

**Benton Community Conversation**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2013**  
**Ivy Road School**

**Present:** Cllr Stuart Hill (Chair), Cllr Janet Hunter, Cllr Pat Oliver, Cllr Linda Darke (Killingworth Ward) and 34 Residents

**Welcome:**

Cllr Hill opened the meeting, explaining that this was the first community conversation to take place in the Benton ward and replaces the area forums that used to take place at an area level. As well as community conversations the mayor will also be hosting “listening events”. This will take place across North Tyneside and are open to all residents. The event in Benton will be on 27<sup>th</sup> March at St Andrews church.

**Flooding**

Officers present to talk about this: Kevin Ridpath, Capita; Steven Harvey, Capita; Richard Robinson, Environment Agency and Colin Davison, North Tyneside Council. Kevin gave a short presentation about the work being carried out to reduce the risk of flooding. The priority is reducing the risk of flooding to people’s homes. On the 28<sup>th</sup> June over 900 properties in North Tyneside were flooded. The Council has allocated £4 million to flood prevention work and we have spent a lot of time working with a range of experts to model the best possible engineering solutions to each problem. This includes developing plans for Rocket Way, Otterburn and Ivy Road

Question	We have received letters from the Environment Agency about work they need to carry out to the Longbenton lech (culvert), (which is an underground river). They have said that if this causes any damage the resident would be liable.
Response	The Environment Agency (EA) are trying to investigate whether better use could be made of the culvert, however when we have put our camera down into the culvert due to the amount of silt it is not possible to see. As a result we need to flush the culvert out and before we can do this we need permission from land owners. As the culvert goes under land owned by householders, their permission is needed before we can do this.
Question	What happens if you don’t get this permission. The letter states that the householder will be responsible of paying for any repair incurred by doing this work. I am not prepared to sign this as I don’t want to find that I am liable for a big expense.
Response (EA)	The best response might be to get all of the residents together who have received a letter to see if there is a way forward. Clearly this work is for the greater good of the area and key to helping reducing flooding, we would hope there is a way to move forward. It is not a difficult job and is unlikely to cause any damage.
Question	How do we know that the culvert is so important to reducing the risk of flooding
Response	Because we have done a lot of modelling of what happened and talked to people who witnessed the flooding. The water needs somewhere to go and if we can direct it into the culvert it would reduce the surface

	water that is the cause of much of the household flooding
Question	What happens to the water in the culvert, where does it go?
Response	It goes into the wider river system
Question	Who is responsible for keeping the culvert clear?
Response	It is the Environment Agency, however they only took over this responsibility a couple of years ago. In the past they have not been very affectively maintained and this is one of the reasons we need to do this work now.
Question	What type of water is in the culvert?
Response	In the past the fresh water and sewage has often shared drainage, this is part of the problem as fresh water becomes contaminated. Newer infrastructure aims to keep fresh water and sewage separate. The culvert is fresh water which is why we want to increase its capacity and we know there is scope to do this.
Question	You talk about reducing the risk of flooding, do you not mean remove the risk
Response	We are trying to reduce risk, if we had a second event like the 28 <sup>th</sup> June it is likely that some households would flood.
Question	What level of protection are you aiming for?
Response	We are aiming to reduce the risk where every possible to a one in a 100 years.
Question	This has been going on for a long time, why has it taken so long
Response	Because we have been trying to ensure that we come up with the best possible way to reduce future risks. We will be starting some of the work early in the new year. The work to the field and to the school car park can be done first.
Question	I live in Otterburn, the weather is changing and every time is rains heavily it runs down the road and into our gardens
Response	The proposed work will reduce this by holding the water on the field, stopping the water before it gets to Otterburn
Question	If the culvert is cleared out will this reduce flooding in Ivy Road
Response	The two issues are separate, the engineering scheme will be focused on Ivy Road.
Question	The cut between the school and Ivy Road has only been cleaned once, this had flooded at least 8 times over the last year
Response	We will arrange to have it cleaned out
Question	What is happening with the cleaning out of gullies?
Response	We are looking at getting an extra vehicle however we are also targeting tree lined streets as well (please see leaflet)
Question	What is happening to the houses on the even side of rocket way who flood because of the water coming off the field.
Response	We are still looking at an engineering solution to this
Question	What is happening the Ivy Road School field
Response	It is proposed to install field drains to the north-west corner of the school field in the summer of 2014 to prevent water logging. Capital work carried out to all of our schools is subject to funding from the Education Funding Agency. We are expecting our funding allocation to be announced in the new year.
Question	If you do this work will the water not go back into flooding gardens

	around the field
Response	No the work will stop this from happening. We are also looking at ways of holding the water in the car park. If we can hold the water in this way for a few days it runs away naturally and does not result in flooding.
Point from the ward councillors	We want a specific meeting for residents of Rocket Way, Lilac Ave and Ivy Road to let them know what is happening, this meeting was meant to be for these residents, we are disappointed that they do not appear to have received information that the meeting was taking place. As a result we will be arranging a special meeting just for them with Capita, and NWL.
Chair	We have spent a long time, and rightly, on this agenda item and I am sure we will return to it in future meetings, but it is time to move on to the next agenda item.

### North Tyneside Local Plan

David Hall and Laura Hewitt gave a short presentation about the North Tyneside Local Plan. Information on this will be given to every household in North Tyneside and there is also information in the libraries and on the website. The local plan will guide planning for the next 15 years and residents are being asked to give their views.

Question	What has happened to the Forest Hall shops regeneration?
Response	The shops have had a revamp, £100,000 was spent on this including which funded a new zebra crossing, road resurfacing and improvements to the toilets
Question	What about the council offices – these are an eye sore
Response	The building is not owned by the Council, but the Council does have a long lease which runs until 2016. It cannot get out of this lease. The building is not being used.
Question	In terms of the local plan, the council keeps building or giving permission for new houses to be built, but the infrastructure does not improve, does the plan include considering the infrastructure needed to support further building? For example schools and roads.
Response	It is one of the main reasons we need the plan – so that development happens in a planned way. The plan is not just about houses, but also includes the infrastructure needed. We receive section 106 funding from any development, and this is the money we use to pay for any additional infrastructure, including schooling.
Question	Will the green belt on be under pressure, where are you going to put all of the new houses?
Response	We have more than enough brown and green field sites to meet the requirements set out in this plan. This consultation is about asking residents to identify the best sites to use.
Statement	Killingworth Moor – this should not be built on as it is both a hill side and wildlife corridor. Any building would increase the risk of flooding.
Response	We will feed this into the consultation
Question	Does the Council own all of the sites identified
Response	No
Question	What is to prevent a developer going to central government to get any

	decision overturned
Response	At present this is happening and means that we do not have control over big planning decisions in North Tyneside. The Local Plan, due the extensive consultation and sign off process gives North Tyneside greater control of planning decisions.
Question	Can we stop a developer sitting on a site once planning permission has been granted?
Response	We can not stop this and know that is happening across the country
Statement	I don't like the merging of communities; we need to have gaps between places.
Response	North Tyneside has been very successful in increasing the numbers of people that want to live here, because it is a great place to live. This plan recognises that we want to continue to build communities that make North Tyneside a very attractive place to live.
Question	Has anyone looked at the empty houses across North Tyneside?
Response	This plan includes bringing brown field sites is about bring sites back into use
Question	What about industrial sites – some of these are empty
Response	There are some areas where we will be looking to change the use of sites – this includes looking to change the use from industrial to housing in some places
Statement	I am worried that planning permissions are being over ruled by government, what is the point of a plan if these decisions are over turned.
Response	The plan will give us more protection and mean that the North Tyneside planning committee should be able to make decisions based on the plan taking account of the needs of North Tyneside. When decisions are taken down in London they do not have this local knowledge.

Please can I thank all of the officers involved tonight and remind residents that this is their meeting. If there are things they would like to have on the agenda they need to let the engagement team or one of their ward councillors know.

Date of the next meeting 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014