

**FLOOD AND DRAINAGE
MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
3 MARCH 2017**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C L STRANGE (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors 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), P Vaughan (City of Lincoln 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).

Councillors C J Davie, Eddy Poll (Anglian North Regional Flood and Coastal Committee), David Sisson (Lindsey Marsh Internal Drainage Board) and W S Webb (Executive Support Councillor Development (Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism) attended the meeting as observers.

Officers in attendance:-

Paul Brookes (County Flood Risk Manager), Deborah Campbell (Environment Agency), David Hickman (Growth & Environment Commissioner), Mark Welsh (Flood Risk and Development Manager), Katrina Cope (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer), Norman Robinson (Area Director, Environment Agency) and Steve Eason-Harris (Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Officer).

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs V C Ayling, A Bridges and A M Austin.

73 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

There were no declarations of members' interest made at this point of the proceedings.

74 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2016

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee held on 3 March 2017, be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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75 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CHIEF OFFICERS

Councillor W S Webb (Executive Support Councillor for Development) brought to the Committee's attention the increased amount of litter/fly tipping in the County; and highlighted as a consequence of the excess litter, the problems encountered when clearing out gullies and drains.

It was agreed that the issue of litter and the potential for a Countywide litter campaign would be raised and discussed further at the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meeting due to be held later in the day.

The Executive Councillor for Development (Economic Development, Environment, Planning and Tourism) advised the Committee of the following issues:-

- That Victoria Atkins, Member of Parliament for Louth and Horncastle had held a successful second Flood Forum to address issues around Coastal Flood Mitigation;
- That it was hoped also for the future to get together Councillors representing coastal areas to hear their views and concerns; and
- It was noted that the East Coast Review was on track and that the consultation was to be held through the summer of 2017.

The Executive Councillor extended thanks to the Chairman and the Committee for all their hard work over the last four years.

The Chairman also highlighted to the Committee that Councillor J Money had completed a full day working with refuse collection services staff at North Kesteven District Council, to raise much needed funds for his nominated charity, Lincolnshire's St Barnabas Hospice.

76 UPDATE EAST COAST TIDAL SURGE

The Committee received a short verbal update from Norman Robinson (Environment Agency), which advised the Committee on the process and procedures put in place behind the scenes, prior to the state of emergency in Lincolnshire being declared on 13 January 2017 by the Strategic Command Group. The Committee noted that six severe flood warnings had been put into action, as a result of predicted tidal surge and expected excess wave action due to force nine winds which as a result could have seen significant over topping along the east coast from Donna Nook to Gibraltar Point. A slide presented to the Committee indicated that the surge height predicted could have exceeded the surge height of 1.8m which occurred in 2013. It was highlighted that around 100 soldiers from the Catterick army base had been deployed to Skegness, where about 3,000 people had been urged to leave their homes or move upstairs.

The Committee was advised that the co-ordinated support for Lincolnshire had been led by the Strategic Command Group. The Committee noted that the Environment

Agency had been able to draft in 60 extra staff over the three days to help deploy temporary barriers, sandbags and provide advice.

A concern raised by some members of the Committee was how to get across to members of the public how dangerous these situations were, especially when some still continued to be close spectators on promenades, and coastal paths where the full impact of waves would be felt.

Steve Eason-Harris, Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Officer concurred with the earlier presentation and reiterated that everything had been in place to deal with a flood situation and evacuation had the need arisen.

It was reported that the feedback had been fantastic and that that all agencies, organisations had all worked together to get everything right, to ensure that lessons learnt from 2013 had been incorporated into the response.

It was reported further that a de-brief was due to take place on 9 March 2017, from which a report would be written which would be made available to members of the Committee.

The Committee was advised that the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum work was being promoted by the Cabinet Office; and some of the policies were being taken on as a tool to promote best practise.

Some members of the Committee felt that a letter of thanks should be sent to the Gold Commander and team for a job well done.

It was also highlighted that the issue of food security and the importance of farming land needed to be uppermost in any discussions/lobbying going forward.

Some discussion took place surrounding notification lead up time, and the Committee was advised that Flood Warning notification started five days in advance; and then reviewed three days in advance, when conversations would be had with partner organisations.

It was also highlighted that secondary sea defences were very important, and the Committee was advised the Environment Agency was working with South Holland Internal Drainage Board regarding designating a trial section. The Committee noted that legal advice was being sought regarding this. The Committee noted further that if the initial investigations were successful, the work would be explored further, and a decision would then be taken on whether to expand the initiative.

RESOLVED

That a letter should be sent from the Chairman on behalf of the Committee to the Gold Commander and team expressing appreciation for all their hard work and dedication during the recent Coastal Tidal Surge for the East Coast on 13 January 2017.

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The Committee received a short presentation concerning the River Rase – Flood Risk Management from Deborah Campbell, Area Flood Risk Manager, Environment Agency.

The presentation made reference to:-

- The extent of the floodplain in Market Rasen/Middle Rasen;
- Details of the two flood storage reservoirs upstream of the town of Market Rasen. The Committee was also advised that the flood storage reservoirs were inspected annually; and that monthly obstruction checks were carried out from the reservoirs to the downstream end of Middle Rasen. It was noted also that weekly checks were made on the trash screens on both reservoirs;
- The maintenance programme for Market Rasen/Middle Rasen. The presentation identified the frequency for when channels were cleared, grass was cut; and weeds were cleared; and
- The Committee noted that the Environment Agency was a statutory consultee for development in the floodplain and that advice/recommendations were provided to the Local Planning Authority concerning flood risk mitigation, not increasing flood risk to third parties; and surface water discharge to a main river. It was also highlighted that the County Council, also as a statutory consultee would provide advice for the on-site surface water management.

The Committee was also advised of the Environment Agency reorganisation locally, which had included the recruitment of nine additional staff; this would work alongside drainage boards and the County Council. The Committee also noted that reorganisation was now based upon catchment areas and that revised contact details would be sent to the Scrutiny Officer for distribution to all members of the Committee.

Other matters highlighted included:-

- Boston Barrier – The Committee noted that the Public Inquiry in relation to the Transport and Works Order for the Boston Barrier was due to be commence on 19 April 2017, the outcome of which would be available during the Autumn of 2017;
- Flood Alleviation Schemes at Louth and Horncastle were both due to open on 11 June 2017;
- That the Lincs Shore Annual Campaign was due to start during April/May when a dredger would be working on the coast. Committee members were invited to watch the dredger in action; and anyone interested was to contact Deborah Campbell; as the dredger only operated over the top of the tide;
- Formal consultation concerning Saltfleet to Gibraltar Point would be available during the summer; and
- That the 2017/18 programme for Environment Agency Activity had been published on the website. It was agreed that details would be forwarded on to the Scrutiny Officer to send out to Committee members.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee extended thanks to the Environment Agency for their continued support at meetings.

RESOLVED

That the update on the River Rase – Flood Risk Management and on the Environment Agency issues be noted.

78 OUTCOME OF THE RIVER STEEPING WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report from Richard Wills, Executive Director with responsibility for Democratic Services, which provided the Committee with an update on the outcome of the River Steeping Working Group.

Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer guided the Committee through the report advising that on 26 February 2016 the Committee had approved the formation of a Working Group to consider local concerns relating to the River Steeping. A decision was then made to hold a Working Group meeting once the Environment Agency had completed the proposed remodelling of the river.

A meeting of the Working Group had then been held on 30 January 2017, from which it had been agreed that a programme of enhanced maintenance would be undertaken on the River Steeping, which would be funded with grant and contributions from the Internal Drainage Board which was part of the fully funded programme to 2021. It was reported that in addition to this a £60k contribution from East Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council had been identified to deliver additional works as part of a wider Wainfleet Improvement Plan.

The Committee was invited to consider and comment on the outcomes from the Working Group and the recommendations detailed on page 13 of the report presented.

The Electoral Division Councillor expressed thanks to the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board for their help and support; and advised that local residents still had concerns regarding bank stability. The Committee was advised that discussions were planned with the Government and Natural England on this matter.

RESOLVED

1. That support be given to the proposed enhanced work programme of maintenance (fully funded until 2021) as set out in the report; and to continued partnership working and local engagement in developing future maintenance plans beyond 2021.
2. That further discussions be endorsed between Officers, Environment Agency and Natural England in relation to maintaining bank integrity and promoting safer river banks, highlighting local concerns in relation to burrowing animals.

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3. That support be given to timely community engagement with residents and businesses to determine local priorities as part of the Wainfleet Improvement Plan additional works.
4. That support be given to the local community in exploring options for desilting where appropriate, in conjunction with the identified local priorities and in the interest of the economic wellbeing of Wainfleet.

79 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Pete Moore, Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection, which outlined the work that had been undertaken to develop Community Resilience & Emergency preparedness in Lincolnshire.

Councillor C J T H Brewis wished it to be noted that he was closely involved with the Long Sutton Community Scheme.

It was reported that one recommendation from the Pitt Review (2008) specifically related to work the County Council carried out was that its communities should take charge of their own actions during flooding events until emergency responders could attend, and that community responders should provide the tools and training required by the community to be able to cope in the interim.

The Committee noted that Lincolnshire County Council had taken the information presented from the Pitt review and adapted one word "Flood" and replaced it with "Emergency". At the start of 2008 there were five community based emergency plans in existence in Lincolnshire. Since that time a lot of work had been done to:-

- Identify communities most at risk;
- Refine community emergency plan templates;
- Training programmes; and
- Buy in from partners and the community.

The report highlighted that of the 500 or so parish councils, 151 had been identified as being most at risk from all forms of flooding (rivers, sea, surface and ground). It was further highlighted that working with Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils, some engagement sessions had been arranged on the back of the prevent agenda and the Community Cohesion Initiative to deliver community resilience awareness training to targeted community groups based around the parish council system.

The Committee was advised that 122 parish/town councils had undergone community emergency planning training within the County with 103 plans being started or developed. It was also noted that a number of community groups had actively participated in both local and national exercises such as Exercise Barnes Wallis and Exercise Grey Seal.

It was reported that areas of community resilience had had an impact in recent years and was strengthening ties between emergency responders, volunteers and the

community, which had resulted in clear and unambiguous communication channels between all stakeholders.

Details of the five stage training programme available was detailed on page 43 of the report presented. It was highlighted that work was ongoing to develop a website; and encourage the use of social media to enhance overall community resilience.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- An example was given how inappropriate communication had a detrimental effect on volunteers;
- One member stressed that there was a need to keep all informed, and that there was a lot that could be learnt from attending exercises; and
- Some members extended their thanks to officers for all their hard work in ensuring there was community resilience and emergency preparedness in Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED

That the report concerning Community Resilience & Emergency Preparedness in Lincolnshire be noted.

80 TO REPORT PROGRESS ON THE INVESTIGATIONS MADE IN THE COUNTY UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 (FWMA)

The Committee gave consideration to a report from Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy, which provided a position statement on all current Section 19 investigations in the County.

The Committee was advised that for Quarter 3 this year (October – December 2016), there had been no Section 19 investigations commenced. The Committee noted that the current Section 19 investigations shown in Appendix A had been presented to reflect the four new Local Highways Manager areas introduced as part of the recent Environment & Economy restructure.

Officers confirmed that no requests had been received from members of the Committee in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee expressed thanks to officers for all their work.

RESOLVED

That the progress made on investigations undertaken in the County under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 be noted.

81 FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

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The Committee received a report which enabled members to consider and make comments on the content of its work programme for the coming year to ensure that scrutiny activity was focussed on areas of greatest benefit.

Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that due to the County Council elections, the next meeting of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee would be held on 17 July 2017.

Two suggested items were put forward for inclusion in the future work programme. These were:-

- Water Resources East; and
- Update on the East Coast Tidal Surge.

Thanks were extended by the Committee to the Chairman for his fairness and the Chairman extended his thanks to all members of the Committee for their valuable participation and knowledge; and to all officers who had provided valuable support to the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman expressed particular thanks to Daniel Steel, Scrutiny Officer for all his help and support.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm.