

SELBY CORE STRATEGY EIP: SEWAGE PROBLEMS FAIRBURN

At the reopened EIP on 18th/19th April 2012, SDC tabled two emails from Yorkshire Water (YW), both dated 17th April. They were in response to my letter dated 16th April which was also submitted to the EIP, but because of the limited time available I agreed with the Inspector that I would respond in writing.

In my letter I highlighted a number of community concerns which had not been satisfactorily addressed in the CS. They relate to the existing sewer network being unable to cope with the current volume of effluent and that this problem would be exacerbated by the designation of Fairburn as a DSV. Unfortunately YW, in their reply, failed to address any of those concerns. Their email, however, confirmed that "Fairburn has been identified as having some drainage issues that will require attention" but claim that "any upgraded works and/or remediation can be dealt with at Planning stage". The local community reject this claim as being misleading and without foundation. Their reasons for this are that in the years since the sewage problems arose 5 developments of 11, 18, 25, 13 and 15 houses/flats have been completed and a further development of 12 was granted planning permission some 3 to 4 years ago but, to date, no start has been made. This means that on 6 occasions in the past the sewage problems could have been "addressed at the planning stage" but on each occasion nothing happened to alleviate the problem. No planning conditions were imposed requiring developers to "upgrade or undertake remedial works" at the planning or any other stage. The consequence of this neglect has added to the problem of sewage overflows and flooding on the public highway and in private gardens. This same failed and discredited policy is now proposed for inclusion in the CS. Neither body offer an explanation as to why they have not enforced the policy in the past nor do they indicate what changes will take place to ensure that in future it will be enforced. So far as I am aware they have not even identified the extent and cost of remedial works. The community see this policy as leading to unsustainable development and UNSOUND in its classification of Fairburn as a DSV.

Whilst the two emails fail to address the community's concerns, they do make two worrying points. The first was an admission that YW's original consultation response was wrong. They admit that their response was based on "a development of only 12 houses." They continued by saying "If that figure is incorrect please inform me". The 12 houses referred to obtained planning permission some 3 to 4 years ago as I have referred to previously. The consultation referred to a larger site of 20 houses which was clearly not considered by YW and their mistake has led to the creation of an UNSOUND policy by SDC. So far as I am aware SDC have not contacted YW as requested to inform them that their assumption was wrong.

In the second email, Stephanie Walden, without knowledge of the facts, appears to play down her colleague's mistake by claiming "there are no show stoppers to prevent Fairburn from being a DSV". The use of the words 'show stoppers' is an unfortunate choice of language and has caused offence to the

local community - bearing in mind that it has now been placed on a public website. Exactly what she means by the phrase is unclear but for the residents of Fairburn their show is stopped on a regular basis by raw sewage flowing over their roads and gardens. She must now explain how much more development can take place before, in her opinion, this foul nuisance becomes a show stopper. The comment made by Stephanie Walden about 'show stoppers' is entirely inappropriate. A judgement by a qualified sanitation engineer should have been sought and not a planner.

Yorkshire Water's giving of false and misleading information about the adequacy of the sewage network in Fairburn has led to SDC developing unsustainable policies. Also, by ignoring overwhelming evidence from the community during the consultation process on the matter of sewage problems together with years of complaints made by the Parish Council when they were consulted on planning matters, SDC are complicit in wrongly classifying Fairburn as a DSV. This, together with earlier misleading assumptions made about public transport and other community facilities, confirms that the classification is UNSOUND and Fairburn should not be a DSV.

Roy Wilson
10/05/12