Boston Barrier Newsletter

July 2014

Government review of the Boston Barrier

The Government Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently reviewed the project business case for the £90.2million Boston Barrier and granted permission to move to the next stage. This announcement means the flood defence scheme, which will reduce tidal flood risk to over 20,000 properties in Boston, remains on track to be completed by 2019.

Cllr Colin Davie, executive member for regeneration at Lincolnshire County Council, said: "The multi-functional Boston Barrier is a welcome and necessary scheme and we are committing £11million to the total project cost. The barrier will provide Boston with one of the best standards of protection from tidal flooding in the country and will also allow the regeneration of the town's waterfront – which will sustain and grow the local economy for years to come."

Are we building the Boston Barrier in the right place?

We are sometimes asked whether the Boston Barrier is being built in the right place. We want to explain why the barrier is being built in the right place and why a barrier downstream of the town is not a sustainable solution.

The aim of the Boston Combined Strategy is to manage tidal flood risk and improve navigation for Boston over the next 100 years. The strategy identified a multi-functional barrier that both reduces tidal flood risk and manages water levels, as the best solution for addressing flood risk management and waterway objectives for Boston.

A structure downstream of the port has many disadvantages and would require a lock for continued navigation use while water levels are held between Grand Sluice and the barrier. The Port of Boston and the fishing fleet have already told us that a lock is an unacceptable option as it would significantly impact on their commercial trade.

Other reasons include:

- Navigation has to be maintained at all times. During construction we would be required to create a large bypass channel to accommodate large shipping vessels.
- Problems with access for construction plant and machinery.
- Problems with utilities (e.g. mains electricity supply).
- Increased cost of a larger and more complex barrier to prevent/limit collision damage and allow port vessels to navigate through.
- Impact on flood risk – in allowing land drainage and gravity discharge of rivers.
- Environmental damage to The Wash – an internationally designated site.

For the reasons stated above, the Boston Combined Strategy discounted a barrier downstream of the port. If the strategy was only considering a tidal barrier, many of the reasons stated above would still apply, which is why we are confident that the preferred location is the right location.

In 2011 the preferred location was decided following extensive public consultation. This was identified as just downstream of Black Sluice lock. The preferred location for the barrier has been

determined by reviewing the technical, economical and environmental benefits and is the best possible location for Boston.

What is the Boston Barrier and 'associated works'?

The Boston Barrier and 'associated works' are shown in red in the image on the right.

When we build the barrier we will also build new flood walls along the port estate and the opposite bank to the full strategy height of 7.3 metres AOD (Above Ordnance Datum – the historic benchmark set in Newlyn, Cornwall, against which sea levels in Great Britain are measured) at the same time.

There is a dotted line shown going past the power substation because we are currently in discussions with Western Power Distribution about working in partnership to raise this section earlier than planned in the Boston Combined Strategy.

Why aren't the Haven banks being raised to the full height at the same time as the barrier is built?

To meet the objectives of the Boston Combined Strategy and keep pace with rising sea levels over the next 100 years, the full strategy requires final defence levels to be constructed to 7.30 metres AOD. However, to provide the whole of Boston and the communities along The Haven with a very good 1 in 200 year standard of protection from tidal flooding, we only currently require a defence level of 6.3 metres AOD. Because the construction works will cause significant disruption to the Port of Boston, the Fishing Fleet and other river users, we have taken the decision to build the barrier and associated works to the full height of 7.30 metres AOD straight away. Doing this extra work now saves us time and money because we don't have to come back to raise the height of the barrier and associated works in the future. Please be assured that the whole of Boston and the communities along The Haven will have the same standard of protection from tidal flooding once the barrier is constructed.

Raising the height of The Haven banks is a later phase of the Boston Combined Strategy. With the current rate of climate change and sea level rise we anticipate this to be between 40-60 years from now. We have to prioritise where we spend public money on flood defences. Because the current standard of protection provided by The Haven banks is good, there is no financial justification to bring phase 5 of the Boston Combined Strategy forward. However we will continue to keep this under review in case climate change happens faster than predicted.

What are the next steps for the project?

Between now and autumn 2015, the Boston Barrier Partnership will work on the preliminary design of the barrier and prepare a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application. The TWAO application will be submitted to the Secretary of State around autumn 2015 for a decision. The scheme is currently expected to begin construction in 2017 and be completed by 2019.

Do you have any questions?

The Boston Barrier project team is available to answer any questions about the scheme. To ask a question or to meet with the project team email boston.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk or call 07747 640663.