



York Flood Alleviation Scheme: Survey of stakeholder's views on engagement and communication

March 2023

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We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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Environment Agency
Horizon House, Deanery Road,
Bristol BS1 5AH
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

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Executive summary

Summary of responses

As the number of respondents to this survey was very small, it is not possible to draw strong conclusions from it. In addition, views on our engagement and communication methods ranged from the extremes of 'very good' to 'poor' in an extremely small sample, limiting opportunities to learn from opinions expressed.

Two improvements for future methods of communication were suggested:

- Updating information as work on a scheme progresses, especially when it extends beyond stated deadlines;
- Using social media more as a means of communication.

Contents

Executive summary	3
1. Purpose of the consultation.....	5
2. How we ran the consultation.....	5
3. Responses to the questions:	5
3.1. How did you find out about this survey?	5
3.2. Are you answering this survey as a resident/ business/ representative of a local organisation/someone who uses facilities in York/a commuter/a tourist?.....	6
3.3. How did you receive information about the York FAS?	6
3.4. Does your feedback relate to a particular area where we have been working?	6
3.5. How satisfied were you with the information you received and the methods used to communicate?	6
3.6. How would you rate the following:	7
3.7. Did you feel you were kept well enough informed?	7
3.8. As a result of our communication, do you feel more informed about flood risk in your area or in York?	7
3.9. What improvements can we make in terms of how we engage with stakeholders in any future Environment Agency schemes?	7
3.10. Any further comments?.....	7
4. Next steps.....	8

1. Purpose of the consultation

Since the beginning of the York FAS in 2016, staff from the York FAS team have engaged with many different stakeholders ranging from individuals, local communities, and voluntary organisations in the city, to local government and statutory consultees. Now that many of our schemes have been completed, we wanted to gather views on how well we have kept stakeholders informed as the York Flood Alleviation Scheme has progressed, so that we can learn lessons and improve our engagement approach for future projects.

2. How we ran the consultation

This online consultation took place over eight weeks, from the 1st October to 30th November 2022, with a webpage set up to provide easy access to the survey for respondents.

The consultation was advertised in the York FAS quarterly newsletter, which is sent electronically to a large number of stakeholders, both organisations and individuals. Individual stakeholders were also contacted by email, asking them to complete the survey. This was in keeping with the usual methods of communication used for this scheme which have, over the years, made a transition from traditional communication channels (postal, face-to-face) to more digital and electronic methods (email, website and social media).

In total we received four responses, all from residents living in York. Two of these were informed about the survey from York FAS newsletters and the other two from social media.

Summary of key findings and actions we will take

As the number of respondents to this survey was very small, it is not possible to draw many conclusions from it. However, the following observations can be made:

- Using a wide variety of engagement and communication methods has been useful for the scheme as a whole; respondents mentioned receiving information from direct communication (email and postal), the York FAS website, public events, through our contractors, signage on sites where works was being carried out, the local press (newspapers and radio) as well as City of York Council's free press.
- Improvements can be made in future schemes by ensuring that more timely communication is provided, especially when deadlines for schemes are extended.
- More use could be made of social media in future schemes.

3. Responses to the questions:

3.1. How did you find out about this survey?

Two respondents found out about the survey from the York FAS newsletter and two from social media posts.

3.2. Are you answering this survey as a resident/ business/ representative of a local organisation/someone who uses facilities in York/a commuter/a tourist?

All respondents were local residents, with one having had Property Flood Resilience measures installed in their home. We did not receive any responses from local organisations or businesses, or from other categories such as commuters or users of facilities where York FAS schemes were being built.

3.3. How did you receive information about the York FAS?

Respondents received information about the York FAS scheme from more than just one source. This included direct emails, the York FAS newsletter (where a link to the survey was placed), public events such as drop-in's, social media, signage on sites where schemes were underway, through our contractors and in the local press (both newspapers and local radio) as well as City of York Council's free press.

3.4. Does your feedback relate to a particular area where we have been working?

Respondents to the survey were interested in the following areas where York FAS schemes were carried out:

- B4 – Scarborough Bridge to Ouse Bridge
- B8 – Clementhorpe
- B10 – Clifton Ings
- B11 – Copping Farm to Scarborough Bridge
- B12 – Scarborough Bridge to Lendal Bridge
- F01 – Foss Basin/St George's Field
- B12 – Lendal Hill (Property Flood Resilience -PFR)
- B15 – King's Staith (Property Flood Resilience -PFR)
- B16 – New Walk (Property Flood Resilience -PFR)
- C1 – Bishopthorpe (Property Flood Resilience -PFR)

3.5. How satisfied were you with the information you received and the methods used to communicate?

Answers to this question ranged from very satisfied (1) to very dissatisfied (1) with one person satisfied and one person responding as 'neutral'.

3.6. How would you rate the following:

- The quality of the information we provided
- Accessibility of the information
- Availability/location
- Timeliness

Answers to these questions followed a similar pattern to the previous question, with one person rating all four categories as very good, a second person rating them all as good, one person rating them all as poor and a fourth person rating the first (quality) as neither good nor bad and the rest as good.

3.7. Did you feel you were kept well enough informed?

Two respondents felt they were kept well enough informed and two did not. One of these stated that they only found out information about a scheme from a local councillor.

3.8. As a result of our communication, do you feel more informed about flood risk in your area or in York?

Three of the four respondents felt they were more informed about flood risk as a result of information we provided whilst one person did not.

3.9. What improvements can we make in terms of how we engage with stakeholders in any future Environment Agency schemes?

Two suggestions were made on ways to improve our communications:

- Updating information as work on a scheme progresses, especially when it extends beyond stated deadlines;
- Using social media more as a means of communication.

3.10. Any further comments?

No further comments were made about our communication.

4. Next steps

As a result of the information gained from this consultation, we will aim to provide more timely information on our flood risk management work. We will also make greater efforts to alert stakeholders when there are delays which result in work taking longer than planned. We will also plan to use social media more effectively as a tool to provide information, recognising the greater 'reach' and immediacy of this communication method.

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