

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

25 JUNE 2019

From Paul Goddard

Opposition to the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Proposals

We oppose the Environment Agency's (EA) flood defence proposals for Caversham.

There has been no reported property damage attributed to the River Thames flooding but the EA are proposing measures that will drastically affect the environment!

The proposed walls 4 to 5 kms in length will have no planting within 4 metres of them and this threatens all the hedges and trees at the north of Christchurch Meadow and anywhere else the wall is to be constructed.

The proposed Conveyance Channel will destroy the "Sandy" play park and as a culvert it will be a significant safety hazard close to a children's play area. It will also need the removal of most of the mature trees both sides of Reading Bridge as well as the removal of the iconic Poplar trees on George Street. The loss of ANY TREES supposedly has a detrimental effect in regard of pollution and should be avoided.

The proposals appear to be at odds with what is expected of the EA. You would think that they would want to protect the environment not destroy it.

Experts say that we can expect a net loss of water because of Global Warming and that water storage should be our main goal.

Finally, it is probable that the funding shortfall will be sought from Reading and Berkshire Councils and we urge that you oppose these EA proposals.

RESPONSE by Councillor Page (Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport):

I thank Mr Goddard for his petition and note the concerns expressed about the Environment Agency's proposals for flood defences in Caversham.

The Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee includes consideration of matters concerning 'Flood Prevention' within its terms of reference and I am therefore going to refer this matter for consideration to the next meeting of the Committee on 9 July 2019 with a short covering report from officers.

I would invite Mr Goddard to attend that meeting and address the Committee in accordance with Procedure Rule 36B, which describes public participation at the Council's standing committees.