

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 1 SEPTEMBER 2020**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR P A SKINNER (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors R P H Reid (Vice-Chairman), W J Aron, T R Ashton, Mrs A M Austin, Mrs P Cooper, A G Hagues, Mrs C J Lawton, C R Oxby, C E Reid and R A Renshaw

District Councillors R Austin BEM (Boston Borough Council), P Vaughan (City of Lincoln Council), Mrs F M Martin MBE (East Lindsey District Council), Mrs L Hagues (North Kesteven District Council), M D Seymour (South Holland District Council) and I G Fleetwood (West Lindsey District Council)

External Agencies – Jonathan Glerum (Anglian Water) and Morgan Wray (Environment Agency)

Councillors C J Davie, D McNally and Eddy Poll (Executive Councillor, Commercial and Environmental Management), attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Steve Blagg (Democratic Services Officer), Paul Brookes (Flood Risk Manager), Richard Fenwick (County Highways Manager), David Hickman (Head of Environment) and Daniel Steel (Scrutiny Officer)

37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

The Chief Executive reported that under the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, she had appointed Councillor Mrs P Cooper to the Committee, in place of Councillor M Brookes, until further notice.

38 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declaration of interests to report at this stage of the meeting.

39 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2020

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 24 February 2020, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

40 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

Councillor P A Skinner referred to the incidents of flash flooding which had taken place last week and stated that updates of these incidents would be reported to the Committee in due course.

Executive Councillor C J Davie, Economy and Place, stated that the Environment Agency had completed its 2020 beach nourishment programme; stated that following the completion of the River Steeping Action Plan, the County Council would support and maintain the main channels that fed in to the River Steeping around Wainfleet; stated the need to examine the Government's Planning White Paper and to work with partners in connection with the Defra review of surface flooding arising from the floods of 2019.

Councillor E J Poll stated that he was in attendance at today's meeting in his capacity as the Chairman of the England Northern Region Flood Council and had nothing to report.

41 HIGHWAYS GULLY CLEANSING, REPAIR AND SURFACE WATER FLOODING UPDATE

The Committee received a report in connection with the reactive, cyclic and planned aspects of highways drainage maintenance including the response to low-level flooding. The report gave details of statistics of highway assets including the annual budget; the use of technology to record data and incidents; the work of the local Highway Teams; the provision of updates to the public and an explanation of the capital programme.

Comments by Members included:-

- The responses to the public about flooding issues were clearer.
- There was still a backlog in dealing with reported flooding cases and more resources should be invested to address the backlog.
- Seasonal factors, the effects of tree roots and parked vehicles also caused gullies to be blocked.
- Some problems of blocked gullies were caused by utility companies. Officers stated that Members needed to report these incidents on the "Fix My Street" App. Officers agreed that coordination of utility activities could be further improved with the Council's Permitting Team having an important role in this area.
- The "targeted approach" by the use of new technology was welcomed as some gullies needed more attention than others.
- Reference was made to a specific and on-going flooding problem in the Kirton area, near Boston. Officers stated that this could be caused by a drainage capacity issue and it was agreed to speak to local officers and partners to examine this matter.

The report was welcomed by Members, who noted that rainfall events were more extreme nowadays and they hoped that resources would be targeted to the worse areas.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report and comments made by Members be noted.
- (b) That the work being undertaken by the County Highways Service as detailed in the report be endorsed.

42 ANGLIAN WATER PRESENTATION

(Note: Councillor T R Ashton left the meeting during discussion of this item).

The Committee received a presentation from Anglian Water on their roles and responsibilities across Lincolnshire, including working with partners across the region to address flooding issues. The company covered a large and flat geographical area and used a lot of pumping stations to transport water. The industry was highly regulated and the three areas presenting challenges included climate change; population and economic growth and environmental protection.

Spending proposals by Anglian Water on drought and resilience had been referred to the Competitions and Markets Authority as Ofwat had objected to the proposals and a response was expected by Christmas 2020.

With regard to managing flood risk the main area of activity was addressing blockages with 80% of flooding caused by blockages, e.g. tree roots and oil/grease.

Tankers to carry water had been used last winter and Anglian Water was currently in discussions with the Environment Agency about how to address this issue in the future.

With regard to surface water management Anglian Water was examining the installation of larger pipes and green methods of storing water to prevent flooding.

Comments by Members included:-

- A Member enquired about whether the Asset Management Plan outcome would affect surface flooding issues in Tetney. Officers stated that while funding was available for Tetney it was not as much as had been hoped that there would be a positive outcome from the Competitions and Marketing Authority on Anglian Water's spending plans. Officers stated that there were some difficult issues taking place in Tetney and a wider discussion with the community was required and it was hoped to work with the National Flood Forum to help with communication with the local community to manage the issues in this area.
- An enquiry was made about flooding issues in properties in the Langwith area, east of Lincoln, especially as a new sewerage plant had recently been

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constructed. Officers stated that the problems in this area were worse in the winter and they would examine the cause of the underlying issues.

- The use of combined service pipes caused flooding issues in some areas and did Anglian Water have a rolling programme to separate these pipes? Officers stated that Anglian Water did not have a rolling programme to separate the pipes. Anglian Water had a 25 year programme to address the problems caused by combined service pipes by means of water retention and to release water slowly so that the system was able to cope. It was hoped to more resilience to the system in the future as replacing existing pipes was very expensive.

RESOLVED

That the comments made by Members and the presentation be received and noted.

43 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

The Committee received an update report on Environment Agency activities, in relation to the effects of COVID-19, the on-going delivery of the capital programme and the recovery programme. Progress of individual projects was outlined, including, amongst others, the Boston Barrier, Stamp End (Lincoln) and beach nourishment programme on the east coast.

Comments by Members included:-

- There was still a lot of work to be done at Barlings Eau following serious flooding last year and it was hoped to see the bunding and piling completed by November 2020. Officers stated that more work was required at Barlings Eau and maintenance activities in the Billingham catchment area, in consultation with the Internal Drainage Board, were taking place as there were areas of common interest.
- There were a lot of weeds in the River Witham at Stamp End, Lincoln. Officers agreed to investigate and report back to the Committee and added that there was extensive annual maintenance carried out in this area. Officers stated that a strategy for the lower Witham was being developed and consultants had been engaged starting with a consultation exercise.
- There was a need to treat water as a resource.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments by Members be noted and actioned where appropriate.
- (b) That the report and progress of the on-going delivery of the capital programme, be noted.

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

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The Committee received a standing report in connection with investigations undertaken in the County under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Officers stated that they were working through the backlog of cases detailed in the appendix of the report stating that many of the issues would be addressed before a Section 19 report was completed.

Officers stated that flooding was normally caused by extreme water fall, e.g. thunderstorms, rather than the steady rainfall which had been experienced recently. Officers stated that they were aware of the flooding problems in Kirton and solutions were being investigated.

Officers stated that the County Council was working with its partners to examine surface water management and that it was important that the public continued to report flooding problems as only by reporting incidents could they be addressed by the Council and its partners.

Comments by Members included:-

- Details of those properties flooded at Kirton were provided with the properties being flooded many times.
- Officers stated that they would contact the District Councillor for East Lindsey District Council separately in connection with the issues raised in East Lindsey.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the comments by Members be noted and actioned where appropriate.
- (b) That the report and progress of investigations be noted.

45 2020+ STEEPING CATCHMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received an update report in connection with the progress on the implementation of the recommendations for action detailed in the final report of the investigation into the flooding at Wainfleet in June 2019 which was presented to the Committee in February 2020.

The update was welcomed by Members as it was important to show the residents of Wainfleet that work was on-going to address the flooding problems in the town.

RESOLVED

That the report and progress on the recommendations as part of the Steeping Catchment Action Plan, be noted.

46 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK
PROGRAMME

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

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RESOLVED

That the Committee's Work Programme be agreed and updated accordingly.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm