

Resident submission - DRAFT COSULTATION ON LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – REGULATION 18.

10th March 2024.

From: Anna Welch [REDACTED]

Dickens Close and the immediate area has been penalised too heavily in recent years, and the plan (SKPR-71), to build 55 houses in the farming field to the North of Dickens Close should be abandoned. I ask that the Council and all involved committees consider the following points in coming to that conclusion:

Agricultural Land:

The proposed site is Grade 2 (the highest graded) agricultural land – the best and most versatile land for agricultural use. It has been used for farming over many generations. Development has repeatedly been rejected on this field and should always be. Nothing in the Council's remit has changed that.

If there were to be any change from the long-term farming use of the field in question it should, without doubt, remain as green, open space, a rich natural habitat, to go some way towards compensating for the other construction and quarrying damage on all sides.

Flood Risk:

Flooding from rivers was previously a limited problem within our area, with some additional risk from surface water run-off. That has very definitely changed in recent years and will get worse. Whilst this proposed site may have been previously graded as lower flood risk, that clearly needs reviewing following the disastrous flooding to this area in recent years, particularly through Winter 2023/24, culminating with Storm Henk. I ask that the Council suspends all plans until that flood risk has been reviewed and protections improved, before universally accepted climate change brings repeats of the 2023/24 disastrous flooding to this area.

The site forms a priority habitat, with paths and water ways, and a neighbouring equestrian centre. A key consideration is potential disturbance to water courses and strain on existing drains – surface water run offs construction effects and noise impacts to wildlife and habitats.

In addition to flood risk from existing and planned quarries, (see point below), Dickens Close is already surrounded by dangerous flood areas on all sides, as proven in 2023/2024. Local rivers Welland and Glen repeatedly burst their banks, breaching our local flood defences. Waterside, Kate's Bridge, Stowe Road / King Street junction, Greatford, Tallington, were all closed for several weeks due to severe flooding, as covered by the National news-media because it was so severe. Two months on, many residents still cannot return to their homes, and businesses remain closed, some never to return. The Met Office's flood warnings for our area were upgraded to Severe, which indicates threat to life. Those areas literally surround Dickens Close, making it totally wrong to consider further development until existing homes, roads and businesses are fully protected.

The lakes directly opposite Dickens Close have been within inches of flooding Dickens Close throughout Winter, including during the last 8 weeks. It is universally accepted that the coming years will bring worsening floods. The immediate area of Dickens Close simply cannot sustain any more development. Displacement and an already high water-table will simply flood the houses of Dickens Close as well as any new development. By making this point now, formally, to the Council and Committees, they are asked to take responsibility for that eventuality. It is not put forward here as a

possibility, but rather as a certainty. To knowingly push ahead to meet housing targets in an inappropriate village location, thus putting existing homes at serious risk, should be subject to future criminal proceedings.

Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity, Sustainability and Conservation related issues;

This site includes a Green Infrastructure Area. Policy EN3 has been strengthened and amended, but is not included for concerned parties to view. Why is that, please?

There is an accepted, fundamental need to protect and enhance local wildlife, its habitats and natural features. The Council's own reports note that sustainability themes around which constraints exist to this site include biodiversity, historic environment and soil.

The site assessment sheet for this site is not included within the Sustainability Appraisal document, prepared by AECOM Limited in London. There is a technical annex attached to the regulation 18 of the draft local plan. But this is, in some respects as noted below, misleading and inaccurate;

- There is additional deciduous woodland and a lake habitat for birds and wildlife, directly opposite Dickens Close (within 100 feet) – neither are mentioned. Already partially destroyed.
- It mentions that the proposed site, within 'Lang4' is located in Fens landscape, which is misleading. Everything west of the A15 it is certainly not Fens landscape.
- The proposed site is Grade 2 agricultural land – the best and most versatile land for agricultural use. This has always been a key reason for dismissing this site as a potential site for housing. And that has not changed.
- The flood zone status classification of the proposed site urgently needs re-assessing following the serious flooding to the area in Winter 2023/24.
- Natural England / DEFRA designate the Lang4 area as within the Impact Risk Zone, attached to the Langtoft gravel pits – SSSI (and SAC/SPA). They state that All Planning Applications in the risk zone will impact the Site of Special Scientific Interest and it is specifically "not suitable for any residential developments of 50+ homes". These pits were classified in 2011 as being in "unfavourable, declining condition", and are very close to the proposed site. It is not acceptable to build more homes in this IRZ area whilst the spread of that decline has not been assessed since 2011. Natural England note that development would present a range of risks of direct impact, particularly to farmland/green space / semi natural habitat. They specifically mention also that Great Crested Newts, bats and birds live, roost, forage and breed in the fields in question. As the proposed site is at the edge of existing settlement, the damage to those species would include light pollution, loss/fragmentation of green space, and loss/disturbance of functional habitat.
- There are also various listed buildings in the immediate area.

Stowe Road / Dickens Close is adjacent to the nature reserve area of the lakes so wildlife is already at risk from increased traffic into and out of the village. Families of Geese, and other birds and animals of significance, are regularly run over, particularly in Spring and Summer. The village put up homemade traffic signs last year in an effort to reduce this, but it is an annual problem, and would increase with additional housing. Migrating birds fly daily to the lakes opposite Dickens Close, and settle in and around the proposed site field. Throughout Spring and Summer, hundreds or even thousands of these birds spend time in the field in question every day. Village Social Media pages are full of beautiful photos and videos of the wildlife that use this site daily.

A fully mature line of screening trees has already been completely removed within 20 feet of the entrance to Dickens Close, totally changing our outlook. This is a totally unacceptable act of sabotage to the area which should have been protected. (Photos attached before and after).

The required Precautionary Principal has not been applied to this proposed site. There are, in fact, fundamental Habitats Regulations Assessment issues. It is true to say that the development would lead directly to a significant adverse effect on the site and its surroundings. The absence of fine detail in the Plan revision confirms that neither the Plan nor the HRA process has established otherwise. Conservation objectives, characteristics, likely impacts are not considered. The only way to counteract those, as is required in an HRA, is to remove this site from the plan. The essential question around likelihood of significant effect, cannot even be taken seriously as it is required to be considered in conjunction with other relevant projects which in this case have been totally ignored and missed off the Plan and its maps. The previously green area directly opposite Dickens Close, now covered with 41 new homes, and less than 50 metres feet from this proposed site, is still represented on the Local Plan and the Regulation 18 revision, as open green space with a conservation / green policy and a biodiversity plan.

The SPA Water Pipeline:

Dickens Close is also impacted by the failure of the Anglian Water's SPA water pipeline which has ruined the landscape adjacent to Dicken Close and has caused serious and long term surface water flooding over a period of many months. It remains an unfinished eyesore, with flood water just a few feet from Dickens Close houses. (Photos attached taken 23rd February 2024 looking north east at Dickens Close, from adjacent in Stowe Road. Deep standing water remains just a few feet from the homes even seven weeks after Storm Henk).

Anglian Water has failed to plan and execute the project, flood risk areas were not appropriately scheduled and drained, thus supporting the point that the historic classification of low-risk of flooding, no longer applies to this site. The initial overall budget of £400million is now forecast to be three times that, with no prospect of completion in sight. Anglian Water's senior management are in crisis as this project is now being compared to the disastrous HS2 project. Once again, Dickens Close residents are seriously impacted.

As well as the damage to the landscape and farming fields, a fully mature line of screening trees has been completely removed within 20 feet of the entrance to Dickens Close. This is a totally unacceptable act of sabotage to the area which should have been protected. It is the role of our elected Council officials to support and protect Dickens Close residents from further impact from this disastrous project, not to add to the rural damage around our homes with a housing development.

Local wastewater treatment works (also Anglian Water) are at full capacity and do not have capacity to accept further wastewater from this proposed new development. Anglian Water senior management are currently focussed on the SPA project's massive overspend and the damage it continues to cause to areas such as Dickens Close. Investment into wastewater works is not going to be prioritised. I request that the Council investigate and publish findings around the plans for both the SPA Project completion and wastewater investment. I bring this to the Council's attention so that it cannot be denied at a future date.

Quarries in the immediate area:

Existing and planned quarry activity around the Dickens Close area has a strong and dangerous impact on the ground's water table, affecting flow direction, levels and increasing hydraulic gradient. Also on ground water chemistry. Engineering studies agree that these changes in ground water levels are significant over a distance of 2,500 metres around the pits, and still of consideration beyond that distance. Quarries at both ends of King Street and in Baston, surround Dickens Close and will further increase geological damage, flooding risk, noise, works traffic on totally inappropriate roads, and in a flat landscape which will increase visual and noise pollution and air quality. It is universally accepted that the already high water table in this area will be an increased risk to residents as climate change leads to more flooding as years go by.

The Council's own commissioned reports note that the Lang4 area is in the Impact Risk Zone, attached to the Langtoft gravel pits (SSSI) affecting all planning applications and certainly not suitable for any residential developments of 50+ homes. These pits are classified as being in unfavourable, declining condition, and are very close to the proposed site. It is not acceptable to build more homes in this area whilst the spread of that decline has not been assessed since 2011. I request that the Council now leads and supports an investigation into that state of decline and links to the Dickens Close area.

Social Challenges / Housing Needs;

The 41 newly built homes directly opposite Dickens Close (Teal Way), are not even included in the new Plan map. That controversial development which has already led to an open village meeting with SKDC (who requested Police attendance), and an overwhelming call for a Public Enquiry, should mean that further development to Dickens Close in the current Plan Period is inappropriate. The Teal Way new development should meet and exceed the requirement of the Dickens Close area in terms of new housing, and it should be accurately recorded in the new Plan. Leaving it off the plan suggests that there has not already been substantial construction and new housing in the immediate area of Dickens Close. It is reasonable to question whether that false impression is given by mistake or deliberately?

I note here also that other than the homes allocated to refugees, the majority of remaining homes on this development remain unsold. Even if one allows for smaller detail like the housing specifications, it is apparent that there is no clear demand for additional housing at this end of Langtoft village because the site is unsuitable. Despite being considered to be a 'large village', only the East side of the village is appropriate for consideration.

Dickens Close was, and still is, seriously and detrimentally impacted by the development of the 41 new Teal Close houses over a period of years – delays, noise, mess, air quality, environmental damage to open green space as well as lake area and its natural habitat, existing residents' right to enjoy the peaceful amenity of their rural environment. Delays were enormous over years, not months. A full row of mature screening trees were removed from directly opposite Dickens Close (see photos), and a significant area of green habitat has been cleared and destroyed. Whether that was by the developer or by Anglian Water, it was totally unacceptable and directly contravenes the biodiversity and green infrastructure policies. It has completely changed the outlook of Dickens Close. Still today there is ongoing and extensive disruption, including repeated closure of and works in Stowe Road, adjacent to Dickens Close. It is still causing disruption and difficulty for Langtoft residents. There is regular disruption to already stretched services since the new homes were built – power, water, phones, broadband, waste.

There are no services and inappropriate roads at the Dickens Close end of Langtoft, unlike at the other end of this village, which is 1 mile+ distant. The growing elderly population in this area cannot be suitably housed on this proposed site as it cannot meet their housing, health or care needs. It is too far from transport links.

Existing Residents' Rights;

Construction in this farming field would seriously impact local residents' right to enjoy the peaceful amenity of their open green space environment. Currently homes in four residential roads - Dickens Close, Westfields, Barleyfields and Wheatfields, are all designed with their main rooms looking out over the field in question. All those homes and gardens would become overlooked, hence completely altering their value and USP – the reason that they were bought. As well as the visual impact, outlook and becoming overlooked, the proposed new estate would totally change the noise and pollution levels for all existing residents who have the right to continuity of the environment that they purchased at a premium with their homes. Both during the construction period and afterwards, the flat, open landscape will mean that a much wider residential area is affected by all the polluting aspects of the build over a significant period of time. Likely years. It is an unsuitable site.

Access Road and other surrounding roads:

The proposed access between Dickens Close numbers 6 and 7 is far too narrow and is totally inappropriate for both construction traffic and for vehicles associated with 55 new houses. It is directly adjacent to and borders the two properties with no buffer area. Numbers 6 and 7 own the fencing which directly surrounds this area. Numbers 6 and 7 have had continuous use of the small, grassed area since 2006, for parking, turning, socialising, as an extension of their gardens and for dog exercise. It has been consistently maintained by Numbers 6 and 7 since 2006 at their own cost and for their own use. It has never once in that 18-year period been used or maintained by the owners. It is therefore subject to adoption by those residents under the terms of the law of Adverse Possession. My family has lived at Number 6 since it was built in 2006 and I can confirm that the land in question has been used and maintained continuously, openly and without the owner's permission for 18 years, by my family and by the current and previous owners of Number 7.

The driveways of Dickens Close houses numbered 1,2,3,5,6, and 7 all open directly onto the proposed access road, mostly on blind corners, blind bends, and very narrow points. Most residents have to reverse out of their driveways. Dickens Close would change from a quiet cul-de-sac into a busy main-access road, with no additional space available for these already cramped driveways. The number of houses built in Dickens Close in 2006 was higher than the number that would have allowed for any future increase in usage of Dickens Close. They simply cannot have it both ways. The owners and developer made more money in 2006 by squeezing in more homes but are now left with a cul-de-sac which is too dangerous for any change of use. The Council's commissioned reports note that there are high levels of car dependency and outward commuting in this area. The proposed development would produce very significant amounts of traffic, which Dickens Close is not designed or equipped to safely accommodate.

The junction of Dickens Close and Stowe Road is not adequate to support any additional traffic. Driveway exits are too close to that junction to be legally considered safe, hence traffic turning in will be blind to vehicles reversing out of Dickens Close driveways from numbers 1,2,3,5,6 and 7. There is

no doubt that accidents would be caused. In addition, the 41 new homes at Teal Way have already increased traffic flow into Stowe Road, directly opposite Dickens Close.

Stowe Road and King Street are both at maximum capacity, and are the subject of frequent complaints around width, quality of highway, poorly defined boundaries, lack of lighting, drainage, potholes, lack of safety, lack of maintenance. SKDC/LCC's own policy around road gritting supports my point that SKDC do not even consider the roads around Dickens Close to be significant enough to grit when icy. SKDC/LCC gritting only covers the A15 end of Langtoft. Stowe Road, King Street and Dickens Close are not of sufficient importance or quality to warrant winter safety care. Gritting extends from the A15 down West End but stops at Scott's Close. That is therefore the only area of the village that the Council consider to be relevant to sustain current traffic or growth.

There are no services at the Dickens Close end of the village. All transport and services are at the A15 end of the 1 mile long village. There are therefore better suited sites at the A15 end of the village, where access could be directly onto the A15 via a new and safe junction, and not through the full length of the village where existing side roads and junctions are already inadequate for their current usage. Similar housing developments with direct access onto the A15 exist in Baston for example.

Stowe Road / Dickens Close is adjacent to the nature reserve area of the lakes so wildlife is already at risk from increased traffic into and out of the village. (see conservation point).

The A15 / Langtoft crossroads is a well-known hazard junction which is already long overdue for improvement before adding any further pressure. It simply cannot handle any additional traffic through the length of the village. Hordes of school children cross there for school busses every morning and afternoon. Already the traffic queues at several times of the day make the village shop area dangerous for pedestrians and for drivers. Vehicle collisions with casualties are common and are increasing. During the recent flooding and road closures on all sides of the Dickens Close area, the queues of traffic through the village to the A15 junction tailed back for one mile, right through the west village. Future housing development should be at the A15 end of the village where all the Services are located, and must include improvement of this junction or provision of a new junction. The heavy dependence on cars in our area and the designation of Langtoft as a larger village simply does not tally with the completely inadequate roads and junctions.

Other Infrastructure Points:

In addition to roads and transport, the other infrastructure inadequacies serving Langtoft are also factors in this decision. The small, village school has recently struggled to accommodate the non English speaking refugee intake from 12 of the new homes opposite Dickens Close. All public forums are overwhelmed daily by numerous residents who cannot get a GP appointment, either in Market Deeping or in Bourne. The same applies to local dentists who, unlike GPs are not required or mandated to accept new local patients. To my knowledge, there is not an NHS dentist available within 20+ miles of Langtoft. Hospital A&E waiting times are often 12+ hours – my own mother, a Dickens Close resident since its construction, recently passed away after just such a wait in A&E.

There are no services and inappropriate roads at the Dickens Close end of Langtoft which is over 1 mile from the A15. The growing elderly population in this area cannot be suitably housed on this proposed site as it cannot meet their housing, health or care needs. It is too far from transport links.

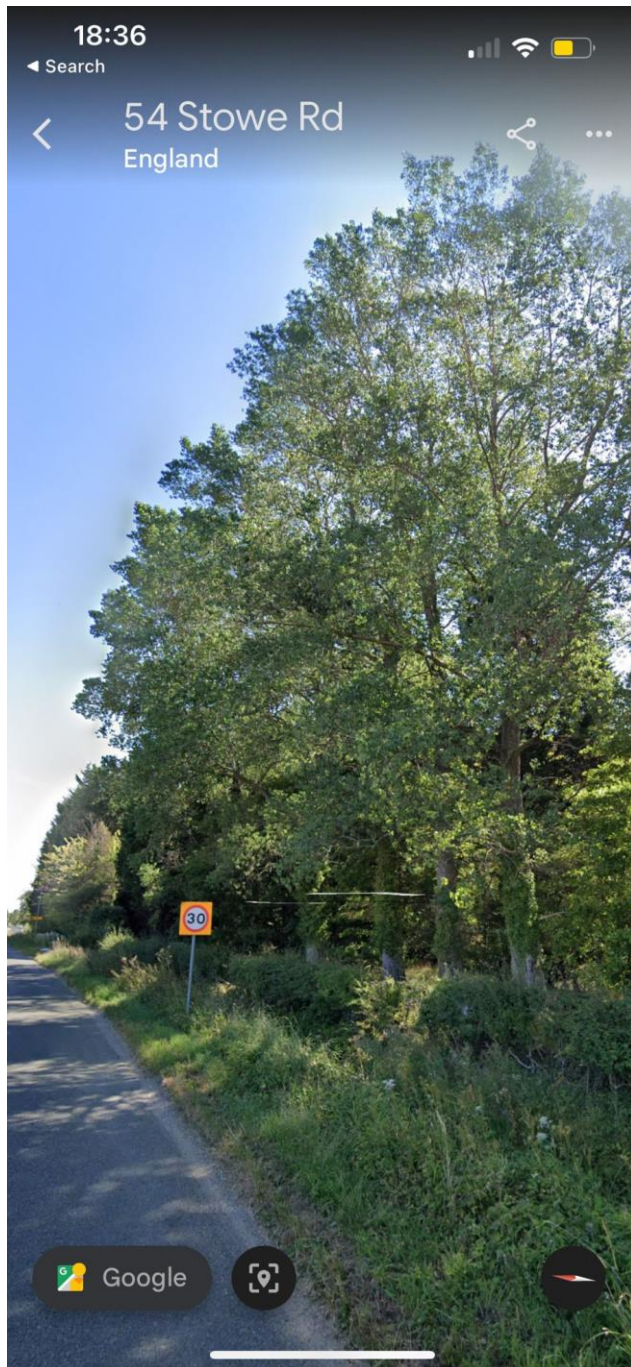
Some of the involved Councillors have been closely linked to various controversial local planning projects in recent years. Including the contentious 2023 Teal Way decisions. For all the reasons outlined above I request that all involved Councillors take this early opportunity to reconsider and withdraw support for the proposal to allocate for building on the farming field to the North of Dickens Close, Langtoft.

Anna Welch. [REDACTED]

SPA Flooding to Dickens Close 23.2.2024

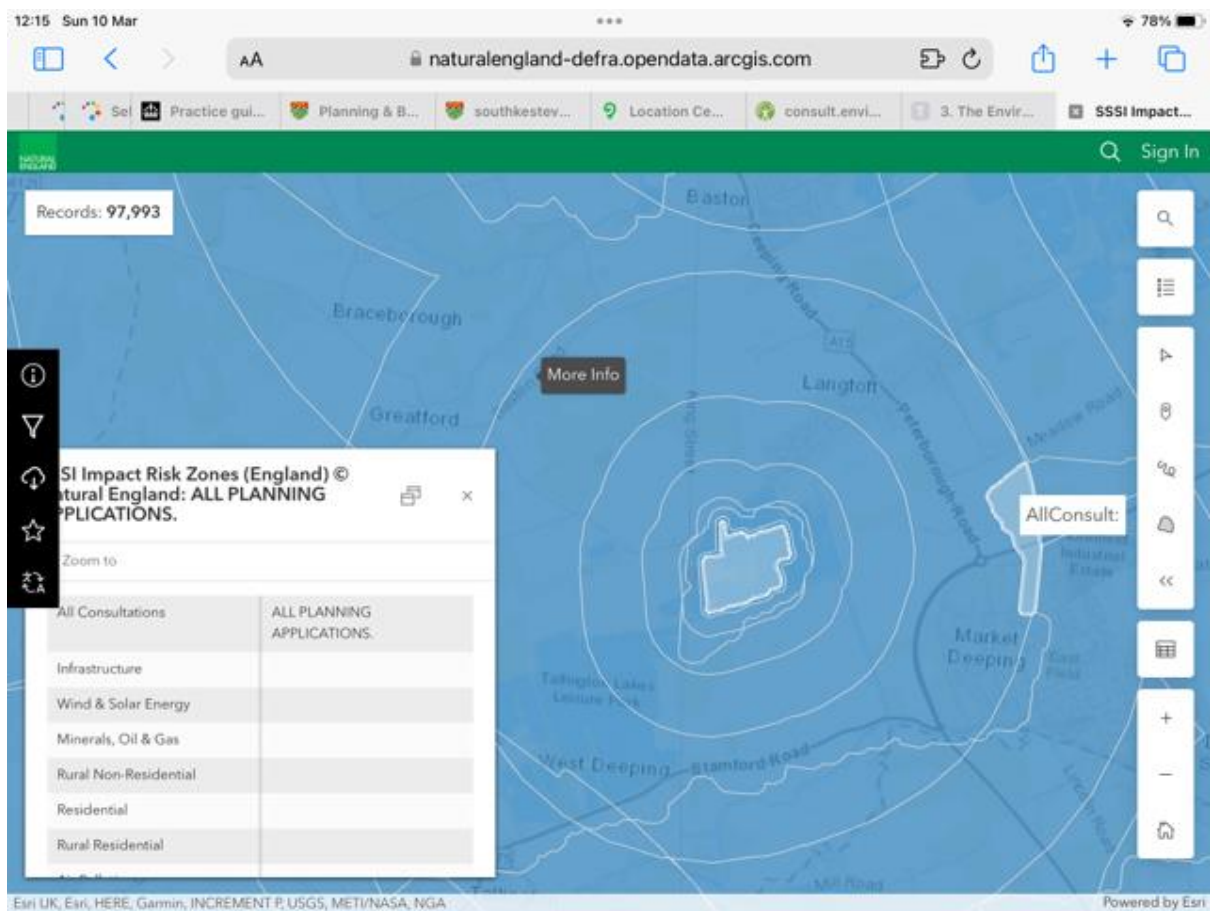


Tree line opposite Dickens Close 2022





Natural England & DEFRA Impact Risk Zone, Langtoft



From: Anna Welch [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 April 2024 08:56
To: Planning Policy
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Urgent. New Information . SKPR-71
Categories: Yellow Category, Orange Category

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OBJECTION TO SITE SKPR-71

Please see this link for Urgent and new confirmation from Anglian Water.

publicaccess.southkesteven.gov.uk



Many residents, including myself, have already brought to your attention that site SKPR-71 is unsuitable for further development as this remote end of a village, with no facilities or services to recommend it, already has a 2023 development of 41 new homes. It is now time to publicly acknowledge the disastrous financial state of Anglian Water who have decimated the local rural landscape and simply do not have the funds to complete the SPA Pipeline. The agreed total budget of £400 million is already now revised to £1.1 Billion, with no possibility of completion.

The SKPR-71 site in Langtoft was one field away from the disasterous sewage and foul water flooding in Greatford in early 2024. The drainage and foul water systems have failed and needs enormous investment and upgrading.

The link above now confirms that Anglian Water, themselves, acknowledge that even in the larger town of Stamford, they can not provide enough potable water or foul drainage capacity for the proposed developments. In an already unsuitable location such as the far west corner of Langtoft, this has already been proven to be the case.

And based on the financial crisis at Anglian Water due to their Pipeline overspend, it would be naive to believe that Anglian Water will make the investment which would be required to support 55 new homes in this rural village location.

Finally, I ask why SKDC have so far failed to acknowledge their understanding of the huge overspend by Anglian Water, and its knock on effects to our region. The numbers I have quoted are real and from the highest level within Anglian Water. My question on the subject was submitted to your open online council meeting last night (11th April 2024), but was not answered. I ask again here. And I further ask for confirmation that that all parties involved in your SRFA and WATER CYCLE STUDY, are made aware of that as a massive contributing factor when considering future risks of all types of flooding, drainage, waste and water supply to site SKPR-71.

Please consider this communication as feedback within your currently open consultation to the local Plan revision,
Kind Regards

Anna Welch. - local resident.

Sent from my iPad