

**North Ferriby Parish Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting with the Environment Agency**  
**7<sup>th</sup> April 2008 at 2.00 p.m. in the Priory Rooms, Village Hall**

Present: Environment Agency – Phillip Winn (Humber Strategy Manager), Richard Young (Strategy Development Technical lead), Andrew Barron (EA officer).

Parish Council – Councillors Abraham (Chairman), Broadbent, Dobbs, Halmshaw, Harris, Holtby, Hyland, Pickering.

The meeting was arranged following the publication of the Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy, Planning for the Rising Tides, in March 2008, to discuss its implications for North Ferriby.

PW introduced the Strategy as one that looks at tidal flood risk over the long term (up to 100 years). The floods in 1953 were the last big tidal event, caused by a combination of weather and tidal conditions. There is a continuing rise in sea levels which is steadily increasing this risk. The rise is currently about 2 mm per year, but future expectations for Government planning purposes are of rises of 6 mm per year, increasing to 15 mm. This implies overall sea level rises of 1 metre in the next 100 years. The new Strategy is based on general information about existing flood defence standards, not on detailed local surveys. A full Strategy report and a Summary have been published and further copies are available if needed.

The EA is looking at two issues

- the present condition and height of defences, and opportunities to undertake short-term improvements where they are weakest in order to protect property behind them.
- The likely longer-term impact of sea-level rises and the priorities for major investment in higher defences to address the long-term needs. North Ferriby area defences are variable, and extensive improvements would only benefit relatively few properties, so in time the EA may not be able to justify investment in improvements.

There are more detailed studies to do, based on fieldwork, in order to work out ways of addressing some concerns. EA will report to the PC looking to decide together on the best ways of managing future issues.

RY emphasised the focus on the best return for investment. National budgets would always mean that priorities would have to be decided. A smaller cost and a large benefit would always be higher priority than vice-versa. The North Ferriby “flood cell” can be treated as self-contained. Their plan of ground levels, with coloured squares for properties at risk, is the best information they have, and shows the results of a comparison of ground levels + 300 mm (equating to the floor levels of properties) with anticipated sea level rises. The plan defines severe storm risks with no defence works, and takes into account wave impacts. There are 3 sections within the Flood Cell:

1. West of the foreshore car park – defences not too bad , roughly 1 in 100 year event standard.
2. From the car park eastward to the former landfill site – the pond and wildlife areas – poor standard, with incomplete secondary defensive wall around housing development, subject to short-term risks.
3. The landfill site which is a higher level, and presents issues of potential contamination rather than flooding.

The immediate short term issue is about the gaps in defences in section 2. But in 30-50 years there would still only be a level of protection of around 1 in 10 to 1 in 5 years, and further investment to raise banks would be expensive and need economic justification.

AB said that EA’s priorities were to protect people’s homes. Eastwards towards Hessle the railway line was at a low level and threatened, but protection of the railway was a matter for Railtrack.

PW said EA need to do a metre by metre survey to help with decisions both about the short term and longer term issues. The short term issue is urgent now.

The chairman asked how the PC could feed in to the debate. PW said money is available for studies now, and it is possible that smaller works arising could be fully publicly funded, perhaps through a combination of agencies/ sources. EA will carry out a site-specific study to identify the problem better. EA are happy to come and talk to local people about the development issues and the results of the study.

PW emphasised the Strategy is the first of its kind in the country. It is based on the EA's own approach, but there is bound to be a developing national debate about costs, priorities, and the whole approach. NF is the first Parish to request a meeting like this, so we are well in the forefront of the development of the strategy.

Cllr Broadbent asked about the insurance implications of publishing such a strategy. PW said this will obviously influence the Insurance Companies, but the information will not be totally new to them. Floodrisk maps are available on the EA website, and the insurance industry has been doing its own work on risk assessments. RY thought the Insurance industry has a more short-term concern than the EA. The chairman said there has been no local feedback from the Insurers. DB emphasised it is inevitable they will take this work into account. RY emphasised the need to justify the cost of works in the long term.

The chairman asked to identify the 60 properties possibly at risk in the long term. RY said these were likely to be in the areas coloured yellow on the map of levels, but that this needs further work, possibly door to door.

The chairman asked which residents had been consulted already. PW said the EA had published 3 newsletters and had consulted based on the postcodes at risk. They will provide a list of their local consultations. People can also use the information on the internet. It was agreed that the EA will write to people already consulted and provided with a summary report, explaining the next steps and the overall approach.

PW said that the effectiveness of the defences depends on the method of construction, as large boulders would allow lower-level water incursion, so it was not always the height of the existing defences that is crucial. More detailed investigations are needed. Similarly the levels of land west of Ferriby towards Brough need to be investigated as levels may be affected by vegetation and existing information may not be accurate.

The chairman asked about the status of former agreements with the Rivers Authority in respect of the maintenance of banking for flood protection. AB/ PW were not aware of these and will follow this up.

Cllr Dobbs asked how many other areas around the Humber had similar or worse problems compared with NF. PW referred to the main Strategy report pp 23-25 showing by a red line areas at Hessle, New Holland, Goxhill, East of Hull, and Welton Water, where long-term flood defence improvements may be uneconomic.

The Melton Park industrial site was discussed. AB said that EA are aware of the proposals, but the Strategy does not address the protection of future development, the flood risk would need to be taken into account in Planning decisions and appropriate provision made by the developers.

The removal of the earth bund at Ings Fields by the Old Pond Place developer was discussed. It was agreed that further information on the history of this part of the defences would be provided to EA.

The Chairman mentioned an email she had received from a resident in Southfield Drive, who had contacted the floodline and been told in January that her property had been redefined as low risk, although in the Strategy it is one of the properties at risk. She was confused about her situation. PW said the Strategy information is more definitive than that used by the national floodline, and he will ensure that the information is connected up.

The need for a meeting with residents was discussed. It was agreed to hold a meeting in about a month, and a further meeting when information from the detailed study is available, about 3 months. EA will appoint consultants for the study and advise on the timing in due course.

PW is the contact for further information. There was agreement that the EA and PC would work closely together to develop responses to the risks identified through the Strategy.

**Actions:**

- EA to send letter to consultees in about 2 weeks, and copy to PC with a full list of residents contacted
- Meeting in about 1 month to allow residents to question EA about the Strategy and its implications
- EA to provide information about consultants' appointment and timing of detailed study
- PC to send information about earth bund at Ings Fields to EA

- PC to send information about the legal agreements for the maintenance of flood defences at Southfield Drive by the Rivers Authority to EA
- Further meeting with residents to be arranged in about 3 months when the outcome of the detailed studies is known.