

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:	Steeping River

Summary:

To outline progress on assessing the options for reducing flood risk in the Steeping catchment, in particular local aspirations for de-silting works.

Actions Required:

That the Committee consider and comment on the current situation.

1. Background

Since 2007, the Environment Agency has undertaken various works to reduce flood risk from the River Steeping. This has included raising banks, improving sluice gates and removing silt from a section of the river upstream of Wainfleet, between Crows Bridge to Firsby Clough. The Environment Agency also regularly inspects the outfall of the river near Gibraltar Point and removes accumulated silt to keep this clear.

A partnership, including the Environment Agency, Lindsey Marsh Internal Drainage Board and Lincolnshire County Council, have been working to decide on the most appropriate way to reduce flood risk to people and property in the River Steeping catchment. Removal of silt was one of the options being considered based upon previous survey information and there is an element of public expectation this will be taken forward.

An outline plan had been proposed which would have seen de-silting commence in early 2015 for a four year period, however due to the likely cost of the scheme and to ensure the most effective use of public money, the survey and modelling information used to demonstrate the need and value of de-silting was updated, including a more refined survey of silt levels.

Full funding for the works had not been confirmed beyond year one.

2. Conclusion

The initial results of the updated modelling work have raised doubt over the cost effectiveness of the proposed de-silting works. The results suggest the risk from overtopping of the banks can be reduced to an appropriate level through relatively minor localised bank raising, the first section of which is planned for this summer.

Taking into account future funding uncertainties the partnership has agreed to postpone de-silting works until we are certain the most cost effective and appropriate option is being pursued

The modelling work to confirm the way forward is ongoing though, for a various reasons, is currently behind programme. We are looking at ways to accelerate the work.

De-silting or localised bank raising will only affect the risk from overtopping of the banks. In order to reduce the overall flood risk further work needs to be carried out to secure the stability and integrity of the banks, including assessing the risk to the banks of any de-silting. This work is ongoing.

3. Consultation

The initial results were discussed with the partnership in February when the decision to postpone de-silting was jointly taken. A position statement was agreed at the February Scrutiny Meeting.

A meeting was held with Councillors, officers of LCC, the EA and the IDB in early March to outline the position at that date and works planned for the following months.

Once final results of the updated modelling are available they will be shared with the partnership so agreement on the way forward can be reached. These results are due early June 2015.

4. 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 Deborah Campbell, who can be contacted on (01522) 784387 or deborah.campbell@environment-agency.gov.uk