



**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place**

Report to:	<b>Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>21 February 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Riparian Project update</b>

**Summary:**

To update members of the committee on the development of the Council's approach to the network of riparian watercourses across Lincolnshire, along with strengthened engagement with riparian landowners. Members' comments and guidance in continuing to develop the project is sought.

**Actions Required:**

Members of the Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on the scope and status of the project and guide officers in developing the project further.

## **1. Background**

In response to impacts experienced during recent rainfall events from riparian watercourses, the Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership has been exploring how existing ways of working can be improved, to implement a more robust, co-ordinated, and sustainable approach to reducing the risk of flooding from riparian assets and watercourses.

As part of this approach, the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that exists with Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) to provide consenting and enforcement services on behalf of the County Council, in the 52% of the county that lies outside IDB Districts, is currently under review for implementation in April 2022 and thereafter.

This report provides a progress update with the Lincolnshire Riparian Project since last reported to committee in September 2021. Further updates on project delivery and lessons identified will be provided to future meetings of the committee leading to its conclusion in March 2023.

## **Progress To Date**

In assessing potential measures needed, the Partnership sought to make extensive use of local knowledge in identifying what the most effective solutions might be and where these might most effectively be applied. For this reason, a representative sample of parish and town councils, town forums and wards across Greater Lincolnshire were asked to participate in a questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire were reviewed in the context of national and regional experience and discussion, leading to the identification of a range of possible measures that could form the basis for how a proportionate countywide, co-ordinated approach to managing flood risk from riparian assets and watercourses could be achieved and more importantly maintained.

Since then, extensive exploration of the development of these measures has been undertaken by the Partnership, culminating in the development of a draft Joint Action Plan (Appendix A) that consists of 14 suggested measures for approval and endorsement by the Strategy Group of the Partnership.

It is worth mentioning that the scope of the project has expanded considerably since inception due to the identification of opportunities for innovation and the building upon of existing practices. This holds true particularly for those measures associated with partnership working, the inclusion of which was deemed necessary by the Partnership to ensure that the proposed suggestions and any future developments regarding the management of riparian watercourses and assets across Lincolnshire can be readily incorporated into and sustained by the Partnership.

Notwithstanding the above it is important to note that the initial emphasis of the project, being the raising of awareness of riparian responsibilities and the ensuring of a consistent approach regarding enforcement, remains a core component of the project, evidenced by the fact that these measures are identified as being of highest priority within the Joint Action Plan. The priority of measures, as outlined in Appendix A, reflects the viewpoints of the Partnership at the time of writing; however, this is not to say that the priority of measures shall remain static throughout the delivery of the programme of works. Indeed, subject to resource availability and existing commitments, the priority of measures may change during programme delivery, and shall be frequently reviewed by the Partnership to ensure the proportionate management of risks whilst maximising opportunities for efficiencies and learning.

For the avoidance of doubt measures within Appendix A are listed in order from highest to lowest priority, with the priority of each measure being based on its potential impact, ease of deliverability and desirability.

#### Highest priority measures within the action plan

Priority	Measure
1	Awareness-raising of rights and responsibilities among riparian landowners – in conjunction with national communication campaigns
2	Developing a more consistent and visible approach for consenting and enforcement activities on watercourses across Greater Lincolnshire
3	The strengthening of the existing first point of contact principle, and its extension across Greater Lincolnshire
4	Refinement and expansion of responses to conveyancing enquiries

Throughout the development of the project, resource has been a recurring theme, with a clear understanding from partners that whilst the project is being led by the County Council the implementation of measures rests with the Partnership as a whole. Acknowledging concerns that may exist regarding the deliverability of the project's ambitions, it is worth noting that the work involved, and subsequent resources required with each measure will vary considerably although the majority simply build upon existing approaches and will therefore only require staff time, with the flood risk partnership alongside North and North East Lincolnshire Council providing support for the measures proposed.

In addition to the above all reasonable efforts are being made by the Partnership to minimise any such risks, thereby maximising the benefits that can be delivered to local communities across Lincolnshire.

#### **Next Steps**

Working within the governance structure of the Partnership, the Joint Action Plan shall be presented to the Strategy Group with the aim of gaining approval of the plan by April / May 2022, with implementation to follow as appropriate during 2022 and thereafter.

Further reporting to committee between now and conclusion of the project in March 2023 will continue.

#### **2. Conclusion**

Members are asked to consider the approach outlined above and continue to support officers with guidance and advice throughout the development of the project.

#### **3. Consultation**

##### **a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

N/A

#### 4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire Riparian Project - Proposed Action Plan

#### 5. Background Papers

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

This report was written by Ryan Davies, Assistant Flood Risk Officer, who can be contacted on 07917 520900 or [Ryan.Davies@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Ryan.Davies@lincolnshire.gov.uk).