

UPPER WITHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Mrs. Jane Froggatt
MA, BA (Hons), Dip HSM
Chief Executive



WITHAM HOUSE
J1 THE POINT
WEAVER ROAD
LINCOLN
LN6 3QN

Web: www.upperwitham-idb.gov.uk
Email (General): admin@upperwitham-idb.gov.uk
Email (Chief Executive): janefroggatt@upperwitham-idb.gov.uk
Email (Director of Operations): martinshilling@upperwitham-idb.gov.uk
Email (Engineer): alangardner@upperwitham-idb.gov.uk

Tel: (01522) 697123
Fax: (01522) 697064

Our ref:
Your ref:

09th January 2015

Ms. Angela Andrews,
Acting Chief Executive & Director of Resources,
City of Lincoln Council,
City Hall,
Beaumont Fee,
Lincoln.
LN1 1DF.

By email

Dear Angela,

Re: Western Growth Corridor, Lincoln.

Thank you for your letter dated 19th December on the subject of potential housing and commercial premises development in the Western Growth Corridor (WGC), Lincoln. My meeting with Andrew Taylor on 24th April was useful to understand both organisations' positions and I do appreciate your letter to subsequently update me on progress. I appreciate the information on how the Council is separating its duties as landowner and Local Planning Authority.

I trust it is helpful if I make a number of observations on issues arising from your letter, hopefully none of which will surprise you. Guy Hird, Engineering Services Officer to the 3 IDBs here (for many years UW's Assistant Engineer), has indeed replaced Ken Pratt on the WGC Technical Working Group and he will ensure that he represents these points with the aim of ensuring that, between the different FRM authorities, we assess accurately the flood and drainage risks and work together to see how these might be mitigated or reduced.

The key issue I need to highlight is in response to your third paragraph, relating to the work commissioned from RAB Consultants to establish whether development can occur on the WGC safely whilst also providing improvements to reduce flood risk. At this point, the Board's officers would have to state that it feels premature to say that "it has been established that development can occur safely and achieve that wider flood risk reduction benefit". I feel I should set out why officers here advise this:

The 'EA approved model' is a very useful tool, but it has its limitations and we and other FRM authorities like the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) are required to consider the risk of flooding from 'water from all sources'. The catchment modelling for WGC is, so far, confined to breach analysis at limited locations. So, it looks at scenarios from breach points on the River

Witham. It does not take into account the very complex nature of the existing pumped land drainage system which serves not only the WGC site but also urban Lincoln and a large rural area. These other (non main river) watercourses plus the risk of flooding from groundwater and surface water do also need to be considered before we can all say that 'development can occur safely'. In summary, a full flood risk assessment would consider all the risks to the site, namely:

- breach from high level gravity River Witham system.
- exceedence of the capacity of the high level gravity River Witham system.
- exceedence of the capacity of the existing pumped drainage system within the site.
- exceedence of the capacity of the existing pumped drainage system that can affect the site.
- failure of the existing pumped drainage system within the site.
- failure of the existing pumped drainage system that can affect the site.
- exceedence of the capacity of the River Trent, as this is at a higher level than the River Witham and is tidal (flood levels over 1.2m higher).
- a multiple scenarios model – e.g. in a major event when IDB pumping stations are beaten, the River Witham is in full flow, electricity power cut massively reduces pump capacity and a breach occurs.

You mention in your letter the potential improvements (e.g. embanking) which could be undertaken along the Board maintained Coulson Road Drain. I am advised that the modelling work to date has been 'high level only' (a desk top exercise) and has not yet considered the practicality and cost of any embankment works or the effect on the existing drainage system and potential impact on how it functions. The issues that need to yet be worked through include:

- the proposed line of the embankment, as this affects numerous roads (including two crossings of Tritton Road).
- assessment of how the proposed line of embankment would impact upon access to existing properties and businesses.
- whether the line of embankment proposed impedes access to the Board's watercourses and assets.
- assessment of the impact of an embankment on the Board's ability to maintain watercourses (e.g. plant access).
- what additional structures and controls may be required to enable the surface water system to work.

On your fourth paragraph, suggesting that the Technical Working Group now sets the key parameters and scope of a Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy, I am in full agreement and this would then help us to jointly agree where 'the line on the plan can be drawn'. However, moving to commission a master plan from this, as set out in paragraph 5, should really follow on from the points I outlined above being first worked through jointly and resolved.

I would like to assure you that, whilst the Board's position is indeed to in principle oppose development in a flood plain, the Board has discussed the potential WGC development over a considerable period of time and is committed to officers participating fully and constructively to advise you as the LPA (and LCC as the LLFA) on how best to quantify flood and drainage risks on the WGC site and how best to reduce those risks.

Although there is nothing new in the content of this letter, I do appreciate that it may be useful if the detail could be talked through and presented informally between our respective officers. I have suggested to Guy Hird that you and I, plus a couple of each of our staff, might find it useful to meet here informally and have a presentation and Q&A session. If you feel this would be useful, we can set this up shortly.

Whilst this is a challenging and complex issue, the Board's staff will continue to work co-operatively to assist the Council with this WGC project.

Yours Sincerely,

Jane Froggatt,
Chief Executive.

Ccfi: Mr. Mark Welsh, Flood Risk and Development Manager, Lincolnshire County Council.