

flood risk management

Godmanchester Flood Alleviation Scheme

Public Consultation
May 2006

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Introduction

We are investigating options for reducing flood risk to Godmanchester.

These improvements may contribute to the future quality of life with Godmanchester.

This consultation document provides background information, details of the options that are being considered, the key environmental opportunities and constraints facing all options, a list of consultees and a point of contact for further information.

This is your opportunity to find out about the proposed Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) and give us your feedback. We would also be grateful if residents could let us know of any archaeological finds they may have discovered in their garden.



Background

Extensive flooding occurred along the River Great Ouse during Easter 1998. We investigated flood risk in the Ouse valley, including a detailed study of the Godmanchester area. This study concluded that the level of flood protection was below acceptable standards and suggested options to reduce flood risk.

The River Great Ouse is a major feature in Godmanchester, setting the character of the historic town. The river is used for navigation and many properties along the river have boathouses and moorings. The town is currently protected by informal defences which take the form of flood embankments and garden walls along the banks of the river. Most of these defences were not specifically designed for flood defence and their failure could result in flooding of approximately 700 properties within the town.

We have concluded that the informal defences will prevent flooding of property to approximately a 5% chance in any one year. However, the risk of failure of these defences during a flood event cannot be accurately assessed. In addition, we are currently conducting surveys and investigating various options to provide a standard of flood defence equivalent to a 1% chance in any one year to both residential and commercial properties.





Environmental impact assessment and consultation

We would like your views on how flood risk can be managed in Godmanchester whilst retaining the links between the town, the river and the natural environment.

As an organisation we aim to promote conservation and, ensuring that our activities have a minimal impact upon the natural environment. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will play a key role in the current study. The EIA will look at the potential effects of each option, and will help us decide which option or options should be looked at in greater detail.

We would like your help in identifying potential issues and impacts surrounding the options under consideration, so that we can try to ensure that these are dealt with in advance, with potential negative impacts being either minimised or avoided completely.

Our aim is to ensure that there will be no significant impacts upon the character of Godmanchester or the natural environment as a result of the proposed flood alleviation scheme and indeed, where possible we will include improvements to the environment within the scheme.

Once the studies and assessments are complete, the information will be gathered together into an Environmental Statement which will be submitted with a planning application to Huntingdonshire District Council.

The existing environment in Godmanchester

Godmanchester is a historic town which has developed in close association with the River Great Ouse. On the other bank of the Great Ouse, Portholme Meadow is of international importance for nature conservation.

So far we know that:

- Much of Godmanchester is designated a conservation area, and there are numerous listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments and longstanding human activity means that the floodplain could contain large amounts of buried archaeology.
- There are several public rights of way within the floodplain of the River Great Ouse which could be affected by the construction and operation of a flood alleviation scheme. Further recreational activities within Godmanchester come from the River Ouse itself which is a navigation channel.
- Portholme Meadow is a grassland area designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation. This wide open landscape is intimately linked to the River Great Ouse and it relies upon flooding to maintain its character.
- The River Great Ouse is a fishery and numerous protected species are supported within its floodplain, including great crested newt, spined loach and several bat species



Potential options being reviewed

The following options are being considered during the review period.

Option	Identified problems
<p>1. Do Nothing No improvement or maintenance works would be undertaken, leading to deterioration of the system and more frequent flooding. The other options considered in the project will be compared against this option.</p>	<p>This option would not improve the flood protection to the Godmanchester area. Without maintenance, the system would degrade increasing the flood risk.</p>
<p>2. Do Minimum We will maintain existing flood defences and drainage systems to the current standards.</p>	<p>The current risk level would increase slowly over time due to Climate Change.</p>
<p>3. Flood Warning system Implement an improved Flood Warning System for Godmanchester giving residents warning of up to 2 days before a possible flood event.</p>	<p>Although carrying out this option could decrease the risk of loss of life and material damage, there would be no improvements in protection to property.</p>
<p>4. Upstream Flood Storage Reservoir (single or multiple site) Construction of flood storage reservoirs upstream of Godmanchester.</p>	<p>This option would require a storage volume of approximately 25 million cubic metres. Due to topography and landuse, it is unlikely to find sufficient suitable locations upstream.</p>
<p>5. Divert river course Construction of a flood diversion channel, bypassing the Godmanchester floodplain.</p>	<p>This option would be expensive and require the construction of a very long diversion channel. It could also result in higher water levels, threatening communities downstream of Godmanchester.</p>
<p>6. Widen existing river channel The existing river would be widened to increase flow capacity. Structures such as locks and weirs would be removed. Flood waters would pass more quickly through the study area, resulting in lower flood levels.</p>	<p>The option would have a negative impact on navigation. Erosion of banks and increased downstream levels may also be caused by this option.</p>
<p>7. Construct new flood defences Construction of a line of flood defences on the right bank of the river. This would consist of raising existing earth embankments and retaining walls, and constructing new embankments and flood walls within the gardens of residential properties on The Avenue and Post Street. Improved defences would also be constructed along the riverside next to Causeway.</p>	<p>This option is likely to raise peak flood water levels slightly in Portholme Meadow for high return periods. A continuous defence line is required, and many defences would have to be built through people's back gardens. The visual appearance of defences may be an issue.</p>
<p>8. Local diversion channel and flood defences This option would involve constructing a localised diversion channel across the east side of Portholme Meadow and the construction of a large flood embankment with associated flood defence/ navigation structures.</p>	<p>This option is likely to be costly and would raise peak water levels slightly in Portholme Meadow. An area of Portholme Meadow would be lost, as a result of the construction of the diversion channel and embankment.</p>
<p>9. Construction of temporary defences Installation of demountable defences throughout the study area.</p>	<p>It is likely that up to 2km of demountable defences could be required. A concern would be, whether the defences could be installed in time.</p>

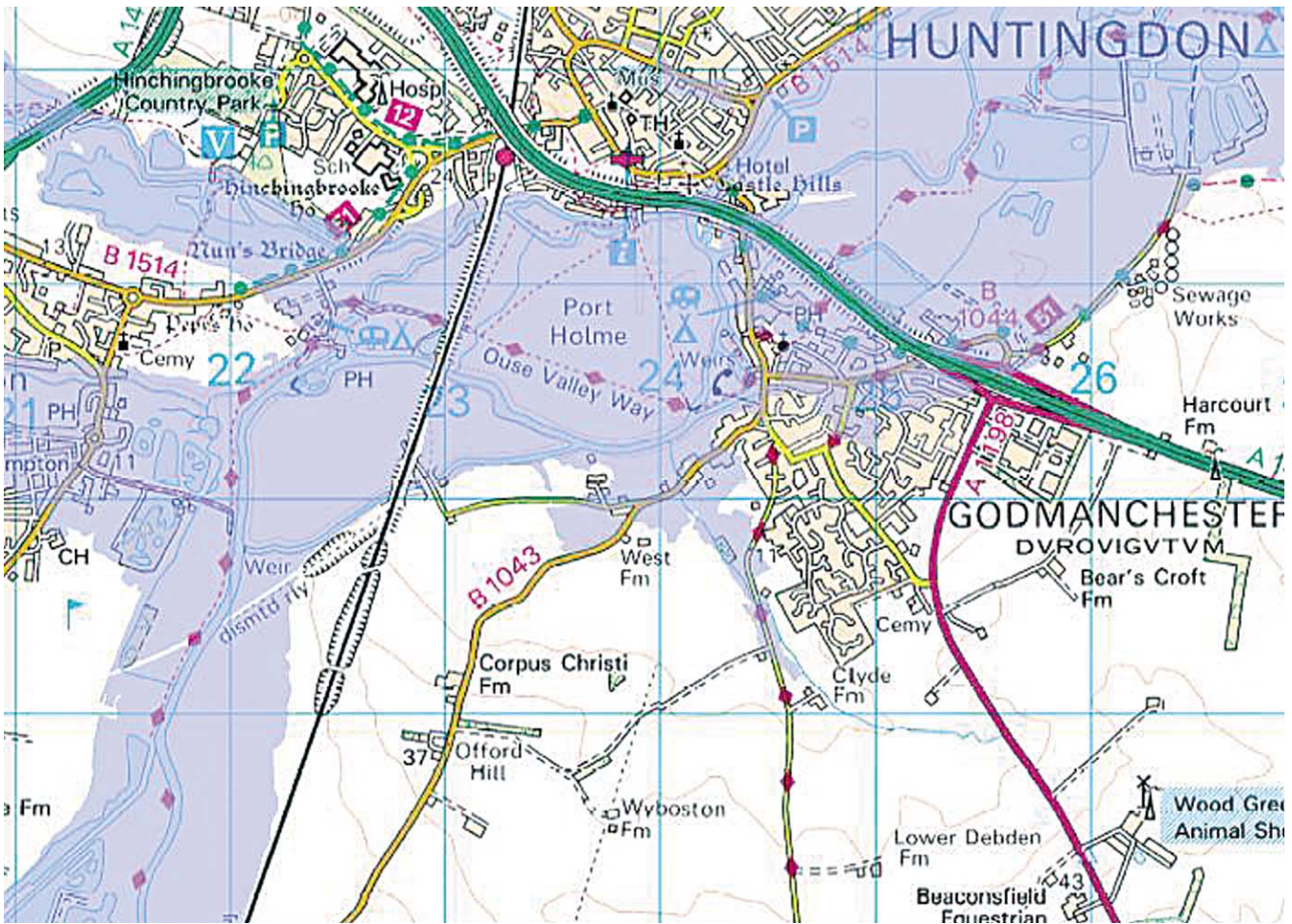
Project consultation

The following parties will be contacted as part of the consultation:

- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Anglian Water
- Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust
- Cambridgeshire badger group
- Countryside Agency
- Cambridgeshire bat group
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Council for the Protection of Rural England
- English Nature
- Parish Councils
- English Heritage
- Ramblers Association;
- Woodland Trust
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Highways Agency
- Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
- Godmanchester Town Council

These organisations, together with residents near to the proposed works, are included in the current consultation. If you think any other organisations should be included, please tell us.





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Godmanchester Indicative Flood Plain 1 in 100 year Return Period

Project contacts

If you have any queries or issues you wish to discuss or you have any information that may aid the decision making process, please contact:

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or about your environment?**

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