

**WATERCOURSES – STANDARD OF PROTECTION STUDIES
GENERAL AND HILTON
(Report by Head of Environment & Transport and Head of Planning
Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the floods in the District in 1998, various studies have been initiated by the Environment Agency on their Main Rivers. These are called Standard of Protection Studies and are pre-feasibility studies to look at the frequency that flooding is likely to affect properties.
- 1.2 The District Council has permissive land drainage powers on non-Main rivers and has maintenance responsibilities on its riparian watercourses and its Awarded Watercourses. A joint study was commissioned by the Environment Agency and this Council for the Hilton catchment following the flooding in October 2001.
- 1.3 The Council has also engaged consultants, Mott MacDonald, to carry out an overarching Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the district. This assessment will identify areas that are at risk of flooding (in a more accurate manner than the existing indicative flood plain maps), and detail these factors that are relevant to current and future flood risks. This is a requirement for, and will inform the emerging Local Development Document that will replace the Local Plan.
- 1.4 Also included in the consultants brief is for them to assess the Standard of Protection on HDC watercourses and key locations.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE:

- 2.1 The Environment Agency has produced studies for:

Alconbury & Alconbury Weston	-	SoP complete and detailed appraisal now being undertaken.
Ellington Brook	-	SoP complete and design work is progressing on minor bank improvements.
River Great Ouse	-	Hydraulic Model produced for Earith to St Neots. Standard of Protection Study being carried out.
West Brook/Hall Green- Brook, Fenstanton		SoP report complete – shows several houses at risk from under 1 in 25 year floods. Detailed appraisal being undertaken.
Parsons Drove, St Ives	-	SoP report nearing completion.

- 2.2 The Hilton Standard of Protection report has now been received from the consultants.
- 2.3 The Stage 1 of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been received from Mott MacDonald.

3. HILTON STANDARD OF PROTECTION REPORT

- 3.1 Hilton was affected by flooding due to the heavy storms of October 2001. There were eight houses flooded due to this storm. These were not flooded in the 1998 floods and there is no record of these flooding on other occasions in the recent past.
- 3.2 The flood event in October 2001 at the West Brook at Hilton has been estimated at a 1 in 100 year return period.
- 3.3 It is estimated that the Standard of Protection offered to Hilton is judged to be in excess of 25 years and towards 1 in 100 years and only a small number of properties are at risk. Therefore the benefits of any improvements would be low and it would be highly unlikely that works could be justified under DEFRA grant aided criteria.
- 3.4 The DEFRA guidelines placed Hilton in land use band B, based on the number of indicative housing units at risk of flooding, and this infers an indicative standard for flood defence of 1 in 25 to 100 years.
- 3.5 The report considered what improvements could be carried out.
- 1) The watercourse upstream of Graveley Way could have the right bank raised by depositing dredgings on it. This would only work in low return period events of up to 1 in 10 year events and therefore not be very effective. A more substantial engineered embankment would be required to provide protection against more severe flood events. This would not be cost effective and may cause local problems to the farmers in draining their land in normal conditions.
 - 2) The Environment Agency maintain West Brook downstream of Hilton already. No improvements were identified to this watercourse but it is important to ensure that regular maintenance continues.

4. STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The completed Stage 1 of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment report has identified all the information available throughout the district. This includes river catchment assessments, ground level data and flooding information.
- 4.2 Stage 2 will prepare plans which give a more accurate 1 in 100 year flood plain assessment for use with local plans and planning applications. The Environment Agency fully supports this work.
- 4.3 Stage 2 will also complete Standard of Protection studies on ordinary watercourses. It has been agreed that 22 locations shall be checked with a total length of 20 Km included.

4.4 This report is expected in April 2004 and will identify properties which may be liable to flooding and at what return period. The Council will then have to consider if it wishes to investigate solutions to these problems or not. The report will also inform the Council in respect of proposed land use allocations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The Hilton report shows that no flooding to properties should occur within the DEFRA guidelines of 1 in 25 years. It also states that there are no cost effective improvements which could be carried out.

5.2 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is progressing well with the final report due in April 2004. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet once the study is complete.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) note the progress the Environment Agency have made with regard to their various investigations**
- ii) note the Hilton Standard of Protection Report**
- iii) agree that no further investigation work is carried out at Hilton to raise the level of flood protection;**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Hilton Village Flood Defence Standard of Protection Study.
Huntingdon Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Inception Report - Final

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