

# Policy Flood Risk and Water Level Management

## 1. Introduction

### Background

1.1. This policy has been prepared by the Scunthorpe & Gainsborough Water Management Board (the Board) to identify the Board's approach to the management of water levels and flood risk within the Board's Internal Drainage District (the District).

1.2. The Board is constituted by order of Parliament operating under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and is designated a Risk Management Authority (RMA) under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010.

1.3. The Board undertakes its function by managing water levels in ordinary watercourses and water control infrastructure within its District to mitigate the risks of flooding and drought.

1.4. In delivering its function the Board will meet its environmental obligations.

### Purpose

1.5. The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 details responsibilities for Flood and Coastal Risk Management in England, including policy responsibility, strategic overview responsibility, development, maintenance and application of a strategy for local flood risk management. Risk management is defined as a function under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended).

1.6. This Policy sets out the Board's approach to meeting national policy aims and objectives in its Drainage District, as stated in the *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England 2011* (the National Strategy). The Policy will be revised when necessary to reflect future revisions of the National Strategy

## 2. Delivering the National Strategy policy aim and objectives

### Aim

2.1. The overall aim of the National Strategy is to ensure the risk of flooding and coastal erosion is properly managed by using the full range of options in a co-ordinated way. The Strategy states that communities, individuals, voluntary groups, and private and public-sector organisations will work together to manage the risk to people and their property; facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level; and achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

### Objectives

2.2. The Strategy sets out five objectives in pursuance of the overall aim:

- understand the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, working together to put in place long-term sustainable plans to manage these risks and making sure that other plans take account of them;
- avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and being careful to manage land elsewhere to avoid increasing risks;
- build, maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society as well as achieving wider environmental benefits;
- increase public awareness of the risk that remains and engaging with people at risk to encourage them to take action to manage the risks that they face and to make their property more resilient; and
- improving the detection, forecasting and issue of warnings of flooding, co-ordinating a rapid response to flood emergencies and promoting faster recovery from flooding.

2.3. The Board supports the national aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels and the Board's policy and approach will be consistent with them.

## 3. Flood risk and water level management in the Board's District

3.1. The District has been determined as an area of special drainage need and derives benefit from drainage operations. In the absence of drainage operations, the District is at some risk from flooding. That flood risk is managed wherever it is practically, environmentally, and financially viable in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended).

3.2. The Board makes decisions regarding flood risk within the District accounting for the following:

- Assets in place considering design standard and life;
- Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority Flood Risk Strategies, plans and maps;
- other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.

- 3.3. The following outlines the key details of the District:
- Total area of the drainage district: 11463 ha
  - Area of agricultural land: 10404ha
  - Area of other (non-agricultural) land including motorway, road, railway infrastructure: 1059 ha
  - Sites of Designated environmental Interest: 39.19 ha
- 3.4. Assets for which the Board has operational responsibility:
- Water level control structures: xx number
  - Watercourses the Board chooses to maintain: 131.8 km
  - Reservoirs: 1
  - Pumping Stations: 10

#### **4. Building, maintaining and improving flood and coastal erosion risk management systems**

4.1. Through its function, the Board seeks to achieve a general standard of water level management that enables the drainage and irrigation of agricultural land, reduces flood risk to developed areas, and sustains environmental features throughout the District.

4.2. The Board monitors and reviews the condition of Board maintained watercourses and other assets, particularly those considered priority, over-spilling from which could affect people and property. Consistent with the resultant needs established, a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is provided. The programme is reviewed periodically by the Board to ensure it is delivering the appropriate condition.

4.3. Where the Board considers it necessary, and to facilitate betterment of land drainage, reduce flood risk and sustaining environmental features, improvement works will be sought where they are considered practical and financially viable by the Board. Where improvement works meet the criteria set by Defra, financial support will be sought from the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding. Where possible, works will be undertaken in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and take opportunities to work with natural processes. Board powers to undertake water level and flood risk management works are permissive and resources are limited.

4.4. Work for and by the Board will be carried out taking account of best practice guidance and the Board's expertise, experience and knowledge of local conditions, as well as, delivering best value for money.

4.5. The Board has a supervisory duty, under section 1(2) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) over all matters relating to the drainage of land within its District and will, where appropriate, advise others regarding the undertaking of works when it is not appropriate for the Board to exercise its own powers.

4.6. The Board will also seek to ensure, where possible, that assets managed by other Risk Management Authorities, which reduce flood risk to the District, are maintained and may enter into a Public Sector Co-operation Agreement with another Risk Management Authority to achieve that reduction in flood risk.

#### **5. Regulation of activities - Avoiding inappropriate development and land management**

5.1. The Board will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.

5.2. The Board will regulate as necessary, using legislative powers and byelaws, the activity of others to ensure their actions within, alongside, and otherwise impacting its drainage system do not increase flood risk, prevent the efficient working of drainage systems, or adversely impact the environment.

5.3. The potential impact on flood risk from future development, both within the District and the wider catchment draining into the District, is fully recognised by the Board. The Board will take an active role in the assessment of local plans, major development and, planning applications to prevent inappropriate development and land use to reduce the potential of increased flood risk.

5.4. Where appropriate the Board will seek contributions from developers to cover the cost of both immediate and longer term works necessary to mitigate against any resultant increase in flood risk. Such contributions will be recorded in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance.

5.5. The Board will where appropriate, seek to designate structures or features affecting flood risk under section 30 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

## **6. Communication and transparency**

6.1. The Board will:

- Publish a map of the watercourses it periodically maintains;
- Submit an Annual Report to Defra (IDB1 Form);
- Publish Board Agenda, Meeting Papers including draft Minutes.

## **7. Environmental measures**

7.1. The Board has nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003, the Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, and is a Competent Authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Board will fulfil these duties.

7.2. The Board has access to environmental advice from its Environmental Officer. When it deems appropriate, the Board will have a Biodiversity Action Plan which will identify targets under the Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife. Such an Action Plan will contain actions to achieve which will be set and reported upon.

7.3. Several sites of national biological or geological interest lie within the drainage district

- Messingham Heath SSSI
- Tuetoes Hills SSSI
- Scotton & Laughton Forest Ponds SSSI
- Laughton Common SSSI
- Lea Marsh SSSI

## **8. Approval and Review of this Policy**

8.1. This policy was adopted by the Board on 12 November 2018

8.2. The Board will periodically review this Policy as required.