



**FLOOD AND DRAINAGE
MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
4 SEPTEMBER 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), D Jackson (City of Lincoln Council), Mrs F M Martin MBE (East Lindsey 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, D C Hoyes MBE, A H Turner MBE JP, S M Tweedale and W S Webb, attended the meeting and spoke where appropriate

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), David Hickman (Environmental Services Team Leader (Strategy and Partnership), Louise Tyers (Scrutiny Officer), Steve Willis (Chief Operating Officer), Mark Welsh (Flood, Risk and Development Manager) and Andrew Jee (Projects Officer)

12 APOLOGIES/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from District Councillor J Money (North Kesteven District Council), Sam Markillie (South Holland Drainage Board) and David Sisson (Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board)

13 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M Brookes requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (minute 18).

District Councillor R Austin requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (minute 18).

Councillor C J T H Brewis requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the North Level District Internal Drainage Board (minute 18).

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District Councillor B Russell requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (minute 18).

District Councillor I G Fleetwood requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of the Witham Third Internal Drainage Board (minute 18).

District Councillor M D Seymour (South Holland District Council) requested that a note should be made in the minutes that he was a member of

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 MAY 2015

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Flood and Drainage Management Scrutiny Committee held on 29 May, 2015, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor C J T H Brewis stated that he was satisfied with the reply he had received from officers in connection with the direction of travel and routes proposed in the south east of the county (minute 5).

Deborah Campbell stated that she would reply to the emails from Councillor C Pain in connection with the River Steeping (minute 8).

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

Executive Councillor C J Davie made the following announcements:-

1. He had attended the opening ceremony of the start of the Louth flood alleviation scheme and emphasised the importance of the scheme for the town of Louth.
2. Stated that David Powell, the Emergency Planning Officer, had met District Councils in connection with the emergency evacuation signage and they had given their agreement for the scheme to proceed.
3. Referred to a meeting on 25 September 2015, with major investors, business leaders and local MPs to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the east coast.

Steve Willis stated that construction of a new Visitor Centre at Gibraltar Point had begun and was expected to finish by Easter 2016.

16 ANGLIAN WATER - GROWTH AND THE IMPACT ON INFRASTRUCTURE

Allan Simpson, Anglian Water, gave a presentation on growth and its impact on infrastructure; the legislation and regulation covering the water industry; engagement

in planning and how Anglian Water got involved and the opportunities and challenges faced by Anglian Water.

Comments by the Committee included:-

1. Invitations to schools to visit Anglian Water plants were welcomed.
2. Was septicity still a problem in the sewerage system?
3. Was there now less necessity to dig up roads to access pipework?
4. There was a lot of new development taking place in Boston and in some areas the sewerage system could not cope because of its age.
5. Anglian Water had, in some instances, blamed users of the sewerage system but was it the inability of the system to cope?
6. Some repairs carried out by Anglian Water appeared only to be temporary. Was it possible to carry out more permanent repairs to prevent leaks?
7. During heavy rain in Boston and in the Wyberton and St Thomas, south of Boston, surface water flooding was a problem and seemed to be caused by blocked pumps. If people were putting inappropriate material into the system then Anglian Water should clear the pumps as soon as possible.
8. There were similar issues of surface water flooding in Horncastle which was facing an unprecedented number of planning applications for housing from developers and Anglian Water did not have the structural capacity to cope with numerous sites.
9. Anglian Water should be a statutory consultee for planning applications involving growth and it was important that District Planning Authorities worked closely with Anglian Water. Should Anglian Water require any help in this area, e.g. the lobbying of MPs, then it should not hesitate to seek the help of the County Council.

Allan Simpson responded to comments made by the Committee as follows:-

1. Technology existed to address septicity in the sewerage system.
2. It was possible to line pipes without digging up roads but it was not feasible in some areas.
3. Anglian Water was examining if old infrastructure existed. The company was trying to improve connection points in the system but it was a challenge in some areas. Members were requested to notify Anglian Water if they were aware of any poor infrastructure to enable the necessary investment to take place.
4. There were operational issues caused by fats being put into the sewerage system and Anglian Water had an education programme in place to address this problem.
5. Surface water connections into the sewerage system were being examined.
6. Anglian Water was aware of the issue of temporary repairs with the company liable to fines for regular leaks by Ofwat.
7. Anglian Water faced fines for flooding caused by blocked pumps and was examining innovative solutions to address this problem.
8. Accumulative development in Horncastle would be examined followed by further examination in the later stages of development to ensure that there was capacity in the system.
9. Anglian Water was currently consulted in connection with the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans but not individual planning applications.

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Executive Councillor Colin Davie stated that he had been a member of the Customer Engagement Forum set up by Anglian Water and complimented Anglian Water for its arrangements for consulting the public and working with the Local Enterprise Partnership. He supported the proposal that Anglian Water should be a statutory consultee for planning applications as they provided an important service to the public. He stated that when Local Plans came before an Inspector during Public Examination it was important that the Inspector was challenged on the need for the necessary infrastructure to be in place before any development was started.

Executive Councillor Colin Davie stated that blocked sewerage pipes were still an issue along the east coast and businesses in this area needed to be reminded of their responsibilities to ensure that inappropriate material was not put into the sewerage system.

Executive Councillor Colin Davie requested that he would like to see the number of planning applications Anglian Water were consulted upon by the District Planning Authorities so that areas of pressure could be examined when it was identified Anglian Water had not been consulted. The Chairman stated that this information should also be brought to the Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee in connection with Allan Simpson's presentation be noted and actioned accordingly.

(b) That Executive Councillor Colin Davie's request to be provided with details of the number of planning applications sent to Anglian Water by District Planning Authorities be actioned by Anglian Water and that this information be considered by the Committee.

17 LOUTH AND HORNCASTLE FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES

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

With regard to Louth, officers referred to the media event on 11 August 2015, to mark the start of construction work. Discussions with landowners in connection with compensation were continuing and the project was expected to be completed in May 2016.

With regard to Horncastle, timber posts had been discovered during preliminary archaeological explorations dating from the Stone Age with the discovery creating local interest. Innovative work was on-going with the contractor and the County Council's Archaeologist to work around this find. The cost and timetable for the project was likely to be affected by this discovery but no delay was expected in delivering the project. Discussions with local landowners were progressing well.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. District Councillor Mrs Fiona Martin MBE, Ward Councillor for Horncastle, stated that she had attended the opening ceremony at Louth and thanked everyone for the starts on sites.
2. Who should the public consult if anything went wrong either during the construction stage or on completion of the projects?
3. The cost of household insurance should reduce when the projects were completed.

Officers stated the contractor was responsible during the construction stages of the projects and when the projects were completed then the Environment Agency would be responsible.

Officers stated the cost of household insurance was dependent on the outcome of a national survey being carried out by the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

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

18 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE
MANAGEMENT OF THE BLACK SLUICE DRAIN AND PUMPING STATION

The Committee received a report in connection with the Environment Agency's ongoing Black Sluice Catchment consultation, how this might impact on the Black Sluice Pumping Station and the implications for the establishment of Boston as a waterways destination. The consultation ran until 27 September 2015 and a number of public consultation events had been arranged by the Environment Agency. Officers stated that the effects of flooding and water level management in the area covered by the Black Sluice and Boston had been examined and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the County Council achieved its aspirations for water management in the Boston area in the future.

Councillor W S Webb, a member of the Anglian Regional Flood Committee, was allowed to speak on this matter in a personal capacity and with knowledge of drainage. He commented as follows:-

1. The Black Sluice Pumping Station was of huge importance to the South Forty Foot Water drainage catchment area which contained Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land.
2. The land in this area drained into the Black Sluice Pumping Station and it was important to control the water level.
3. Three of the five pumps had been damaged during the tidal surge in December 2013 and had not been repaired to his surprise.
4. He considered that the pumps were repairable and that the estimated cost of repair of £5-£10m was too high.
5. An engineer should be asked to examine the pumps to assess the cost of repair.
6. He was surprised the Environment Agency had not deepened or widened the South Forty Foot Drain.

7. Failure to comply would lead to flooding similar to that in the Somerset Levels a few years ago.
8. The County Council's response to the consultation detailed in the report did not address flooding issues.
9. The South Forty Foot Drain was a drainage river.
10. He supported Black Sluice Drainage Board's response to the consultation.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The South Forty Foot catchment area contained very fertile agricultural land.
2. How was the value of agricultural land measured compared to its use for development?
3. Councillor W S Webb's views were supported.
4. The views of the Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board should be sought.
5. The Environment Agency was working in partnership with the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board on this matter.
6. The cost of repairing the pumps would be cheaper than their replacement.
7. Executive Councillor C J Davie should consult the Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board before he sent his response to the Environment Agency.
8. If the pumps did not work then the Boston Barrier would not work.
9. The cost of repairing the pumps should be investigated.
10. It was noted that the Leader of the County Council had made a statement that he thought the money could be found to repair the pumps.
11. The public would be concerned if the pumps were not working.
12. The effects on tourism in Boston and a boost to the local economy if the pumps were maintained.
13. The importance of agriculture for the nation.
14. If it was not possible to get rid of the water from the South Forty Foot Drain then the effects would be felt nationwide.

Executive Councillor C J Davie agreed that agricultural land in the Black Sluice catchment area was important for food production; that the Boston Barrier was important for the economic benefit of Boston; that the Anglian Regional Flood Committee had asked the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency to come up with a solution before the County Council submitted its response to consultation; stated that he would like to see all of the responses of the consultation exercise; was concerned about the cost of repairs and stated that he wanted to hear the views of the Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board on the possible refurbishment of the pumps.

Officers' responses to the comments made by the Committee included:-

1. An engineer had examined the pumps and had stated that due to their age, (60 years), the cost of repairing them was expensive. Details of the costs would be sent to the Committee.

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2. The widening of the stream above the pumping station had been examined but the cost made the scheme unviable. Details of these costs would be brought to the Committee.
3. The Environment Agency had worked closely with the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board when the pumps had been turned off.
4. With regard to the value of agricultural land the Environment Agency worked within the Defra Framework, the NFU and the Treasury Green Book. Details of how the cost was calculated would be brought back to the Committee.
5. With regard to the Water Level Management Plan and Boston regeneration when the economic case was examined for the Black Sluice Pumping Station the opportunity would be taken to examine partnership plans.
6. It was agreed that the Environment Agency would examine the pumps installed on the River Tydd by the North Level Internal Drainage Board as highlighted by Councillor C J T H Brewis.
7. When the pumps were first installed at Black Sluice sixty years ago the landscape was different to that of today.
8. There was a need to examine the revenue and capital costs of running the pumps and there was a need to follow the rules.
9. There was a need to examine drainage management in the county.

Executive Councillor C J Davie urged Members to respond to him and the Chairman of this Committee, on the consultation by 11 September 2015, and a response would be prepared. A copy of the response would be circulated to the Committee. He stated the importance of getting a balance between protecting agricultural land and ensuring that the opportunities for the economic regeneration of Boston were not missed.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report and comments made by the Committee be noted and actioned accordingly.
- (b) That the Committee approve the proposal for a single co-ordinated response from the County Council from Executive Councillor C J Davie and Councillor C L Strange, Chairman of the Committee.
- (c) That this issue be considered again at the Committee's next meeting with the Chief Executive of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board being invited to the meeting.

**19 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
(GLLEP) COASTAL VISION AND WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received a report outlining recent initiatives led by the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership to develop a clear set of objectives for Lincolnshire's coastal areas and to establish a Water Management Plan as a channel for accessing a wider range of Government and European funding for flood risk and water resource management in Lincolnshire. A first draft of the Coastal Vision was presented for the Committee to consider and on which comments were invited. Officers stated that it was hoped to complete the Coastal Vision by March 2016.

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Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The figures detailed under the heading of "Strategic context" were important not just for the coast but for the county.
2. Flood risk affected economic development.
3. The construction of an off-shore reef and coastal footpath were essential for economic development and not just beach replenishment.
4. Frampton Marsh should be added to Appendix A of the report as it was a nationally recognised RSPB site.
5. Improved infrastructure was required but how would this be achieved?
6. Had other local authorities been consulted on the Coastal Vision?

Officers stated that the development of infrastructure was dependent on the approval of Local Plans and that neighbouring local authorities had been consulted about the development of the Coastal Vision.

RESOLVED

(a) That the comments made by the Committee be taken into consideration in the development of the draft Coastal Vision.

(b) That the timetable for completing the Coastal Vision by March 2016, be noted.

20 INVESTIGATIONS HELD 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.

Comments made by the Committee included:-

1. The opportunity should be taken to utilise the machinery present in connection with the refurbishment of the new Gibraltar Point Centre to replace the flood banks?
2. Delays in addressing flooding issues at Toynton St Peter.

Officers stated that they would examine the issues raised by the Committee and that the recent flooding events in Long Bennington and Grantham would be investigated as part of the Section 19 investigations.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the comments raised by the Committee be examined by officers.

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21 FLOOD AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

The Committee received its Work Programme.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly.

22 LOUISE TYERS, SCRUTINY OFFICER - LEAVING THE COUNCIL

The Chairman stated that this was Louise Tyers' last meeting before taking up a new position with East Northamptonshire Council and thanked her for services to the Committee wishing all of the best in her new post. He presented Louise with flowers to mark the occasion.

The meeting closed at 12.35 pm

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