

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT
 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
 15 MAY 2023**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R P H REID (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors T R Ashton (Vice-Chairman), P Ashleigh-Morris, M Brookes, S Bunney, K J Clarke and G J Taylor

District Councillors P Vaughan (City of Lincoln Council) and I G Fleetwood (West Lindsey District Council)

External Agencies – Morgan Wray (Environment Agency)

Councillors , attended the meeting as observers

Officers in attendance:-

Kiara Chatziioannou (Scrutiny Officer), Ryan Davies (Assistant Flood Risk Officer), Simon Evans (Health Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Harrison (Senior Commissioning Officer - Flood Risk)

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alison Austin (Boston Borough Council), Helen Crawford (South Kesteven District Council), Andrew Hagues, Lucille Hagues (North Kesteven District Council), and Fiona Martin MBE (East Lindsey District Council).

28 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no interests declared at this point in proceedings.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting are approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

30 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND LEAD OFFICERS

**FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 MAY 2023**

The Chairman had attended the Flood and Water Management Workshop on 26th April 2023 at County Offices, and thanked the Flood Team, the Emergency Planning Team, the Environment Agency (EA), Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), Anglian Water and Canal & River Trust for their contributions. He informed the Committee that materials from the Workshop would be made available for members.

The Executive Councillor for Economic Development, Environment and Planning made the following announcements:

- He agreed to continue to liaise with the government regarding the IDB levy issue on behalf of the Committee.
- East Lindsey had experienced surface level flooding on 5th May in Little Carlton, Carlton and Manby. The Flood and Water Team had conducted site visits and Section 19 investigations had been initiated where internal flooding was reported.
- Officers were liaising with Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board to collate data regarding the recent flood events in Lincolnshire and to address issues experienced.
- Market Rasen and Middle Rasen were affected by a localised rainstorm on 11th May 2023; although there were no instances of internal flooding, damage to roads had been reported.
- Works commenced on 15th May 2023 for the Long Bennington Surface Water Flood Relief Scheme which would protect 50 properties from future flood risk.
- Officers and members continued to engage with strategic flood and water resource projects across the county in collaboration with LCC partners.
- The government had announced the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which would involve a change in legislation meaning that Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) would be the responsibility of LCC from April 2024.

Members raised the following points in response to the Executive Councillor's announcements:

- Members noted that flooding caused mental health difficulties for residents.
- It was vital that the balance was correct between investing in present flooding events and the potential future impact of climate change.
- LCC was adopting a 'One Council' approach to new developments to ensure mitigating against flood risks was part of the planning process; it was assured District Council's would see a more consistent approach towards flood prevention from LCC moving forward.
- LCC's 'floodline' had been renamed under the Customer Service Centre to prevent confusion with the Environment Agency's 'floodline' service.
- Members considered circulating an article in the County News magazine about how residents can manage surface level flooding.

Consideration was given to a report by Matthew Harrison, Flood and Water Manager on the recent work of the Flood Risk team including Section 19 investigation. The following matters were reported:

- Members noted that the report was written prior to the recent extreme rainfall events.
- The backlog of Section 19 (S19) investigations had been cleared.
- The Flood and Water Team reacted swiftly to recent surface level flooding particularly in East Lindsey, and the receptiveness of residents was appreciated.
- A townwide modelling report had been commissioned to fully investigate the flood in Market Rasen from August 2022 to gain a better understanding of the capacity of the drainage systems in the town and identify areas for improvement. Dedicated capital funding had already been set aside by the Team.
- Under Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, LCC would become a Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) approving body; the Development Management Team were establishing working groups and liaising with colleagues in the wider flood and water partnership in preparation for this change.
- A contractor had been appointed for the Long Bennington Flood Alleviation Scheme and the works would have a significant impact on residents by protecting in excess of 50 homes from surface water flooding.
- The Flood and Water Team continued to review and adapt the Capital Flood Risk Programme and were currently focusing on Market Rasen and Spalding.

Members considered the report, and the following comments were raised:

- The Committee praised the reduction of the backlog of S19 investigations.
- It was requested more information be shared with the Committee regarding LCC becoming a SuDS approving body when more information was available.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee views the current list of completed and active flood investigations that are available online at the address indicated on page 15 of the agenda.
2. That Democratic Services (Scrutiny Officer) be informed in advance if Members wish to raise any particular sites at the forthcoming Committee meeting.
3. That the Committee notes and comments as required on updates provided on the work of the Flood Risk Team
4. That comments raised in the discussion be cascaded to relevant Leading Officers and Portfolio holders for their information and consideration as required.

32 PROJECT GROUNDWATER (GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE)

Brett Rycroft-Jones, Flood Resilience Programme Coordinator and Vicky Jones, Flood Resilience Programme Coordinator delivered a verbal and visual presentation on Project

FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 MAY 2023

Groundwater. The presentation provided an overview of the effects of groundwater in the Greater Lincolnshire Area. Members considered the contents of the presentation, and the following points were highlighted in discussion:

- Members praised the ongoing collaborative work with the University of Lincoln which had been undertaken for a number of projects.
- Members questioned the groundwater issues experienced in Grimsby and officers noted that it was a longstanding issue exacerbated by climate change. It was highlighted that allotments in the area were not tended to therefore the area was currently unfit for purpose.
- The Committee requested a site visit to a location where a project was being undertaken, and officers agreed this would have value and ensure accountability.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee receives the report and presentation and is satisfied on the detail on the progress of schemes reported.
2. That the feedback from the discussion in relation to this item be passed on to Leading Officers and Portfolio holders for their information and consideration as required.

33 LINCOLNSHIRE RIPARIAN PROJECT UPDATE

Ryan Davies, Flood Risk Officer, delivered a verbal and visual presentation on the Riparian Project and provided an overview of the development of the Council's approach to the network of riparian watercourses across Lincolnshire, along with strengthened engagement with riparian landowners. Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions to the officers present in relation to the information contained within the presentation, and the following points were raised:

- Establishing riparian ownership on roads was highly complex as ownership documentation could date back to the 19th century or earlier (if records existed). Consequently, ownership responsibility was considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The Flood and Water Team would provide clarity on how riparian rights were enforced following requests from members. The Flood and Water Manager noted that IDBs carried out enforcement functions and assured that court was avoided at all costs; amicable correspondence and site visits tended to resolve issues.
- Despite a lack of comprehensive records of accurate riparian responsibilities, it was assured that there was an active list of watercourses which was constantly under review.
- It was suggested that an article be published on riparian rights in the County News magazine to improve engagement with riparian owners.
- Members and officers suggested that LCC work with Parish Councils to circulate information about riparian rights and responsibilities to communities.
- Officers and members agreed that the maintenance of riparian drains should be considered as part of the planning process at the earliest stage of development.

FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 MAY 2023

- The Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager – Environment Agency emphasised the importance of seeking riparian advice from risk management authorities on whether maintenance work required consent or permits and noted that landowners ought to be encouraged to carry out their own maintenance.
- Members questioned whether there was scope for LCC to take national leadership on riparian responsibilities, and the Flood and Water Manager agreed this would be possible once more information was known about riparian rights given LCCs leadership on the matter.

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee reviews and is satisfied with the contents of the cover report and presentation.
2. That comments from the discussion be passed on to Leading Officers and Portfolio holders for their information and consideration as required.
3. That the Committee notes the importance of the responsibility of riparian ownership boundaries and notes the importance of responsibility with landowners.

34 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

The Committee received a report by Morgan Wray, Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, which provided an update on Environment Agency (EA) activities in Lincolnshire including progress on key capital schemes. Multiple projects were summarised in terms of their background, updates since the last Committee meeting, and how each scheme aligned with flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) schemes. Members considered the report, and the following points were highlighted in discussion:

- Members questioned how compatible objectives were of managing water levels and restoring the River Witham under the River Sleas project. The Flood and Coastal Risk Manager gave assurance that the EA was engaged with consultations with the Sleaford Navigation Trust, and conversations were ongoing with other local partners to take ambitions into account and ensure they are realised in the future.
- The absence of Jonathan Glerum, Anglian Water, was noted and the Committee recorded their thanks for his ongoing work.

RESOLVED

That the Committee receives the update offered by the Environment Agency and notes the progress of works being undertaken in Lincolnshire.

35 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. It was

6

FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 MAY 2023

noted that members requested a site visit be scheduled to view some of the workings of Project Groundwater, which Officers agreed to schedule and facilitate before the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.40 am