

**News release**

8th September 2016

**LEP Ahead of Game with Water Plan, Says Environment Secretary**

**The Environment Secretary, the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, has praised Greater Lincolnshire for being “ahead of the game” when it comes to planning for future water supplies and reducing flood risk.**

Speaking on Tuesday (6th September) at the House of Commons launch of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s Water Management Plan, she said: “I really do congratulate you on being ahead of the game and I know your ambition is to be an exemplar for both water use and protection from flood water.

"Greater Lincolnshire is a very important food and farming area with lots of coastline and tourism and a lot to preserve about it, so it is very important you are doing this work.”

Tuesday’s event was hosted by Boston and Skegness MP Matt Warman and was attended by Lincolnshire MPs Victoria Atkins (Louth and Horncastle), Martin Vickers (Cleethorpes) and John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) as well as Lord Porter of Spalding, Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, the Chief Executive of Anglian Water Peter Simpson, Chair of the Environment Agency Emma Howard Boyd and senior figures from local councils.

The plan sets out potential projects including new reservoirs and water infrastructure to ensure the supply of water for homes, businesses, farms and food manufacturers in the future.

It is also needed to help protect homes, land and businesses in Lincolnshire, much of which is low-lying, from flood risks from the sea, rivers or surface water

Extra water supplies are required if 100,000 new homes are to be built in Greater Lincolnshire, as the LEP hopes, and to help grow the local economy by £8 billion by 2030.

Mrs Leadsom added: "We will shortly be launching our own flooding resilience plan at a national level – as a government we are doing our bit.

“We are investing more than £2.3 billion up to 2021 in the flood resilience area; that's going to better protect 300,000 homes and 420,000 acres of agricultural land right across the country.

“This does include a barrier in Boston which will protect 15,000 homes and provide an economic boost to the area.”

Matt Warman MP told the audience: “There is nowhere that knows the value of water management more than Lincolnshire. In my own patch that means £100 million on the Boston Barrier, that means a whole host of internal drainage boards working with the Environment Agency, and it means working with the LEP to make sure we get the economic development benefits that go with managing flood risk as best as we possibly can.”

Also speaking at the launch was Mark Tinsley, a LEP board director who also chairs the LEP’s Water Management Board. “I am a farmer,” he said. “I live at sea level, about five miles away from the Wash sea bank, and we are involved in the growth of high-value crops, so clearly I am very aware of the threat of flooding and benefits from adequate supplies of water.

“Failure to protect the highly productive land around the Wash from flooding could create a major interruption for national food supplies, given the concentration of food processors and farm production in the area.”

If you would like to receive a hard copy of the Water Management Plan send an email to enquiries@greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk. Or you can download a digital version by visiting
<http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk/assets/downloads/Water_Management_Plan.pdf>

**Notes to Editors:**

* The Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership is a private and public sector partnership led by the private sector which aims to improve conditions for infrastructure and doing business in the Greater Lincolnshire area.
* One of the first LEPs to be established in the UK, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP covers a large geographical area with a population of over one million and a diverse range of industries, from ports and logistics to farming, tourism and engineering.
* It includes North and North-East Lincolnshire and the administrative county of Lincolnshire and is controlled by a LEP board made up of leading figures in the public and private sector.
* Visit [www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk](http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk) for more information.
* Greater Lincolnshire has been affected by a number of significant coastal and inland floods, most notably in 1953, 2007, 2012 and 2013.
* The Greater Lincolnshire LEP has developed the Water Management Plan in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders and partner organisations, shaping and refining it through workshops.

**For media information please contact:**

**Jez Ashberry**

**Shooting Star**

**01522 528540**

**07780 735071**

**jez@weareshootingstar.co.uk**

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