


ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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An aerial photograph of a coastal settlement, likely a fishing village, showing numerous small buildings and structures clustered along a shoreline. The water is visible in the foreground and background.

YOU HAVE AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO  
SEE THE  
PROPOSALS BEING  
CONSIDERED  
AND TO  
GIVE YOUR  
COMMENTS



# introduction

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The Lower Witham catchment is mainly rural in nature, with numerous scattered communities. The main towns in the catchment are Boston, Horncastle, Lincoln, Bardney and Coningsby.

The River Witham and its tributaries between Lincoln and Boston form a complex network of watercourses, with approximately 300 kilometres of flood defence embankments and 30 channel structures along their lengths. These defences protect the towns and properties, some isolated rural communities and valuable productive farmland totalling 26,500 ha. Without effective land drainage, and man-made coastal and river defences, much of the area would be marshland, regularly inundated by the sea.

# the problem

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The sustainability and the economy of the Lower Witham catchment depend on the land drainage and flood defence systems. Without them the area would revert to marshland, properties would be ruined by flood waters, and communities would be devastated. The existing flood defences are complex and are of cause for concern.

Breaches and overtopping of the embankments have occurred and erosion is ongoing. Further settlement of the embankments in the future, combined with the possibility of sea level rise and other climatic changes increases the possibility of the defences failing.



# the scheme

## Scheme Progress & Proposals

The Environment Agency has produced a strategy study for a major £40 million flood defence scheme over ten years to improve the embankments which protect the area.

This study considered various options for the scheme and has identified a preferred option of creating flood storage areas. This would allow the existing standard of defences to be increased with the minimum of works to the bank, the least environmental damage and the greatest environmental gain.

The main recommendations of the preferred strategy are:

- Phased refurbishment of embankments and re-establishment of berms;*
- Provision of four flood storage areas;*
- Raising of embankments to incorporate a safety allowance;*
- Consideration given to environmental enhancement;*
- Continued maintenance of the river system.*

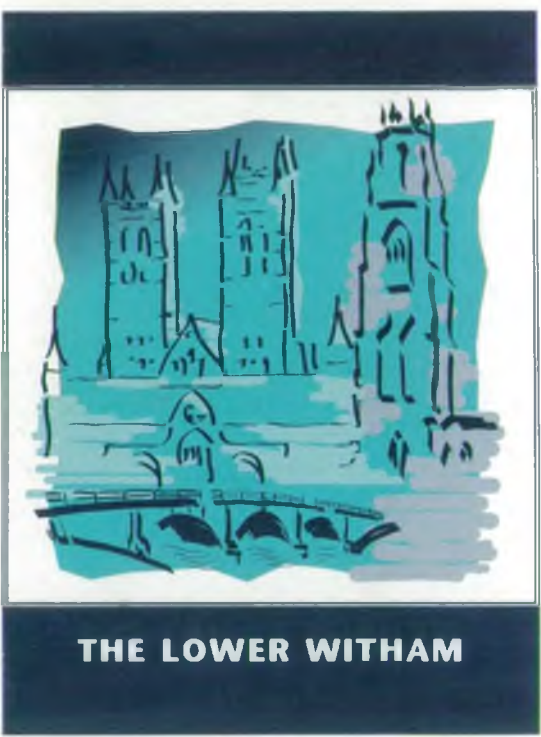
The River Bain upstream of Coningsby is hydraulically independent of the River Witham. The principal features of the preferred strategic option for the River Bain are:

- Localised flood defences to protect Haltham and Kirby-on-Bain;*
- Continued maintenance of flood embankments protecting agricultural land;*
- Improvement of existing defences in Horncastle.*

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# F L O O D

d e f e n c e s



S T R A T E G Y



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The Agency will proceed to obtain approval for the strategy through the formal processes with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The process of gaining approval will take some time, and the ten year programme of works is likely to commence in 1998/99. The Agency will progress individual schemes under the strategy through consultation with interested parties and the local community.

## COnsideration Environmental C o n s i d e r a t i o n

The Environment Agency has a duty to conserve and enhance the environment and to carry out Environmental Impact Assessments or Appraisals on all its operational works.

All options for flood defence needs of the Witham have been considered in environmental as well as engineering and financial terms to ensure an



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The 24-hour emergency hotline number for reporting all environmental incidents relating to air, land and water.

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integrated approach to the strategy. Comments have been received from nearby landowners as well as many other organisations with an interest in the river. A number of surveys have been carried out on specific aspects including ecology, archaeology and landscape/townscape.

This process has identified opportunities and constraints in connection with the flood defence proposals.

It is the Agency's intention to work closely with individuals and organisations in the catchment to ensure the best possible environment for the Witham.

Copies of the Lower Witham Strategy are available from the Project Manager at the Environment Agency Anglian Regional office where comments will also be received. (A charge maybe made for the report.)





**M A K E  
Y O U R  
V I E W S  
K N O W N**

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