

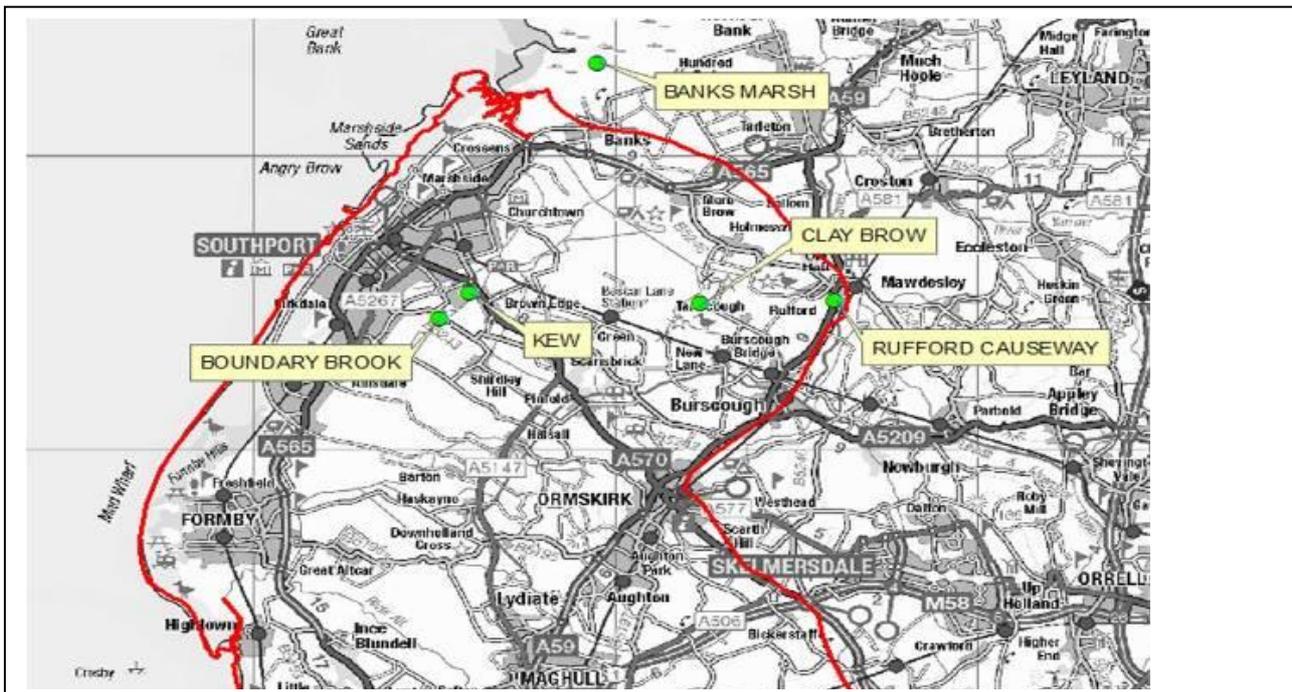
### Extension of the Notice period to 31 December 2018

Land drainage and flood risk management activity in the Alt Crossens catchment has been carried out by the Environment Agency in recent years. The Environment Agency now prioritises flood risk management activity that provides the greatest protection for people and property. To support this, the Environment Agency is stopping land drainage activity including the operation of pumping stations in areas where evidence shows that it does not deliver sufficient flood risk benefit to people and property.

In September 2015, the Environment Agency wrote to landowners and occupiers affected by this change to advise them of the Notice to cease operation of five land drainage pumping stations at

- Banks Marsh
- Boundary Brook
- Clay Brow
- Kew
- Rufford Causeway

The locations of the pumping stations are shown on the map below.



The Environment Agency has now agreed to further extend the Notice period to the 31 December 2018. This extension reflects our continued commitment to help those affected to find a sustainable way to manage land drainage in Alt Crossens for the benefit of agriculture, the environment, communities and businesses, whilst ensuring public funding for flood risk management is spent on the protection of people and property.

The Notice periods for the Lyth Valley and Waver Wampool catchments in Cumbria have also been extended by the Environment Agency.

## Actions to be progressed during 2017

The Environment Agency will continue to work with affected landowners and other interested parties to seek alternative funding and management of these five land drainage pumping stations, in particular, supporting work to identify a range of options to be considered. Working with the NFU, CLA, Lancashire County Council, local communities, the relevant local authorities and other organisations interested in these changes, we will seek to develop a new advisory group during 2017, to help inform this work. There will also be further engagement with those affected to ensure they have both the opportunity to be involved in this process and are also kept fully informed on progress.

One of the options that the farming community has previously shown strong support for is the creation of a new Water Level Management Board. In December 2016, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) confirmed their view there was a potential difficulty in applying the provisions within the Land Drainage Act 1991 to enable the creation of new Water Level Management Boards. Defra are now seeking to secure Parliamentary time to make the necessary changes to the legislation.

Other options that are being considered include:

- A Public Sector Co-operation Agreement with an existing public body to undertake maintenance of watercourses and operation of pumping stations
- Co-operatives undertaking maintenance of watercourses and operation of pumping stations
- Those directly benefiting from the pumping stations funding and undertaking continued operation
- Decommissioning the pumping stations and putting in place mitigation measures

A viable alternative solution needs to be identified before the end of December 2018. If there is clear support demonstrated by those affected for a preferred option that cannot be delivered with the existing notice period, the Notice period can be extended further if required to enable this option to be progressed.

The Environment Agency will continue to operate the 5 land drainage pumping stations during the Notice period and undertake the maintenance of main river watercourses in line with our annual maintenance programme. All watercourse maintenance is prioritised on an annual basis with the programme for 2017/18 that is currently being agreed due to be published in April 2017. The maintenance programme up to the end of March 2017 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/river-and-coastal-maintenance-programme>.

## Our commitment

Before making changes we will always try to:

- understand how any proposed changes impact on the people who live and work in the area;
- consider how we can protect and improve the environment;
- work with key partners to identify the most sustainable and affordable options; and
- ensure any changes are properly communicated and understood by those affected.

## Where can I find further information?

For more information contact Dale Gibbons, Senior Advisor, Flood Risk Management based in Cumbria and Lancashire by telephone on 02030255729 or email at [dale.gibbons@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:dale.gibbons@environment-agency.gov.uk)