THE CITY'S PROPOSALS FOR HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS - MAKE SURE THE CITY LISTENS TO THE VOICES OF REASON

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CITY'S PROPOSALS FOR HAMPSTEAD HEATH PONDS?

The City is inviting the public to choose between two unacceptable and legally unnecessary sets of works to the dams on the Hampstead and Highgate chains of ponds on the Heath.

- **Unacceptable,** because the new dam structures proposed for the Model Boating, Men's Bathing and Highgate 1 Ponds (Highgate chain), and above and below the Mixed Bathing Pond, and the "Catchpit dam", (Hampstead chain), will ruin those parts of the Heath, making them look like municipal waterworks. These dams will disfigure the Ponds landscape destroying views and the natural appearance. For instance the model boating pond will roughly double in size with the dam running half way up the banks on either side, to store water after a storm.
- **Legally unnecessary**, because the City is wrong to claim that reservoir safety law requires them to design enormous dams on this scale without taking account of its other legal obligations to include in its public safety risk assessments:
  - life saving factors such as early warnings and civil emergency procedures and services,
  - the environmental and public benefit costs of the permanent damage that would be inflicted on the 'natural aspect and state' of the Heath, which the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act requires the City to preserve.

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN ANSWERING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- **Flooding in South End Green**, **Gospel Oak and Kentish Town** has never been caused by the Heath Ponds. It is officially recorded as being due to torrential rainstorms and the failure of the sewers to cope. These works on the ponds will not stop that flooding from happening again. **The City admits:** ".....extreme storms will still cause floods in the area downstream after the work is complete" *... (The City Hampstead Heath Management Committee, Report, January 2012)*

- **The computer-modelling behind these proposals is NOT based on facts** but on an extreme and hypothetical 1 in 400,000 year worst-case flood scenario which presumes total collapse of all dams and massive loss of life. **Fact:** there has been no collapse of any of the dams, no uncontrolled escape of water and no deaths in any storm in the Ponds' 300 year history.

- **The professional guidance behind these extreme calculations** is still being questioned within the engineering profession. A peer review of the City's engineering advice stated:
  - "The dams withstood overtopping during the 1975 flood event. .....the [Pond] embankments may be more resistant to overtopping than research figures suggest".
  - "No specific concerns about the condition of the dams are noted in the inspection reports that might explain such an increase [in the Annual Probability of Dam Failure]".
  - "The uncertainty of the velocity and timing of the breach flood peaks is compounded by the software used for modelling". (*Review by AECOM Technology Corporation, November 2010)*

Yet the City claims: *"We will not be able to act on comments that challenge the need for the work to be done. Doing the work is a legal requirement for the City to minimize the risk to the public from the dams"*

We challenge the statement that the proposed work is a *legal requirement*

IT IS VITAL THAT YOU REPLY TO THE SO-CALLED CONSULTATION AND TELL THE CITY SO - <u>CLOSING DATE FEBRUARY 17, 2014</u>

THE CITY CONSULTATION PROCESS SO FAR

- In 2012 the City set up the Ponds Project Stakeholder Group (PPSG) of local residents and Heath users including the Heath and Hampstead Society, the Highgate Society, the Mixed Pond Association, the Highgate Men's Pond Association, the Kenwood Ladies Pond Association, the United Swimmers Association of Hampstead Heath and the Hampstead Heath Anglers' Association, together representing thousands of people.
- In March 2013 the engineering firm Atkins who advise the City, prepared a "Dam Flood Assessment" ("DFA") estimating the extent of the largest possible flood that could occur.
- Many of the Stakeholder Group representatives themselves have professional legal and civil engineering backgrounds. They submitted detailed challenges that the DFA lacked a legal or rational basis as the sole starting point for safer designs for the Heath ponds. All of the above members of this group **formally rejected all the massive embankment Options** offered by the City. Sixteen months of meetings and exchanges of lengthy technical queries have still not provided satisfactory answers to these challenges.
- Despite that, these are the proposals, which you, the public, are now invited to select from.

THE CITY'S INFORMATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/pondsproject
www.surveymonkey.com/s/PondsProjectYourViews
They are available in paper form at Parliament Hill staff yard and East Heath car park
By email: send your name and address to pondsproject@cityoflondon.gov.uk requesting a copy
You can phone the City on 020 7332 3847

BE AWARE: WE CONSIDER THE CITY MOCK-UP PICTURES TO BE MISLEADING

The scale of the mock-up pictures on all the City consultation documents would lead you to believe that the ponds won't look much different after the works are completed. A more realistic impression, based on mock-ups (using the City's own calculations), of the impact these new structures will have can be found at:

www.DamNonsense.org.uk www.heathandhampsteadsociety.org.uk

FILLING IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE – CLOSING DATE FEBRUARY 17, 2014

There are 10 questions. You are asked to choose between:

- Options 4 and 6 for the Model Boating and Men's Bathing Ponds (Highgate chain),
- Options M and P for the Mixed Bathing Pond, and Hampstead No 2 Ponds (Hampstead chain)

IF YOU WISH TO OBJECT to the proposed works you could answer the questions as follows:

Questions 1, 3, 5 and 7: Tick the first point "Not satisfied". Do not tick "Don't know/None of the above"

Questions 2, 4, 6 and 8: You could answer these questions along the lines of the information set out above under **Key Issues**, but mentioning in particular that (1) the works will, because of their great size, ruin the natural appearance of the Heath in breach of the 1871 Hampstead Heath Act and (2) works *of this size* are not required by the Reservoirs Acts.

Question 9: You may, among other things, object that the City has decided not to consult you on **(1) the largest proposed work** - the new 5.6 metre high earth dam to be built across the whole of the Catch-pit valley above the Mixed Bathing Pond or **(2) the raising of the dam at Highgate No 1 Pond by 1.25 metres** or **(3) the giant spillways** (some of them 60 metres across) to be constructed on many of the Ponds in both chains.

Question 10: You may, among other things, question why the design of the works deliberately and irrationally ignores the possibility of meteorological forecasts, early warning systems, evacuation procedures required under civil emergencies legislation, or indeed any preventative/mitigating action involving the emergency services or mechanical or electrical equipment.