TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992
TRANSPORT AND WORKS (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) RULES 2004
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
BOSTON BARRIER ORDER

DOCUMENT EA/14/1

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

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LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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1 Introduction

1.1 I am Lincolnshire County Councils (LCC) Flood Risk and Development Management Manager. I have worked for LCC for 18 years in a variety of engineering and managerial roles within the Highways Team and took up my present position in 2013 in response to LCC’s new role as the Lead Local Flood Authority. I am also a Tactical Duty Officer in respect of response to civil emergencies, reflecting my managerial level.

1.2 LCC fully supports the Boston Barrier Project and this statement will explain one of the factors contributing to that position. The scope of my evidence will cover:

2 The impacts of major flood events focussing on the December 2013 tidal surge event and the resource implications in the immediate period preceding the event.

As part of my duties as LCC’s Flood Risk and Development Management Manager and Tactical Duty Officer, my role during this event was to represent LCC and help to co-ordinate the multi-agency response so I witnessed the build-up and the event first hand as they happened. This report demonstrates the extent of the preparations and how they impact on local and wider regional resources as the level of risk and consequence rises.

3 Background

3.1 There are three components which come together to create damaging tidal surges such as that which occurred in December 2013. These are high ‘spring’ tides, low barometric atmospheric pressure and high winds. When forecasters recognise that these conditions that can cause flooding might come together the Environment Agency are alerted and in turn they issue warnings that relate to the level of flood risk. When those risks go beyond certain thresholds the agencies in the Local Resilience Forum begin to react and get ready to mobilise should the level of risk increase further. These include the emergency services, LCC and other local councils, the NHS, the Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Boards and, as in this case, we can call upon military aid. In December 2013 to assist in dealing with the flood risks in Lincolnshire resources were also drawn from Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

3.2 Below is a summary of the events in the 48 hours preceding the December 2013 flood, based on the Lincolnshire Resilience Forums (LRF) After Action Report into the Dec 2013 surge tide. The full report is attached at Appendix 1.

3.3 Activity begins on Monday 2/12/2013, but it should be noted that the incident was declared an ‘emergency’ at 11.05 am on Thursday 5/12/2013 as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act, due to the potential impacts on communities and the environment. At this point there will have been a significant uplift in resourcing as the incident will have been escalated to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Headquarters to be managed by dedicated staff from the Emergency Services and LCC. The detailed structures within which these responders work are shown in the section 19 Flood Investigation Report attached at Appendix 2.
Summary of events leading up to the December 2013 floods in Boston

- Build up activity begins on Monday 2/12/2013 with meteorological forecasts of the possible combined effects of tides, surge due to low air pressure and wind and wave action.

- Early warnings reported to the emergency services, Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMA's, these include the EA, councils, drainage boards and water companies) and the media.

- Emergency Services and RMA's carry out threat assessments and plan for contingencies.

- Staff deployed locally to manage and coordinate responses and resources to meet common objectives and response strategies.

- Two multi-agency task forces created in Lincolnshire at Louth and Boston; this was the largest pre-deployment of staff and equipment in recent decades. This had regional impacts as it included resources drawn from other counties.

- Removing people from danger; issuing timely warnings to the public, identifying vulnerable groups, planning for road closures and evacuation routes to carry the occupants of up to 18,000 households. Protecting infrastructure including flood defences, the port and hospitals.

- Strategic large scale evacuation centres opened in Grantham and Caythorpe, neighbouring LRF's (Northants, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire) alerted to the developing situation and the potential requirement for the possible mass evacuation in line with pre-planned regional requirements.

- Large scale transport operation put in place and procurement begins to source support equipment, bedding and food.

- LCC Health Service deploys GP's to evacuation centres

- Boston Pilgrim Hospital cancels elective procedures and outpatient activity.

- Severe Flood Warnings issued to 12,300 properties in Boston and the surrounding area.

- Boston multi-agency 'surge task force' established consisting of:
  - Police Beat Deployment Unit
  - Police Underwater Search Unit (13 staff and one boat)
  - Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) deployment of 6 flood rescue boats and teams
  - FRS 7 fire appliances and personnel
  - East Midlands Ambulance Service Hazardous Area Response Team deployed
  - Following the first high surge tide reports of flooding began, the Police deploy the National Police Air Service helicopter and the FRS request national mutual aid for 5 further flood rescue boat teams and High Volume Pumps.
Further preparations were then made and additional resources provided via mutual aid across the region to deal with the issues arising from the first high tide and ahead of the second and predicted higher tide due approximately 12 hours later.

4.1 The resources allocated to this activity are often required regardless of the outcome based upon forecast scenarios and it is necessary to prepare and be able to react - this was also the case in January 2017.

4.2 The construction of a barrier to raise levels of protection from flooding in Boston will reduce the frequency of flood predictions and events and therefore the frequency of mobilisations of those resources. This will free up those resources to undertake their day to day roles and for deployment to other areas which remain at high flood risk.

5 Conclusion

The Boston Barrier is required to protect Boston from the risk of flooding from tidal surge events. It will also free up significant resources regionally when such events are forecast, removing the personnel from the risks associated with flooding and saving significant public funding. LCC fully supports the Boston Barrier Project.

Supporting documents:

Appendix 1 - Lincolnshire Resilience Forums (LRF) After Action Report into the Dec 2013 surge tide

Appendix 2 – Section 19 Flood Investigation Report overview of coastal surge flood events during 5th, 6th & 7th December 2013.

6 Statement of truth

I hereby declare as follows:

6.1 Insofar as the facts stated in this Proof of Evidence are within my own knowledge I believe them to be true, and that the opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinion.

6.2 This Proof of Evidence includes all facts which I regard as being relevant to the opinions which I have expressed and that I have drawn the inquiry’s attention to any matter which would affect the validity of those opinions.

6.3 I understand that my duty to the Inquiry is to help it to help it with matters within my expertise and I have complied with that duty.