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

DOCUMENT EA/16/1

STATEMENT

OF

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The fact that the flood barrier project is to be the subject of a public inquiry is welcome.

There is already widespread consensus that Boston needs the barrier and deserves what will be the single biggest investment of public money in the town certainly in recent times and possibly in its history.

But there are inevitably conflicting preferences on what precisely the barrier should do, how it should operate and on the details of what is a hugely complex operation.

For myself, I’m clear that there are three key aspects to this project: first, and most important, the barrier must protect people’s lives and property from the risk of flooding.

That public safety aspect is the most important single gain, and it is right that it trumps all other interests.

It would be wrong, however, to ignore the huge economic importance of the barrier. Done properly it will safeguard the fishing fleet and river users and it will protect businesses in the town as well.

This means that it unlocks potential investment in Boston and it encourages more businesses to open or expand. It underlines that infrastructure investment has both a preventative and a positive power.

Finally, there are the transformational possibilities: with water-level management of some sort Boston could become a town that faces the water, which reaps the huge benefits of all the tourism and commercial activities that come from a marina and more.

This is the true potential of a major project and I am pleased that the EA have sought to safeguard the possibility of introducing WLM in the future with this scheme.

In the first phase of the barrier, it is the safety and economic security that will be to the fore. But longer term that final aspect is also vital.