



Our ref:

019/1713

2019

Dear Stephen,

**Whittlesey Washes**

Lynda

Thank you for your email of 6 July 2019 from your constituent Lynda regarding land within Whittlesey Washes. I apologise for the delay in my reply.

Whittlesey Washes has been used to store flood water since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century when the South Barrier Bank was built. The formal designation as a flood storage reservoir was made in the late 1980s as a result of the Reservoir Act 1975. Our recent works have not changed the flooding regime of the Washes – the South Barrier Bank was strengthened to comply with reservoir safety legislation to reduce the risk of failure.

The purpose of the Washes is to store flood water from the River Nene when high tides prevent gravity discharge to the Tidal River Nene. This 'tide locking', which also affects local land drainage, could occur at any time during the year and although high river flows are more likely in the winter, these could also happen at other times.

We were consulted on the Whittlesey showground planning applications. All of the built residential development is outside of the Washes. The surface water drainage arrangements have been reviewed by North Level District Internal Drainage Board (IDB). In its most recent response to Fenland District Council, the IDB confirmed it had received an application to drain water at a controlled rate into its system. It has approved this subject to conditions relating to discharge rates, headwall details and payment of a levy. We are satisfied that the IDB's approach to management of water levels within its system is compatible with the effective operation of the Washes.