

**FLOOD AND DRAINAGE
 MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE
 29 MAY 2015**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C L STRANGE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors A M Austin, C J T H Brewis, M Brookes, R G Fairman, D C Hoyes MBE, J R Marriott, 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), J Money (North Kesteven District Council), B Russell (South Kesteven District Council) and M D Seymour (South Holland District Council)

External Agencies – Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency) and Alan Simpson (Anglian Water)

Councillors C J Davie and S M Tweedale, attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Paul Brookes (Principal Highways Officer), Hayley Harrison (Emergency Planning Assistant), David Hickman (Environmental Services Team Leader (Strategy and Partnership), David Powell (Head of Emergency Planning), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Mark Welsh (Flood, Risk and Development Manager), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer) and Richard Wills (Executive Director for Environment and Economy)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Bridges, District Councillor D Jackson, Sam Markillie (South Holland Internal Drainage Board) and David Sisson (Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board)

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, he had appointed Councillors C E D Mair and D C Hoyes to the Committee in place of Councillors Mrs V C Ayling and R Oxby, respectively, for this meeting only.

2 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor C J T H Brewis requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he now represented the County Council on the Local Government Association's Coastal Group.

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3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FLOOD AND
DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 27
FEBRUARY 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee held on 27 February 2015, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the deletion of the additional "Read" which appears twice in Resolution (b) (minute 37).

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

Executive Councillor C J Davie welcomed new members appointed to the Committee following the District Elections on 7 May 2015 and the annual meeting of the County Council on 15 May 2015. He welcomed Executive Support Councillor Stuart Tweedale who would be supporting him on his portfolio. He also took the opportunity to congratulate ex-Councillor J Churchill who had supported him as Executive Support Councillor on her success to being elected Member for Parliament for the Bury St Edmunds constituency.

Executive Councillor C J Davie stated that following the re-appointment of Elizabeth Truss MP as the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs he had invited her to Lincolnshire to hear about the challenges which faced Lincolnshire to protect the coast and coastal defences. There was a need to find funding to protect valuable farmland in Lincolnshire and supported the comments made by George Eustace, MP, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on the need for the UK to produce more of its own food.

5 EMERGENCY EVACUATION ROUTE SIGNAGE

(Councillor I G Fleetwood arrived in the meeting).

The Committee received a report in connection with emergency evacuation route signage from those areas of the county subject to severe coastal flooding. Officers stated that the decision to approve the signage had been delegated to the Executive Councillor P Robinson, who had, amongst others, responsibility for this area.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The lack of discussion about the risks involved for example. there had not been a major flooding event in South Holland since 1810 and therefore was it worth all of the effort to erect signs.
2. There was a danger of erecting signs and for them not to be used for many years which could lead to ridicule from the public.

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3. The direction of travel by the public in the south east of the county shown on the maps was incorrect as it showed the need for the public to travel to Bourne instead of Kings Lynn which was more suitable.
4. Some communities had been omitted from the maps in the south east of the county, e.g. The Deepings and Holbeach.
5. Vandalism of signs was a possibility as this happened in Halifax during the hot summer of 1976.
6. Local communities already knew the best routes and therefore signage was not needed.
7. Coastal protection needed to be examined.
8. Many tourists visited the coast and were not familiar with the geography of the area.
9. The effects of the flooding incident in France in 2010 needed to be considered.
10. The cost of the signage was small.
11. Were there any plans to install evacuation routes in Sat Navs?
12. There were many vulnerable people living in the Boston area that had not any means of evacuating themselves.
13. There were fewer tourists in the autumn and winter in the UK compared to Florida during their winter.
14. The signs should not be permanent because of new development.
15. There was a need to examine secondary sea defences.
16. New housing had been built in the flood zone with no access to roof space.
17. The use of photovoltaic lighting for the signs should be considered.

Officers' responses to the Committee's comments included:-

1. Planning for a major 1:200 multi-event flooding event was important and followed advice from the Environment Agency.
2. Lessons had been learnt from the French floods in 2010 where overtopping had led to deaths.
3. The evacuation routes in the south east of the county had been chosen by consultants but concerns by the Committee about direction of travel and the inclusion/omission of some routes would be raised with the consultants and a response given to the Committee.
4. The use of technology, e.g. Sat Navs, was being examined by the Government and a response would be given to the Committee.
5. The Environment Agency was examining the cost of reinstating secondary sea defences and South Holland District Council was a pilot for this development.
6. The evacuation signage was required to protect the public.
7. The first priority was to evacuate people living in single storey buildings and located immediately behind the sea defences.
8. People needed to be educated about the risks which would increase as climate change took place.
9. The evacuation signs would be kept in place from November to March.

Executive Councillor C J Davie stated that he supported the proposals in the report adding that the Council had responsibility to protect its citizens; stated that there was a need to increase the economy on the coast and to extend the holiday season; that the Executive Councillors having responsibility for highways and emergency planning

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supported the proposals and that it was wrong for District Planning Authorities to build social housing in flood zones contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED (Note: Councillor I G Fleetwood did not vote as he had arrived in the meeting during consideration of this item)

That the Committee fully supports the recommendation to the Executive that the County Council (as Highways Authority) invests in the pre-production, installation and maintenance of signage along pre-defined routes on a permanent basis, in order to facilitate a safe and effective self-evacuation strategy that maximises public and responder safety whilst allowing the most efficient use and prioritisation of responding resources during a coastal flood emergency, subject to the comments made by the Committee being noted, including those relating to evacuation routes in the south east of the county and the use of Sat Nav.

6 LOUTH AND HORNCastle FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES

The Committee received a report in connection with progress made towards implementing flood alleviation schemes for Louth and Horncastle.

Before consideration of the report the Chairman stated that he did not propose to allow the public to speak on this application, that the Committee could only scrutinise the proposals to protect Horncastle and it was not in the Committee's remit to consider compensation for landowners which was entirely for landowners to discuss separately with the Environment Agency.

Officers stated that planning permission had now been given for the Louth scheme and that the Water Voles had been successfully removed.

With regard to Horncastle, officers stated that the outcome of the planning application was awaited, that flood protection of property was now complete, that a lot of work was on-going in connection with this scheme and agreed to circulate the responses from the Environment Agency to questions asked by landowners which had been read out to the Committee.

Councillor W J Aron, the local Member for Horncastle, supported the flood alleviation measures, requested that the issues raised by the landowners were addressed and that the scheme was now completed as quickly as possible.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The work done by Robert Caudwell in providing advice on the flood alleviation scheme in Horncastle was appreciated.
2. The landowners and farmers were an important and integral partner in the Horncastle scheme and it was important that the negotiations between them and the Environment Agency were expedited and resolved as soon as possible.
3. It was important that the landowners and farmers were properly compensated and that the people of Horncastle received flood protection as quickly as possible.
4. How effective was the material being used to build the dam?

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5. Should there be any problems with compensation payment to landowners and farmers then the newly elected Member of Parliament for Louth should be approached as the matter would need to be raised with the EU because this was not the Committee's responsibility.

Officers stated that the design of the dam embankment and the materials used met national engineering standards.

RESOLVED

(a) That the Committee support the roll out of flood alleviation schemes for Louth and Horncastle but are concerned at the points made by local landowners (with the exclusion of compensation matters, which is not the Committee's concern) but in the Committee's scrutiny role, the Committee sends the strong message, that it supports cooperation between interested parties on all schemes.

(b) That details of the responses by the Environment Agency to questions from landowners and farmers, read out to the Committee, be circulated to the Committee.

7 BOSTON BARRIER

The Committee received a report in connection with progress on work to develop a tidal flood barrier in Boston.

Officers explained why the Water Level Management had been removed from the current scope of the barrier project following consultation with the County Council and due to its complexities it would now be delivered through the Fens Waterways Link in the future.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. Water Level Management was a long term aspiration and flood protection was a priority.
2. Implications of the Water Level Management not proceeding at this time on Boston and other facilities on the River Witham, i.e. the Fishermen's Quay and lock.
3. Could the "wash" areas outside Boston cope with excess water from heavy rain and a high tide?
4. Would boats be able to exit the River Witham into the Haven and then into the Wash?
5. Had the Environment Agency examined installing a causeway across to Norfolk?
6. The installation of a lock would help to control the amount of water flowing into the Haven and therefore reduce the risk of flooding.

Officers' responses included:-

1. The main priority was to ensure that Boston was protected from flooding. Discussions would take place with Boston Borough Council and partners on how to improve economic regeneration in Boston, including the Lock.

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2. The Fishermen's Quay was going to have to be relocated down river from the Barrier but now, without funding from the Water Level Management, this was going to be costly. This expense would not have been met by DEFRA money as that was only for flood prevention.
3. The cost of installing a Lock was high and part of the £11m allocation for Water Level Management would have funded moving the fishermen's fleet. No flood risk money was being used for its relocation.
4. Excess rainfall clashing with a tidal surge had been examined and the probability of this happening was very low.
5. The "wash" areas outside of Boston had the capacity to deal with any excess water.
6. It would be possible to take a boat, with a mast, out of the River Witham to the Haven and then onto the Wash but it would be necessary to raise the barrier.
7. The installation of a causeway to Norfolk had been investigated and was too expensive.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.

8 RIVER STEEPING UPDATE

The Committee received a report in connection with progress on assessing the options for reducing flood risk in the Steeping catchment, in particular local aspirations for de-silting works.

Officers stated that since the initial results of the updated modelling work this had raised doubt over the cost effectiveness of the proposed de-silting works. The modelling work to confirm the way forward was on-going but for a variety of reasons, including the shortage of hydrologists, the results were not expected until early June. The risk from overtopping was not significant.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. What were the Environment Agency's future plans for flood alleviation?
2. The Venables's report about the flooding in the Somerset Levels needed to be examined and taken into consideration in connection with the River Steeping.
3. The advice provided by the Internal Drainage Board to the Environment Agency in connection with 1:50 protection of properties along the banks of the River Steeping had not been used by the Agency.
4. It was thought that Robert Caudwell had identified a funding stream to carry out the de-silting work.
5. Local residents had been informed in public meetings that the problems of the River Steeping would be solved.
6. It was important that any decision for the River Steeping was based on evidence.
7. The Environment Agency should provide a list of schemes which had greater priority than the River Steeping scheme.

Officers' responses included:-

1. Coastal protection was the main priority for the Environment Agency and a six year programme was outlined.
2. It was possible to release more water down the River Steeping to help with de-silting.
3. Work was on-going with farmers to reduce the amount of silt entering the River Steeping.
4. The stability of the banks of the River Steeping was being examined.
5. It was important that the use of resources was based on evidence and risk.

District Councillor Mrs F M Martin MBE requested that as a representative from East Lindsey District Council she should be kept informed of meetings involving the River Steeping and this was noted.

RESOLVED

That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.

9 INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010

The Committee received a standard report on the position of all current Section 19 investigations in the county. Officers stated that the report now only included information in connection with only those sites where investigations had not yet been completed.

Comments by officers included:-

1. Keelby (Eastfield) - Anglian Water were trying to identify drains in the village of Keelby.
2. Gainsborough (various roads) – investigations of the problems had been undertaken in conjunction with Severn Trent, advice provided to local residents and the work had been completed by highways.
3. Horncastle (various roads) – a bid had been submitted for funding and work was on-going to solve the problem.

With regard to Horncastle, the Committee stated that it would be useful to have a timescale for the flood alleviation work, the need for consultation with all local Councillors and home owners on the effects on infrastructure from development. In this respect, officers agreed the need to examine the effects of development on infrastructure in Horncastle and Anglian Water agreed to give a presentation to the next meeting of the Committee on this subject.

RESOLVED

(a) That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted.

(b) That Anglian Water give a presentation to the next meeting of the Committee on the effects of development on infrastructure.

10 NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON WATER MANAGEMENT

The Committee received a presentation in connection with proposals for delivering Sustainable urban Drainage systems (SuDs) and changes to the statutory planning consultation process.

Officers stated that since the introduction of the Flood and Water Act 2010, there had been changes to the legislation which affected the role of Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLAF) which involved changes to the statutory consultation process. Schedule 3 of the Act (to establish SuDs Approving Body (SAB), responsible for adopting and maintaining SuDs, and Highway authorities responsible for maintaining SuDs in public roads, to national standards), had now been revoked. The LLAF would now become a statutory consultee in relation to surface water flood risk (only) for Major Development and consultation on flood risk relating to surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses for all development to be subject to local arrangements by the Local Planning Authority.

Officers stated that a training event had been held with Local Planning Authorities in the county and with developers to discuss the new arrangements and the new arrangements came into effect on 6 April 2015.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. It would be useful to have a County Council representative on each of the Internal Drainage Boards which would help with the feedback of information and also help with co-operation with partners.
2. What areas did SuDs cover?
4. The setting up of Management Companies to maintain development.
5. The effects on householders if a Management Company disappeared?
6. Would Internal Drainage Boards be required to impose a levy on new developments?
7. Management of surface water arising from new housing developments.
8. Historical problems associated with the management of surface water from developments and problems with flooding.

Officers' responses included:-

1. SuDs were applicable to all areas.
2. The use of Management Companies to maintain surface water was a contentious issue but the County Council had been advised by the District Councils that the current arrangements were adequate. The County Council and Anglian Water needed to be in a position to be able to adopt any provision for the maintenance of surface water.
3. The best Management Companies always involved local residents.
4. Internal Drainage Boards received additional funding for new developments.

5. There now a much better understanding of the over land flow of water which could now be reported to the District Planning Authorities.

It was agreed that the presentation by officers be sent to the Committee.

RESOLVED

(a) That comments made by the Committee and responses given be noted.

(b) That the presentation given at today's meeting be sent to the Committee.

11 FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report in connection with its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly, subject to the following items being added:-

1. A presentation by Anglian Water in connection with the effects of development on infrastructure. (4 September 2015)
2. Initiative with Farmers and riparian owners in the south east of the county. (Future meeting to be agreed)
3. Black Sluice Pumping Station (4 September 2015)

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm