

WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Witham First District Internal Drainage Board to provide a public statement of the Board's approach to its management of flood risk and water levels in its area.

Background

- 1.2 The Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" which includes Witham First District Internal Drainage Board.
- 1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence (1). To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has published a series of high level targets (2). The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include an assessment of the risk of flooding and coastal erosion in their area, and what plans they have to reduce that risk.
- 1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are available from the Board's offices at Witham House, J1 The Point, Weaver Road, Lincoln, LN6 3QN. We are also providing a copy to the Department of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Environment Agency and local authorities.
- 1.5 The Government's policy aim is:
To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.
- The key objectives to achieve this aim are:-
- 1.6 (a) *To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.*
(b) *To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.*
(c) *To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.*

2. HOW THE BOARD WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Witham First District IDB supports the Government aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them as follows:-

Objective (a): To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.

- The Board will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems. Co-operate with the Agency in responses to flood emergencies and participating as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures, reviewing such arrangements every two years.

Objective (b): To encourage the provision of adequate economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

- Within the drainage district potentially all the area is at some risk of flooding. The Board will seek to retain this risk at acceptable levels through appropriate improvements and the implementation of a sound maintenance strategy. They will also seek to ensure that the Environment Agency's flood defences, which also afford protection to the district, are maintained at a satisfactory standard.
- Work will be carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of guidance available from DEFRA, the Environment Agency and other organisations.
- Regulate as necessary using the available powers the actions of others to ensure their works do not increase the flood risk.
- Ensure that riparian owners are aware of their responsibilities for maintenance.
- Play a positive role in fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environmental objectives and targets. We acknowledge our responsibilities under the Land Drainage Acts of 1991 and 1994, The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the European Birds and Habitats Directives and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994.
- When carrying out our works we will seek to avoid wherever possible damage to environmental interests and aim to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans and seek opportunities to enhance the aquatic environment.

- Ensure that for those Water Level Management Plans where we are the leading operating authority we work in partnership with English Nature to complete, implement where appropriate, and review Plans in accordance with DEFRA guidance on plan completion and the timetables set out in the High Level Targets.
- Co-operate with other bodies and make input to the development of Shoreline Management Plans, Coastal Habitat Plans and Local Environment Agency Plans.

Objective (c): To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding.

The potential impact on flood risk through future development in the Drainage District, or in the wider catchment draining to the District is fully recognised by the Board and it will take an active role in the assessment of structure planning, local plans and individual applications to ensure flood risk is not increased. Where appropriate the

- Board will secure from Developers contributions to cover the cost of both immediate and longer term works necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk can be removed. Such contributions will be recorded in accordance with DETR/MAFF Circular (successor to 30/92).

3. FLOODING RISKS IN THE BOARD'S DISTRICT

3.1 As mentioned in Section 2, the entire drainage district is at some risk to flooding. That risk is substantially controlled but some variation in the standards of protection will apply. The following are the key details of the District:

Catchment Area draining to and including the District	16,500 ha
Total area of the District	15,753 ha
Area of Agricultural Land	15,485 ha
Area of Residential & Industrial Property	268 ha

Major Infrastructure

Motorway		0 km
Classified Roads	- A roads	14.35 km
	- B roads	9.58 km
	- C roads	104.52 km

Sites of Environmental Interest

SSSI	4.78 ha
Nature Reserve (Metheringham Delph)	30 ha

3.2 Witham First District IDB has provided the Environment Agency with information on the major flood defence assets for which the Board are responsible. The information is available from the Environment Agency at Waterside House, Waterside North, Lincoln LN2 5HA.

3.3 Assets for which the Board has operating authority responsibility

Pumping Station	14 No.
Other Water Level Control Structures	0 No.
Watercourses	266 km
Raised Embankments	2.775 km

Passing through or adjacent to the District are the following assets maintained by the Environment Agency.

Main Rivers	151 km
River Raised Embankments	201 km

3.4 Flood Risk From These Watercourses

This section sets out the Board's assessment of flood risk taking into account the following:

- Assets in place considering design standard and life.
- Environment Agency flood risk maps.
- Other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.

3.5 The areas, which are more vulnerable to flooding due to the particular local circumstances, are adjacent to Environment Agency main rivers Witham, Sleas, Carr Dyke, Billingham Skirth and the Delphs. The Board is satisfied that there are minimal risks to human life arising from any failure in its own assets or overflowing from its watercourses.

3.6 Through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable of providing flood protection to agricultural

land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively. This likely return cannot be taken literally and should be considered as a chance of some overspilling from the system taking place each year as being 5% and 1% respectively.

3.7 Reduction and Management of These Flood Risks

The Board monitor the condition of its pumping station and watercourses, particularly those designated as critical, overspilling from which could affect property. Consistent with the established need a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards of protection, which are sought. Where standards are not at the policy level, improvement works, where they can be demonstrated to meet with DEFRA criteria, will be considered and undertaken as appropriate. The Board welcome from its agricultural ratepayers, special levy councils and members of the public any comments on the condition of its system which could lead to any increased flood risk.

- 3.8 The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create an understanding among people who live and work in it as to what the flood risk is and the efforts made to control it. They will also seek to achieve directly and through local councils a culture within which the watercourses are seen as vital to controlling flood risk, whilst providing an interesting aquatic habit and dissuade abuse of them through dumping waste or obstructing flows in other ways.

4. **REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT**

Witham First District IDB will review this Policy Statement within a period not extending beyond 3 years.

References

1) Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993.

2) High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence Operating Authorities and Elaboration of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999.

Chief Executive

October 2009