

**FLOOD AND DRAINAGE
 MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 5 SEPTEMBER 2014**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C L STRANGE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors Mrs V C Ayling (Vice-Chairman), A M Austin, C J T H Brewis, A Bridges, M Brookes, R G Fairman, J R Marriott, C R Oxby, C Pain and R A Renshaw

District Councillors I G Fleetwood (West Lindsey District Council), D Jackson (City of Lincoln Council), Mrs F M Martin MBE (East Lindsey District Council), B Russell (South Kesteven District Council) and M D Seymour (South Holland District Council)

External Agencies – Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency) and Robert Caudwell ((Anglian North Regional Flood and Coastal Committee))

Councillors C J Davie and D C Hoyes MBE, attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Andy Gutherson (County Commissioner for Economy and Place), David Hickman (Environmental Services Team Leader (Strategy and Partnership), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Mark Welsh (Flood, Risk and Development Manager) and Richard Wills (Executive Director for Environment and Economy)

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Sean Kent (Group Manager, Environmental Services), Sam Markillie (South Holland Internal Drainage Board) and Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer, Environment and Economy Directorate)

12 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C J T H Brewis requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the North Level District Internal Drainage Board.

13 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JULY 2014

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee held on 18 July 2014, be agreed as a correct record and signed

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by the Chairman, subject to Councillor Mrs A Austin's apologies being listed in "Apologies for Absence", Minute 2.

14 RIVER STEEPING, BURGH LE MARSH

Further to the statement made at the last meeting of the Committee by Councillor C J Davie in connection with proposed solutions to overcome flooding and silting issues on the River Steeping at Burgh le Marsh, Councillor C Pain stated that he had spoken to Councillor Davie about the need for a further meeting to discuss progress. It was agreed to invite Councillors C L Strange and Steve Willis to the meeting. District Councillor F Martin MBE asked to be kept informed about this issue. NOTED.

15 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING, TOURISM AND THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY DIRECTORATE)

Councillor C J Davie announced that the Executive at its meeting on 2 September 2014, had approved the County Council's Infrastructure Statement and that the Statement could now be used in discussions with District Councils about planning applications and associated infrastructure proposals. It was agreed to circulate the Statement to the Committee.

16 SECTION 19 REPORT - COASTAL SURGE FLOOD EVENT DURING 5, 6 & 7 DECEMBER 2013

The Committee received a report in connection with the flooding caused by the coastal surge of 5 December 2013. The report drew upon reports by other Risk Management Authorities to produce the overarching Section 19 report which the County Council had a legal duty to produce.

Responses to comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The cost of reinstating sea defences was met either by land owners, if in private ownership, otherwise by the Environment Agency. Some of the funding for restoring was provided by Central Government under the Farming Fund as long as the land was returned to agricultural production.
2. The Environment Agency, in consultation with the Meteorological (Met) Office, had developed models of the effects of the sea surge if the wind had been blowing towards the coast, similar to 1953. The investment in flood alleviation measures which had taken place since 1953 had prevented damage on the scale of the 1953 floods but there still would have been more properties flooded to that of December 2013.
3. Modelling indicated that the event of December 2013 was a 1:400 event on the coast.

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4. The effects of the gradual dropping of the south and east of the country since the retreat of the ice age (isostatic rebound) was taken into consideration by Defra.
5. The Environment Agency used modelling to examine the effects of fluvial and sea flooding at the same time with different scenarios being considered to justify expenditure.
6. National discussion was on-going about the return on investment and the need to consider probability in connection with the events of December 2013. The Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Partnership was sponsoring a working group to explore the efficacy of the former lines of reclamation in providing additional protection from coastal flooding and was considering their potential for formal designation as flood defences. There were opportunities to involve the Local Enterprise Partnership because of the importance of agri-food to Lincolnshire's economy and to that of the UK as a whole.
7. The effect of the sea surge on Bulldog Bank was being examined by the Environment Agency.
8. The Environment Agency had examined the effects of the sea surge on Fishtoft and Boston. The Boston Barrier was designed to provide 1:300 year protection and it was proposed to increase the height of the embankments at both of these locations as required in response to climate change.
9. A report on the measures householders could take to prevent damage to their property would be submitted to a future meeting.
10. A report on progress of improvements to flood defences at Slippery Gowt and Fishtoft would be submitted to a future meeting.
11. Work was on-going by the Met Office and the Environment Agency on the effects of climate change and prediction of flooding. According to national studies capital investment of £1b each year nationwide was needed for flood alleviation measures. Capital investment by Central Government had increased and was matched by partnership funding from public, private and third party sources.
12. The role of Internal Drainage Boards and the responsibility of householders for their own property was emphasised.
13. The Environment Agency had a dedicated team to help the public sign up to receive communication of potential flooding events.
14. The Environment Agency was reducing the use of sirens, nationally.
15. The Environment Agency had done a lot of work to improve communication with the different communities in Boston and the surrounding area about flooding matters. Caravan sites were encouraged to have their own evacuation plans and the Environment Agency was doing a lot of work in this area.
16. A start on the Boston Barrier was expected in 2017 with completion in 2019.

The Committee agreed that the Section 19 report was well written and informative and it was agreed that the Chairman should write to the report's authors to thank them for their contribution.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments made by the Committee be noted and actioned accordingly by officers.

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(b) That the Committee place on record its appreciation to the report authors for producing a well written and informative report and that the Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, write a letter of appreciation to the authors.

(c) That the outcome of consultations on the report's findings and the lessons learnt, be monitored by the Committee.

17 COMMON WORKS PROGRAMME AND LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL CAPITAL SCHEMES 2014-15

The Committee received a report in connection with the latest position of the Commons Works Programme for 204/15, including the current programme for surface water management schemes.

Responses to comments made by the Committee included:-

1. A meeting had been arranged with residents in connection with flooding issues in Bear Street, Market Rasen.
2. The surface flooding issues on Acacia Avenue, Spalding was caused by problems to infrastructure.
3. Officers agreed to speak to Councillor Mrs A M Austin, separately, in connection with the problems of flooding on Marsh Lane, Boston.
4. The Environment Agency was aware of the threat of flooding from the River Trent.
5. The necessary infrastructure should be in place before any major development was approved to address the impact of flooding.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by the Committee be noted and actioned accordingly by officers.

18 THE FLOOD RE-INSURANCE (FLOOD RE) SCHEME - REGULATIONS

The Committee received a report on the implications of the Government's Flood Reinsurance (Flood Re) Scheme and the consultations on the subsequent Regulations. The Scheme was expected to be implemented in April 2015 and would address the problem of householders being unable to get insurance cover due to flooding.

Responses to comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The level of insurance excess was covered in the Regulations and would be limited.
2. Householders could not be refused insurance.
3. The scheme emphasised the importance of householders taking action to reduce the risks from flooding.
4. In addition to directors from the insurance industry there was also an independent "Responsible Officer" appointee to the Scheme. However, the Committee was concerned that there were no independent directors on Flood Re. Officers would feed back this comment as part of the consultation.

5. The maps produced by the Environment Agency were good, would improve in the future and should be used by householders to challenge the insurance industry if they had any problems insuring their property.
6. Surface water was a problem and householders needed to examine the Environment Agency maps to understand the issues further.
7. The housing market had a role to show the effects of flooding.
8. It was agreed that publicity about the scheme should be examined at the meeting on 27 February 2015 and suggestions included using Council Tax bills and County News to get messages out.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by the Committee be noted and actioned accordingly by officers.

19 LOUTH AND HORNCastle FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on progress of the Louth and Horncastle flood alleviation schemes.

With regard to Louth comments by officers included:-

1. A legal agreement still needed to be agreed for the contract.
2. Negotiations were on-going with landowners in connection with the storage of flood water and agreement about the content of the planning application.
3. Funding and risk carried by partners was being examined.

With regard to Horncastle comments by officers included:-

1. In noting that the Louth project would be carried out first any monies remaining following completion of that development would be transferred to the Horncastle project.
2. Should any extra funding be required for the project then this would be met by a local levy which would be reduced over time and a legal agreement was required to put this in place.
3. Future maintenance costs would be met by the Town Council and should there be any surplus monies remaining from the Louth and Horncastle projects this could be used to meet future maintenance costs.
4. The same contractor would be use for the Horncastle and Louth projects.

Councillor Mrs F M Martin MBE, the local District Council Member, welcomed the acknowledgement of risk by partners, the discussions with landowners and the partnership working between Horncastle and Louth Town Councils.

RESOLVED

That the update on both projects be noted.

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20 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT
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The Committee received a report in connection with the Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly subject to the following additions:-

1. An examination of the various approaches to flooding across the county - 27 February 2105. This report would also include the use of sandbags and other measures householders could take to prevent damage to their property.
2. Monitoring of the lessons learnt from the tidal surge of December 2013 - 27 February 2015
3. An examination of the effects of flooding on agricultural land including the action being taken by the Local Enterprise Partnership - 27 February 2015
4. A progress report on improvement works to flood defences at Slippery Gowt and Fishtoft – future meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm