

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills,
Executive Director for Environment & Economy**

Report to:	Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 October 2017
Subject:	Water Resources East Update

Summary:

This report updates members on activities relating to Anglian Water's (AW) Water Resources East (WRE) Project and the opportunities that might emerge from it in relation to the GLLEP Water Management Plan and LCC's Waterways Development Strategy. Officers are supporting Anglian Water to develop the proposal and to ensure that Lincolnshire is correctly positioned to exploit the opportunities that emerge from it.

Actions Required:

To consider the report contents and task officers to continue to work with Anglian Water and other stakeholders to ensure that LCC is positioned to attract the investment that WRE could bring to the County and exploit the wider opportunities that it would create.

1. Background

Long-term water resource planning is currently focussed on public water supply and is mostly undertaken by water companies. It has been recognised that continuing with such a narrow approach will hamper effective planning and preparation for long term issues of water availability faced by the east of England. This presents significant consequences for levels of growth across the region and the ability of sectors such as agri-food to operate effectively. An integrated, collaborative approach, working across sectors is far more likely to deliver success. In seeking to address these long term pressures Anglian Water has worked with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the Water Resources East (WRE) project. The purpose of this is to develop a long-term, multi-sector, water resource strategy that delivers better outcomes for the region, more efficiently and at a lower environmental cost than would otherwise be possible.

Anglian Waters Water Resources East Project

Water Companies are required to produce a Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) every 25 years and to review their plan every 5 years. AW's Water Resources East (WRE) project is a medium to long term strategic project that will identify and appraise options to ensure security of Public Water Supply across the

Anglia region and meet projected growth in demand for the next 25 years. The next WRMP is due for publication in 2019.

In the past major infrastructure projects such as this have usually been delivered in isolation without consideration being given to collaborative working. AW are now trialling an inclusive approach, working with the EA, the LEP, IDB's, Local Authorities, farmers and growers and environmental groups. WRE will appraise the benefits of collaborative working to deliver major infrastructure projects and the opportunities created to share the costs and benefits of a water transportation and storage system designed to meet wider ranging ambitions. This approach is in response to DEFRA guidance and WRE is a case study in new ways of working and LCC Officers are actively supporting it.

WRE covers the whole AW region and one of the additional storage options shortlisted for detailed appraisal is a new reservoir in South Lincolnshire, supplied via water transfer from the River Trent and water captured in the Black Sluice catchment. The transfer would be via a combination of new and existing open water channels which would create opportunities to move, store and supply water, create and join wetland habitat, develop visitor destinations, improve and extend navigation routes and increase levels of flood protection.

The WRE Project Group (the South Lincs Water Partnership (SLWP)) has been meeting for approximately eighteen months. They have identified the needs and aspirations of the stakeholder groups and quantified them in terms of additional demand for water and a workshop has been held to appraise how this demand could be met, the preferred option being:

- A large main reservoir supplemented by smaller ponds throughout the catchment.
- Water security for Lincolnshire's agri-food sector.
- Open water channels to provide access to water throughout the catchment (delivering environmental gains and economic benefits from the tourist and visitor sector).
- To capture and use water from drainage channels within the catchment where possible.
- To slow the flow in the natural water courses to the West of the South Forty Foot Drain to improve water quality, create and improve wet habitat and reduce flood risks.

This project is being monitored by DEFRA whose officers have visited the catchment and met with the project team. In May 2017 the Project Team held a launch to DEFRA of the proposal that WRE takes forward this work as a pilot study to develop the collaborative approach to the Black Sluice catchment as an option to meet the demands for water for supply to the public and those of the wider stakeholder groups. AW has confirmed that the South Lincs option has been shortlisted for detailed appraisal that will identify their preferred option(s) in November 2017.

The GLLEP Water Management Plan

The Greater Lincolnshire LEP's Water Management Plan (launched 2016), sets out the LEP's view of effective flood risk and water resource management as critical success factors in enabling economic growth across the area. In developing the plan it is recognised that three of Greater Lincolnshire's four priority sectors require a secure supply of water and protection from flooding to facilitate their growth namely; Agri-food, Visitor Economy and Manufacturing and Engineering.

The Water Management Plan builds on long-standing partnership working in flood risk management – a Lincolnshire Partnership which has been seen as a national exemplar by government. Partners are currently beginning a formal review of the existing Lincolnshire Flood Risk & Drainage Management Partnership Framework and the Joint Flood Risk Strategy, with a view to integrating flood risk and the LEP's perspective more closely together. In addition, the development of the Water Resources East initiative offers an opportunity to reinforce this integrated approach by aligning the Lincolnshire partnership's objectives with those of Water Resources East. LCC and the GLLEP will be key players in supporting and driving this initiative forward.

The LEPs Water Management Plan 'Water for Growth' has the following aims;

- Sets out the aims and objectives for water management as a driver for economic growth
- Identifies current, emerging and future projects that will secure these aims and objectives
- Sets out the water supply challenges for Greater Lincolnshire and the potential construction of major new reservoirs and/or water distribution infrastructure
- Establishes a 'pipeline' of potential bids for funding from a range of sources
- Draws on core actions set out in the three Local Flood Authorities Local Flood Risk Management Strategies where these directly contribute to economic growth
- Promotes integration between flood risk and water resource management in terms of focussed projects that facilitate economic growth
- Defines specific opportunities to promote co-operative ventures with neighbouring LEP's

There are clearly strong synergies between the GLLEP Water Management Plan and WRE and that working in partnership with AW and the SLWP will create opportunities to deliver beneficial outputs identified in the GLLEP Water Management Plan. WRE is recognised as being a potential delivery mechanism for projects that align with the WMP.

Lincolnshire County Councils Waterways Development Plan

The Waterways Development Strategy for Lincolnshire County Council (LCC); "*Lincolnshire Waterways for the Future 2009 – 2018*" has been highly successful in enabling investments in excess of £20m to be made. These investments have resulted in an extended network of navigations with improved infrastructure making our waterways and places nearby more accessible to a wide range of stakeholder groups.

The aim of those investments was to improve the accessibility of our waterways and attract a significant increase in boating activity, which would then act as a catalyst to increased levels of private sector investment. This has now begun with a number of new businesses and new jobs having been created alongside our waterways in locations across the county and planning applications being approved for new marina's in Cherry Willingham and Boston (R Witham) and others pending in Gainsborough, Woodhall Spa and Boston (South Forty Foot Drain).

Over the period from 2009 to date, as well as significant infrastructure works being completed that contribute to the Fens Waterways Link project studies have been undertaken that underpin the business case for this project. It is clear from these reports that the trigger for the major private sector investments will be FWL, delivered via strategic infrastructure projects that attract more boats into the County from the River Trent and extend the reach of our navigations to and then beyond Spalding will be key factors in unlocking the economic potential of Lincolnshire's waterways. The further Development of Gainsborough Marina and being able to exploit the opportunities for extending our navigations created by WRE are therefore important areas of activity for LCC.

LCC's Waterways Development Strategy is due for revision and the new strategy will be reported to Council early in 2018. It will propose a clear focus on the strategic objectives of making our waterways more accessible from the River Trent and delivering the next stages of Fens Waterways Link, extending our navigations to Spalding. These strategic objectives will bring potential economic, social and environmental benefits to every community along the Fosdyke, Witham, Black Sluice, R Glen and R Welland corridors; with Boston, the Black Sluice catchment and Spalding potentially being the major beneficiaries.

Some of the opportunities arising from the WRE project will come ahead of the completion of the Boston Barrier. However, these will enable local benefits to be realised along the WRE water transfer routes, which could create a new circular boating route and other opportunities that will benefit Boston. As the detail of WRE emerges over the next 6 months it will be necessary to enable officers to develop projects such as those in partnership with AW. It is proposed that the budget currently ring-fenced for waterways developments arising from the Boston Barrier be moved to future years in the capital programme to provide funding to enable the development of those projects ahead of the Boston Barrier project being built. In doing this a holistic approach will need to be taken to utilising that budget to ensure the original aims of this budget allocation are achieved.

2. Conclusion

There are clearly strong synergies between the WRE Project, the GLLEP WMP, FWL and LCC's Waterways Development Strategy. LCC and GLLEP Officers are working in partnership with AW and the SLWP to ensure that if the proposed WRE South Lincs Reservoir is approved for development, the wider opportunities to deliver benefits to the environment, flood risk management, the agri-food and tourism sectors are recognised and exploited where possible.

LCC has supported the development of the Black Sluice Project, and its potential as Water Resources East pilot, as part of its contribution to delivering the existing Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk Strategy and the GLLEP's Water Management Plan. The present paper is intended to ensure that members are aware of the potential for this project to deliver significant strategic options for managing water in Lincolnshire and supporting the broader objectives of the GLLEP.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

N/A

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Upon confirmation that the Anglian Water WRE project will be proposed within their 2019 Water Resource Management Plan. This will be reported to the February Floods and Water Management Scrutiny meeting.

4. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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