

Open Report on behalf of Phil Younge, Area Manager Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire, Environment Agency

Report to:	Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 May 2015
Subject:	Boston Barrier Tidal Flood Defence Scheme

Summary:

To outline progress on work to develop a tidal flood barrier in Boston.

Actions Required:

That the Committee consider and comment on progress to develop a tidal flood barrier in Boston.

1. Background

- 1.1 The £198million, five phase Boston Combined Strategy (BCS) was approved in 2008.
- 1.2 The BCS identified a multi-functional barrier as the best way to reduce the risk of tidal flooding to 20,000 properties over the next 100 years and achieve waterways objectives like the Fens Waterways Link by managing water levels through the town.
- 1.3 Over 800 properties, including 84 businesses, flooded across 55 streets during the tidal surge on 5 December 2013. If the barrier had been built on 5 December 2013 then it would have prevented the flooding.
- 1.4 Government has committed £73million to build the barrier.
- 1.5 The Boston Barrier Partnership (Environment Agency, Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board) has committed to delivering the Boston Barrier by December 2019.

2. Update

- 2.1 Immediate Water Level Management (WLM) has been removed from the current scope of the Boston Barrier project following consultation with Lincolnshire County Council. Due to the complexities around how WLM

would be delivered and its intrinsic link to the Fens Waterways Link scheme, it has been seen more appropriate that this element of the scheme is delivered through the Fens Waterways Link in the future.

- 2.2 Water Level Management (WLM) will create a safe and reliable non-tidal inland navigation link between Grand Sluice and Black Sluice Lock forming phase 2 of the Fens Waterways Link. As a key partner in the project Lincolnshire County Council committed £11m to deliver water based regeneration to Boston.
- 2.3 The original proposed WLM regime was to mirror the level of the River Witham through Boston on alternate tides. Our engagement work identified a group of river users navigating to the Wash and back that would likely object to these proposals. The project team has worked intensively with these stakeholders to reach agreement on how to operate WLM, as a result of this work we identified a lower retained level would not impact stakeholders.
- 2.4 A recent economic study has concluded that the most opportunities for economic growth in Boston as a result of WLM happen when the next stages of the Fens Waterways Link is completed. The study also identified the most benefits for Boston arise from holding water levels as high as possible for as long as possible.
- 2.5 The partnership has agreed to adopt a phased approach to water level management to allow more time to reach an acceptable solution. This means that the barrier will only operate as a tidal flood defence structure until further permissions to operate water level management are sought in the future.
- 2.6 The partnership remains committed to delivering future water level management as part of the Fens Waterways Link. The barrier will be designed so that it can still be used to manage water levels through Boston in the future.
- 2.7 The designs include WLM provision in the Boston Barrier scheme, which LCC are considering partial funding for through their current £11m allocation to deliver water-based regeneration to Boston.
- 2.8 We have implemented a scope of works freeze on the Barrier location and design. Our suppliers have begun the Environmental Impact Assessment works and design work needed for the Transport and Works Act Order application. We are currently working on preliminary design and the Transport and Works Act Order application.

3. Conclusion

Progress continues on the Boston Barrier to reduce the risk of tidal flooding in the Borough of Boston. Current expectations are that construction will start in 2017 and be completed by December 2019.

4. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable

5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Adam Robinson, who can be contacted on 07768 510174 or adam.robinson@environment-agency.gov.uk

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