



# Humber Tidal Flood Strategy Newsletter

Dear Landowner/Farmer,

February 2019

We are contacting you because, according to our records, the land you own and/or work on, falls within the Humber Flood Risk Management Strategy Review area and could be at risk of tidal flooding in the future. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information about tidal flood risk on and around the Humber Estuary and to let you know about work that we are doing to develop a new strategy for managing tidal flood risk in your area.

**If you do not wish to receive information from us in the future or are no longer the land owner please contact us – [Hstrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Hstrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk)**

## Tidal Flood risk on the Humber

The Humber makes a substantial contribution to the UK economy, with investment around the estuary supporting thousands of businesses and jobs. In addition, the natural flood plain that we know as the Humber Head Levels supports some of the most productive arable land and diverse natural environments in the country. Situated on low-lying land, tidal flood risk is a reality for people living on and around the Humber with around 230,000 homes, 50,000 businesses and 120,000 hectares of high grade agricultural land potentially at risk of tidal flooding during an extreme flood. The effects of flooding can be devastating and with sea levels rising and storms becoming more frequent due to climate change, the Humber is at an increased risk.

Because the Humber Estuary is tidal, the impact of storm surges and exceptional high tides can lead to flooding well away from the coast, as additional water is pushed into the estuary. The risk of flooding due to tidal influences extends far inland along the tributaries of the Humber (Ouse, Don, Aire and Trent) with large areas of low lying land at risk.

In December 2013 over 1,100 properties and over 7000ha of agricultural land flooded as a result of a tidal surge. Saline contamination and the duration of standing water were just some of the challenges faced by farmers and landowners, causing millions of pounds worth of damage.



*The hook of the Ouse near Goole December 2013*

## What are we doing to manage tidal flood risk?

The current Humber Strategy ‘**Planning for the Rising Tides**’ was put in place in 2008 by the Environment Agency to manage tidal flood risk on the estuary. By 2021, over £150m will have been invested in flood defence improvements on and around the Humber, improving the standard of protection to **over 70,000 properties in both urban and rural areas.**

## What changed?

Many things have changed since the original strategy was put in place.

- Since the original strategy, there have been changes to policy and the way flood risk management is funded.
- Following the 2013 tidal surge, there was a call from Local Authorities from around the Humber, the Humber LEP and local MPs, to provide a consistent standard of protection all the way round the estuary - This approach was not deemed suitable by central government, given the large amount of investment vs economic benefit, and potential for increased severity of flooding upstream, making the situation worse for others.
- It was then decided that the Environment Agency would work in partnership with Local Authority partners and the Humber LEP to review the existing strategy, to effectively manage tidal flood risk on the estuary for the next 100 years.

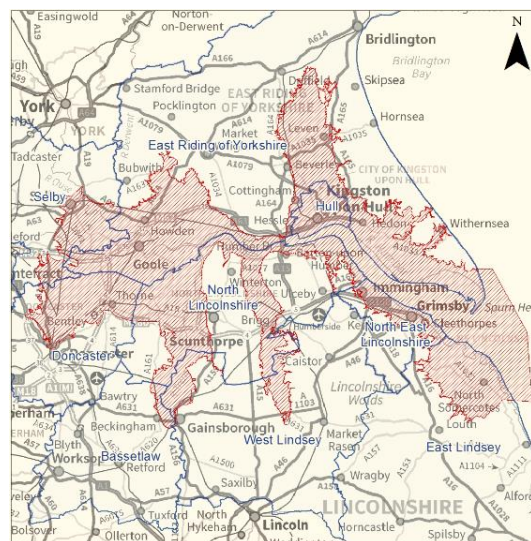


## Shaping a new strategy

The partnership have been working with IDBs and key stakeholders, including the NFU, to consider a long-list of options for managing tidal flood risk. While some options were discounted (such as providing a consistent standard of protection all the way around the estuary), elements of others were drawn together to form three potential strategic approaches.

The three potential strategic approaches which the partnership decided to evaluate further are:

- **Containing the tide**, using a combination of flood defences, flood storage, and occasional large scale planned flooding, to contain water largely within the estuary. Improved resilience and changes to land use in some areas would also be required to adapt to rising sea levels and high tides.
- **Adapting to the tide**, by changing land use in some areas, to allow defences to be deliberately altered or moved back in some locations over time. This would create greater capacity for flood storage or large scale planned flooding, and allow us to respond to the fact that it may not be possible or safe to maintain or continue to raise defences where they are at present. This would be combined with continued maintenance and improvement of defences in key areas of population and industrial development.
- **Keeping out the tide**, by constructing a tidal surge barrier, most likely in the outer estuary. This would be a complex and long term option.



Map – The boundary of the Humber Strategy Review

These three approaches are currently going through a thorough appraisal process which should be completed by late 2020. After this, the results will be used to develop a new strategy.

At this stage we are being open-minded about what this might look like and considering options that are feasible, affordable and will best support the area's aspiration for growth. The strategy will need to be able to adapt to changes and/or opportunities in the future – such as rates of sea level rise, changes to legislation or economic factors. These 'influencing factors' could set the strategy in a different direction or pathway.

## Is your land at risk?

The new Humber Strategy will consider all areas of tidal flood risk over the next 100 years, taking future predicted rates of sea level rise into account. Land that currently has little or no risk attached to it, could be at risk in the future during extreme tidal events.

To check if your land is at risk of flooding and find out how you can be better prepared to lessen the impacts of flooding by visiting: [www.gov.uk/flood](http://www.gov.uk/flood) or call Floodline 0345 988 1188



## How you can get involved

IDB and NFU officers have been involved with the process throughout and are already contributing to the development and direction of the new strategy, as well as working to understand the impact of flooding on farming and drainage.

Over the coming months we will be carrying out further work to refine the strategic approaches so that we understand the implications and opportunities they offer. We are yet to determine what the three approaches will look like in different locations around the estuary but as this picture emerges we will be in touch to help you understand what it might mean for you, and to seek your views.

To find out more visit: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/humber/strategyreview>

Or contact us [HStrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:HStrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk)

