

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R P H REID (VICE-CHAIRMAN)

Councillors P Ashleigh-Morris, T R Ashton, A J Baxter, M Brookes, S Bunney, K J Clarke, A G Hagues and H Spratt

District Councillors P Vaughan (City of Lincoln Council), Mrs F M Martin MBE (East Lindsey District Council), Mrs L Hagues (North Kesteven District Council), H Crawford (South Kesteven District Council) and I G Fleetwood (West Lindsey District Council)

Councillors R Austin BEM and P A Skinner observed the meeting via Microsoft Teams

Councillor T J G Dyer, attended the meeting as an observer

Officers in attendance:-

Paul Brookes (Flood Risk Manager), Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Robert Close (Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Harrison (Senior Commissioning Officer - Flood Risk) and David Hickman (Head of Environment)

Officers in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

Chris Miller (Deputy Head of Environment)

External Agencies in attendance via Microsoft Teams:-

Jonathan Glerum (Anglian Water), Matthew Moore (Anglian Water) and Morgan Ray (Environment Agency)

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Skinner and Councillor R Austin.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor C Davie – Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning.

13 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of Members' interest were made at this stage of the proceedings.

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2021

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 September 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

15 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

The Chairman informed the Committee of the passing of Councillor B Adams, former Chairman of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee. The Committee held a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Adams.

Councillor Dyer, Executive Support Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning, advised the Committee that, since the 20 September 2021 meeting, he had the opportunity to visit Wragby Fire Station to observe the investment made for two additional flood pumps bringing Lincolnshire's fleet to four.

Furthermore, Councillor Dyer noted that the Environment Act. 2021 had now passed into law and would bring a number of impacts to the fields of environmental and water management, some affecting local planning policy as the requirement for biodiversity net gain aligned with emerging policy areas such as natural flood management and the ongoing implementation of sustainable drainage systems. Moreover, the creation of nature recovery networks would also mean that flood risk and drainage management work would need to provide increasing benefits if the partnership of local authorities were to make best use of opportunities from these policy developments. One area, currently in development, was the Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater project, which offered a significant opportunity to explore new ways to manage difficult flood risk issues involving a much wider range of techniques to those that would have been traditionally available. Particular consideration would be given to flood risk management, environmental improvement and water quality improvement. He observed the tone of Government policy was changing from an approach seeking to manage flood risk to a focus on the overall reduction in flood risk and improvement in communities and local economies.

16 FLOOD & COASTAL INNOVATION PROGRAMME - THE GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE GROUNDWATER PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report, which advised the Committee on progress with the Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater project and set out the next steps in developing an Outline Business Case. The Chairman invited Matthew Harrison, Senior Commissioning Officer – Flood Risk, to present the report to the Committee.

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Committee were advised that £200 million was awarded by Government in 2020 for the Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme, distributed to 25 local areas between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2027. Lincolnshire County Council, as lead flood authority, was leading on the development of a collaborative approach, with North Lincolnshire Council, North East Lincolnshire Council, North Kesteven and East Lindsey District Councils, Internal Drainage Boards, the Environment Agency (EA) and Water Companies. Within the Partnership's Expression of Interest (EOI) bid, it was hoped to identify opportunities to manage groundwater in a sustainable way, thus managing flood risk and the environment, to improve Greater Lincolnshire's resilience to flooding, building on community resilience, communicating learning regionally and nationally and improving the capability to improve the emergency response to ground water flooding. Currently, the Partnership were producing an Outline Business Case to work with consultants and develop detailed modelling on Lincolnshire limestone and chalk models.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Observing that, within the report, it was indicated that £150 million of the total £200 million allocation would be given to local areas, Members asked how the remaining £50 million was used. The Head of Environment advised that the remaining £50 million was allocated into large scale strategic schemes, including the Humber Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme be noted.

17 FIRE AND RESCUE FLOOD PUMP CAPABILITY

Consideration was given to a presentation, which offered the Committee an overview of the trailer mounted flood pumps which had been secured through Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) funding. The Chairman invited Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, to present the report to the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the Council planned for major flood emergencies through the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity unit. The partnership of the LLFA, EA and the Fire and Rescue Service entered into an agreement in 2017 to procure two trailer mounted pumps. The benefit of this style of pump was that enabled deployment by only four officers and could be operated by two while still offering a high level of pumping capability. Furthermore, the All-Wheel Drive (AWD) Isuzu trucks offered 3.5 tonne towing capacity and could be used for a variety of other tasks. The pumps were located at Alford, Gainsborough, Holbeach and Wragby in line with historic and predicted flood risk areas. Since implementation, the pumps had been utilised in a number of incidents including

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

Greetwell, Grantham and Wainfleet in addition to smaller incidents and substituting other pieces of equipment.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members emphasized their appreciation of the utility presented with these pumps, particularly observing some significant incidences of flooding in recent years.
- When considering the rural locations, the pumps would likely be deployed to, Members asked what security was being implemented to ensure the protection of these valuable pieces of equipment. The Chief Fire Officer noted that the pumps would not be left in situ without two fire officers present at any times, in the interest of both security and maintenance.
- Referencing the locations in which the pumps were initially situated, Members raised apprehensions that areas to the south of Lincolnshire, may see delayed response times. An indication was made by Members that they would be supportive of a further two pumps being procured to enable a greater coverage of Lincolnshire. The Chief Fire Officer agreed that a further increase in pumps would offer greater assurance to those in the county during periods of high flood risk. Furthermore, he reminded Members that the Fire and Rescue Service possessed other flood management equipment in addition to the trailer mounted flood pumps.
- Members sought further detail of how the unwanted water was dealt with after it had been pumped from the affected site. The Chief Fire Officer explained that a dedicated hose and ancillary equipment allowed for water to be pumped into local flooding pipes thus being moved a further away enough to be considered safe. Sufficient pressure allowed water to be moved several kilometers if required.

RESOLVED

That the Fire and Rescue Flood Pump Capability be noted.

18 CONSULTATION ON THE SECOND CYCLE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS

Consideration was given to a report, providing an overview of the plans and consultation exercise in advance of a formal response being provided by the Council. The Chairman invited the Senior Commissioning Officer – Flood Risk to present the report to the Committee.

The Committee were advised that the EA had produced draft Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for England to cover the period from 2021 – 2027. The second cycle was now part of a three-month public consultation, which was open and would run from 22 October 2021 to 21 January 2022. FRMPs were strategic plans that set out how to manage flood risk in nationally identified Flood Risk Areas (FRAs) for the period 2021-2027 and were statutorily required by the Flood Risk Regulations 2009. Lincolnshire fell into two River basin areas, the

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

Humber and Anglian. A number of new features for FRMPs included a strategic focus on areas where the risk of flooding had been identified as nationally significant, aim to be more accessible and easier to use for our stakeholders and the public with greater use of online mapping, measures to display an online map-based tool called flood plan explorer and support from the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England. The Council, in its role as LLFA, had no designated FRAs within its area. However, the EA had designated FRAs in their role as RMA in both the Humber and Anglian River Basin District.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and offer any comments and guidance to contribute to the preparation for the submission deadline of 21 January 2022, some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members sought further information about the areas of responsibility that the EA cover. Morgan Wray, EA, advised the Committee that the Environment Agency did have responsibilities for flood risk, main river risk management and reservoir risk.

RESOLVED

That the comments from the Committee be considered when compiling the formal response from the Council to the Flood Risk Management Plans consultation.

19 UPDATE ON BLACK SLUICE PUMPING STATION PROJECT, BOSTON

Consideration was given to a report, providing an update on progress to make the decommissioned Black Sluice Pumping Station site in Boston safe, and the opportunities for local partners to re-purpose the site as a local amenity. The Chairman invited Morgan Wray, EA, to present the report to the Committee.

The Committee were advised that EA led a study called the 'Black Sluice Catchment Works' in 2012. This study included detailed modelling and economic assessment on a range of scenarios for the whole catchment. Evidence indicated that, whilst the gravity sluice and dual-purpose lock played an important role in managing flood risk to people and property, the pumps did not. Following the study and formal consultation, the EA and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (BSIDB) considered either a transfer of the BSPS to the IDB or decommission of the asset. In March 2018 it was confirmed by BSIDB that the cost to refurbish the pumps was not viable to justify a business case, it was subsequently announced that the pumps would be decommissioned. Whilst the pumps had been decommissioned, the EA remained owners of the building. The strategically important gravity sluice and dual-purpose lock at the Black Sluice Complex would continue to be maintained and a £1 million detailed asset inspection and refurbishment of the navigation lock was carried out in 2020 to ensure it remained operational. The EA were now in the second phase of scoping, designing a decommission model and identifying costings to make the site watertight. The heritage value of the site was widely recognised and a would be

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

fundamental to a proposal for a novel eating experience by transforming the building into a bistro while retaining the wow-factor and magnitude of the pumps.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the report and some of the points raised during discussion included the following:

- Members appreciated the significant heritage value of the building and stressed their endorsement of a scheme that would avoid this building being demolished.
- Several flood infrastructure projects included public information centers, Members asked if this scheme would offer something similar. Suggestions were made that models and information of the nearby flood barrier were also included. Morgan Wray explained that, while no legal duty bound the EA to do so, they endeavored to publicise all capital projects. If the project was developed as a visitor attraction, the EA would explore further materials to include promoting flood risk information and community resilience. While the EA could provide a monetary contribution to ensure sustainability, it was stressed that this would be taken from maintenance budgets.
- Members were encouraged that the EA were working closely with the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (BSIDB) to manage flood risk in Boston.
- If the site was to be converted to hospitality use, Members asked if the issues of land availability and car parking had been considered given the potentially high number of visitors. Emphasis was made that mere sustainable transport solutions would not be sufficient to make this operation viable. Morgan Wray noted that the issue of repurposing and sustainable transport would be considered by BSIDB. Initial investigations had identified areas for disabled parking and discussions would be undertaken with neighboring sites.
- If any engines had to be removed as part of the repurposing, Members asked that other FRMAs were given preferential treatment upon disposal consider. Morgan Wray agreed that engines of this age would be highly sought after by other FRMAs and would be duly considered in the event of removal.

RESOLVED

1. That the update on the Black Sluice Pumping Station Project be received.
2. That a further progress update be brought to the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee.

20 INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN UNDER SECTION 19 OF THE FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010

Consideration was given to a report, providing the status of all current flood investigations being undertaken in the County. The Chairman invited Paul Brookes, Flood Risk Manager, to present the report to the Committee.

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Committee were advised that it was a duty under Section 19, Flood & Water Management Act 2010 for the LLFA to carry out investigations to identify risk in the County and publish the results. The Council also made recommendations to manage future flood risk, to be delivered by individual RMAs or in partnership. The Committee were encouraged to view the interactive mapping available on the Lincolnshire County Council website.

During consideration of the report, the Committee raised some of the following issues:

- Noting that the last report they had received identified 25 properties being affected with 22 investigations commissioned, Members asked if any further activity had been carried out. The Flood Risk Manager advised that the further 13 investigations were undertaken in the following quarter to the last report.
- Members asked if the multi-agency scheme was still expected to commence in January. The Senior Commissioning Officer – Flood Risk advised that the multi-agency scheme was one of the largest being delivered under the flood risk development fund and had grown since its inception. However, it was still expected to be delivered in early 2022.
- The Committee thanked the Flood Risk Manager and his team for the work they'd undertaken particularly surrounding near miss statistics.

RESOLVED

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

21 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

The Committee received an update from Morgan Wray, Environment Agency, which provided an update on recent activities.

Issues covered in the presentation included:

- An overview of a £1.5 million scheme completed in Torksey to protect 457 properties from flooding from the River Trent.
- Commencement on Salt Fleet to Gibraltar Point management preparations was due imminently, this would protect 20,000 house, 30,000 static caravans and 30,000 hectares of agricultural land.
- The Wainfleet flood action plan continued based on flow management, flood water storage, flood warning model improvements and raised flood defenses.
- The Boston Barrier was operated for the first time on 7 November 2021 as a result of a forecast for high tides and tidal surges. At its peak, there was a 3.7-meter difference from downstream and upstream sides.
- Gates were planned to be installed at the wet dock entrance in Boston and were expected to protect a further 424 properties.

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

- The lower Wootton flood resilience project was soon to be commenced and would consider assets and flood defenses in Boston.
- A project in Boston to look at tidal defenses between the barrier and the black sluice gate valued at £4.7 million and to protect 259 homes was soon to be commenced.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised the following comments:

- Members asked if the additional security was going to provide insurance companies with sufficient evidence when they quoted cover within Boston. Morgan Wray explained that, while the EA did not have any direct oversight on insurance premiums, he noted that the Boston flood map had changed because of the barrier which insurance companies would take into account.
- Referencing the boaters, Members asked what work was being done to tackle the increased weed on the rivers. While Morgan Wray acknowledged the increased weed growth seen recently, he advised that it did not represent a significant contribution to flood risk. The EA would, however, work closely with the Canals and River Trust to look at ways of managing it.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and noted.

22 ANGLIAN WATER UPDATE

The Chairman invited Jonathan Glerum, Anglian Water, to present the update to the Committee.

The Committee was advised of the project; undertaken with the National Flood Forum to work with communities to increase flood resilience and create flood action groups. These had been created in Tetney, Louth, Ingoldmells, Scopwick and Long Bennington.

Members noted a number of case studies demonstrating the work that Anglian Water were undertaken since their last contribution to the Committee, including the addition of flow monitor and identifying surface water management possibilities in Langworth and a Water Industry National Environment Programme scheme, mitigation works to divert main sewer flow, and disconnection of downpipes connected to the foul network in Metheringham.

During consideration of the presentation, the Committee raised some of the following comments:

- Members asked if they could have an update on the progress of the South Lincolnshire Reservoir. Jonathan Glerum advised that this information would be brought back to the Committee at its next meeting.

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29 NOVEMBER 2021**

- The Committee asked for an update on the flood in Hull Drive, Lincoln. Matthew Moore explained that Anglian Water had worked with the Council to develop a scheme, valued at approximately £30,000, to clear the blocked surface water system.
- The Committee thanked Anglian Water for their facilitation of a visit to Langworth, enabling them to appreciate the infrastructure allowing for a more efficient drainage system.
- Noting the reported discharge of effluent into the river network, Members asked to what extent was it a problem in Lincolnshire. Jonathan Glerum explained that Anglian Water considered itself a custodian of the environment and endeavored to improve it wherever possible. However, he stressed that overflows that were discharged did so, to mitigate the risk of flooding and damage. He suggested that combined sewer overflows should be considered as priority given their significant impact.
- Members stressed their gratitude of the work undertaken by Anglian Water and their work in relation to waste.

RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and noted.

23 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report from Kiara Chatziioannou, Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to consider and comment on the content of its work programme to ensure that scrutiny activity was focused where it could be of greatest benefit.

The Committee were advised that Riparian Watercourse Project, Natural Flood Management, an Memorandum of Understanding with Districts on incident response and provision of temporary resilience measures and the Coastal Adaptation Strategy were still awaiting to be programmed.

Members would have the opportunity to consider the red diesel ban and its impact on IDBs that was coming into effect from April 2022 at the 21 February 2022 meeting; the outcomes of the Digby Flood Alleviation Scheme would be reported at the 23 May 2022 meeting.

Referencing the South Lincolnshire Reservoir, Members asked if they could expect an update or presentation offering an overview of the project. The Scrutiny Officer acknowledged their request and would follow it up.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved as amended.

The meeting closed at 11.54 am