

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place

Report to:	Flood & Water Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 May 2022
Subject:	Flood Risk Team update (including Section 19 investigations)

Summary:

To provide an update to Committee on the recent work of the Flood Risk team including informing the Committee of the status of all current flood investigations being undertaken in the County.

Actions Required:

Members are asked:

1. To view the current list of completed and active flood investigations online at <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/flood-risk-management/flood-investigations>
2. Inform Democratic Services in advance if they wish to raise any particular sites at the forthcoming Committee meeting.
3. To note and comment as required on updates provided on the work of the Flood Risk Team.

1. Background

A standing item to inform the Committee on the position of all current Section 19 investigations in the County has been in place for some time. Whilst this report will still highlight the status of such investigations in the county, the opportunity is also being taken to update the committee on recent work and initiatives for which the Flood Risk Team are involved. This will hopefully provide members of the Committee with a much broader understanding on some of the recent work that has been undertaken in the County.

Investigations under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010

The Committee will be aware that all such investigations are published on the County Council's website by means of an interactive map, whether the investigation is completed, actively under investigation or awaiting works to mitigate future flooding.

It is a duty under Section 19, Flood & Water Management Act 2010 (F&WMA) for the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to carry out investigations to identify which Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have a flood risk management function in connection with the flood and whether they have exercised, or intend to exercise, that function in response to the flood. To assist with this, Lincolnshire County Council as the LLFA makes recommendations for proportionate works to manage future flood risk, to be delivered by individual RMAs or in partnership as considered appropriate or expedient. Such recommendations are also published although this is over and above the requirements of the F&WMA; all recommendations for mitigation works and the RMA leading those works are available to view on the interactive mapping. If Members have any site-specific questions, they are requested to contact the Flood and Water Manager in advance of the meeting.

As previously reported to members of this committee, the workload generated by significant and widespread flooding in 2019 and 2020 has proved challenging. It is pleasing to report however that the review of the Section 19 process has now been implemented resulting in a more streamlined approach. This has resulted in a quicker turnaround of not only the current incomplete investigations as part of the existing backlog but also new investigations which have emerged, whilst still maintaining the high quality of investigation and report content. This will process will be kept under constant review.

With regards to new flood investigations started in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 (January to March), there were 3 S.19 investigations started affecting 2 residential and 8 commercial properties. This compares with 2 investigation reports during the same period last year.

The current status of S.19 reports is shown in Table 1 below:

Number of Reports On-going	180 (22.42% reduction since last reported in February 2022)
Number of Completed Investigations with Outstanding Works	79 (79.54% increase since last reported in February 2022 due to the significant number of reports that have recently been signed off).
Number of Reports commissioned in April 2022	1
Number of Reports Commissioned in Q4 (2021 /2022)	3 (at the time of writing)
Number of Reports Commissioned in Q4 (2020 / 2021)	2
Number of Reports Circulated to RMAs for Endorsement	11
Reports Awaiting Sign-off	10

Table 1: Current status of S.19 investigations (as at 6/5/2022)

The total annual number of S.19 investigations and properties affected between 2012 and 2021 can be seen in table 2 below.

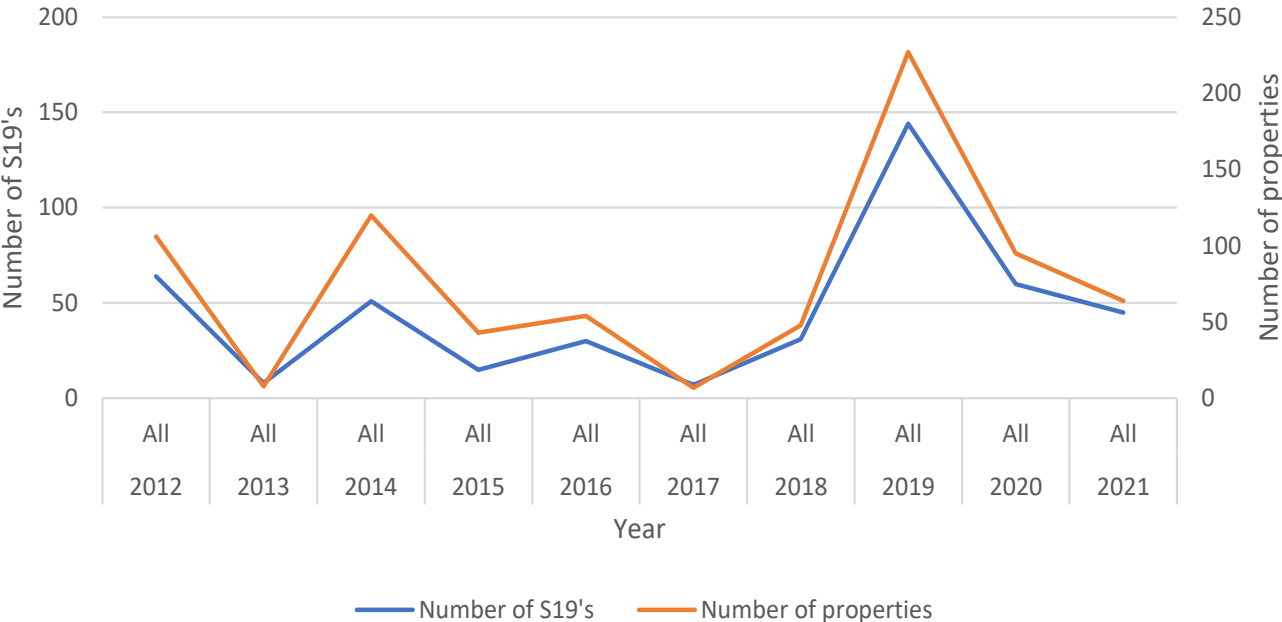


Table 2: Annual totals of Number of S.19 Investigations and properties affected

In addition to the above data, a piece of work has recently been completed by the floods team to collate data for the number of near miss reports received. A near miss report can be identified in a number of ways such as via a S.19 investigation where it is determined that internal flooding did not occur, but outbuildings or gardens were affected, or where instances of flooding are reported directly to the County Council to either the Flood Risk Team or Highways colleagues via members of the public, elected members or partner organisations. The collation of the near miss data can help inform decision making for future programmes of works by taking a proactive, rather than reactive approach to addressing flood risk and drainage issues.

A summary of the number of near miss data collated to date is summarised in table 3 below.

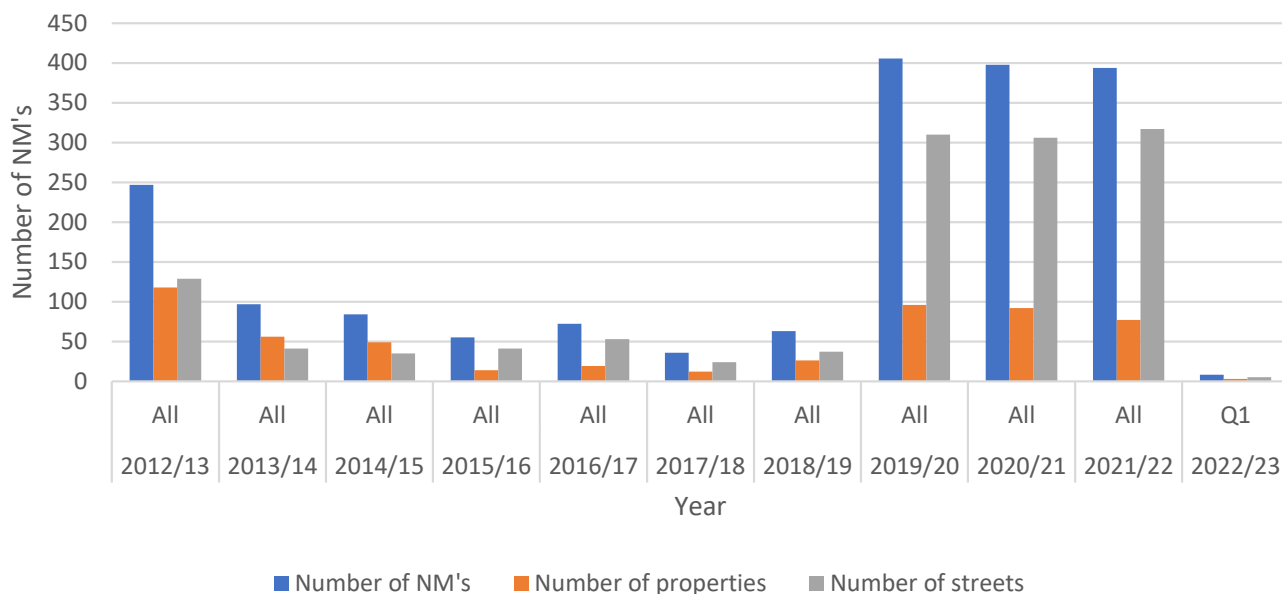


Table 3: Summary of near miss data collated between 2012 and 2021

Water Situation Report update

The water situation report update for March 2022 (most recent data) in the Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire catchments showed that total rainfall, soil moisture deficit, river flows and groundwater levels were all noted at normal levels. Rainfall varied between 72-85% of the long-term average for the time of year (92-98% over the last 12 months) with the whole area receiving 39mm of rainfall during March, with 50% of this rainfall falling on one day – 16th March. Most days in March recorded 0mm of rainfall. Following the normal levels of rainfall recorded in March, river flows remained stable, with most sites being at similar levels to what they were in February 2022.

An update on the Greater Lincolnshire Riparian Project

As previously reported to this committee 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.

Following support for the continued development and implementation of the Joint Action Plan the Lincolnshire Riparian Working Group has commenced implementation on a number of measures, the following of which are on-going:

- Awareness-raising of rights and responsibilities among riparian landowners – in conjunction with national communication campaigns
- Developing a more consistent and visible approach for consenting and enforcement activities on watercourses across Greater Lincolnshire
- The strengthening of the existing first point of contact principle, and its extension across Greater Lincolnshire

- Strengthening the partnership across Greater Lincolnshire by actively developing and upskilling staff, reviewing existing arrangements and promoting the good work undertaken by the partnership
- Establishing a register of organisations able to undertake rapid, small-scale maintenance work
- The establishing of principles for the reasonable inspection of partner assets during site visits
- Consider the creation of byelaws in specific locations where proportionate and appropriate
- The identification and digitisation of localised riparian assets within high consequence flood risk areas

In addition, the measure identified to refine and expand on responses to conveyancing enquiries has now been implemented following agreed wording to be incorporated as part of standing advice to question 21 of conveyancing enquiries.

Unfortunately, the refresh of the Environment Agency's 'Living on the Edge' document has been delayed; nevertheless, measures have been implemented to ensure that the activities outlined within the communications and engagement log can progress.

An update on the Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater Project

As previously reported to this committee this project is being taken forward following a successful bid into the national Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation (FCRI) programme whereby confirmation has been received that capital funding to the value of £7,551,000 will be available over the six-year period of the project timeframe (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2027).

The FCRI Programme provides the opportunity to develop understanding of a broad range of groundwater risks and opportunities across multiple LLFA areas, leading to a range of practical actions delivered in partnership over the next six years. It is intended that these actions should incorporate multiple benefits, such that environmental and social resilience is built into the approaches developed.

All projects have to complete an Outline Business Case (OBC) for assurance and approval by the Environment Agency's national project assurance groups. Led by officers at Lincolnshire County Council, and supported by other partners and stakeholders, the OBC for this project has been developed over recent months to meet the submission deadline of end of April 2022. It is pleasing to report that the OBC and supporting appendices were submitted to the national team for review on 28th April and therefore marking a significant milestone in the early stages of this project.

Subject to assessment and approval this will allow drawdown of the remaining allocated funds to support the continued development and delivery of the Greater Lincolnshire Groundwater Project for which the partnership will then be committed to delivering on the objectives set out for this project.

2. Conclusion

Despite the continued pressure on resources as a result of the above-average number of flood investigations being initiated, good progress continues to be made in managing the backlog of investigations while maintaining quality. This process will remain under constant review to ensure maximum efficiency when producing an appropriate, reasonable, and proportionate report. The Flood Risk Team will continue to build on the excellent working relationships it has with other Lincolnshire Risk Management Authorities to deliver partnership projects for the benefit of residents and communities across the county. Further updates will be presented to future meetings of this committee.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. 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 Matthew Harrison, Flood and Water Manager, who can be contacted on 07771 837565 or matthew.harrison@lincolnshire.gov.uk.