



Beccles Flood Risk Management

December 2021

What are we telling you about?

This briefing is to update you on what we have been doing since the flooding that took place in Beccles in December 2020.

The Environment Agency are leading and coordinating input from partner organisations who are involved in flood risk management in Beccles. This includes Suffolk County Council (as the Lead Local Flood Authority), Suffolk Highways, East Suffolk Council, Waveney Norse, Anglian Water and Beccles Town Council.

What have we been doing?

The Environment Agency last updated you with the 'Beccles Winter Flooding Briefing' which was shared with the community in June 2021.

The December flood event highlighted issues with surface water drainage when river levels are high and possible groundwater flooding in addition to flooding from the River Waveney. Given the complexity of the flooding in Beccles we have been working with partner organisations to understand and investigate what happened.

Through this work we identified several immediate actions that could be undertaken to reduce the chance of flooding in the immediate future. We are also looking ahead for a longer-term option. The work we have undertaken is explained in more detail below.

Flood Investigation Report

Suffolk County Council undertook a flood investigation report as part of their duties under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The purpose of this report is to establish the causes of flooding and make recommendations for future improvements to managing and responding to flooding in Beccles. The final report has been published on the Suffolk County Council website.

The flood investigation report can be viewed here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/Flooding-and-drainage/Section-19s/Section-19-Report-Beccles-Quay-Beccles-Lido.pdf>



Flooding at Fen Lane and the Quay in Beccles, December 2020. Photo credit Paul Rudland <https://alldrone.uk/>.

Drainage Investigations and Surveys

With support from the Environment Agency, Waveney Norse and Suffolk Highways have undertaken detailed surveys of the drainage system and assets in the area of Fen Lane. This involved multiple site visits to inspect the penstock chambers at high and low tides. Waveney Norse operate the penstocks and install the flood boards on behalf of Beccles Town Council and Suffolk Highways are responsible for the road drains.



Inspection of the surface water drainage penstock at Fen Lane, Beccles in July 2021.

The survey indicated that the highways surface water drains extend from Beccles Quay onto Fen Lane and Bridge Street. Suffolk Highways will be undertaking further investigations on Bridge Street in due course.

The penstocks on Fen Lane and at the rear of the former Loaves and Fishes public house have been checked and cleaned to ensure they will effectively shut off the drainage system and prevent a backflow of river water. Associated flap valves at the quay have also been checked and some further maintenance is planned.

Temporary Pump

East Suffolk Council and Waveney Norse with support from the Environment Agency have set up a procedure for the deployment of a

temporary pump to help alleviate flooding at Fen Lane should it happen again. The Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit has also written a flood plan for Beccles.

Flood Warning Service

To improve the accuracy of the flood warnings in Beccles the Environment Agency are continuing to review the thresholds for our Flood Warning System based on information gathered during the December 2020 event.

We understand that the flood alerts and warnings issued during the December 2020 event were received after the flooding had started in some locations. This happened because flooding occurred from multiple sources. The Environment Agency's flood warning system can only warn for flooding from the River Waveney. We cannot provide a warning service for surface water flooding as it is extremely difficult to predict precisely where it will happen as it is dependent on a number of factors including topography, geology, rainfall amount, soil moisture conditions and the local drainage network.

Beccles Flood Risk Management Project

As we mentioned in the briefing in June the Environment Agency are in the early stages of a long-term project to investigate ways to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Waveney to a number of properties. The Environment Agency previously undertook an "Initial Assessment" of flood risk in Beccles to better understand the risk and consider what could be done to help reduce flood risk. This report came up with a number of potential ways to improve the management of flood risk in Beccles.

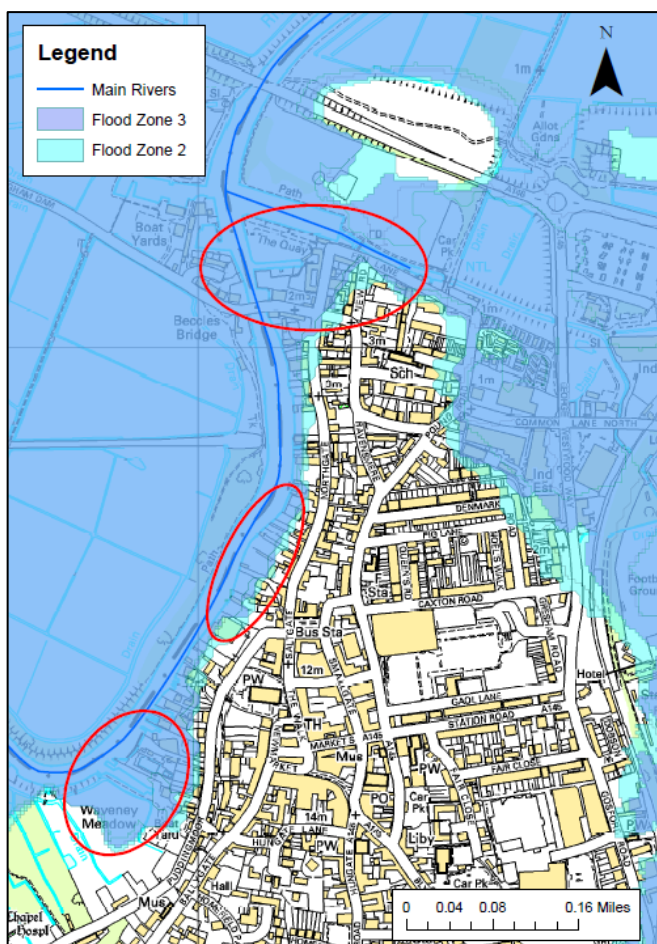


Flood wall and flood boards on Fen Lane, Beccles.

Several of the options identified as part of the Initial Assessment work were found to be viable. The most favourable option included maintaining the existing flood wall but replacing the flood boards with flood gates. Individual Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures such as waterproof external doors to exclude flood water, would also be required for 5 properties that do not benefit from the current flood defences.

This is expected to be completed in the summer of 2022. We will be looking to share our findings with the community and would welcome your views on the proposed options. We will be in touch with how you can view and provide comments in due course. If you have any questions in the meantime, please get in touch using the contact details at the end of this briefing.

We are in the process of investigating and developing capital projects to manage flood risk in a number of other communities that were affected by flooding in December 2020, including Bungay.



Locations where 22 properties were affected by the December 2020 flood event in Beccles. This figure includes all sources of flooding and both internal and external flooding of residential and commercial properties.

Working with our flood risk consultants, Jacobs, we are developing this work to produce a business case and a long list of options to manage flood risk from all sources of flooding in Beccles (including surface water), therefore the options may change. To inform the project we will also be undertaking a number of surveys and assessments of the existing defences in Beccles in order to understand their current condition.

Community Engagement

As already mentioned in this fact sheet, we have set up a procedure for the deployment of a temporary pump to help alleviate flooding at Fen Lane. To make the best use of this asset and ensure it is deployed at the right time we need to work closely with the community.

We would welcome input from members of the community. This could take the form of a volunteer flood warden role or as part of a flood group. Any new flood group or flood wardens would link into the community emergency planning group already in place which is managed by Beccles Town Council.

If you are interested in being a flood warden or part of a flood group in Beccles please email Tina Starling in the Flood Resilience Team at the Environment Agency: tina.starling@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Contact

For further questions or comments please contact:

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