

Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Full Council 10/10/2024

Foudry Brook

INITIAL THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW

I think it is fair to split our 'new' questions into a separate EIR request. They are new questions in the sense that they requested more detail that was not in our original request. We await responses to these points.

I summarise below the points that have been answered.

Reply point 1 refers to our question 1 Why discharges occur when FFT not reached?

Probably the best answer we will get. The statements "*identified as one of our priority sites after an investigation into potential site performance concerns. The root cause analysis identified design limitations as a potential cause*" confirms our view of design or maintenance problems.

Reply point 2 refers to our question 5 Decreases in flow in 2021 and 2022 compared to early years.

It is true that there were missing data in 2021 for about 40 winter days and this would reduce the measured discharge, possibly by about 100 thousand m³. The figures (in 100 thousand m³) for 2017 to 2022 were 629, 648, 655, 615, 414, 411. So, the missing data might raise the 414 to about 514. The year 2022 was relatively dry and this would have contributed to lower flows. There were also short periods of zero or low daily flows. These factors would have reduced the recorded flows. Analysis of the flows for 2023 would be interesting to see if flows increased in the wetter year.

Reply point 3 refers to our question 7 More details on the planned upgrade.

The answer refers to the final point – what is the full scope of the upgrades you are conducting at this site. Some technical questions within the body of our question 7 have not been answered. However, the answer does give a lot of new information and needs careful consideration along with the earlier details of the upgrade. Expert analysis is being sought.

The fifth bullet point in the reply about the High Level pumping station implies there is considerable doubt about how the station is configured.

The point that government targets for 2030 have not yet been finalised is a valid point.

Reply point 4 refers to our question 8 Perceived benefits of the upgrade

This seems a reasonable reply.

Reply point 5 refers to our last question -about volumes and targets.

This seems a reasonable reply.

In our review we did not request an answer to our original point 6 (had maintenance work be carried out/) as we had already received confirmation that it had.

Thus, the outstanding questions to be answered are:

2. **Is the system currently capable of normal discharges at the FFT rate?**
3. **Why do the storm discharges last so long?**
4. **What is the capacity of the current storm discharge pump?**

And some of the technical points in question 7;

7. **With regard to the planned upgrade, could you please provide more details, such as the capacity that the works will be able to process, the effect of changing weir heights on storage capacity and the rate at which the proposed storm discharge pump can operate.**

INITIAL THOUGHTS ON THE SECOND RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW

Reply points 1 to 5 are responses to our query 2 where we asked five questions. Each question has been answered.

1. The answer provide clarification of the 3X DWF and the flow to full treatment (35 l per sec) agrees with our copy of the permit.
2. The current estimate of DWF is based on the 10th percentile (is this normal practice?). The quoted figures 775 and 996 m³ are well below the consent of 1904 m³ (we agree this figure). This seems fine but is related to our earlier query about why flows have reduced in recent years (our question 2 of our initial request).
3. The storage tank capacity slightly exceeds that required by the permit.
4. Treated effluent is measured by the MCERTS monitor installed after the humus tank. Some explanation of the sewage process has been added though this is general and not specific to Mortimer.
5. The last MCERTS inspection was in June 2024 (certificate attached).

Reply points 6 and 7 refer to our query 3.

6. They do not have a diagram of the present configuration. Seems strange but one is being drawn up along with another showing the improvements. Need to get these from Paul Hampton when completed.
7. This refers to returns made to the Environment Agency each year. It appears that the current work follows a review of the system is due to be completed October/November 2024.

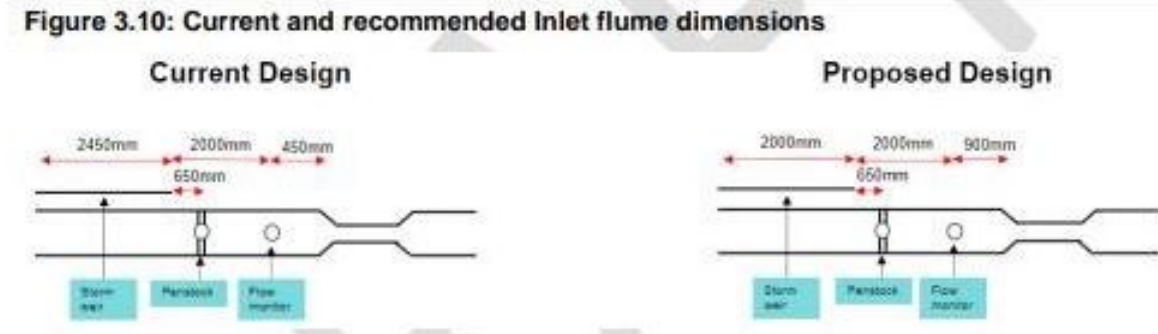
Reply points 8 and 9 refer to our query 4.

8 and 9 These seem to describe the process concerning the storm return pumps.

Reply points 10 to 14 refer to our query 7.

10 and 11. Confirms that the EDM monitor is located on the storm tank and gives the model.

12 and 13. diagrams of flumes as requested.



The text states that the changes in location of the sensor and the penstock need to be made to ensure flow measurements are accurate. (Note from MD; a detailed drawing was attached as a separate file).

14. Once the upgrades are complete, we will have sufficient capacity

CONCLUSIONS

The initial response to our EIR received in June was inadequate, muddled and appeared to be hurried. This review is much better and Thames Water have answered the questions we asked.

The upgrade work has been planned and work is due to start. The response includes the statement:

“A review of the overall system was undertaken, including equipment Process, Mechanical, Electrical, Instrumentation, Control and Automation (MEICA), and Civil capacities checks. The current work being undertaken is as a result of the investigations which took place. It is expected to be completed in October/November 2024 subject to no delays occurring.”

We don't know when this review took place. However, the detailed drawing referred to above is dated 29th September 2024.

Paul Hampton (Healthy Rivers Community Manager) in an email on 2nd September stated:

I've been in touch with the site manager and understand while the upgrades are taking place this autumn/winter it's unlikely that it would be suitable or safe for us to offer a site visit. It might be more suitable for us to run a tour in the spring once the daylight hours start stretching out again and we'd be in a better position to review the improvements made.

We do not have the expertise to judge how successful the upgrade will be but we can continue to monitor storm discharges. If the work is completed as planned we should be able to see results this winter and spring.

Various points remain unresolved. The storage capacity of the storm tank complies with the permit and the dry weather flow is currently well below the permitted level.

However, it is still not clear why the storm discharges occur so frequently and last so long. The reason given for the High Operational Spill Frequency in Thames Water's returns to the Environment Agency in 2021, 2022 and 2023 was "Asset Configuration". This, plus the facts that there is no plan of the current configuration and there is doubt about pipework to the high level pumping station seems to imply relatively little attention was paid to reasons for the storm discharge frequency in 2021, 2022 and probably 2023.

The question of the reduction by about one third of the total daily volumes of treated effluent in 2021 and 2022 compared to years 2017 to 2020 is not really explained but may not be important now.

WHAT NEXT

Paul Hampton will give a presentation to the Full Council on 14th November and will give an overview of the process and the upgrade. If there are outstanding questions then he would like them in advance, so please send these to The Clerk (or myself) so they can be coordinated.

The review mentions that plans of the current and upgraded setups are being prepared and we should chase these if necessary.

A site visit to the upgraded works is planned for 1:30 on 20th May. Paul Hampton's emails stated:

"I've been in touch with the site manager and understand while the upgrades are taking place this autumn/winter it's unlikely that it would be suitable or safe for us to offer a site visit. It might be more suitable for us to run a tour in the spring once the daylight hours start stretching out again and we'd be in a better position to review the improvements made."

"We've put 20th May in the diary at 1.30, so hopefully that might be suitable. Obviously plenty of time to make changes if required, but as you can imagine the winter/early spring is always a challenging time for our operations teams so this would be more suitable for them to have better availability."

We should request notification when the works have actually started.

Any other suggestions?

For information:

Following the recent heavy rain, a storm discharge started on 23rd September at 12:15 and is still continuing at the time of writing (4pm 3rd October; so far for 244 hours. This is the first discharge since 19th /20th May.

MDD 3rd October 2024