

MELVERLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by Meverley Internal Drainage Board to provide a public statement of the Board's approach to its management of flood risk and water levels in its area.

Background

1.2 The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" which includes the Meverley Internal Drainage Board.

1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence¹. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has published a series of high level targets². The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include an assessment of the risk of flooding in their area, and what plans they have to reduce that risk.

1.4 This policy statement fulfils that requirement. Copies are available from the Board's offices at New Windsor House, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY3 5HJ. We are also providing a copy to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment Agency and local authorities in the District.

1.5 The Government's policy aim is:

To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.

1.6 The key objectives to achieve this aim are:

- (a) To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.*
- (b) To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.*
- (c) To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding and coastal erosion.*

2. HOW THE BOARD WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Melverely Internal Drainage Board supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them as follows:

Objective (a) : To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.

The board will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems. They will co-operate with the Agency in responses to flood emergencies, participating as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.

Objective (b) : To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defence measures.

- Within the drainage district potentially all the area is at some risk to flooding and the Board will seek to retain this risk at acceptable levels through appropriate improvements and the implementation of a sound maintenance strategy. They will also seek to ensure that the Environment Agency's flood defences, which also afford protection to the district, are maintained at a satisfactory standard.
- Work will be carried out in accordance with the best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of guidance available from DEFRA, the Environment Agency and other organisations.
- Regulate as necessary using the available powers the actions of others to ensure their works do not increase the flood risk.
- Ensure that riparian owners are aware of their responsibilities for maintenance.
- Play a positive role fulfilling our statutory and other responsibilities for nature conservation, including achievement of the Government's environmental objectives and targets. We acknowledge our responsibilities under the Land Drainage Acts of 1991 and 1994, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the European Birds and Habitats Directives and the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) Regulations 1994.
- When carrying out our works we will seek to avoid wherever possible damage to environmental interests and aim to ensure no net loss to habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans and take appropriate opportunities to enhance the aquatic environment.

- Ensure that for those Water Level Management Plans where we are the leading operating authority we work in partnership with Natural England to complete, implement where appropriate, and review Plans in accordance with DEFRA guidance.
- Co-operate with other bodies and make input to the development of Local Environmental Agency Plans.

Objective (c) : To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding

- The potential impact on flood risk through future development in the Drainage District, or in the wider catchment draining to the District, is fully recognised by the Board and it will take an active role in the assessment of structure planning, local plans and individual applications to ensure flood risk is not increased. Where appropriate the Board will secure from Developers and other direct beneficiaries contributions to cover the cost of both immediate and longer term works necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk can be removed.

3. FLOOD RISKS IN THE BOARD’S DISTRICT

3.1 As mentioned in Section 2, the entire Drainage District is at some risk to flooding but that risk is substantially controlled but some variation in the standards of protection will apply. The following are the key details of the District:

Catchment Area Draining to and including the District			10,000 ha
Total Area of the District			3,400 ha
Area of Agricultural Land			3,360 ha
Area of Residential Property			37 ha
Area of Industrial Property			3 ha
Classified Roads			28 km
Sites of Environmental Interest			
	Wetland SSSI	11 ha	Crofts Mill 3.72 ha
			Canal 7.82 ha
	Nature Reserve	20 ha	

3.2 Melverley IDB has provided the Environment Agency with information on the major flood defence assets for which the Board is responsible. The information is available from the Environment Agency at Hafren House, Welshpool Road, Shelton, Shrewsbury, SY3 8BB.

3.3 Assets for which the Board has operating authority responsibility:

Water Level Control Structures	6no
Watercourses	97 km
*Critical Watercourses	None designated
Raised Embankments (Argaes)	3 km

*Critical watercourses are those from which over spilling will put at risk of flooding a significant number of people and properties. Against clear criteria the above length has been agreed with the Environment Agency.

Passing through or adjacent to the District are the following assets maintained by the Environment Agency

Main Rivers	43.7 km
River Raised Embankment (Argaes)	14.6 km

3.4 Flood Risk from These Watercourses

This section sets out the Board's assessment of flood risk taking into account the following:

- Assets in place considering design standard and life.
- Environment Agency flood risk maps.
- Other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.

3.5 Flooding within the Drainage District is largely governed by the Environment Agency maintained argaes (raised embankments) along the Rivers Severn, Vyrnwy and Morda (all main rivers).

If water levels in these main rivers rise to levels which over top the argaes serious flooding of the Drainage District will follow. The watercourses within the district are not of a design size to contain the huge volumes of water which overtop the argaes. Clearance of the flood water once overtopping has occurred is linked to the level of the Rivers Severn and Vyrnwy. Only when these have dropped to a certain level can the sluice gates, through the Environment Agency argaes, sited at the bottom end of the principal Board maintained watercourses open and allow the flood water to drain back into the Rivers Severn and Vyrnwy.

The Molverley Drainage District acts as a significant flood water storage area during major flood events, only slowly releasing the stored flood water back into the main river system when the River Severn is at a lower level more able to take the stored flood water.

The principal area for flooding extends to the south and west of an approximate line running from Llanymynech in the west to Maesbrook, Kinnerley and Pentre in the east. In addition there is a further corridor of land either side of the River Morda running northward towards Woolston and Newbridge which can be subject to flooding.

The Environment Agency argaes give limited flood protection, some being designed to over top every 2-3 years and others giving a 1 in 5-10 year protection.

The Board's small raised embankments along the Weir Brook give some very limited protection to agricultural land.

During the last fifteen year period overtopping of the argaes has been more frequent with very major floods in October 1998, October 2000 and 2007 and 2009.

The Board is satisfied there is a minimal risk to human life arising from failure in its assets and overtopping from its watercourses but once the E.A. argaes are overtopped no such guarantee can be maintained.

3.6 Management of Flood Risks

The Board monitors the condition of its watercourses. Consistent with the established need a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards of protection which are sought. Where standards are not at the policy level improvement works, where they can be demonstrated to meet with DEFRA criteria, will be considered and undertaken as appropriate.

3.7 Publicity

The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create an understanding among people who live and work in it as to what the flood risk is and the efforts made to control it. They will also seek to achieve directly and through local councils a culture within which the watercourses are seen as vital to controlling flood risk, whilst providing an interesting aquatic habit and dissuade abuse of them through dumping waste or obstructing flows in other ways.

4. REVIEW OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

Melverley IDB will review this Policy Statement within a period not extending beyond 5 years. Policy reviewed September 2008.

References

- ¹ Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993.
- ² High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence Operating Authorities and Elaboration of the Environment Agency Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999.