

Open Report on behalf of the Environment Agency

Report to:	Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 September 2016
Subject:	General update from the Environment Agency

Summary:

To provide the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee with an update on a number of Environment Agency projects.

Actions Required:

Members of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the update provided and highlight any future actions for consideration.

1. Key flood risk facts for Greater Lincolnshire

Below are some key facts to highlight to the scale of flood risk across the Greater Lincolnshire area.

Number of houses at risk	=	223,677	
Area of Floodplain	=	2,843 km ²	(17% of national total)
Length of Main River	=	1,500 km	
Length of raised river defence	=	1,700 km	(25% of national total)
Length of coastal / tidal defence	=	350 km	

2. Boston Tidal Barrier

The barrier scheme remains on programme with an anticipated completion date of December 2019.

The TWAO (Transport and Works Act Order) application has been submitted to the Secretary of State. Public consultation on this is ongoing and closes in early October.

A full public enquiry may be required, subject to the nature of the representations received through the public consultation. A decision should be known in November.

We are continuing to run Boston Hub drop-ins every Wednesday 12-7pm to engage with the public.

3. Louth and Horncastle Flood Alleviation Schemes

The Louth and Horncastle Flood Alleviation Schemes are now nearing completion, albeit slightly later than originally intended. Previously it had been reported the reservoirs would be completed late summer however a number of risks have materialised which have delayed completion. The delays are due to a number of factors, including heavy rain and difficulties in securing suitable material locally for the embankments.

The revised programme shows the Louth reservoir being ready for service in mid-November and the Horncastle reservoir by Christmas, however prior to these dates the embankments will still provide a reduced risk of flooding to the communities before the scheme becomes fully operational.

4. Saltfleet to Gibraltar Point Strategy

In order to get input from the wide range of interested parties identified it is proposed to create a sub-group of the Local Flood Risk Management Partnership Strategy Group to act as a steering group for the project.

The project team will be holding five workshops in November, each targeted at a key stakeholder group:

- LCC Members/Officers
- ELDC Members/Officers
- Parish/Town Councils
- Other Partner Organisations
- Tourism, Business and Community Representatives

Idea is for people to share views on what the coastline could look like in the future and also explore what else might be achieved through the Strategy. Outputs from the workshops will have refine the long list of flood risk approaches and options to a short list, which will be discussed at further workshops in early Spring 2017.

The outcomes from both workshops will shape the wider formal consultation on the Strategy, and its options, that will take place over July and August next year. A formal consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment will take place at the same time.

The Strategy will be in place at the end of 2017. This means approval can be sought and achieved for the business case required to implement the Strategy from 2021, when current funding ends.

5. Steeping River and Wainfleet Relief Channel

Existing modelling suggests that de-silting alone would not be sufficiently beneficial to reduce flood risk in the area and it would not be possible to justify the cost according to funding rules. However further modelling work was required to assess the impact of the silt on the drainage system managed by Lindsey Marsh Internal Drainage Board (IDB). This work has been ongoing though, as previously reported, was subject to available resources and other work priorities.

Additional dedicated resources have been secured from October to ensure the modelling work is completed as soon as possible. It is expected results confirming the flood risk benefits of de-silting, including impacts on the IDB system, will be available for the beginning of January. This will allow the proposed Steeping sub-group of partners to meet and agree next steps for addressing a range of issues across this catchment, including de-silting.

Our key flood risk concern remains the integrity of the banks in places where there are ongoing issues with burrowing animals, cattle damage and narrow banks restricting access for maintenance, mean the risk of failure of the defences is greater than the risk of overtopping. We are tackling the most urgent problems at specific individual locations as they arise, including dealing with burrowing animals within the parameters of the law where appropriate.

6. Exercise Certus

Following a review of the 2015 winter floods the Environment Agency has introduced a new incident response structure, which will more closely align with those of other partners in the Local Resilience Forum, known as ConOps (Concept of Operations).

Exercise Certus is an exercise taking place 11-12 October and is designed to test our winter readiness plans, including incident command and control under ConOps, mutual aid provision across the country and contingency planning for key flood risk structures.

Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire area is one of eight areas across the country taking part in the exercise.

7. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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