

Anglian (Northern) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC)

Minutes of the Anglian (Northern) RFCC held on 5 July 2013, Boardroom, Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way, Peterborough

Present:	Robert Caudwell Geoff Beel Cllr Michael Clarke Mary Dhonau OBE Cllr Ian Fleetwood Cllr Denis Hoyes MBE Stephen Langlois Cllr Hugo Marfleet Clive Mason Cllr Pam Posnett Cllr Heather Smith Dick Thomas Steven Trehwella Cllr Alexander Wallace	Chairman Environment Agency Appointee Northamptonshire County Council Environment Agency Appointee Lincolnshire County Council Lincolnshire County Council Environment Agency Appointee Lincolnshire County Council Environment Agency Appointee Leicestershire County Council Northamptonshire County Council Environment Agency Appointee (Coastal) Environment Agency Appointee North East Lincolnshire Council
In attendance:	Jim Hutchison Mike Dugher Paul Burrows Deborah Campbell Leigh Edlin Amanda Bakewell Amy Inman	Regional Flood Risk Manager Area FCRM Manager Regional Programme Manager Area Coastal Manager Operations Manager – Lincolnshire External Relations Officer External Relations Officer
Observers:	Josie Bateman Peter Bateson David Hickman Teresa James Paul Tame Rod Chapman Mark Bowlt Emily Coombes	Northamptonshire County Council Witham Fourth IDB Lincolnshire County Council North East Lincolnshire Council National Farmers Union North Lincolnshire Council FCRM Advisor (EA) FCRM Officer (EA)

1. Apologies for absence and greetings to visitors

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Mark Avery (Environment Agency Appointee – Conservation), Cllr Ron Allcock (North Lincolnshire Council), Cllr Ian Bates (Cambridgeshire County Council), Cllr Edward Baines (Rutland County Council), Cllr Peter Hiller (Peterborough City Council), Michael Sly (Environment Agency Appointee), Sue Longstone (Northern Area Manager), Pete Reilly (Operations Manager – Welland and Nene), Julia Chatterton (Peterborough City Council), Jenny Gough (Cambridgeshire County Council).

1.2 The Chairman welcomed the new local authority members that had joined the Committee since the local elections in May.

1.3 The Chairman welcomed all other staff and visitors in attendance.

2. Chairman's announcements

2.1 The Chairman advised that Mike Dugher is on assignment as Area Flood Risk Manager and Deborah Campbell is on assignment as Coastal Manager.

3. Declarations of members' interests

3.1 Cllr Marfleet declared an interest in Item 9 as Chair of the Lindsey Marsh Internal Drainage Board (IDB).

3.2 All other previously declared interests were carried forward.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2013

4.1 Resolution

A. The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2013 as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising

Minute 6.5

5.1 Members noted that it had not been possible to arrange a workshop to follow this meeting due to availability but it remains an action and will be rearranged. Officers advised that the strategy group has been working on the different approaches for the Saltfleet to Gibraltar Point Strategy.

Minute 8.9

5.2 Mr Beel advised that he had received a briefing note on Greatford Cut. He expressed concern that the priority level is two, however, capital works are being proposed to restore channel capacity in the area. Mr Beel felt that this shows the consequence of lack of maintenance on the river and wondered if the priority status is being reconsidered for other lengths of main river affected by last year's rainfall and flooding.

Minute 9.4 to 9.7

5.3 Acknowledging that he had commented on the communications prior to their issue, Mr Tame noted that there had been some concern that farmers were being asked to provide information on their single farm payments as part of the General Drainage Charge (GDC) information being sent out. This should be noted for next year's communication. The Chairman recognised the importance of demonstrating the local benefits to those paying the GDC

Minute 15

5.4 Members noted that Defra had just announced that the possible transfer of Environment Agency navigations over to the Canal and River Trust would be postponed for another two to three years whilst Defra finances improve and when there is a realistic prospect of the transfer being possible.

5.5 Officers advised that Government had recently announced that the Environment Agency would not be merging with Natural England following the results of the Triennial Review. A number of recommendations have been made to ensure the two organisations are working more closely together.

6. Members' slot

Flood Insurance

- 6.1 Ms Dhonau advised that Government had made an announcement on the future of flood insurance following long negotiations with the Association of British Insurers (ABI). The Flood Re approach is being taken forward as the proposal for the future and a public consultation on the approach is open for the next six weeks. The Flood Re approach will place a limit on flood risk premiums and will cap what people pay in excess. A pool will be created funded through all insurance premiums will allow payouts to those at risk if there is significant flooding.
- 6.2 Mr Thomas noted that a fund would take time to build up and asked what would happen if there is significant flooding in the meantime. Ms Dhonau advised that £10.50 from each insurance premium will be paid into the fund so there is confidence that the pool will build quickly but the insurance industry will have to pay out if more is needed. Ms Dhonau advised that surface water flooding will be covered by Flood Re which is good progress.
- 6.3 Mr Beel felt it would be important that insurance companies use the right flood risk maps which show the benefits of defences and the existing level of protection. Officers advised that information provided is National Flood Risk Assessment (NAFRA) data which sits behind flood zone maps. When the flood map is re-launched in December it will make residual risk more prominent, taking into account the flood risk.
- 6.4 Cllr Clarke asked when the £10.50 would start to be taken from peoples insurance premiums and if it would be part of their existing premium. Ms Dhonau advised that, if the Flood Re approach is taken forward, it would start to build up from 2015 but many insurance holders may not notice any difference to their premium.

6.5 Action

Officers undertook to circulate the guidance and information on Flood Re to all members.

- 6.6 Members noted that there are a number of details yet to be finalised and discussed. The Chairman and Ms Dhonau would attend a stakeholder forum in the following week.

Coastal Update

- 6.7 Mr Thomas advised that there is a powerful set of coastal data being collated at Regional Coastal Observatories that local authorities and the Environment Agency can access. It is detailed and at an engineer level of understanding but can be used by operating authorities to help with their role. Members noted that National Coastal Erosion maps are on the Environment Agency website for members of the public and can indicate likely rates of erosion.
- 6.8 Officers advised that the RFCC Coastal representatives from around the country had recently met to share best practice and issues. They agreed the importance of the link between the Coastal Groups and RFCCs. It is anticipated that the meeting will now become an annual event.
- 6.9 Mr Thomas advised that the North East Coastal Group had raised the issue of ensuring actions are being taken forward from Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and that RFCCs have a role in ensuring this is overseen. It is important for the Committee to understand what is in their SMP action plans.

7. Executive Managers Update (NFCC13/16)

- 7.1 Mr Langlois advised that work has been ongoing to progress submissions to the Price Review 2014 (PR14) process and Anglian Water would be consulting on their strategy and business plan in a few weeks time. The consultation would be available on the Anglian Water website. Numbers within the business plan will need to be finalised by the middle of September and it will be scrutinised internally and independently throughout the Autumn. The final determination from Ofwat will not be available until January 2015.
- 7.2 A list of flood risk management schemes put into the PR14 process has been included at Item 10 (NFCC13/19), and shows that 28 schemes have been put forward for the Anglian (Northern) area with £2.3 million of investment. The joint funding of a post to help maximise the submission of schemes into the PR14 process has benefited the region.
- 7.3 Members noted that the Lincshire scheme would feature on a new BBC documentary called 'Keeping Britain Safe'. The programme will highlight the work carried out there and how it helps protect the local community.
- 7.4 Members noted that there had been a successful prosecution for a significant pollution incident that affected the River Nene in June 2012. The company was fined £92k which is one of the largest fines seen for this type of incident. Mr Beel welcomed this successful outcome and felt that it should be put forward as an example to warn others about the consequences of chemicals getting into a river or watercourse.

7.5 Resolution

A. The Committee noted the report.

8. FCRM Programming 2014/15 – 2018/19 (NFCC13/17)

- 8.1 The Committee noted the report included in the pack and received a presentation providing the updated position on creating a programme for the next five years. All Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have identified their candidate projects and submitted them into the allocation process. The Committee has opportunity to comment before it is submitted to the national team by 12 July. Members and officers from RMAs were asked to check the submissions for accuracy and consider the ability to deliver what is in the submission. The indicative allocation would then come back to the October meeting.
- 8.2 It has been announced that a six year capital settlement has been secured by Defra to invest in flood and coastal erosion. This enables unprecedented long term planning and will provide confidence to partners and co-funders. The commitment is that protection will be improved to 300,000 more properties by March 2021, efficiency targets will be re-set with a further 10% added over that period and an expectation to leverage in 15% of non Grant in Aid (GiA) sources into the investment programme. The Environment Agency flood risk revenue budget will be maintained in cash terms in 2015/16 with an additional £5m for maintenance..
- 8.3 Mr Beel felt that revenue funding for main rivers is crucial and welcomed that there would be no further cuts to the revenue maintenance budget. However, this would not restore the levels of revenue funding to what they were historically. There are areas of main river in the lowest priority level that are covered by GDC payers but are not being maintained. The Chairman advised that Anglian (Northern) area does work hard to show the benefit to GDC payers but recognised that new powers enabling IDBs and landowners to undertake some work themselves may help make the best use of money.

- 8.4 Mr Beel noted that 15% non GiA contributions were needed and asked if Officers had been able identify what percentage the schemes in the indicative allocation might provide. Officers advised that the next stage of work would focus on assessing the projects for their contribution.
- 8.5 Mr Mason felt that indirect benefits should be considered. Officers advised that there are strict rules as to how to calculate beneficiaries and the current calculator does not allow for indirect benefits.
- 8.6 Officers gave thanks to Environment Agency staff and all RMAs for their input and hard work over the last few months. Officers would take on any lessons learnt for the allocation process next year.
- 8.7 Officers highlighted a number of significant schemes across the Northern area that have a robust case to attract GiA over the next five years. Members noted that a number of local authorities cross other RFCC boundaries and so bids have been shared across all areas.
- 8.8 Mr Langlois advised that Anglian Water are progressing a scheme at Ruskington which has been considered for some time. The area is also at risk of fluvial flooding so it would be important to work together and deliver both things together. This is the type of work that Duncan Campbell will be looking at for the next few months as part of his jointly funded assignment between the Anglian RFCCs and Anglian Water.
- 8.9 Members noted that it is important to link in with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) but recognised that there are some differences between them with different priorities. The funding opportunities could be important in future.
- 8.10 The Committee noted that North Lincolnshire Council had experienced issues with helping residents understand the importance of Property Level Protection in areas where there are a smaller number of properties affected. The Committee agreed that these smaller solutions are just as important as the larger schemes and in some cases would be the only viable option. Ms Dhonau advised that many of the products used in Property Level Protection are now very discreet and does not need to affect the external appearance of the property.
- 8.11 Members noted that the discussions of how to capture and value growth is still continuing. The current priority is to protect people and property and so the focus has to be on achieving these targets.
- 8.12 The Committee noted that there would be a minimum funding gap for some schemes with a partnership funding score of less than 100%, contributions are needed in order to lever GiA. Local levy and IDB Precept can be used tactically as contribution to such schemes. The Committee agreed to allocate local income to the following schemes to inflate their score to 100%.
Levy: Nether Heyford Flood Alleviation Scheme; Welland & Nene Property Level Protection
IDB Precept: Wash Banks Strategy Works; Black Sluice Catchment Works – Capital Maintenance
- 8.13 Mr Beel noted that Local Planning Authorities need to be considering developer's contributions when considering planning applications. There is an important role at a local planning level to ensure that developer's contributions are sought for growth areas.

- 8.14 The Chairman advised that Cllr Ian Bates had put forward some comments for this item regarding local levy. Cllr Bates asked for greater consistency across all three RFCCs when setting local levy amounts as this helps local authorities that sit on more than one committee. Cllr Bates advised that Cambridgeshire County Council would need to make a further 10% of cuts, as will all local authorities. Cllr Bates felt that all local authority members across the three RFCCs should discuss the local levy for greater consistency.
- 8.15 The Committee agreed that there could be benefits in having a consistency of approach across all RFCCs but were cautious with regards to a consistent levy across RFCCs. This could see a single national approach which would not allow the flexibility for local needs and justification to the local community.
- 8.16 Mr Beel expressed concern around demaining areas of main river and transferring to IDBs without consultation with the Committee. Officers advised that each proposal would be considered individually and would be driven by an IDB or the local community taking on responsibility for that section.
- 8.17 **Resolution**
- A. The Committee noted the national funding picture.**
- B. The Committee embraced their role in developing, shaping and consenting the capital programme.**
- C. The Committee supported the submission of the forward programme to our national team to inform the indicative allocation of FCRM grant in aid.**
- **The Committee decided to indicatively allocate local levy to Nether Heyford Flood Alleviation Scheme and Welland & Nene Property Level Protection, and IDBP to Wash Banks Strategy Works and Black Sluice Catchment Works – Capital Maintenance**
 - **The Committee agree to allocate Local Levy to ‘invest to save’ initiatives to reduce future revenue dependency and to help enable others to take on maintenance activities. This will be added to the Committee’s suite of local levy principles. Investments will need to be assessed on their individual merits and benefit to the RFCC, but themes would include:**
 - **Implementing the Minister’s (agriculture) ‘red tape’ challenge and enabling other to take on maintenance or adopt assets**
 - **Implementing the Maintenance Protocol for uneconomic assets**
 - **Demainment activities**
 - **Invest to save adaptation of assets (eg automation)**
- D. The Committee recommended that the Chair and Officers meet with LLFAs as soon as possible to start the conversations around funding requirements that will ultimately lead to the Committee’s local levy vote in January 2014.**

9. Flood Risk Management, Agriculture and the Environment (NFCC13/18)

- 9.1 The Committee received a report explaining the national project being taken forward following widespread criticism received from the farming sector. This focused on the reduction and stopping of watercourse maintenance activities, reducing revenue budgets and priorities towards more populated areas where the flood risk benefits are greatest. A project has been established, following a large number of complaints and discussions with stakeholders, to collate and deliver the many actions, provide an internal focus and a point of contact and engagement with stakeholders.
- 9.2 The project is focussed around four themes: communications and stakeholder engagement; effective partnerships; making it easier for farmers and landowners to

undertake watercourse maintenance and do the right thing; and sustainable agriculture and resilient rural communities. A number of actions are already being taken forward.

9.3 **Resolution**

A. The Committee supported the national project.

B. The Committee asked to be kept updated on progress with the project and the pilot areas.

10. **Developing the Anglian (Northern) RFCC Programme (NFCC13/19)**

10.1 The Committee received an update report on the new and emerging investment requirements and the update on the appraisal stages of existing capital projects. Members noted that the Boston Tidal Barrier business case was submitted to the Large Projects Review Group and all comments have been signed off. Officers would consider the next stage of approvals through treasury and will report back on progress at the October meeting.

10.2 Mr Beel noted that a new supply framework had been implemented which had meant the loss of several contractors and consultants that have been working effectively for some time and noted that this had caused a delay to the Louth scheme. Mr Beel asked if other schemes would be affected in this way and noted that the contractor working on the Humber is no longer on the list.

10.3 The Chairman advised that the Environment Agency Board would be visiting the Louth area in September where there would be opportunity to voice concerns and show them the issues faced.

10.4 Officers advised that the Environment Agency is required to review the procurement of projects routinely and to tie in with European legislation. Officers reassured the Committee that the changes would not jeopardise the delivery of the programme or the cost and they would take every opportunity to ensure there is no disruption.

10.5 **Resolution**

A. The Committee noted the report.

11. **Flood and coastal Erosion Risk Management Programming: current in-year position (NFCC13/20)**

11.1 The Committee received a report updating them on the current in-year capital and revenue programme position. The report includes information on risk and efficiencies and highlights opportunities to build upon the programme within the year.

11.2 Members noted the new efficiency saving targets already mentioned with a 15% ongoing commitment and a further 10% target by the end of this Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period. Officers advised that the Environment Agency is now forecasting to deliver beyond the efficiency targets set for this year both regionally and nationally. The Anglian (Northern) RFCC constitutes £4.7 million of savings towards the regional context of £7.5 million.

11.3 Members noted that there are some expenditure opportunities to re-invest some forecast changes in local levy spend into the initial assessments of some Welland and Nene Property Level Protection, as well as flood alleviation schemes for Wansford and Greatford and some refurbishment works.

11.4 **Resolution**

A. The Committee noted the information within the report.

B. The Committee agreed to support the use of local levy towards the opportunities set out above.

12. Delivering the Anglian (Northern) RFCC Programme (NFCC13/21)

- 12.1 The Committee received an update report on progress with the delivery of projects and works within the capital and revenue programmes and looking ahead to any key activities for the next quarter.
- 12.2 Members noted that preliminary works to create access tracks for the Whittlesey Washes Safety Works has begun. Works on the bank will start later in July.
- 12.3 Cllr Wallace noted that 270 concrete wave walls for the Grimsby Docks Sea Defence Improvement scheme had been pre-cast in Ireland and asked how they would be delivered. Members noted that they would be transported in containers by road. Officers advised that the cost of transporting the wave walls by sea would have been more costly than by road.
- 12.4 The Chairman reminded Members that visits can be arranged through Environment Agency Officers to see some of the schemes mentioned in the meetings as it is not always practical or possible to organise for the whole RFCC.

12.5 Resolution

A. The Committee noted the report.

13. Forward look (NFCC13/22)

- 13.1 Mr Bateson noted that a report may be put forward on Eel Regulations and asked how many of the schemes within the indicative allocation programme were solely to satisfy those regulations. Officers undertook to check but advised that there would not be many.
- 13.2 **Action**
Officers undertook to check how many of the schemes identified and submitted for national allocation consideration were solely to satisfy Eel Regulations.
- 13.3 Members noted that Officers would progress with organising the workshop requested at the April meeting to discuss the measures taken by Bunn Leisure and whether any aspects of this could be taken forward in this region.
- 13.4 **Action**
Officers undertook to see if a workshop can be arranged to follow the October meeting.
- 13.5 The Committee noted that a discussion on the shortlisted options for Lincshore should be added to the January agenda.
- 13.6 The Committee agreed that an update on flood mapping for surface water should come to the January meeting after the re-launch in December.

14. Matters arising from information papers

Flood Risk Management Plans (INF/N07)

- 14.1 Mr Beel noted that the report had no reference to IDBs and felt that they are a key partner in terms of delivery and developing the programme. The Chairman undertook to feed this back to Phil Rothwell.

15. Any other business

- 15.1 Mr Thomas noted that a general concern from meetings he has attended is the constantly changing cycle of Environment Agency staff. For longer term projects it is crucial to build up good relationships with partners and felt it is important to have some stability.

16. Date of next meeting

- 16.1 Friday 18 October 2013, Boardroom, Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way, Peterborough, PE2 5ZR.

Draft