

# THORNTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose

- 1.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Thornton 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 the 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 include the Thornton I.D.B. The Board maintained infrastructure is shown in Paragraph 3.2 below.
- 1.3 The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence<sup>1</sup>. 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 targets<sup>2</sup>. The first target requires each operating authority to publish a policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government 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. We are providing a copy to D.E.F.R.A, the Environment Agency and local authorities in the district. Copies are also available from the Board's office at 3 The Old Cattle Market, Smiddy Hill, Pickering, North Yorkshire.

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

- 2.1 Thornton I.D.B supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood and coastal defence. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them.

#### Policy Aim

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

Section 3 below sets out our plans for reducing or managing the flood risk in The Board's District.

#### 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. Integrating with the Agency in response to flood emergencies and participating as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.

Objective (b)

*To encourage the provisions of adequate economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood defences.*

- In meeting its obligation the Board will consider its activities within the wider natural and developed environment seeking to ensure the avoidance of any adverse impact. It will equally co-operate with other drainage authorities and organisations to ensure adverse impacts on the drainage district do not arise as a result of other activities.
- The Board will carry out its maintenance and improvement works in an efficient and cost effective way and where appropriate use best practice and accessing appropriately qualified advice when necessary.
- To achieve this the Board will encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood protection and water level management measures and seek to control that development which could increase the risk of flooding.
- Within the drainage district potentially all the area is at some risk of 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 maintains at a satisfactory standard any flood defence which also affords protection to the district.

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 that 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 work necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk is removed.

3. FLOOD RISK IN THE BOARD'S AREA

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

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Catchment Area draining to and including the District | 5,728ha |
| Total area of the District                            | 5,728ha |
| Area of Agricultural land                             | 5,624ha |
| Other land including property, highways etc           | 796ha   |

There are no sites of Designated Environmental Interest, Wetland SSSIs or Nature Reserves.

### 3.2 Board Maintained Infrastructure

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Pumping Stations               | None   |
| Water Level control structures | None   |
| Watercourses                   | 138 km |

Passing through the District is main river which is maintained by the Environment Agency.

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Main river – River Derwent & Thornton Beck | 15 km |
| River Flood Defences                       | 15 km |

### 3.3 Regulation of Activities

The Board will exercise as required its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and its Byelaws to ensure that activities in and alongside its drainage system do not reduce flood protection standards and unnecessarily increase flood risk.

### 3.4 Standard of Protection

Through the maintenance of the channel system the Board seeks to maintain a general standard capable of providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively. This likely return periods can not be taken literally and may be subject to variation of 5% and 1% respectively.

An area which is more vulnerable to flooding due to particular local circumstances are:-

- (i) The agricultural land at Marishes, adjacent to the River Derwent.

### 3.5 Management of Flood Risks

The Board monitor the condition of its watercourses, overspilling of which could affect property or agricultural land. A routine maintenance programme is in place and improvement works have been implemented over many years. Where further improvement works are found to be necessary and where they can be demonstrated to meet the D.E.F.R.A criteria they will be considered and undertaken as appropriate.

The Board welcome from its agricultural ratepayers, special levy councils and members of the Public any comments on the condition of its system which could lead to any increased flood risk.

### 3.6 Publicity

The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create a rational 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 and dissuade abuse of them through dumping of waste or obstructing flows in other ways.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES

- 4.1 The Thornton I.D.B has nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and as a competent authority under the Conservation (Natural Habitats C) Regulation 1994. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.

Much of the Boards watercourse maintenance work involves vegetation control and de-silting is a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short term impact will arise this management is not only essential for flood defence and land drainage but also to maintain the diverse aquatic habitat in the District. The Board maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the district, the significant majority being the responsibility of the riparian land owners.

When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:

- avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to agricultural interests and natural habitats.
- ensure no net loss of habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans
- take appropriate opportunities to enhance habitats.

5. REVIEW OF POLICY STATEMENT

Thornton I.D.B will review this policy statement within a period not extending beyond 5 years.

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's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999