

Thames Water: response to Martin Cherrett & Deborah Silver

Why did the River Ash Flood?

1. Who is responsible for maintaining and operating the Sluice Gates?

Thames Water is responsible for maintaining the sluice gate at Moor Lane, and operates it when required to according to Environment Agency instruction.

2. Was a decision made to open the Sluice Gates? What records are kept of such decisions?

Gold Command/EA to answer.

3. On what basis was the decision made? Who authorised the decision?

Gold Command/EA to answer.

4. What previous experience is there of the effects of opening these Sluice Gates, particularly the likely effect on residents downstream?

The last time the gate at Moor Lane was opened was during the 2003 floods when the Environment Agency requested they be used to manage the water flow. EA to answer question on the effects in 2003.

5. Was the decision made in order to divert water away from the Colne River and prevent flooding elsewhere?

Gold Command/EA to answer.

6. When were the Sluice Gates opened?

The sluice gates are always open. However late in the evening of Tuesday February 11 the gates were partially closed (50%) as requested by Gold Command.

7. Were the Sluice Gates operating properly at the time? If not why not?

The sluice gate at Moor Lane operated as required on 11 February. The sluice gates hadn't been used for a number of years so extra pieces of equipment were brought in to make sure the gate was successfully closed, which it was, and the sluice gate was operated to the EA's satisfaction and in line with their instructions.

8. When were the Sluice Gates closed?

I think this question actually means when were the sluice gates reopened (eg back to normal). This was Monday February 17.

9. Who was told that the Sluice Gates were to be opened or had been opened? When were they told? Who passed the information on to the Police?

For Gold Command/EA to answer

10. Why were the public simply told to evacuate and not given information about the basis for this advice?

For Gold Command/EA to answer

The effect of dumping water in Leacroft

1. Who was responsible for this operation?

This was a Thames Water operation to discharge flood water into a main sewer, called a 'trunk' sewer. Smaller sewers drain into trunk sewers, which are larger and drain a bigger area. This trunk sewer was downstream of places suffering from sewer flooding.

2. Where did the water go to from this drain?

Water going into this trunk main takes the path of the A30 Staines Road down to to Mogden sewage treatment works in Hounslow.

3. Was the drain operating in the way that it was expected to? Was the drain inspected to ensure that this was so?

Yes and yes. The sewer was overloaded with water but not surcharging (water coming back up through manholes) during the operation and we inspected points downstream to make sure there were no operational problems.

4. What impact did the 'dumping of water' into a drain in Leacroft have on the level of the water in the River Ash?

None, as the sewer and river are unrelated. The water the tanker put into the trunk sewer went to Mogden sewage treatment works.

5. Why was the operation halted when the flooding occurred, and the water dumped in another location? We have been told by lorry drivers employed by the subcontractors "the drain in Leacroft was too small for the water and was not flowing away properly so we have had to start taking it somewhere else."

The operation was halted because if it had continued the immediate area would have been flooded by the sewer as it was becoming too full. If more water had gone in, the sewer would have surcharged - meaning the water would have come back out the manhole. Instead, water was taken away to Hounslow and away from the flooded area.

This was absolutely the correct thing to do in order to prevent sewer flooding.

Response to Nigel & Jennifer Cook

Tanker lorry in Leacroft

This was a Thames Water operation to discharge flood water into a main sewer, called a 'trunk' sewer. Smaller sewers drain into trunk sewers, which are larger and drain a bigger area. This trunk

sewer was downstream of places suffering from sewer flooding and took the floodwater away to Mogden sewage treatment works.

Sluice gate

I believe this question refers to the sluice gate which is the River Ash take-off and owned by the EA – they'll need to answer this one. *If not and it is the Moor Lane gate then the answers drafted for Martin Cherrett and Deborah Silver will apply.*

The 'manhole' issue

Dynarod do not work for Thames Water.

In response to why 'the manhole cover was not lifted to relieve the area of floodwater' the answer is that to do this would put floodwater into a system designed only for foul water, which would overwhelm it and create significant problems downstream.

Thames Water used tankers in Leacroft to in an effort to alleviate sewer flooding in the area. Floodwater was overwhelming the sewers and in some places the high water levels in the sewer caused manholes to overflow, putting people at risk of having their properties flooded by sewage.

By tankering away this overflowing water and putting it back into the sewer system at Leacroft, where the sewer was bigger and had more capacity to take the excess flow, Thames Water were preventing customers being flooded by sewage.

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