

RAWCLIFFE DRAINAGE BOARD
("the Board")

**POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND
WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT**

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

- 1.1. This policy statement had been prepared by Rawcliffe 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 Environment, Food and 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 the Rawcliffe 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 its plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in its area. This will include an assessment of the risk of flooding in its area, and what plans it has to reduce that risk.

- 1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. The Board is providing a copy to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Environment Agency and local authorities in the district. Copies are also available from the Board's offices at Halcyon House, Landing Lane, Newport, Brough, East Yorkshire HU15 2RU.

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

- 2.1 Rawcliffe Drainage Board supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence. The Board's policy and approach will be consistent with them.

The Government's 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 response 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 and 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 improvements works in an efficient and cost effective way and where appropriate use best practice and accessing 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 of flooding and the Board will seek to retain this risk at acceptable levels through appropriate improvements and the implementation of a sound maintenance strategy. The Board 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 to ensure that any potential increase in flood risk is removed.

3. FLOODING RISKS IN THE BOARD’S AREA

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

Area of land to benefit:	1 138 ha			ha
Present use:				
Agricultural:	917 ha			ha
Developed:	144 ha			ha
Environmental/Amenity	77 ha			ha
Scheduled for development:	0 ha			ha

The Rawcliffe Drainage Board occupies the historic floodplain of the River Aire, River Don and surrounding delta system, discharging into the River Humber. Although extensive flood embankments exist, causes for concern were identified following the extensive flooding in the area in November and December 2000. Rawcliffe Drainage Board manages 12 pumps (one emergency mobile), 7 pumping stations, one outfall and approximately 32 km of drains, which discharge into the tidal watercourses, the River Aire and the Dutch River. Historically Rawcliffe and the surrounding area have also suffered extensive flood inundation in March and April 1947.

3.2 Board Maintained Infrastructure

Pumping Stations:

The Board owns/operates seven Pumping Stations & one outfall (Beechtree), they are:-

- (a) Pastures Pumping Station
- (b) Langham 1 Pumping Station
- (c) Langham 2 Pumping Station
- (d) Langham 3 Pumping Station
- (e) Dobella Pumping Station
- (f) Key Lane Pumping Station
- (g) West End Pumping Station
- (h) Beechtree Outfall & Emergency Pump

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 seeks 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 period cannot be taken literally and should be considered in the light of there being a chance of some overspilling from the system taking place each year as being 5% and 1% respectively.

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 MAFF criteria, will be considered and undertaken as appropriate.

The Board welcomes from its agricultural ratepayers, special levy Council 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. The Board 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 habitat, 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 work by way of advertisement in newspapers circulating in the Board's District and in reports kept at the Board's office for inspection by interested members of the public.

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES**

- 4.1 The Rawcliffe Drainage Board 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 duties in a positive way.

Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work comprising vegetation control and de-silting is a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short term impact will arise, this management is also essential to the maintenance of the diverse aquatic habitat in the Board's Drainage District.

However, it should be noted that the Board maintains only a proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the majority being the responsibility of the riparian land 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 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 plan prepared for any SSSI within the Board's District and, in conjunction with English Nature and other interested parties, review any plan in accordance with DEFRA guidance.

4.3 In 1999 the Board published a Bio Diversity Action Plan. The Environmental Department of the Board's Engineers developed the plan which will be up dated annually.

5. REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENT

Rawcliffe Drainage Board will review this Policy Statement within 5 years from the date hereof

DATED this day 30th October 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.

(Any other references)