

**FLOOD AND DRAINAGE  
 MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY  
 COMMITTEE  
 11 DECEMBER 2015**

**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: R Austin (Boston Borough Council), I G Fleetwood (West Lindsey District Council), Mrs F M Martin MBE (East Lindsey District Council), B Russell (South Kesteven District Council), M D Seymour (South Holland District Council), I Carrington (North Kesteven District Council) and B Charlesworth (City of Lincoln Council).

External Agencies –

P Bateson (Chief Executive of the Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board), Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency), District Councillor J Summers (Leader of West Lindsey District Council), R Caudwell (Chairman of the South Forty Foot Drain Steering Group), Keith Casswell (Chairman of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board), Stafford Proctor (The Wash Frontages Group) and Ian Warsap (Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board).

C J Davie (Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism) and S M Tweedale (Executive Support Councillor for Economic Development, Planning and Tourism) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer), Andrew Jee (Project Manager), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Mark Welsh (Flood Risk and Development Manager) and Richard Wills (Executive Director for Environment and Economy).

**23 APOLOGIES/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS**

Apologies from absence were received from Councillors D Jackson (Lincoln City Council) and J F Money (North Kesteven District Council).

It was noted that Councillors B Charlesworth (Lincoln City Council) and I Carrington had replaced Councillors D Jackson (Lincoln City Council) and J F Money (North Kesteven District Council) respectively, for this meeting only.

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24 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Note: Some Committee members wished the following interests to be noted:-

Councillor M Brookes – Member of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board and Witham Fourth Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor C J T H Brewis – Member of the North Level Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor M D Seymour - Member of the South Holland Internal Drainage Board and North Level Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor R Austin – Member of Witham Fourth Internal Drainage Board and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.

Councillor B Russell – Member of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.

25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FLOOD AND  
DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 4  
SEPTEMBER 2015

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4 September 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Minute No 13 – Declarations of Members' Interests on page two having the interests of Councillor D Seymour inserted as being a member of North Level Internal Drainage Board and South Holland Internal Drainage Board.

26 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TOURISM AND  
SENIOR OFFICERS (ECONOMY AND PLACE)

Councillor C J Davie, the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism advised the Committee that there was nothing to report at this present time.

27 WRANGLE SEA BANKS

The Chairman invited Peter Bateson, Chief Executive of the Witham Fourth District Internal Drainage Board to present to the Committee, the Wrangle Sea Banks Scheme.

Details of the Scheme were appended to the Report at Appendix A.

It was reported that the objective of the scheme was to raise and re-profile the sea defences to keep pace with climate change. The scheme included contributions of up to 40 metres of farmland to provide the spoil to be used to re-profile the banks.

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The Committee were guided through Appendix A to the report 'Capital Works Programme – Wrangle Sea Banks' from which reference was made to the following:-

- Details of the work to be undertaken to the sea defences near Wrangle where land had been identified as being the lowest along the Wash frontage;
- The Committee were advised that landowners who farmed behind the sea defences would be contributing up to 40 metres of grade one farmland to provide the spoil to re-profile the sea banks, as the use of traditional borrow pits were not currently possible due to the Wash status being a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- The fact that Witham Fourth Internal Drainage Board was leading on the project had enabled local contractors to be used. It was highlighted that the partnership approach together with a number of households protected had enabled an application to be made for Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding. The Committee were advised that the project had already had indicative approval for inclusion in the six year investment programme. The work would take place over three financial years from 2015/16 to 2017/18;
- The re-profiled sea banks would be constructed to have a shallow sloped rear face, which would lead to a soak dyke to cope with any future over topping. The construction would also provide for some wildlife habitation; and
- The cost of the scheme was £600,000. The scheme would protect 463 properties that were at risk, several businesses and 340 hectares of prime agricultural land.

A discussion ensued, from which the following issues were raised:-

- The necessity for the scheme as it was very important to protect farmland for the future. Some discussion was had as to whether borrow pits should be used, as some members felt that the value of the farmland land for growing was very important also. A question was asked if there was a breach of the single bank how far the water would travel in a two hour period. The Committee were advised a test breach scenario had shown that the water had gone for hundreds of metres, as far as the A52. The Committee were advised further that the re-profiling of the bank (1 in 4 slope) would allow for over topping without destroying the bank;
- It was asked whether contributions should be requested from residents affected. The Committee were advised that properties paid drainage rates, therefore everyone contributed to such a scheme, with funding from the Environment Agency, DEFRA and the Drainage Board; and
- The vulnerability of the East Coast. The Committee noted that discussions were ongoing with MP's and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and that a good case was being made for Lincolnshire, with regard to the Coastal Economy and food production. The Committee agreed to send a letter to the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism expressing their support to the scheme and the importance of protecting the coast.

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The Chairman invited Stafford Proctor from the Wash Frontages Group to address the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the Wash Frontages Group was a grass roots organisation who acted as a facilitator, and enabler of improvements to the flood defences around the Wash to protect people, towns, businesses, farming and food production.

The short verbal presentation made reference to:-

- The need to protect the fens as some 650,000 lived and worked there. It was also highlighted that the area was the major centre for food production and processing in the UK, and was therefore vital for food supply and employment;
- That tidal surge had increased from 1953 to 2013. The Committee were advised of the tidal surge levels at Boston frontage, they were as follows: 31 Jan 1953 5.20m; 11 Jan 1978 5.49m; and 5 Dec 2014 6.00m;
- That the group was working in partnership with all agencies to help improve coastal and river flood defences, as highlighted in the Wash Banks Performance Review 2012. The need to source funding for the improvements required; and
- The importance of the 5.4km flood defence improvement scheme at Wrangle, north of Boston, the first major improvement to coastal flood defences for over 30 years.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- That there was no evidence that accretion was taking place within the Wash; and
- The availability of the Wash Banks Performance Review 2012 Report. The Committee were advised that Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency) would let Officers have a copy of the Executive Summary from the report to be forwarded on to members of the Committee.

In conclusion, the Committee gave their full support to the Wrangle Sea Banks Scheme.

**RESOLVED**

1. That support be given by the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee to the Wrangle Sea Banks Scheme.
2. That a letter be sent by the Chairman, Councillor C L Strange to the Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism expressing the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee's support to the Wrangle Sea Banks Scheme; and to the importance of protecting the coast.

**28**     LOUTH AND HORNCASTLE FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Phil Younge, Area Manager Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, Environment Agency, which provided a progress report on implementing flood alleviations schemes for Louth and Horncastle.

Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency) guided the Committee through the report making particular reference to:-

Louth Alleviation Scheme update

It was reported that Louth was a 'rapid response' catchment which was situated on the River Lud with a low protection of flooding. The Committee was advised that a partnership approach to funding was adopted by all organisations to build two flood storage reservoirs to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses in Louth.

The Committee were advised further that work had commenced on site in July 2015, and was progressing as planned, with the control structures at both sites nearing completion. It was reported that culverts had been installed on the south site and that work to the earth embankment on the north side was 33% completed. It was highlighted that the clay material at the Louth sites was enabling the two schemes to progress according to the programme, but there remained a risk of delay due to the inclement weather. It was however hoped that the works would be completed in 2016.

It was highlighted that the site had received visits from the members of Louth Town Council and from students from a local secondary school to observe progress being made on the scheme.

Horncastle Alleviation Scheme Update

The Committee were advised that the Horncastle site was situated on the confluence of the rivers Bain and Waring, and that flooding occurred as a result of high flows in both watercourses. The scheme would build a flood storage reservoir on the River Bain and individual property protection for those at risk from the River Waring.

It was reported that work had started on site in July 2015. However due to archaeological investigations at Horncastle; and the type of material at the site, construction of the main earthworks had stopped for the winter period, but work was continuing on the control structure. As a result of these factors and the wet weather there was a delay of 2/3 months to the programme.

The Committee were advised that the Horncastle site had also received visits from Town and Parish Councils to see how the scheme was progressing.

The Committee were also advised that agreements with landowners were nearing completion and that some advance payments had been made.

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The East Lindsey District Council representative advised the Committee that work was progressing well and that all parties were working well together on site. It was also reported that the findings of the archaeological investigations had been very interesting.

The Committee were advised that the scheme would be finished for the summer of 2016.

**RESOLVED**

That the progress made towards implementing flood alleviation schemes for Louth and Horncastle be noted.

**29 BOSTON BARRIER UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report from the Environment Agency, which provided the Committee with an update with regard to the Boston Barrier.

Deborah Campbell from the Environment Agency advised that the Boston Barrier project remained on track to be completed by December 2019. Extensive work was currently being undertaken to produce the relevant documents needed to support the Transport and Works Act Order application to the Government in the Spring of 2016. The Committee were advised that the Environmental Statement for the scheme was expected to go out to consultation with statutory consultees in January 2016.

The Environment Agency had also started the process to appoint a supplier for the design and build contract for the Boston Barrier for 2016. It was noted that the detailed design work would commence once the Transport and Work Act Oder had been submitted. It was hoped that construction would start in 2017 following a successful Transport and Works Order application.

The Committee were advised that currently a series of public exhibitions were being held in Boston to launch new information and consult with local people about any impact arising from the proposed contraction methods. It was reported that over 150 people had attended the consultation events so far.

Members of the Committee were invited to watch a new computer generated animation showing the Boston Barrier Scheme in more detail.

During questions, the Committee raised the following issues:-

- An expression of thanks was extended to Environment Agency staff at the drop in point for all their patience and support;
- The need to ensure that a reassuring message was communicated to the general public about the scheme. The Committee was advised that some issues had come forward and they were the tidal surge through Boston, the effect the barrier would have on the fishing fleet; and protection for the industrial estate. Communication played a vital part in getting local people on board with the scheme. The Committee was advised that the Environment

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Agency and Boston Borough Council were working together doing lots of engagement sessions and on-line updates. Reassurance was given at the meeting by the Environment Agency representative that the fishing fleet would be able to operate as normal, and that the industrial estate at Marsh Lane would have no adverse effect from tidal surge;

- Timescale for the Transport and Works Act Order – The Committee was advised that the draft would be in for March 2016, if all went to plan the project would then commence in 2017; and
- Life expectancy of the barrier. It was reported that the barrier had a life expectancy of one hundred years. One member enquired regarding the hydraulic cylinders being open to the elements would have an effect on the barrier. Officers agreed to relay concerns on to the project team.

The Committee welcomed the update on the Boston Barrier.

**RESOLVED**

That the Boston Barrier update be noted.

**30     BLACK SLUICE CATCHMENT**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Ian Warsap, Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board, Keith Casswell, Chairman of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board and Robert Caudwell, Chairman of the South Forty Foot Drain Steering Group.

The Committee received an introduction from the Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board, which advised of the joint position statement on the future development of the Black Sluice Catchment flood risk management proposals following a six week consultation to look at how flood risk could be managed better in the future.

It was reported that the Environment Agency (EA) and the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (BSIDB) had identified some key points (full details were shown on page 27 of the report), and as a result both parties had agreed to move forward jointly.

The Committee were advised that the South Forty Foot Catchment Steering Group had been established, to which Robert Caudwell had been appointed as an Independent Chairman, to ensure continued dialogue between all risk management authorities and other organisations and individuals who had offered to assist in shaping the future flood risk management and sustainable development of the Black Sluice Catchment. This would then allow the EA to act as an equal partner rather than lead.

Representation on the group would comprise of representatives from BSIDB, EA, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The Steering Group would be focussing on four main areas for development. These were:-

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- Catchment wide asset management for land drainage and flood risk management;
- Water Resource;
- Water Level Management and Navigation; and
- Water Framework Directive.

Further details relating to each of the four development areas was detailed on pages 28/29 of the report presented.

It was highlighted that Lincolnshire was leading the way in this respect, as this way of proposed partnership working was a first locally and nationally.

The Committee were advised that the Group would be looking at good practice across the world to come up with solutions to the five development areas.

The Executive Councillor was delighted with the agreed solution, as a collective voice would help to find funding opportunities.

Members welcomed the joint approach being taken and invited the team to come back to the Committee with periodic updates.

**RESOLVED**

That the update on the Black Sluice Catchment be noted.

**31 COMMON WORKS PROGRAMME & LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CAPITAL SCHEMES 2015-16**

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy, which provided an update on the latest position with regard to the Common Works Programme for 2015/16, including the current programme for surface water management schemes.

Appendix A to the report identified the latest project spend profile for the current financial year and the programme of surface water schemes that were planned.

Members noted that in line with the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Drainage Management Partnership's policy of maintaining the greatest possible openness, the Common Works Programme for 2015/16 was published on Lincolnshire County Council's website. The policy distinguished between 'core' activities, which were those that Risk Management Authorities undertake in the normal course of their duties, and 'joint' activities which were those where two or more authorities had come together to deliver a solution.

It was noted further although the County Council's responsibility for surface water flood risk fell within the Common Works Programme, the Council had developed a programme of such works in consultation with its partners, to provide opportunities for joint working. The Committee were advised that Government funding was



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obtained through the Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid process, with schemes being assessed on a cost benefit basis with the County Council making contributions and delivering schemes.

The report advised the Committee that a business case had been submitted in December 2012 identifying a spending profile over the three years 2013/14 to 2015/16 from the County Council of £1.7m. A similar case had been submitted in June 2015 for further capital allocation for the 2016/17 financial year, with £630,000 being approved as a contribution to an indicative programme valued of just over £2m.

**RESOLVED**

That the actions in progress to deliver the current programme of works to manage local flood risk be noted.

**32**     **INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010**

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy, which informed the Committee of the position of all current investigations in the County under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

A spreadsheet summarising investigations in the County under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 was detailed at Appendix A to the report.

During discussion, the Committee made reference to individual properties on the list, and enquired as to what would be happening with regarding to insurance for properties situated within flood areas. The Committee were advised that currently lobbying was being undertaken with MP's to try and come up with a solution to the problem.

**RESOLVED**

That the report and Appendix be noted.

**33**     **FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report from the Executive Director with responsibility for Democratic Services, which asked the Flood and Drainage Scrutiny Committee to consider its Work Programme for the coming year. A copy of the Work Programme was detailed at Appendix A to the report presented.

The Health Scrutiny Officer invited the Committee to put forward any items for consideration by the Flood and Drainage Scrutiny Committee.

The following items were put forward:-

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- An update on the Black Sluice Programme;
- An update on the River Steeping from the Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board;
- An update on the River Welland Navigation; and
- Property Level Preventative Measures with regard to flooding – it was suggested that Mary Dhonau should be invited to speak on this matter.

Members also asked for confirmation as to whether the September meeting date was to be held on the 22 September (which was a Thursday date), or on Friday 23 September 2016. Officers agreed to confirm the 'actual' date to members of the Committee.

The Chairman also suggested that a representative from the Environment Agency that covered the Derbyshire/Nottingham/Leicester area should be invited to attend the next meeting.

**RESOLVED**

That the Work Programme presented be noted and updated accordingly with the suggestions as detailed above.

The meeting closed at 11.51 am