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David Johnston MP
The House of Commons
London
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23 January 2021

Dear David Johnson

PLANNING APPLICATION P18/V2791/O BY LIONCOURT STRATEGIC LAND LTD

As you will know there is an application to develop land between this village and the village of Fyfield. For these small communities this represents a massive increase in population with attendant responsibilities on this Parish Council in particular. Although the site lies in our neighbouring Parish it is without doubt that the development is intended to expand this settlement (Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor) since it is sited immediately east of the Kingston Park site (Bloor Homes) and expands this village eastwards rather than it becoming a disjointed suburb of Fyfield. For this reason, the Parish Council here is keen to comment and has done so on several occasions recently.

Given that Government planning policy is pointing in the direction it is, we are resigned to the fact that in the end this development will be approved. That said it is still worth noting that for 8 years now (see <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/news-archive/item/2203-kingston-bagpuize-overwhelmed-by-planning-applications>) this Parish Council has been very concerned about the unprecedented growth of what was a village into a town. Unlike a town however we still lack any sort of infrastructure to support a community of this size except for 2 Co-op shops and a very late addition to our primary school. Developers have cashed in on the help-to-buy scheme and left us, the Parish Council, with a host of additional responsibilities associated with a lack of highway adoptions and much else.

The most pressing concerns in the latest iteration of the Lioncourt application are:

- The safety problems with the A420 dual carriageway west of Fyfield
- The immense extra load on the drainage system locally.

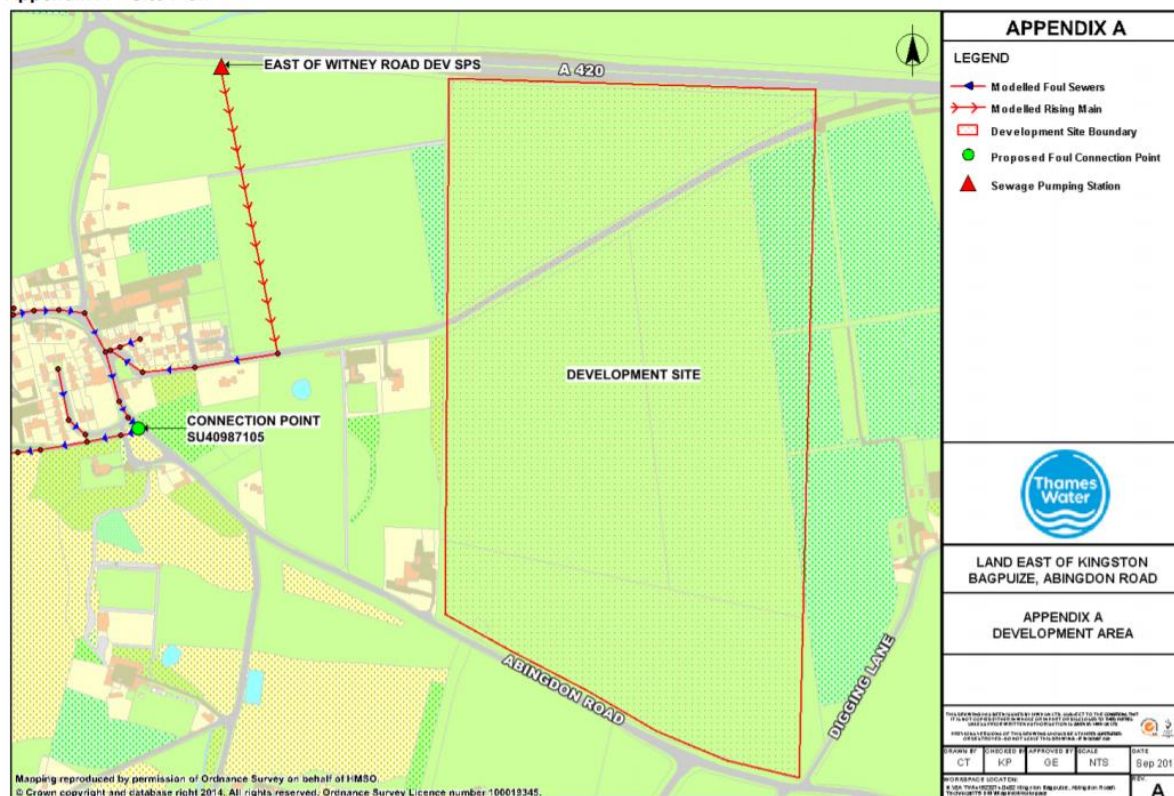
We know that you have raised the matter of the A420 in Parliament but do be aware that an extra 1,000 traffic movements in and out of this 700-dwelling estate can do nothing but add to the current problems. You are well briefed on this matter and we are encouraged to know you are 'on the case'.

As to the drainage problems it is worth reviewing the state of affairs at present. The sewage treatment works south of the village was installed during and after the second world war to deal with the large presence of American military personnel based here. Most of the village at that time had private drainage systems. The effluent from the military accommodation was via pitch fibre pipework which persists to this day. From time to time this ageing installation collapses and Thames Water are faced with large repair operations which disrupt the village but never fully solve the problem. It is an exercise in make-do-and-mend.

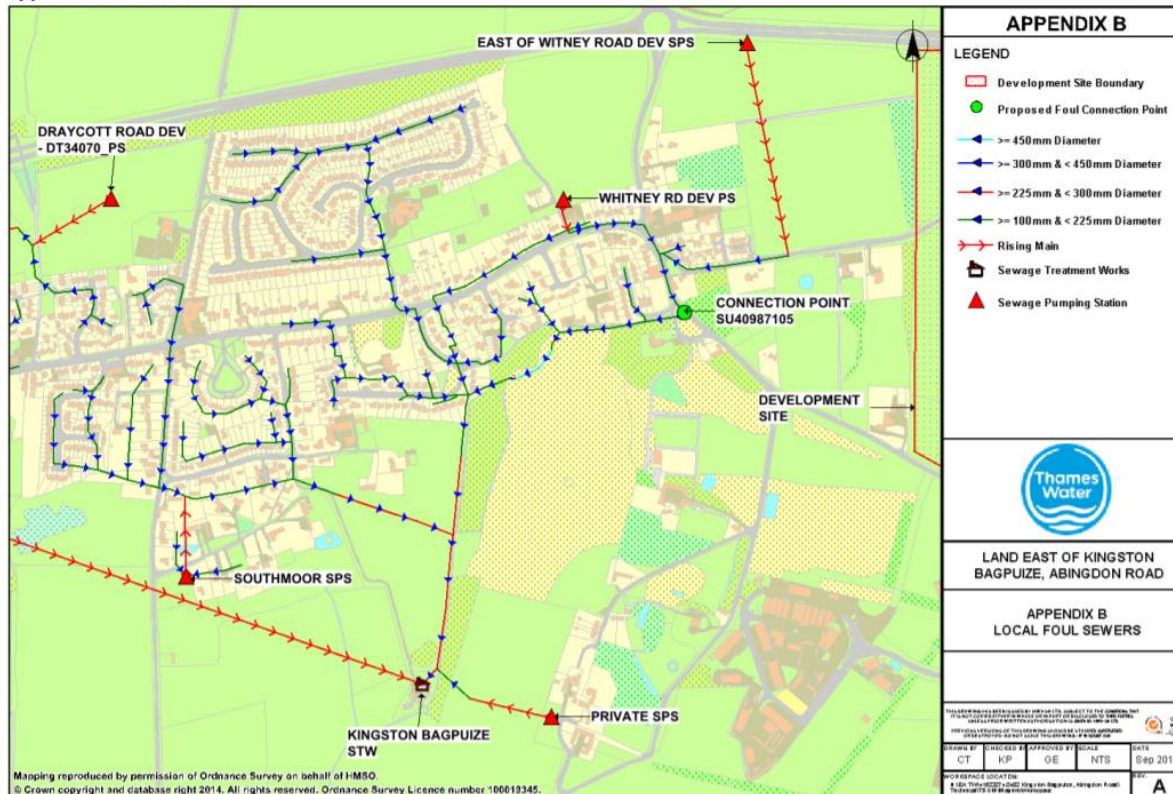
The large new developments here, of which there are now at least six, are sited in a flat landscape where there are no suitable natural falls to sewage outfalls. Consequently, each development has a collection sump which is pumped out during the night into the village system putting increasingly aged pipework under strain. Its eventual destination is the sewage treatment works referred to above. The final leg of this system was 'upgraded' in the past couple of years but is already showing signs of not working efficiently. There is smell of sewage pervading the area of the Park at Kingston Bagpuize House and the neighbouring areas to the south of Faringdon Road. The pumping station at the Edward Strauss Park development frequently has to be cleared because of failures in that system. Residents in Sandy Lane complain of large Thames Water vehicles trundling in and out of the treatment works to deal with problems.

It is against the background of this that Lioncourt's development seeks to connect its collection point to this system. That is an extra 700 dwellings discharging into an already overloaded system. Their mitigation proposal is to construct a labyrinth of 'storage pipes' on a meadow behind Norwood Avenue to 'hold' 125m³ of sewage prior to draining to the treatment works. Our view of this is that it is another make-do-and-mend solution to a problem that is not going to go away. For your information here are the three appendices to Atkins' report showing the existing and proposed drainage suggestions:

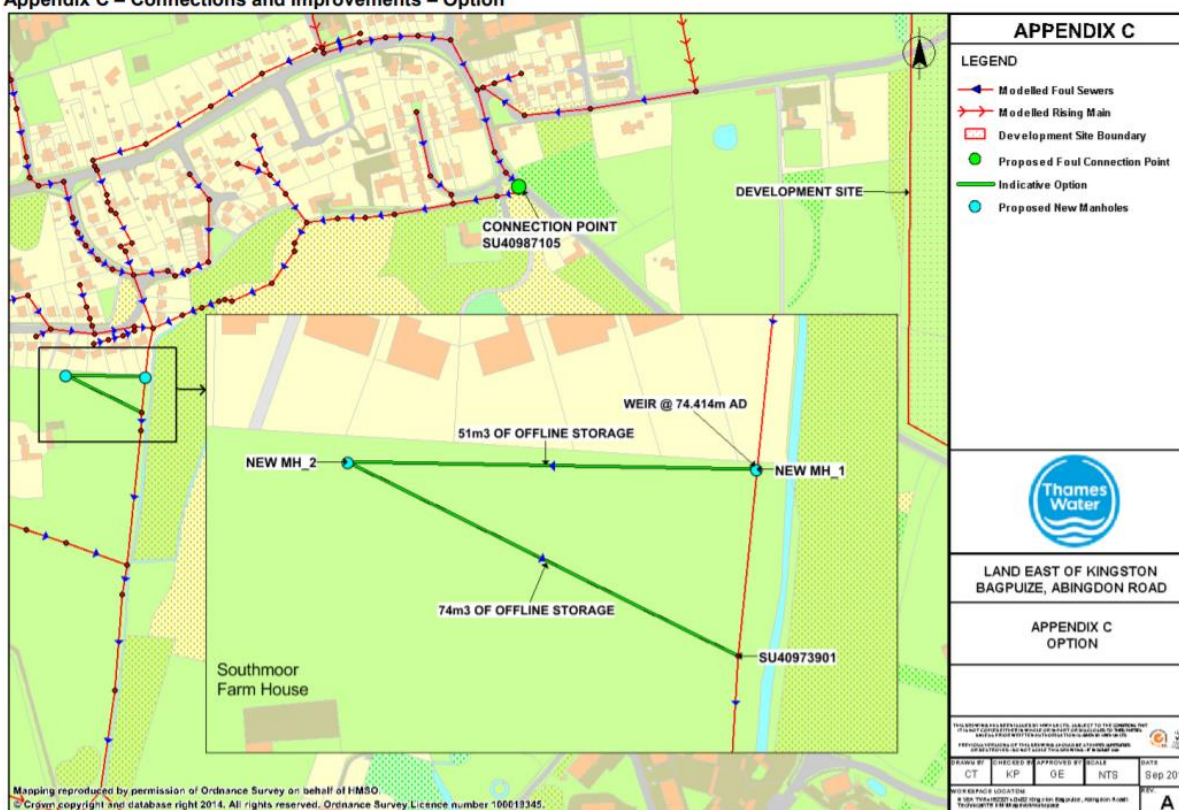
Appendix A – Site Plan



Appendix B – Local Sewers



Appendix C – Connections and Improvements – Option



The Parish Council are not experts in the fine detail of drainage engineering but as ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground we have decades of experience of the foul drainage system failing and what it means to live with that problem. Our opinion is that the massive proposal to our eastern flank will be the straw that breaks the camel’s back and we shall then be faced with massive disruption as the proper solution is carried out. As a public authority we feel this is not something that should be publicly funded but ought properly to be provided by the applicant. This may not square with current thinking about presumed planning approvals, but we are sure it cannot be the government’s intention to allow this failure to deal with

public infrastructure to go unchallenged. Our feeling is that this matter should be conditioned to guarantee the efficacy of the system in perpetuity at no cost to the public purse.

We write to you because the District Council's approach is to ensure the applicant includes mitigating arrangements and in any case place great reliance on specialist reports which merely kick the can down the road and cause problems later. Anything that you feel you can bring to bear on this matter will of course be welcome in addition to your concern for the A420 problem.

This letter now becomes doubly urgent as we understand from our District Councillor Eric Batts that the Lioncourt application is expected to come before the VWHDC Planning committee in February or March.

With thanks in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Grant".

Virginia Grant
Chairman Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council