

Meadlake Ditch flooding in 2014 caused by excessive landfilling

1. Excessive landfill levels on both sites of the Meadlake Ditch has created a 900m long dam parallel to Norlands Lane and Coldharbour Lane on what was a floodplain .

In the 2014 floods the only flow path for floodwater in the west side of Egham Hythe was through the Meadlake Ditch via a 1.50m culvert under Norlands Lane and a poorly set culvert in Thorpe Park that was blocked .



In the 400m section south of the lake , landfill created high banks on both sides of the ditch creating a bathtub effect causing it to flow backwards flooding properties 3km upstream .

As floodwater levels went down everywhere else the upstream levels remained static for five days as the ditch could not drain properly under the Norlands Lane Bridge .

Flood levels were eventually lowered by pumping the ditch out into the Penton Hook Marina over a three to four week period . The Marina is on the downstream side of Penton Hook Lock .

At the time of the floods Surrey County Council were not aware that a culvert existed under Norlands Lane and were made aware of this a year later . Three years after the flood event , they have yet to inspect it or remove the silt and debris found inside the culvert when we went under the bridge to check it ourselves last October (2016) .



2. Floodwater was held back 50m north of the Norlands Lane Bridge on both sides of the ditch at a height of 14.90m AOD as measured at the Meadlake Cottage and at the Thorpe Lea Road Bridge . The level in the two floodwater pools shown above were 1.20m higher than the level at the Norlands Bridge and 1.80m higher than the pavement at the gates to the landfill site .



3. In 1947 the fields around Norlands Lane and to the north of Green Lane were floodplains as this aerial photo shows .



4. The entry gates to the Coldharbour Lane Landfill Site . The gates are 1.90m high and the land level at the kerb in the road is 13.10m AOD .
Note the level of the mounds of landfill in the background .



5. East side of Coldharbour Lane being backfilled in 2003 .

When this picture was taken it looks like there may have been a drainage path in the bottom right hand corner of the site . The entry gates to the site are at the lowest point in Norlands Lane .



6. This is the start of the footpath heading north from the Norlands Lane bridge towards Green Lane , the Meadlake Ditch is a metre or so to the right . The path is rising due to the amount of landfill underneath it as it runs upwards towards where the diversion culvert that was removed in November 2014 . The culvert was located to the right the top of the slope .

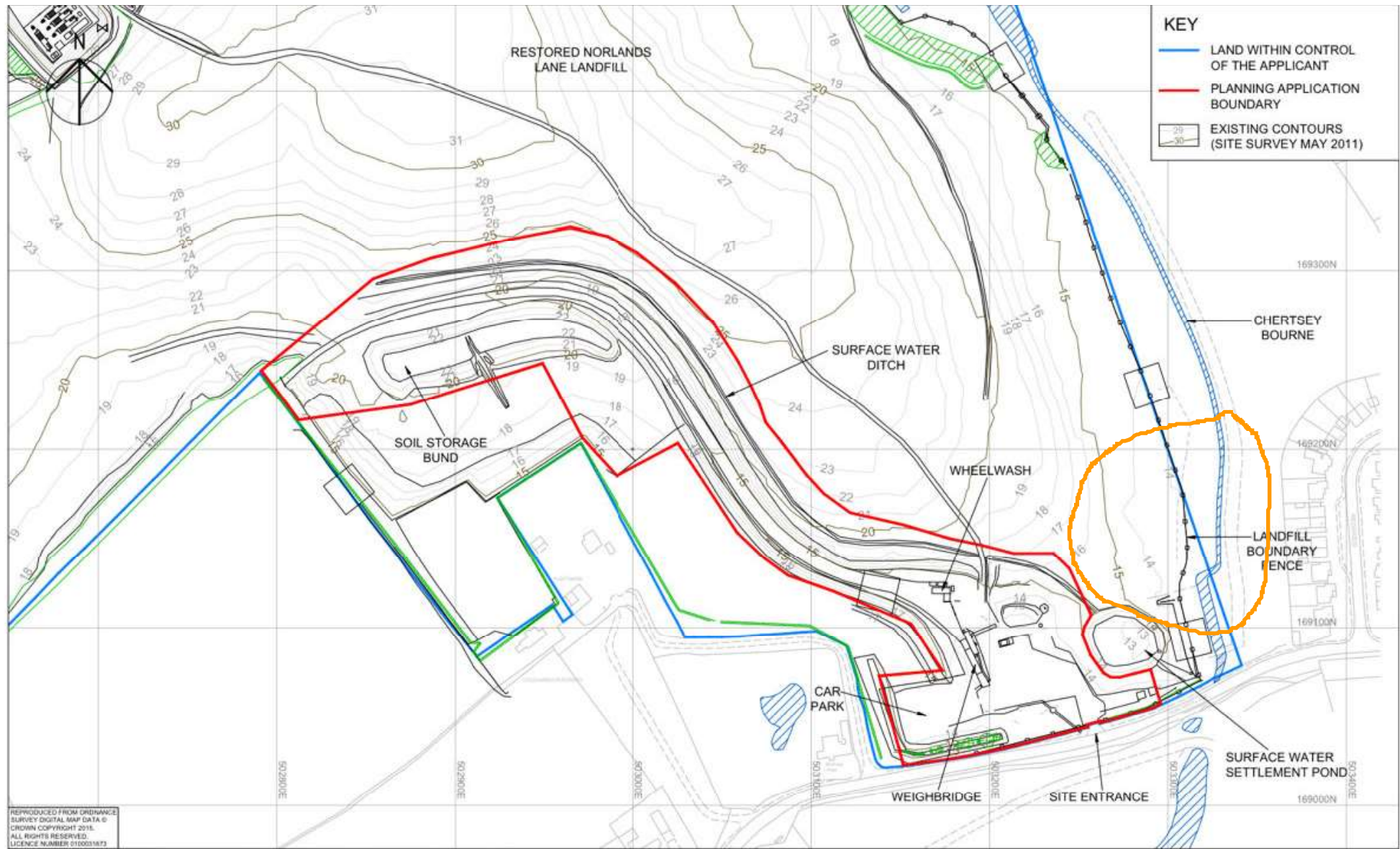
The raised earth banks on the left of the picture are landfill banks in the Coldharbour Lane site .



7. This is the diversion culvert in 2014 before it was removed .

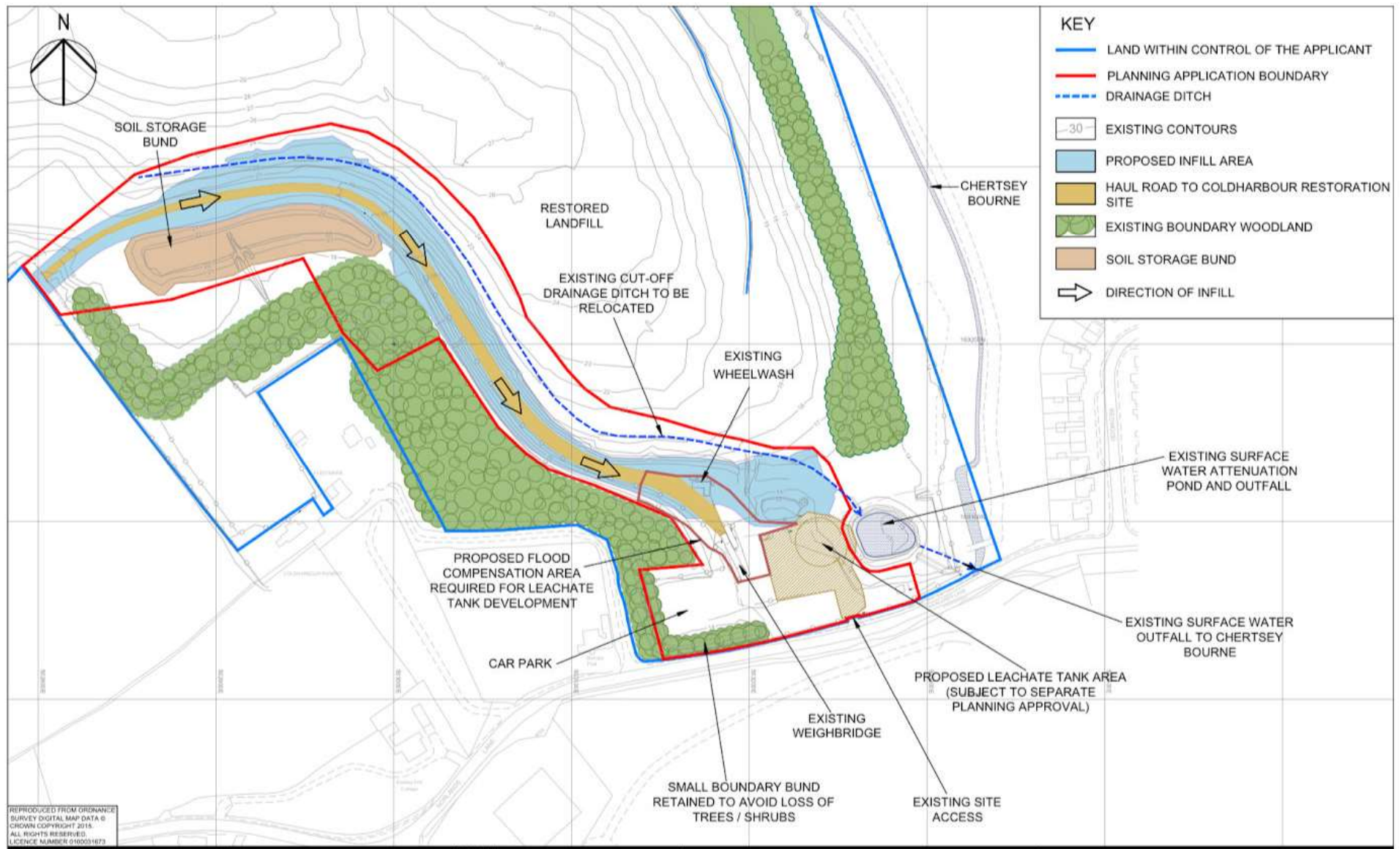
Note the height of the earth bank above the culvert that gets higher as it moves to the left where the footpath is . The earth bank extends into the Coldharbour Lane site .

The two black pipes on the left are from the dewatering plant in the Coldharbour site that silted up the the bed of the ditch , the culverts under Norlands Lane and Service Road and the small entry pond inside Thorpe Park.



8. Landfill levels in the Coldharbour Lane landfill site . The floodwater level held back in this area that is only 50m north of Norlands Lane was 14.90m .

These proposals were submitted to SCC in January 2016 and show the landfill levels to be between 15m to 16m . They actually look much higher than that when standing in the area . It appears that no land drainage paths were planned or installed on the whole site .



9. Entrance to Coldharbour Lane site showing plans for the restoration of the Haul Road . A few weeks ago (February) the haul road was underwater .

This plan was submitted for approval in January 2016 which was two years after the floods . As mentioned previously , no land drainage paths appear to have been constructed for the whole site .

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Questions that need to answered

- a. Was the overfilling of the Coldharbour Lane site deliberate (i.e. planned) or the result of negligence on the part of the EA, Surrey County Council and / or the landfill company ?
 - The Coldharbour Lane site was supposed to be returned to agricultural use when it was completed .
- b. Who was responsible for allowing this to happen ?
- c. What were the planned final landfill levels of the west side of the Meadlake Ditch in 1998 and what they are now ?
 - We are mainly concerned about the level of planned drainage channels/paths that don't exist at the moment .
- d. What are the agreed final land levels for both the east and west banks of the RTS channel between the A320 (Chertsey Lane) and Norlands Lane .
- e. What can be done to protect the western side of Egham Hythe for the next eight years before the RTS channel is actually brought into service ?
 - In the last three years nothing has been done other than the removal of the diversion culvert that we arranged and managed ourselves . If nothing is done and the Thames gets into the Meadlake Ditch again we will have the same drainage problems we witnessed in 2014 . The ditch will also need to be pumped out again .
- f. Confirm whether the request for details about proposed modifications to land levels on the Coldharbour Lane site mentioned by Emma Booth (Black & Veatch) at the last RTS Workshop has been passed on to her .
- g. Confirm how much lower the upstream floodwater level in Egham Hythe (14.90m in 2014) would have been reduced by if a shallow drainage channel / path set below 13.10m had been provided on the Coldharbour Lane side of the ditch .
- h. Confirm whether the current land levels of the land to the west Meadlake Ditch between Green Lane and Norlands Lane were used in the ' flood model ' referred to in the Meadlake Briefings .
- i. Confirm that the EA and other agencies are aware that , in the event of a repeat of the February 2014 flooding due to what are man-made problems , they will be open to claims for both retrospective damages from 2014 and corporate negligence .
- j. How much was paid to SCC and other agencies to allow the landfill levels on the sites to be exceeded ?

12th March 2017