

Barn Elms Planning Application WW010001
West Putney Storm Relief Combined Sewer Overflow Alternative Site
Reference Numbers: LR16793 and 10017188
Unity Harvey, [REDACTED]
Notes for spoken appeal on 11th November 2013 written on 26th October 2013

Introduction

I believe that there should not be a main or secondary shaft on Barn Elms for the proposed sewage tunnel. I believe that the sewage concerned should be directed in its pipe along Beverley Brook and under Putney Embankment through to the proposed CSO at Putney Bridge.

In 930 A.D. King Athelstan gave Berne Elms to the Canons of St Pauls. Since then it has been used for the Manor house of Barnes and in Elizabethan times it was the home of Frances Walsingham. Samuel Pepys mentioned the picnic area here by the Thames. Later when the first hot air balloon flew from here the Ranelagh Club owned the site. Barn Elms has been used for sports since 1956.

The amount of sewage going into the West Putney Storm Relief Combined Sewer Overflow is very small but significant. At present the content comes from Putney into Barn Elms in a 1.5 metre diameter pipe *over* Beverley Brook and then goes *back* into the same Beverley Brook at Ashlone Wharf on the Thames.

- The flow rate is up to 1 cubic metre per second, for 113 hours duration, the total volume is 34,000m³ and the site discharges only 26 times in a typical year. (Section 48 Project description and information report – Summer 2012. Page 46 Section 5.3.42). I have been told that the following figures are not actual figures, but model ones taken from Thames Water computers.
- I believe that what arrives in the pipe does not need to go to Barn Elms at all and can surely continue in a downstream direction still in its pipe to the proposed CSO at Putney Bridge.
- There is no need for extra sewage capacity here for the future as The River Thames, Common lands, Sports Playing facilities and the London Wetland Centre surround the area.
- The system would be safer, probably cheaper and Barn Elms as a whole would be left unscathed. There would be no unnecessary disturbance to such a large surrounding area.

Flood risk, Climate Change, River and Foreshore change.

The sewer project is designed to manage the sewage from London efficiently for the next one hundred years. The east coast of England is sinking and with climate change there will be sea level rises and more extreme weather conditions bringing more flooding. The Environment Agency has plans to manage projected floodwater from the River Thames for the next one hundred years but I believe that the two plans do not lie easily and efficiently together. To contain the floodwater, I believe that the Environment Agency has plans to build a new Thames Barrier and raise the banks of the River Thames by up to one metre. They will also need water-holding bays. Until this work is completed the land on Barn Elms and on Putney Embankment is at risk of flooding.

- At Barn Elms, the land was flooded to a depth of 2 metres here in 1966 and despite the present barrier and raised bank being constructed since then, the land is once more at

risk. Our house insurance premiums reflect this. The proposed CSO building has doors and will not be flood-proof so the system will not work during a flood when it is most needed. Moreover, I contacted the Environment Agency to see if they had any plans to use Barn Elms as a water holding bay. Jo ByWater sent me an e-mail on 18th January 2013 indicating that they had no plans to use it as a water holding bay for Beverley Brook, not mentioning the River Thames. She added that if they needed to use it later, they would contact the then owners of the land. If a CSO is built they will not be able to use it unless a big defensive wall is built around any proposed CSO building.

- The present the pipe in Putney going over Beverley Brook has no manholes. I have been told by a Thames Water Representative at a public consultation meeting that the proposed pipe may not need manholes along the Putney Embankment but also that it might, in which case it too would be flooded. When the planned Environment Agency high wall is built the pipe would be secure even with manholes. I can understand why any one in the boat houses and dwellings along the Embankment will wish to defer the building of the wall for as long as possible but if the predictions are correct and they do not accept it, I believe that they will need to rebuild their properties on stilts.

Thames Water representatives have also told me that it is: -

- impossible to tunnel under the flats in Putney to reach the Embankment but it must be possible to take the sewage there somehow as Leader Gardens on the Embankment was one of the sites considered for the main shaft in the first place. Incidentally Leader Gardens was never considered for a secondary shaft. If really necessary, the pipe could go along side Beverley Brook for the short distance required, and
- there may be a need for the last stretch of the pipe to Putney Bridge to be in a tunnel to maintain the gradient of the pipe for an efficient flow. This is not impossible.

If the sewage is piped to Putney it would be secure in the long term and Barn Elms could still be used as a water-holding bay if necessary.

Biodiversity, the Biological Environment and Ecology

Barn Elms is adjacent to the London Wetland Centre (LWC), a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Being surrounded by buildings on the west, north and easterly sides, the only access for wildlife is via the south through the Thames Estuary or Barn Elms, the Commons and Richmond Park. If these proposals go ahead, there will be noise and disturbance in the day and at night too. For some of the time, there will be floodlighting. The proposed access route to a CSO on Barn Elms, although being preferable to more direct one via Beverley Brook, is on three sides of a square via Rocks Lane, Queen Elizabeth Walk and along side the River Thames. The wild life in the trees and hedges along Rocks Lane and Queen Elizabeth Walk would be vulnerable to more noise and disturbance. The proposed main depot is across the wildlife corridor and the new road route goes close to the LWC Sheltered Lagoon and Bat House. There are eight species of bats here. Bats from Richmond Park also commute here daily to feed and there is much research to show how bats, a protected species, are adversely affected by flood lighting. The lights may also adversely affect the Bitterns, also a protected species. The road would then go in a southerly direction along the trees where there has been no disturbance before.

Barn Elms is a nature reserve in its own right, a London Borough of Richmond Site of Borough Importance. Similarly, Beverley Brook is a key wildlife corridor and habitat, and also a Borough Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. So too is the fishing lake which is well stocked with

fish by the anglers. Many vertebrates and invertebrate creatures can be found - wood mice, damselflies, dragonflies, moths and butterflies. Purple Hairstreaks can be found in the oak trees. The bats include Pipistrelles, Noctules and Daubenton's as well as U.K. rare species Leisler's Bat and *Nattingius' Pipistrelle*.

Recently I have seen many birds as follows. (Birds in italics are on endangered species lists in The Population Status of Birds in the UK 2002 -2007)

Cormorant	Green finch	Wren
Swift	Mallard	Canada Goose
Grey heron	Coot	<i>Mistle thrush</i>
Moorhen	<i>Great spotted woodpecker</i>	Long tailed tit
Green Woodpecker	Wood Pigeon	Pied wagtail
Ring necked parakeet	<i>Song thrush</i>	Carrion Crow
Blackbird	Blue Tit	<i>Swallow</i>
Great Tit	<i>Chaffinch</i>	Little owl
Robin	Jay	<i>Redwing</i>
Magpie	Common gull	Gold finch
Black headed gull	Tufted duck	Yellow wagtail
Hobby	Common Tern	Fieldfare
<i>Mute swan</i>	<i>Kingfisher</i>	Coal tit
<i>House martin</i>	Bullfinch	Sparrow hawk
<i>Sand martin</i>	<i>Kestrel</i>	Blackcap
<i>Gold crest</i>	<i>Starling</i>	<i>Dunnock</i>

In the past I have seen Tawny owls, sparrows, chaffinches, a nuthatch and a tree creeper. A spotted flycatcher was once seen.

If the sewage were piped along the short route along Beverley Brook and under Putney Embankment, there would be a very small disturbance to the wildlife there in comparison to the large-scale disturbance on the proposed longer route.

Air Quality and Emissions.

Thames Water has stated that there will be no emissions from the proposed CSO at Barn Elms during construction. There will be filters for the air from the main tunnel but on rare occasions when the tunnel gets full they might have to turn the filters off to protect them from damage. (Thames Water leaflet 'Odour' Page 5) I have been told by a Thames Water representative at a public meeting that *in the long term* the tunnel will almost certainly become very full most of the time so then there will be a permanent foul smell. This would be unpleasant for the neighbouring residents in Putney and for the players on the sports field who go to enjoy fresh air as well as play sport.

If there is no main or secondary shaft here and the sewage is piped to the Putney CSO as suggested, there would not be any smell at all.

The journey by road is much longer so the total exhaust fumes from the large vehicles would be greater.

Noise and Disturbance including Travel, Traffic and Transportation

The distance from the junction of Mill Hill with Rocks Lane to the proposed CSO site on Barn Elms is approximately 2.5 times the distance of that from Beverley Brook at Ashlone Wharf to the propose CSO at Putney Bridge meaning that the distance the necessary vehicles travel will be significantly greater.

There are already frequent daily traffic jams on Rocks Lane where the houses could be affected by vibrations caused by the increase in heavy vehicles. Queen Elizabeth Walk (QEW), where the houses are also close to the road, can be jammed too. Sometimes it can take an hour to get from my home at No 3 QEW to the junction at Rocks Lane particularly at weekends when the sports fields are very busy. There will inevitably be more noise and disturbance to the residents. Thames Water plan to create a new road junction to enable their lorries to negotiate the corner more easily; it has not been found possible to speed up the vehicle exit.

The road is very narrow outside Nos. 3, 5 and 7 QEW so priority is given to traffic going one way. Pedestrians, cyclists, cars and lorries use this road. There are blind entrances here making it very dangerous. The Holly Blue butterflies will lose their breeding site if the road is made wider.

The proposed new road on Barn Elms goes around the edge to make it safer for the people using the Sports Centre. If there are only a few vehicles, they could go through the Centre on the present road as they did when Beverley Brook at Ashlone Wharf was upgraded. The trees in the avenue on the present road are not the magnificent old Elms that used to be there, but recently planted lime trees that could be trimmed as necessary. The road would need upgrading but everyone could use it afterwards. The proposed new road by QEW *would lead to nowhere afterwards* and, if it has to be built during the construction period, I feel it should go back completely to grassland afterwards.

There will already be noise and disturbance along Putney Embankment when the proposed Putney CSO is constructed. It must be possible to use Putney Embankment even if it need be partially closed at times. The CSO will need to be made a little larger to take the sewage from the West Putney Storm Relief Combined Sewer Overflow so there would be significant increased impacts but I feel that a little more disturbance there, where there is to be disturbance already, is preferable to disturbing greater numbers of people and blighting large areas on and around Barn Elms.

I believe that moving the material from a tunnel, main or secondary shaft is better done by river than by road as proposed, but the River Thames at Barn Elms is very special for rowing and small dingy sailing. There are many boathouses here including one from where school children are taught. The Oxford and Cambridge University Boat race starts here. The requisite riverboats and barges and their moorings here at Barn Elms would seriously affect these activities. Using the site downstream at Putney Bridge where there is already planned mooring would not be so harmful. There would be less spoil to remove with the piped route along the Embankment too.

Landscape and Visual Aspects

Barn Elms is classified as Metropolitan Land and there is a presumption of not building upon it. The proposal for the main shaft building on the currently rejected proposal was very large and intrusive. The proposed fireproof building for the secondary shaft is 4-6 metres high and described as a kiosk. (Section 48 Project description and information report - Summer 2012,

Page 4). It is to house the machinery and the ventilation shaft. Making it flood proof is not mentioned. I doubt too that it is vandal proof. Because of the remote location, the rubble and gravel walls and roof could easily become a climbing frame for local teenagers who sometimes play in that area when the Sports Centre is closed.

This building would still dominate the view of the players from most parts of the Sports Centre. The eye is naturally drawn to the trees at the apex of the triangle to the south and the presence of any type of building here would permanently spoil the much loved country feel of the area.

Although I believe that the sewage pipe comes from as far as the swimming pool in Dryburg Road in Putney, it is still a small amount of sewage. No sewage from Barnes goes into the pipe. The uncontaminated surface rainwater on Putney Common and Barn Elms flows naturally into the ground and towards catchment area of Beverley Brook. If the small amount of sewage were piped to the proposed Putney CSO, then no building would be needed on Barn Elms to mar the view.

Socio-economic Effects

I do believe that the major social effect will be the disruption of recreational and sporting activities during construction. The loss of car parking spaces and the knocking down of the pavilion while one is constructed will, I fear, mean that fewer people will be able to use the site. There might be difficulties arising from the temporary increased traffic and air pollution on the roads.

I believe that it would be much less costly to pipe the sewage to the Putney CSO despite the small length of tunneling which may be required. There would be no need to build a new road junction at the junction of Rocks Lane and Queen Elizabeth Walk, no need to build a long new road around Barn Elms and no need to construct three buildings, the CSO itself, the replacement and new permanent pavilions. There will only be a need to enlarge the planned CSO at Putney.

Mitigation

I would prefer that the sewage be directed to the Putney CSO so that no mitigation would be available but if it is not then I believe that the best site for a pavilion on the Wandsworth Sports Centre is where it is at present along Queen Elizabeth Walk. It is near the entrance and has a sunny aspect. It is possible to see more of the Centre from there than from anywhere else on site.

I believe it would be to the advantage of all users and wildlife to maintain the existing road across the Centre to the boathouse, which will be used in the future by everyone, not build one around the north east corner as planned.

One thing could really help the area but it is really expensive. I have lived on Barn Elms for nearly fifty years and know the area intimately. No person or organization can be found to provide the money to do it. It is to dig out the fishing lake in the heart of Barn Elms. The lake is in the Borough of Richmond not Wandsworth. It is silted up and, to keep the fish from dying and to enable them to escape the preying birds, the water level is raised by opening the pipe to the River Thames for most of the year especially during high tides. This water breaks the flood barrier. The lake water level needs to be almost at ground level already. Thames Water has the machinery to dig it out, there is direct access via Queen Elizabeth Walk and Thames Water has the wherewithal to dispose of the silt. I cannot envisage another such opportunity. If the lake has to be filled in it would be to the detriment of the wildlife and therefore everyone around,

including future generations. If I should lose my appeal to have the sewage piped to the Putney CSO and no building at all on Barn Elms then I sincerely hope that, in mitigation, there could be such seemingly unattainable cooperation so that the fishing lake can be rid of its silt?

Conclusion

If my suggestion of having no CSO of any kind on Barn Elms and directing the sewage from the West Putney Storm Relief Combined Sewer Overflow to the CSO at Putney Bridge instead is accepted, then I believe that: -

1. it will be more financially viable for Thames Water;
2. it will be better for the residents of Putney and Wandsworth because in exchange for a slightly larger CSO at Putney Bridge: - a. their sewage will be disposed of in a secure way and b. their lovely Sports Centre will not be spoiled in the short term by the damaging effects of heavy lorries and floodlights and in the long term by possible noxious fumes;
3. it will be better for the wild life and ecosystem of the whole of Barn Elms as it will remain undisturbed;
4. it will be better for the people of Barnes and the local, national and international visitors to Barn Elms because the unique habitat of the area will be maintained and
5. we will know that we have done our best to maintain and create a sustainable environment for future generations.