

## SPAEC OSC Meeting 15 June 2021

### Restoration of River Gade and Environmental Improvements to Gadebridge Park

#### Request for Further Information from Environment Agency.

The replies to the outstanding questions from Members at the presentation by the Environment Agency are detailed below:

Q1. C. Hall to come back to the members on the licences for abstraction – It was asked for **assurance that the abstraction they have here was now at its peak** and that they were now **able to rely on the water flow to be able to keep the river flowing**.

Reply: Having checked with Water Resources colleagues, the major abstractor in the area of Gadebridge Park is Affinity Water, who were abstracting 20.5 megalitres per day from one site upstream of the park and one site downstream. The water was not taken from the river but from the groundwater. From 2018 a permanent change in the licence conditions decreased the total amount abstracted by 6.4 megalitres per day, to around 14 megalitres per day. This reduction would be made by reducing upstream abstraction by more than 6.4 megalitres per day but slightly increasing downstream abstraction. Therefore reduction upstream should contribute to keeping the river flowing.

Q2. C. Hall to provide more information into the funding – While Chris did give a break down in regards the budget and where the funding for the project was coming from. I think members need more **information on how the contribution from DBC would be used and spent**. What it was they would be getting from for contribution. I think the best way to respond to this is to give a budget over view for the project **showing all the funding**, and how it will be sourced. What it will be used for. Hopefully this will answer this question. **They also questioned how much of the budget was going on consultancy fees. And is any funding time limited (Affinity)**.

Reply:

#### Gadebridge Funding.

##### **2021/22 EA funding:**

Water Resources Capital: £300,000

Water Resources Revenue: £100,000

This funding is confirmed and will take us up to completion of detailed design. Funding is allocated by financial year, so next year we will have to bid for money from the Water Resources Capital and Revenue pots in order to move to the Construction Phase.

**Affinity Water Contribution:** £250,000

To be used in the Construction Phase. The funding is available as part of their AMP7 programme and is available until 24/25.

**Dacorum Borough Council Contribution:** £120,000

This would be used for environmental amenity improvements only; one bridge, footpaths, signage, beaches, dipping platforms etc. DBC funding would not be used for construction works or project slippage costs.

To date the EA have spent approximately £115,000 with consultants to provide modelling, mapping, archaeological and other studies, and to provide detailed designs.

Q3. K. Sheehan to provide information on the further study – K. Sheehan said they are doing another study on the channel retaining water and he would be able to report back then. The concern from members with this one was that the river once relocated and opened up would maintain good flow throughout the year and that there would be no loss of flow through the River Side Development as well as the Water Gardens. They also wanted assurance and proof that they would not become silted up.

Reply: A natural feature of chalk streams is that they on occasion run dry depending upon weather conditions and rainfall.

The view of the EA is that the water loss will be no worse than from the current channel, and the stream would run dry in a range from 1 in 10 years to 1 in 20 years. The channel will need a period to bed in, and that for the first 5-6 years, while sediment seals the bed, the stream could potentially run dry once a year.

One of the main reasons for realigning the channel on to the original river flood plain is to reduce the incidence of flooding especially in the park and downstream towards the town.'

END

Further queries please contact:

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Dated: 14 September 2021