

NEWARK AREA INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

A Statutory Authority concerned with Land Drainage, Flood Defence and Conservation

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Newark Area 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 Environment Agency 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 the Newark Area Internal Drainage Board. The Board maintained infrastructure is shown in para. 3.2 below
- 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 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 31 Castlegate, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 1BB. A copy will also be provided to Defra, the Environment Agency and the Office of the Deputy PM through a website link.

2. How the Board will deliver the Government's Policy Aim and Objectives

Newark Area I.D.B. supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them.

Policy Aim

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.

Section 3 below sets out the Board's plans for reducing or managing the flood risk in the Board's district.

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. Integrating with the Agency in responses to flood emergencies and participating as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.

Objective (b):

To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defences.

In meeting its obligations the Board will consider its activities within the wider natural developed environment seeking to ensure the avoidance of any adverse impact. It will equally co-operate with other drainage authorities and organisations to ensure adverse impacts on the drainage district do not arise as a result of other activities.

The Board will carry out its maintenance and improvement works in an efficient and cost effective way and where appropriate use best practice and access appropriately qualified advice when necessary.

To achieve this the Board will encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood protection and water level management measures and seek to control that development which could increase the risk of flooding.

Within the drainage district potentially all the area is at some risk to flooding and 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 maintains at a satisfactory standard any flood defences which also afford protection to the district.

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, and other direct beneficiaries, contributions to cover the cost of both immediate and longer-term works necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk is removed.

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 but that risk is substantially controlled and 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	97,100 ha
Total area of the District	35,530 ha
Area of rated agricultural land	31,540 ha
Area of non-agricultural land residential, industrial etc.	3,990 ha
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 8 no.	95 ha

3.2 Board maintained infrastructure

Pumping Stations	8 No.
Watercourses	587 km

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

Main Rivers including raised embankments	171 km
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3.3 Regulation of Activities

The Board will exercise as required its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and its Byelaws to ensure that activities in and alongside its drainage system do not reduce flood protection standards and unnecessarily increase flood risk.

3.4 Standard of Protection

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 10 and 1 in 100 years respectively. This likely return period cannot be taken literally and should be considered as a chance of some overspilling from the system taking place each year as being 10% and 1% respectively.

The areas which are more vulnerable to flooding due to the particular local circumstances are North Scarle, Balderton, Whatton, Lowdham, Thurgarton, Bleasby, Egmanon, Carlton on Trent and Sutton on Trent.

3.5 Management of Flood Risks

The Board monitors the condition of its pumping stations 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 Environment Agency criteria, will be considered and undertaken as appropriate.

The Board welcomes, 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.

3.6 Publicity

The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create a rational 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. The Board will publish its proposed annual programme of capital and maintenance works and forward copies to certain interested parties. Copies will also be made available at the Board's offices

4. Environmental Measures

4.1 The Newark Area I.D.B. has nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats C) Regulation 1994. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.

Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work of vegetation control and de-silting is a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short term impact will arise, this management is essential also to maintain the diverse aquatic habitat in the district. Only a small proportion of the watercourses in the district are maintained by the Board; the majority are the responsibility of the riparian owners.

When carrying out works, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:-

- Avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to all the natural habitats
- Ensure no net loss of habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans, monitoring any gains and losses and reporting annually to the Environment Agency
- Take appropriate opportunities to enhance habitats.

4.2 The Board will play its full role in sustaining any water level management plans prepared for the SSSIs within the district and, in conjunction with English Nature and other interested parties, review the plan in accordance with Defra guidance. At present there are no SSSIs within the Board's district that require plans.

5. Review of this Policy Statement

Newark Area IDB will review this Policy Statement within a period not extending beyond 3 years.

Last reviewed February 2009.

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.