

# **Notes on Meetings re Thames Water Booster Station**

**January 2024**

Three meetings have been held in the last couple of weeks regarding Thames Water Booster Station in Buckland.

**15<sup>th</sup> January – Planning surgery with Senior Planning officer for Buckinghamshire Council attended by Cllr Carole Paternoster and Clerk Jane Lewis.**

**PC - Statutory providers what can be challenged and what needs planning application?**

BC - Utility companies have a permitted development rights. They're restricted in nature, For example, they can put pipes in the ground and they can do certain size buildings. This is however limited to 29 cubic metres. Anything above this will need planning permission. Looking at the size of their application it will definitely require planning application. Applications that are made to bucks by Thames Water, we would ask them to give us their arguments why they need the station where it is and why is this the best position, there'll be no special dispensation and Members and parish councils can request this to go to planning committee. Normal procedures will follow.

**PC - Can residents put forward objections and comments and opinions?**

BC - Yes, you can. It would be a delegated decision unless procedures are followed and it is a committee item. Residents can put in their arguments as per normal procedures.

Planning recognises there is a need for this facility and there is a need for the water supply the debate is what it looks like and where it is located. Is the route in a logical place in a confined area, we would need them to have explored a number of options and what is their preferred option. They would need to explain why other options are not viable.

The location must be compliant on the VALP policies unless there are justifications made, this application would be assessed like any other.

**PC – When I visited the cottages, the field next door is meter higher than the cottages gardens.**

BC – This will need to be factored into the design. They may go underground, which may level this out. I have not seen any detailed plans yet.

It is in their best interest to engage with the public, but we cannot force them to do that, it is down to them.

Given the strategic importance this is an important piece of infrastructure, but will take into account VALP policies and will assess the application as normal.

**PC – Will the pipeline route make a difference to planners?**

BC – It will be logical based on the areas they need to serve and where the water is required. They will have certain areas where they need to get the water from. For example it will take into account things like topography.

The pipeline route will not be in the application, but will inform building location. The building and placement will be the planning application.

**PC – There is an application for 93 houses in the area, can they(TW) use the public open spaces?**

BC – Thames Water will need to explain in their application why they have chosen the site they have. The 93 house application is live and under consideration.

**PC – What about 5-year land supply?**

BC – As of December we have a 4.7 year land supply. Central government released a new NPPF in December. Any application submitted prior to 19/12/23 must be assessed on not having a 5-year land supply (tilted balance will be engaged unless in a protected area). Anything submitted after this date will not require the tilted balance to be engaged for a period of 5 years post adoption of VALP. Chapel Way was submitted prior to new NPPF so will be considered Under regime for not having a 5 year land supply.

BC– So far, we have not received a planning application from Thames Water. They may take up Pre-App or submit an application.

### **16<sup>th</sup> January at The Gateway, Aylesbury**

Present: Buckinghamshire Cllr Mike Collins; Buckland Parish Cllr Carole Paternoster

Thames Water: Zoe Filer and Nicola Beale. James Fletcher and Phil Jameson available by phone as required.

It was agreed by all that a new water booster station is needed and that it will be required to be sited within the Buckland area.

The various site options for the new water booster station were discussed, including the site off the Lower Icknield Way adjacent to the A41 bypass. This is the option put forward by Buckland Parish Council and which received the support of the local residents who attended the public meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

During the discussion concerning the site next to Hope Cottages, it emerged that it was the planning officer dealing with the pre-application advice who had requested that the water booster station should be located as closely as possible to the cottages, so that it would be more closely aligned to existing development and not a random, isolated building in a field.

The general route of the new pipeline through the Hampden Fields development and then onto Aston Clinton and Buckland was discussed. Options for a possible route through Buckland were looked at, particularly the possibility of using New Road instead of the narrower pathway along Moat Farm drive. The use of New Road, which is neither an adopted nor a private road, may also provide a shorter route via the Glebe towards the Lower Icknield Way and the water booster station.

It was confirmed that, after the water booster station, the pipeline will need to eventually pass under the Wendover Arm canal, cross under the road at Tring Hill and then on to the TW station on Dancers End Lane.

Next steps: Thames Water will look at the Lower Icknield Way/A41 site to see if it could be a viable option. If so, Cllrs Mike Collins and Carole Paternoster will ask for a meeting with Buckinghamshire Council's senior planning officer for Aylesbury Vale to understand if there are any planning policy issues which would rule out the use of this site.

### **Meeting with Rob Butler MP - 19<sup>th</sup> January**

Present: Rob Butler MP, Elliott Banks (Chief Of Staff for Rob Butler MP), Cllr Nigel Hayward (Chair of BPC), Clerk Jane Lewis

The meeting began in the Parish Office where the plans were shown to Mr Butler and the concerns raised by Buckland Parish Council and the residents. Discussions took place regarding the location for the pumping station. Mr Butler discussed the concerns and said that he had received a response from TW which he had had following the email from local residents.

TW had stated that the Booster station would be no more than 6.2m high, it would be housed within a structure in keeping with the local environment, there would be no noise, odours would be limited, lighting would only be required if night time access was needed. Alternative locations would require further pipework and further surveys relating to hydro geology.

Mr Butler acknowledged the public feeling in relation to this plan with 20% of local residents attending the recent public meeting.

Mr Butler explained that he cannot influence Buckinghamshire Council in planning matters but he can write at planning applications stage and make comments.

He can also ask questions in the House of Commons, and at weekly Business meeting with other MP's and Business Secretary Penny Mordunt MP.

Mr Butler asked BPC to send a rebuttal of all the comments made by TW .

A visit to the site of the proposed Pumping Station was then undertaken. Mr Butler was able to see the narrow access to the proposed site, along with the height difference in the ground between the field and the cottages.

Mr Butler could see the unsuitability of the proposed site, and agreed with the proposed location on the Lower Icknield Way.

He and his colleague suggested that BPC arrange a petition regarding the matter; when making comments BPC should ensure they comment on the fact that the proposal is a substantial structure next to the conservation area and the views from the AONB. They questioned how secure the site would be with a public footpath running straight through it,

At the end of the visit Rob Butler MP said that BPC could say that they had convinced the local MP of the unsuitability of the location.

Mr Butler will be writing to TW week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> January and demanding a reply within 10 days.

Social media posts from Mr Butler following the visit:

Facebook:

### [Rob Butler MP](#)

I'm extremely concerned about [Thames Water](#)'s plan for a booster station right next to cottages in Buckland. Unsurprisingly, hundreds of residents oppose it. I visited the proposed site this afternoon with Buckland Parish Council and saw for myself how totally unsuitable it is.

The Parish Council has an alternative proposal that makes far more sense, should cost less, and would be far better for the local community. It's even in the very same field! I'll be demanding to know from Thames Water next week why they refuse to listen to common sense



Twitter:

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**Rob Butler M** @RobBAylesb1 · Jan 19 ...

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Rob Butler MP reposted