1,000 in St Ives.
- 2.2 The scheme comprises substantial improvements to almost the entire length of the existing flood bank south of the river. The bank will be extended at its eastern end to protect London Road, St Ives and Greenfields and its western end to protect properties in Hemingford Abbots. New flood walls will be provided where it is impractical to improve the existing bank.
- 2.3 The town of St Ives will be protected by a new flood wall along The Waits and the The Quay and embankments and other measures along Priory Road at the eastern end of the town.
- 2.4 A feature of such flood protection schemes is that as river flood levels rise flood water is prevented by flap valves, or other control devices, from escaping into drainage systems which, in normal circumstances, would discharge into the river. This would not usually be a problem but the particular circumstances of Hemingford Grey require a pumping installation to be provided to deal with surface water that accumulates within the defended area.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Environment Agency and their consultants have worked closely with the Council's planning and conservation services to develop a scheme that is sensitive to the natural environment, particularly south of the river, and the historic built environment north of the river. It is not anticipated that any significant issues remain that would prevent planning consent being granted where this is required.

- 3.2 An Environmental Impact assessment will be undertaken by the Environment Agency which will be developed in consultation with other key agencies and Cambridgeshire County Council's Bridge Engineer insofar as it relates to New Bridge (London Road causeway). Whilst the works themselves may temporarily disrupt some moorings there will be no lasting impact on navigation on the river.

4. PUMPING INSTALLATION


- 4.1 As stated in paragraph 2.4 the scheme includes a pumping station. This already has been the subject of discussion between the Environment Agency, District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Hemingford Grey Parish Council. All agree that some form of pumping installation is essential to the effectiveness of the scheme.
- 4.2 No agreement yet has been reached on the principle of sharing the cost of construction and future operation of the pumping station as proposed by the Environment Agency. Notwithstanding their stated need to secure contributions it is understood that the Environment Agency are proceeding with their applications for grant and funding approvals with the total cost of the pumping station included as part of the scheme.
- 4.3 There appears to be alternatives to a permanent pumping station, which currently do not have the support of either the Environment Agency or Hemingford Grey Parish Council. It is considered that the alternatives would give rise to a substantially lower capital and ongoing operational cost and could still provide a reliable solution.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) reaffirm their support for the proposed scheme subject to the determination of any unresolved planning or conservation matters;
 - b) authorise the Head of Environment and Transport to continue to seek to secure the provision of any pumping installation wholly through Environment Agency funding without any District Council financial input; and
 - c) authorise the Head of Environment and Transport to convey their views to the Environment Agency.

Background papers

St Ives and The Hemingfords Flood Alleviation Scheme –Environment Agency

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