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

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PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

PHIL DRURY

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MARCH 2017
TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992 (TWA):

BOSTON BARRIER WITNESS EVIDENCE

PHIL DRURY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

1 I am the Chief Executive of Boston Borough Council having been appointed to the role in July 2015. With the exception of a short spell working in the National Health Service I have spent my entire working career at Boston Borough Council, first joining the Council in March 1983.

2 I am a trained strategic commander in respect of Civil Emergency Planning and represented the Council throughout the formal response stage of the tidal surge flooding event in December 2013.

3 Boston has a long and unfortunate history of tidal flooding and flood risk. Later in this statement I will provide more details of the financial and personal impacts of the most recent significant event in December 2013.

4 The recurring risk and flood potential for the town is unnerving and unsettling. Public and investor confidence is understandably challenging with repeated states of alert and readiness for responders in preparing for an event. 2013 saw two severe weather events even before the flood in December. Gale force winds and a surge combined on the 10th October and again with the St Jude Storm of the 25th and 26th October. Immediately following the 5th December floods the town was again threatened with further stormy weather, heavy rain and strong winds between Christmas and New Year creating concerns about already weakened defences.

5 As recently as early January this year once again saw Lincolnshire’s responders formerly establish a strategic command structure involving significant resources from partners including the military, health and others. Strong winds, tidal surge and high tide were again threatening overtopping along the Lincolnshire coast including the town of Boston along hard defences of the River Haven.

6 Coastal flooding is a tier 1 risk to UK national security. As an area with significant coastal flooding risk Lincolnshire invests significantly in preparedness. Regular and repeated
flooding/flood risk events place huge financial burden on the public sector and its partner responders.

7 In readiness for the events of December 2013 our time was invested in removing people from danger; ranging from timely public safety and flood warning messages to road closures and planning for the evacuation of up to 18,000 properties.

Between 18- 20km of flood defences overtopped along the Lincolnshire Coast causing 4 breach locations with 2 in Boston to the Haven Bank and a small section of the hard defences in the town centre. A number of buildings including significant sites were damaged such as the historic St Botolph’s Church (‘Boston Stump’) and local infrastructure such as the access road to the Boston Landfill Site, Civic Amenity Site and County Council Waste Transfer Station. Three of the five main pumps at Black Sluice Gate were damaged by flooding and are now inoperable, causing significant financial question over the future of the pumping station. £8.1m worth of damage was caused to infrastructure in the county.

8 44 people were ‘rescued’ from flood water affected areas and 203 received assistance to evacuate away from their homes overnight. Many more self evacuated without assistance.

9 The EA monitored defences in Boston and undertook additional temporary measures to strengthen a 45 metre stretch in St Anne’s Lane where flooding in the same area of Boston occurred in 1978.

10 Boston Pilgrim Hospital took a decision to cancel elective and outpatient activity on the 6th December 2013 and held mutual aid discussions with neighbouring trusts for potential relocation of patients and preparations for alternative power supply.

11 Our capacity to respond to such wide-area emergencies depends on accessing mutual aid and national specialist assets. Boston is unable to do this alone.

12 On Saturday 7th December 2013 I took over from the Strategic Co-Ordinating Group Chairman for Response and chaired the formal Recovery process. The recovery process was not formally stood down until 4th February 2014, however, the final repair and renewal grant to the last
remaining flood affected property was not completed until September 2016 almost three years after the tragedy.

13 Advice/guidance information was produced in English, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and Portuguese. Information was hand delivered to in excess of 1,500 properties with numerous follow up visits undertaken. 3 food banks were established by volunteers.

14 I chaired 12 formal Recovery Co-ordination Group Meetings which involved representatives from the Borough Council, Lincolnshire Resilience Forum, Lincolnshire Health, Environment Agency, LCC Highways, and the DCLG. There were 36 internal flood support meetings, with the Council's media team engaged with local and national media as well as social media.

15 The Council's Operations Teams collected and disposed of 350 tonnes of flood damaged property. The Council operated a Flood Support and Recovery Team, which included 2 permanently seconded members of staff and did not formally close until October 2015, almost 2 years after the event.

16 It is difficult to fully report the financial costs as many volunteers and partner organisations took on board much of the consequences of the floods. In financial and property number terms the following provides a snapshot of one single event on our town:-

- Translators were used on 31 occasions.
- 115 businesses were flooded.
- 52 businesses submitted Business Support Scheme Applications.
- There were 59 successful business applications relating to the Repair and Renewal Grant.
- £525,000.00 was paid out for the Business Support Scheme.
- 717 residential properties were affected by the flood.
- 465 home owners were successful in their Repair and Renew Grant application.
- 327 Repair and Renew Grant applications were procured and project managed by the Council.
- 138 directly appointed private contractors.
- Repair and Renew Grant spend totalled £2,125,928.45.
- 39 separate public, private and voluntary sector organisations have been called upon to support the recovery process.

250 properties required safety checks following power failures, with 100 properties requiring urgent repairs.
17 Of the homes known to have been flooded in the December 2013 event, 132 had no insurance whatsoever and a further 93 were uninsured in respect of contents cover.

18 Had a barrier been in place that December evening, each of the flood affected homes and businesses would have been protected.

19 My hope is that the tidal flood defence to be provided by the barrier can be delivered as soon as the process will allow.

20 Completion of the barrier will have a positive effect on Boston, the people who live here and also to the economy. It is my belief that overall the delivery of a tidal defence barrier has widespread public support.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I hereby declare that the contents of this proof of evidence are true

Phil Drury, Chief Executive Boston Borough Council

Date ..........14 March 2017.............................