

**SEWERAGE PROBLEMS, ST AUDREY LANE, ST IVES  
(Report by Chris Allen, Projects and Assets Manager)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A petition was presented to the February meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel by residents of the St Audrey Lane area of St Ives, highlighting the problems they experience with their sewerage system during times of storm. At these times, the sewers have overflowed and they loose toilet facilities.
- 1.2 This Council through its Projects and Assets Manager has written to Anglian Water about this matter.
- 1.3 The Committee requested that a further letter be written to Anglian Water and that a report be prepared for this committee explaining the sewerage system and the responsible parties involved in the drainage of this area.

**2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF AUTHORITIES**

- 2.1 There are several authorities who have responsibilities or powers regarding sewerage systems in the area:
- 2.2 Anglian Water are the Statutory Undertaker for the sewerage system. They own the foul, surface and combined public sewers. The definition of these are:
- Foul sewer – pipework taking discharges from internal drainage systems from the houses and industrial units. This is from toilets, sinks, baths, washing machines, etc.
  - Surface water sewer – pipework taking rainwater from roofs, drives, paths and roads. (See also Highway Drains)
  - Combined sewer – where there is only one system of pipes in the road, these will often take foul and surface water, and therefore are classed as combined. Recent developments would mostly have separate systems, whereas the older town areas mostly have combined systems.
  - Pumping Stations – these collect the sewage from catchments and pump it either direct to the sewage works (terminal pumping stations) or into another catchment (in-line pumping stations).
- 2.3 Cambridgeshire County Council Highways are responsible for the adopted roads and pavements, and the associated gulleys. In roads where the pipes only take highway drainage and no flows from properties, then the piped system could be adopted by the County as a Highway Drain.
- 2.4 Huntingdonshire District Council has no ownership of drains in the road. It did own private drains when it owned the Council Houses, but the responsibility went either to new owners or to Luminus when the properties were sold.

- 2.5 The District Council has power through Environmental Health legislation to serve notice on properties which have defective private or shared drainage to get repairs carried out.
- 2.6 The District Council has permissive powers to carry out repairs to village drains. These are drains which take mainly land drainage, and are usually the old piped ditches laid in highway verges. None of these are known in this area of St Ives. We also have permissive power to get ditches cleaned out if necessary.
- 2.7 The Environment Agency has permissive powers for the maintenance of the main rivers, such as the Gt Ouse and Parsons Drove to the east of St Ives. It would also be the leading authority in checking of pollution of watercourses from discharges from foul sewers into watercourses and taking action.

### **3. ST AUDREY LANE SEWERAGE SYSTEM**

- 3.1 The information given in this section is taken from the information available to the Council and should be taken as indicative of the situation, and not the full detail. To gain the full information would require a full investigation and full access to Anglian Water records.
- 3.2 The town centre of St Ives is mainly on a combined system and drains to a pumping station on Meadow Lane. This pumps the foul flow back into the Pig Lane catchment, with excess storm flows being pumped direct to the river near the lock.
- 3.3 The St Audrey Lane area of houses drains to the pumping station in Pig Lane adjacent to the school. It has a catchment of a large area of St Ives as shown on the attached plan in Annex A. It has a combination of separate and combined sewers depending on the age of the development. There is a surface water system which flows down St Audrey Lane, and out through Warners Park. This takes some of the flows from the roads to the north of St Audrey Lane.
- 3.4 The pumping station is a terminal pumping station which pumps direct to the sewage treatment works to the north of St Ives. It is the capacity of this plant which determines how quickly the water is removed from the system. It is known that the station has been uprated previously, but not what its present capacity is, especially with regards to the flows it can receive. The ability and cost to uprate these pumps is dependant on the size of the station structure and the capacity of the pumping main to take the flows. It is expected that the pumping main is running at its maximum capacity already. Laying a larger main would be expensive as the pipe is laid close to houses and through public open space.

### **4. CORRESPONDENCE WITH ANGLIAN WATER.**

- 4.1 Following discussion with Cllr Davies over problems with the sewers in the area, a letter was written to Anglian Water regarding the problems.
- 4.2 Anglian Water's responses have basically stated that:
- Although they are aware of problems in the area, they do not receive many complaints and not enough to justify upgrading the station
  - They have no plans to upgrade the pumping station

- They consider that the problem is related to severe weather, but that they cannot be held liable for illegal water entering their “foul” system.

## **5.0 COMMENTS AND ACTIONS ON ANGLIAN WATER REPLIES**

- 5.1 All residents experiencing problems should be encouraged to report these to Anglian Water every time they happen. For sewage discharges onto property, they would be advised to request a visit from a manager. Anglian Water seem to react to the number of complaints received in each area.
- 5.2 Anglian Water state that “illegal” connections have been made to their system. Certain lengths of sewer are combined sewers and so will have road and house drainage connected to them. If there are “illegal” connections, then Anglian Water could be taking action to have these removed. Anglian Water could be asked as to where these illegal connections are, and what action they intend to take on the matter. The District Council has no knowledge any illegal connections.
- 5.3 With extra houses being connected to this system, Anglian Water should have a programme for improvements to cater for these flows.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 Properties in the St Audrey Lane area of St Ives are experiencing problems form toilet loss and discharges of sewage during storm times.
- 6.2 Anglian Water state that the problem is caused by illegal connections, but have no proposals at present to tackle the situation.
- 6.3 No problems with the other Authorities responsibilities have been identified.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is

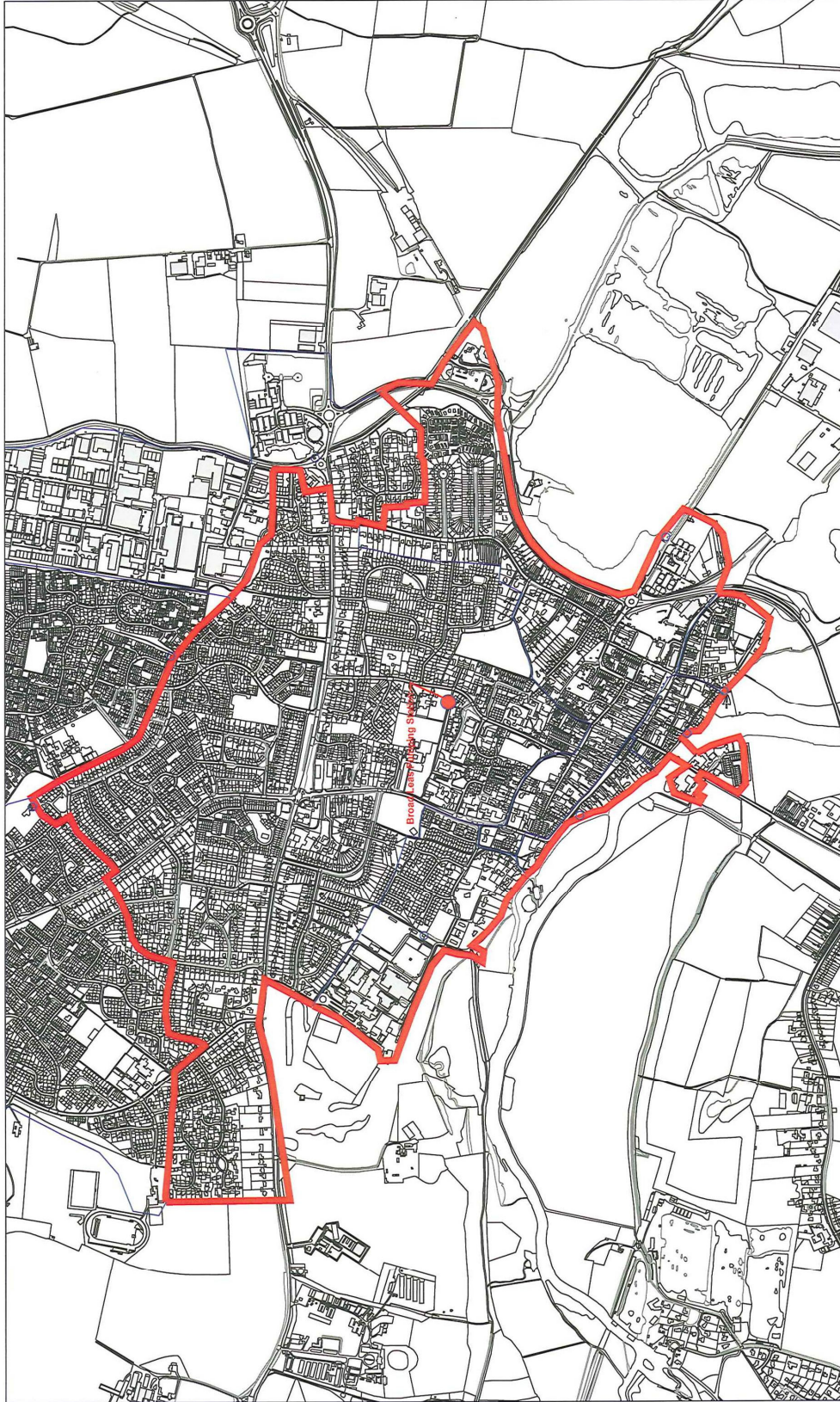
**Recommended that the panel consider this report and request that a representative of Anglian Water be invited to a future meeting of the panel to discuss the situation.**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Environmental Management Division files

**Contact Officer:** Chris Allen  
 **01480 388380**

# ANNEX A – SEWERAGE PLAN



JOB	Sewerage Problems St Audrey Lane St Ives	TITLE	Broad Leas Pumping Station - Catchment Area	<b>Huntingdonshire</b> district council		SCALE	NTS	DATE	Mar 08
				Chris Allen, B.Sc., CEng, Dip. RSA Project Manager Directorate of Operational Services		DRAWN BY		Ian Lack	
				PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST. MARY'S STREET HUNTINGDON, CAMBS. PE18 6TN TELEPHONE: HUNTINGDON (01480) 3863368		DRG. No.		Annex A	