

Rickmansworth Aquadrome NLHF Project

Public Engagement Session

Wednesday 16 September 2026

5pm to 7pm

Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL

Questions submitted prior to session:

Question:
Do the plans for the Aquadrome development still include having dogs on leads and a ‘dog enrichment area’ where they can be let off leads?
Answer: The Dog Enrichment Area was removed from the Aquadrome Plans, this was due to very limited support for this element during the RIBA 2 Engagement period. Many were passionate about retaining the ability for dogs to walk off lead through the site; whereas many others were concerned about dog conflict with wildlife, other dogs and people. In addition to many negative comments about dog fouling there was also acknowledgement that there are many responsible dog owners who utilise the Aquadrome. Opportunities for increased engagement with dog owners have been included within the Activity Plan for the Aquadrome Project; this would include encouraging responsible dog ownership through picking up and disposing of dog waste, preventing dogs from bothering wildlife and keeping dogs under close control including preventing them from entering the water. The aim of this will be to protect wildlife, ensure dogs are able to safely exercise within the Aquadrome and so that both dog owners and those without dogs can enjoy the site equally.
Question:
Why not charge Hillingdon residents to park and put the funds raised towards these plans. Hillingdon does exactly this at Ruislip Lido. Genuine Question.’
Answer: There are currently no plans to charge for using the Aquadrome car park.
Question:
When in flood conditions, the "causeway" between Bury and Stockers lakes overflows, which fortuitously limits the water level rise in Bury Lake so as to just not flood the sailing clubs or lakeside walkways (although ideally it could be a couple of inches lower...). However, for pedestrians, this causes major frustrations, only occasionally helped by the addition of a pallet or some-such bridging item to be hopped across.

Please can you indicate whether a solution is being considered for this problem, which could consist of a raised bridging walkway (minimum 250mm above water level) along one side of the causeway - it only needs to be wide enough for single file use, but strong enough for a mobility scooter?

Answer:

The causeway is a particularly hydrologically sensitive area due to the ground levels. Also sitting in the floodplain with proximity to the lakes, restricts the surface that is possible to use. Path improvements are proposed for this route paired with lake bank restoration with aim to reduce the damage to this path when it is flooded. The council cannot, however, guarantee that flooding will cease on this route.

Question:

1. Why does TRDC plan to remove the weir and what effects – both positive and negative – will occur as a result?

Answer: The Environment Agency listed the removal, or breaching, of this weir as a priority barrier to be addressed for the lower Colne catchment within its 2017 assessment of barriers to fish passage in the Lower Colne Catchment. Positively, the removal of the weir will restore natural river processes, improve fish passage, reconnect habitats and create a healthier chalk river environment – currently the weir is causing unnecessary damage to a globally rare habitat. Concerns, which have been considered, and are being modelled and evaluated, are short-term construction disturbance, limited risk of bed and bank adjustment through riverbed regrading, and concerns from local residents and river users about water-level changes. Based on current progress of that work, negative risks are considered extremely low in terms of likelihood and able to be mitigated with appropriate riverbed regrading.

Question:

2. Does TRDC see any flood risk as a consequence of this action – either in WD3 or further downstream? How certain is TRDC that this activity will not result in increased flood risk?

Answer: A Flood Risk Activity Permit must be granted by the EA for the River restoration (including removal of the weir) to proceed. For this permit to be granted the EA must be satisfied that the scheme will not increase flood risk. This is factored into the design process to ensure that flood risk is not increased outside of the Aquadrome boundary. Through the river restoration and natural floodplain management planned, there will be greater connectivity between the river and its floodplain resulting in increased localised water levels during flood within the Aquadrome as it operates as a floodplain. These increased water levels are confined to the floodplain and do not increase flood risk outside of the Aquadrome boundary, to any local residences or commercial properties.

Question:

3. Has TRDC considered the interaction effects of the various water sources within TRDC and beyond the perimeter of the Aquadrome in the creation of these plans?

Answer: Yes

Question:

For example (1) will the stated diminution of flow out of the Mill stream if TRD remove the weir result in loss of water downstream, in for example, the Maple Lodge Conservation Society Reserve?

Answer:

The council has never stated that there will be a diminution of flow in relation to the Mill stream. As previously confirmed publicly, the council remains committed to ensuring there is no negative impact on the Mill Stream or the wider river system.

Question:

For example (2) – the interaction effects between fluvial, surface water, groundwater, canals, reservoirs and sewers within the district and potential negative effects outside of it.

Answer:

Yes, this has been considered. The hydrology around the Aquadrome is very complex due to the interactions between the rivers Colne, Gade and Chess, the Grand Union Canal, Colne Valley lakes and groundwater. Therefore, there has been extensive hydrological assessment and modelling to ensure the proposals are beneficial to the local area (for people, for wildlife and the landscape). This ensures that proposals submitted to the Environment Agency for approval will demonstrate the Aquadrome being enhanced as a floodplain and therefore reducing the current negative effects taking place outside of the site boundary.

Question:

- 4. The expert hydrologist at a previous consultation session in the Aquadrome in March noted that the removal of the weir would result in a diminution of flow within the Mill Stream. On this basis, (taking consideration of loss of amenity for residents, potential loss of a watercourse important to heritage features, effects on wildlife) why are TRDC planning to proceed with these plans?**

Answer:

The expert hydrologists who were present at the consultation session deny that this is what was said. Rather what was said was that “the removal of the weir will not diminish flows along the smaller side stream.” The council remains committed to ensure no negative impact on the Mill Stream. Technical work is ongoing to finalise design and ensure no negative impact on the mill stream. As previously stated, this will require external approval from the Environment Agency for works to proceed.

Question:

- 5. When does TRDC plan to implement the plan to remove the weir?**

Answer:

If the project progresses on its current timeline, the weir removal would take place within the 2027-2030 delivery window. This is subject to Environment Agency approval and the council successfully securing the external funding required.

Question:

6. Will TRDC consider repairing the weir as an alternative plan?

Answer:

No as this would be contrary to advice from the Environment Agency. The current weir structure is unstable and needs to be removed. The EA support the removal of this weir; if this removal takes place within the Aquadrome Project significant river restoration to a globally rare habitat will accompany its removal supporting the system as a whole.

Question:

7. If the TRDC activities result in bank erosion along residential properties, *as may be the case given the various comments made by TRDC and its specialists thus far*, what plans does TRDC have to fully compensate residents in order that they can stabilise the banks adjacent to their properties in accordance with riparian obligations?

Answer:

Neither the council nor RSK have ever stated that “...activities will result in bank erosion along residential properties”. The council intends to undertake significant river restoration works to support the riverbed and riverbanks within the council’s ownership; this will only be conducted if the EA grant a Flood Risk Activity Permit which would not be approved if it would result in negative impacts on the riverbanks. There are no plans, nor is it considered there will be any need to “compensate residents.” As is the case currently and will remain for the future, riverbanks remain the responsibility of the riparian owners.

Question:

8. Can TRDC confirm that it does not plan to install a raised walkway in the flood plain adjacent to properties along the Uxbridge Road, *noting that the expert hydrologist at a previous consultation session in the Aquadrome in March stated that TRDC would not build any structures in the functioning flood plain.*

Answer:

The expert hydrologist present at the consultation denies making this comment. Structures are already present within the functioning floodplain including bridges, buildings and multiple pathways etc. Any structures have been designed to avoid impeding flood conveyance, with clear openings and modelling to confirm performance in extreme events.

Initial plans presented as part of early design did consider opportunities for a raised boardwalk along the woodland walk. However, during the development of this work, this proposal has now been removed, with the exception of bridges over the river connection points. This was based on feedback from the public and cost viability.

Question:

- 9. Can TRDC confirm that it does not plan to create woody berms in the river adjacent to properties along the Uxbridge Road, noting that the expert hydrologist at a previous consultation session in the Aquadrome in March stated that TRDC would do this in an area close to housing within the functioning flood plain.**

Answer:

As can be seen within the Draft River Restoration Designs, berms are proposed of two different types: 1. Bank protection berms designed to enhance flow diversity via channel narrowing while protecting vulnerable banks from poaching. Constructed from aqua rock bags blinded with chalk gravels. 2. Berms intended primarily for flow diversification. Constructed following a 'traditional' method; using brushwood fascines secured with chestnut stakes and backfilled with site won spoil.

The location and purpose of the berms have guided the construction type. This has all been included within the flood modelling taking place and will form part of the Flood Risk Activity Permit for approval from the Environment Agency.

Question:

- 10. Does TRDC plan to remove trees along the River Colne, why and where?**

Answer:

Yes. As can be seen within the Draft River Restoration Designs, targeted de-shading is proposed along the riverbanks within the council's jurisdiction to reduce excessive shading and promote marginal and in-channel vegetation growth. This is vital to restoring the globally rare chalk stream and reinstating natural processes. This has all been included within the flood modelling taking place and will form part of the Flood Risk Activity Permit for approval from the Environment Agency.

Question:

- 11. Has TRDC consulted with Heathrow Airport about the interaction effects of this plan2 and their plans? What are the conclusions of these consultations?**

Answer:

The council have direct contact with Heathrow Airport Limited in relation to the interaction between the Aquadrome Project and the airport expansion, Heathrow Airport Limited have access to the plans and the opportunity to comment. Council officers also sit on multiple working groups for the airport expansion and will continue to work closely with Heathrow Limited where its plans relate to and have the potential to impact upon the Aquadrome.

Question:

12. Has TRDC consulted with any parties in relation to the interaction effects of its planned activities and the planned construction of a number of data centres locally? (namely, the Denham data centre, the Iver data centre, Abbots Langley etc) What are the conclusions of these consultations?

Answer:

The construction of data centres is not relevant to the Aquadrome Project nor this Public Engagement Session, it is recommended to review the council's webpage on Planning and submit the enquiry to the following email address: enquiries@threerivers.gov.uk

Question:

I would like to know how the removal of Bury weir affects the mill stream flow that follows adjacent to the River Colne in Mill End. Can you please confirm this flow will not be affected?

Answer:

The council remains committed to ensure no negative impact on the Mill Stream. Technical work is ongoing to finalise design and ensure no negative impact on the mill stream. A Flood Risk Activity Permit must be granted by the EA for the River restoration (including removal of the weir) to proceed. For this permit to be granted the EA must be satisfied that the scheme will not have negative impacts to the river system.

Question:

1. Could the Council explain why when it has clearly stated that the whole of the Aquadrome is 'riddled' with Asbestos and has introduced a blanket no dig policy, The Woodland path is the only part of the Aquadrome that is currently closed. What is the significant additional risk to the public of the woodland path as opposed the rest of the Aquadrome, which remains open?

Answer:

The history of the source of the asbestos contamination is unknown; however, it is believed that there are potentially significant quantities of buried asbestos cement, textile, asbestos insulating board and other asbestos materials in the ground at the Aquadrome. For general day-to-day use, the Aquadrome poses no health risks to members of the public or other users. Due to the asbestos being buried, it is unknown exactly where all of the asbestos is, which is why a "no dig" policy has been implemented. Following the investigative work undertaken as part of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Development Phase, high risk asbestos was identified within the proximity of the Woodland Path. As a result of this high-risk asbestos, this area is closed to the public, including an extended area adjacent to the Woodland Walk. The high-risk asbestos found in this location was not identified elsewhere in the Aquadrome. Lower risk asbestos in comparison to the asbestos identified at the woodland walk was identified close to the canal within the small woodland copse and scrub area. This section does not currently attract high levels of public usage and will therefore be fenced with a lower-level fence to prevent access as part of the asbestos remediation work.

Question:

- 2. The exposure of asbestos on the woodland path was as a result of Three Rivers District Council instructions to undertake digging. Why, when the risks were already known and there is a no dig policy in place was this authorised?**

Answer:

The Aquadrome is deemed a “no dig” site due to the levels of asbestos known to be present across the site. This, however, does not prevent digging from taking place as long as the correct method statements, risk assessments and subsequent remediation is in place should asbestos be uncovered. Works are planned, approved and delivered in accordance with the Aquadrome Asbestos Management Plan.

The investigative work that was undertaken across the Aquadrome was part of the Development Phase of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project. Investigations were carried out across the site where key capital works are proposed. This included the car park, area around Café in the Park, the Wet Woodland Walk and other areas of the nature reserve. RSK, as the contractors undertaking the investigative work, provided all of the necessary documentation to ensure that the work was delivered safely and effectively and included appropriate PPE and air monitoring.

Question:

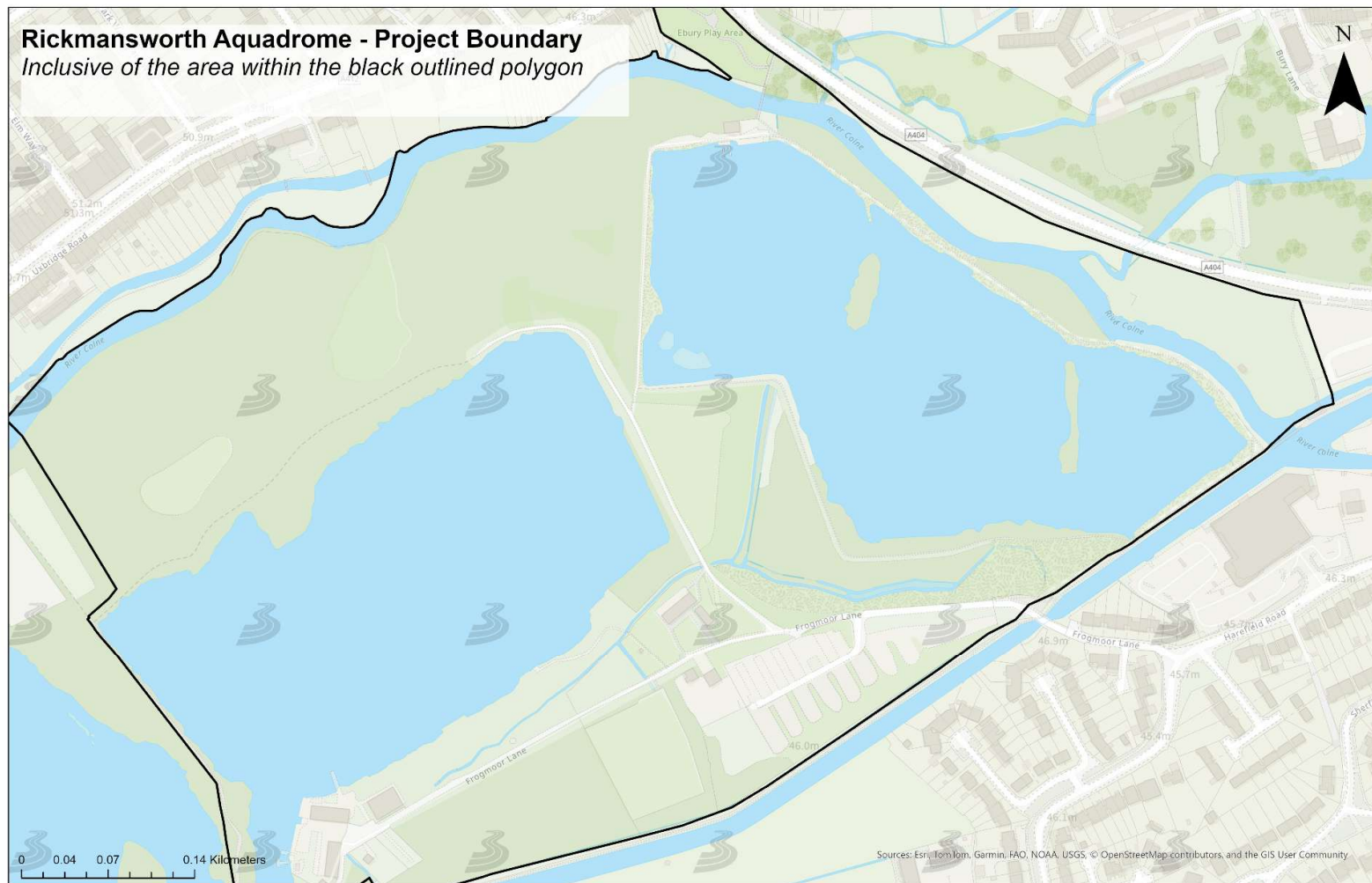
- 3. Why is it not possible for the areas that have been exposed as a result of the TRDC authorised dig to be reinstated?**

Answer:

The work to mitigate and ensure safe onward management of the area where high-risk asbestos was identified during the investigative works will be undertaken during the autumn. Works are currently programmed to commence in mid October.

Question:

- 1. At the Climate Change and Leisure Committee Meeting held on 24th June 2026, an officer stated. ‘...*that within the Aquadrome boundary there is an increase to flood risk, however, this benefits the flood plain of the Aquadrome. Outside of the boundary, there is no increase to flood risk*’. The questions arising from this definitive statement – reflected in the Committee minutes are;**
- a. What is the defined boundary to the Aquadrome being used as the scope for this statement. Please provide a detailed map.**



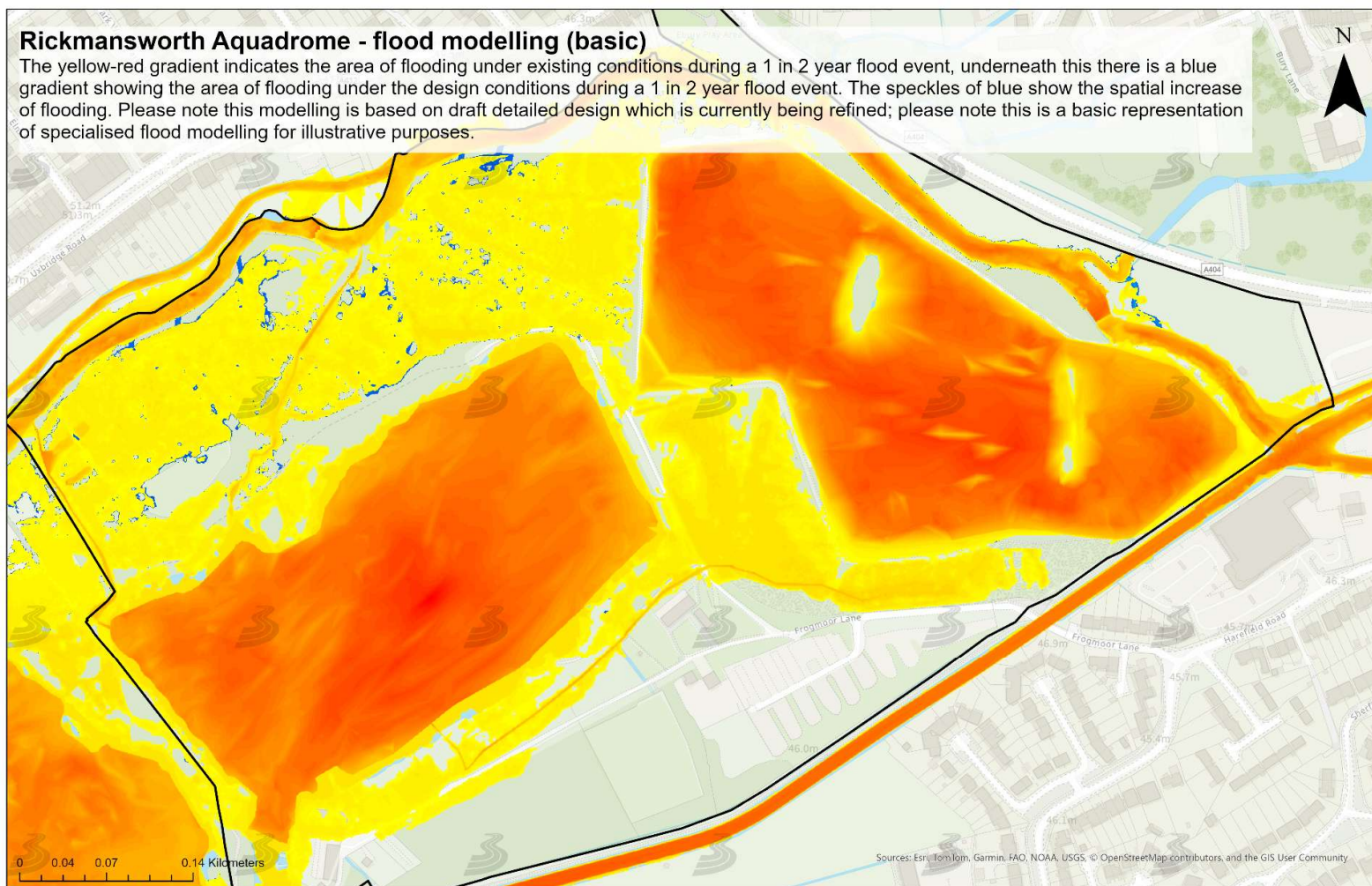
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- b. How far outside of the boundary of the Aquadrome will there be no increase to flood risk. Please provide a detailed map of where there is no increase to flood risk as a consequence of the TRDC plans. (what is the exact scope for this definitive statement?)**

Rickmansworth Aquadrome - flood modelling (basic)

The yellow-red gradient indicates the area of flooding under existing conditions during a 1 in 2 year flood event, underneath this there is a blue gradient showing the area of flooding under the design conditions during a 1 in 2 year flood event. The speckles of blue show the spatial increase of flooding. Please note this modelling is based on draft detailed design which is currently being refined; please note this is a basic representation of specialised flood modelling for illustrative purposes.



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c. Please provide all tangible evidence for making the statement ‘*Outside of the boundary, there is no increase to flood risk*’

Answer:

The draft designs for river restoration have been subjected to significant flood modelling with further technical work ongoing. The Aquadrome has been placed within the context of the catchment (through utilisation of the updated EA model) and also to within the Colne Valley down to at least Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment works. The modelling is run based on the existing conditions and then the proposed improvements are “installed” into the site, and the model is run again to show the design output. The difference is then analysed to show if there is any change to flood risk. This information is then evaluated by the EA when a flood risk activity permit application is submitted, if there is an increase to flood risk within the design the FRAP would not be granted; the EA would not permit the scheme if there was an increase to flood risk.

The Flood Risk Assessment states:

“The results of the hydraulic modelling show a small increase in flood depths (up to 200 mm) in the woodland north of Bury Lake, in the swale between Batchworth and Bury Lakes, and in the new fish pass channel (within the Aquadrome). The results do not indicate any changes in flood extents outside of these design areas (this includes the Aquadrome project boundary).

There is no change to pass forward flows at the downstream extent of the model, which indicates there won’t be a change in flood risk downstream of the modelled extents. (the modelled extents are to approximately Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment works).

The modelling does not indicate any flood receptors are adversely affected by the proposed design and suggests there is no substantive change to flood risk in the area.”

Question:

- 2. On page 14 of the RIBA Stage 2 report issued by TRDC as part of its consultation process, at the top of the map it shows the boundary of the Aquadrome makes a clear incursion directly into the gardens and grounds of many properties along the Uxbridge Road between the point just above the Mill Stream split from the Colne and the Ebury roundabout.**

a. Is this an error, or is TRDC laying claim to sizeable amounts of gardens and grounds of these properties? If so on what legal basis?

Answer:

The map referred to on page 14 of the RIBA Stage 2 report is the UKHab Baseline Survey, this is an ecological survey which was conducted of the site. Ecologists record high level information of the habitat properties as can be seen within the map legend. The ecologists included all that is within eyeline to the site ensuring that if there were any protected habitats adjacent to the site that they are considered. The project boundary can be seen within many other maps within the document for example on page 18, 19 or 25.

b. If large parts of the gardens and grounds of these properties are within the TRDC definition of the Aquadrome, does it then follow that, as ‘... that within the Aquadrome boundary there is an increase to flood risk’ these properties are subject to increased flood risk?

Answer:

This is not the case as explained in the above response.

Question

Concerning the proposed wooden walkway

1: How much money is being put aside for maintenance to the walkway?

2: How will contractors get access for clearance of fallen trees?

3: Assuming wheelchair access will require a perfect (undamaged) surface will the whole walkway be closed if there is ANY damage?

4: When there is any damage what is the contracted repair time in days with the client (assuming by client we mean members of the public who use it)?

5. I have seen wooden walkways at Wetlands Centres like the one in Barnes, which run through reed beds and small trees/bushes. But these are not deciduous woodland with large trees. Do you have an example of a wooden walkway running through deciduous woodland in Bucks/Beds/Herts?

6: It is assumed that the council has records of all incidents of fallen trees/branches and locations. Please confirm YES/NO?

Answer:

The proposed wooden walkway detailed at RIBA 2 (concept design) has been removed from the proposals following the public engagement and in consideration of the financial viability of the project.

Question:

I attended the meeting with RSK presentation. In that meeting they said they were LAYING down some tarmac near the canal 'hotspot' to manage some asbestos. Can the same approach be applied to the woodland walk pathway where it is outside the hotspots. Thus dispensing with the need of the wooden walkway and digging up ground for supporting timbers, which may disturb asbestos.

Answer:

The proposed wooden walkway has been removed from the project proposals. Tarmac cannot be used adjacent to the River Colne and would not be supported by the Environment Agency due to its proximity to the chalk stream. As such a natural material surface will be used.