

Confidential Filing

Prime ministers meeting with
James Prior MP and Sir Peter Tapsell MP
about East coast sea defences

PRIME MINISTER

May 1986

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
5.6.86							
13.6.86							
20.6.86							
30.6.86							
1.7.86							
28.7.86							
31.7.86							
4.8.86							
7.8.86							
11.8.86							
19.8.86							
15.7.86	1488						

PREM 19/2409



File SPW Boy

*cc MAFF
CST
MLB.*

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

29 July, 1988.

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 13 July.

The Government is of course very much aware of the problems referred to in your letter, and the need for a continuing programme of improvement works on this most vulnerable part of the coast. It was with these needs uppermost in our minds that we were able to announce a substantial increase in funding in 1986; well over half these funds have been allocated to Anglian Water.

As to the future, we do not plan any fundamental change in the organisation and financing of sea defence works under the new National Rivers Authority. Capital works will continue to be funded by MAFF grant aid with the balance provided by precepts on County Councils. However, MAFF are very much aware of the particular difficulty Anglian Water has in financing its sea defence activities and have recently carried out detailed consultations with them on their capital works programme into the 1990s. In consequence the question of grant provision is receiving particular attention in our present consideration of public expenditure. It is of course too soon to predict the outcome but I can assure you that securing the sea defences in East Anglia and Lincolnshire is high on MAFF's list of priorities.

*Yours ever
Margaret*

Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

Mr C D Powell
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1 2AA

27 July 1988

Dear Anales

Thank you for your letter of 15 July enclosing a copy of one from Sir Peter Tapsell M.P suggesting that sea defences should be nationally funded when the National Rivers Authority takes over responsibility for this activity when water authorities are privatised.

We are not planning changes of the sort suggested by Sir Peter: our policy is to maintain present arrangements whereby funding is provided partly by MAFF grant aid with the balance from precepts on local authorities.

Sir Peter has been concerned about financing reconstruction of decaying sea defences in Lincolnshire for some time. He and Sir James Prior discussed the matter with the Prime Minister in 1986 following which additional MAFF grant aid was provided. Nevertheless heavy expenditure is likely to continue to be necessary in Lincolnshire, for other lengths of Anglian Water's sea defences and for flood defences in general to avoid danger to life and property. We are well aware of the problem and have held detailed discussions with Anglian Water to assess their grant aid needs over the coming years. Accordingly a bid for increased PES provisions for 1989/90 - 91/92 has been made and is currently under consideration with Treasury.

... The attached draft reply has been cleared with Treasury; a copy goes to Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office).

Smiley

Shirley Stagg
SHIRLEY STAGG (MRS)
Principal Private Secretary

To issue

Sir P. Tippell for PM

Silver Boy

Re: yk for your letter of 13 July.

" The Government is of course very much aware of the problems referred to in your letter, and the need for a continuing programme of improvement works on this most vulnerable part of the coast. It was with these needs uppermost in our minds that we were able to announce a substantial increase in funding in 1986; well over half these funds have been allocated to Anglian Water.

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OP

provision is receiving particular attention in our present



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

Mr C D Powell
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON
SW1 2AA

27 July 1988

Dear Anabel

Thank you for your letter of 15 July enclosing a copy of one from Sir Peter Tapsell M.P suggesting that sea defences should be nationally funded when the National Rivers Authority takes over responsibility for this activity when water authorities are privatised.

We are not planning changes of the sort suggested by Sir Peter: our policy is to maintain present arrangements whereby funding is provided partly by MAFF grant aid with the balance from precepts on local authorities.

Sir Peter has been concerned about financing reconstruction of decaying sea defences in Lincolnshire for some time. He and Sir James Prior discussed the matter with the Prime Minister in 1986 following which additional MAFF grant aid was provided. Nevertheless heavy expenditure is likely to continue to be necessary in Lincolnshire, for other lengths of Anglian Water's sea defences and for flood defences in general to avoid danger to life and property. We are well aware of the problem and have held detailed discussions with Anglian Water to assess their grant aid needs over the coming years. Accordingly a bid for increased PES provisions for 1989/90 - 91/92 has been made and is currently under consideration with Treasury.

... The attached draft reply has been cleared with Treasury; a copy goes to Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office).

Smileedy

Shirley Stagg
SHIRLEY STAGG (MRS)
Principal Private Secretary

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As to the future, we do not plan any fundamental change in the organisation and financing of sea defence works under the new National Rivers Authority. Capital works will continue to be funded by MAFF grant aid with the balance provided by precepts on County Councils. However, MAFF are very much aware of the particular difficulty Anglian Water has in financing its sea defence activities and have recently carried out detailed consultations with them on their capital works programme into the 1990s. In consequence the question of grant consideration of public expenditure. It is of course too soon to predict the outcome but I can assure you that securing the sea defences in East Anglia and Lincolnshire is high on MAFF's list of priorities.

AM Meeting with James Prier MD
May 86.



*file to
cu AH*

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

Ad ee
15 July, 1988.

I attach a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.

I should be grateful if you could provide a draft reply for the Prime Minister's signature, to reach me by 28 July please.

Could you please coordinate your reply with Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office) to whom I am copying this letter and its enclosure.

(C.D. Powell)

Mrs. Shirley Stagg,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

cu

SIR PETER TAPSELL M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

13th July, 1988.

Dear Prime Minister,

Sea Defences

You may remember that you very kindly received me in your Room at the House of Commons on the 1st July, 1986, when I explained to you the urgent need for increased capital expenditure on the Sea Defences of the East Coast generally and, from my personal knowledge, on the Sea Defences of my own East Lincolnshire Constituency (Mablethorpe, Sutton-on-Sea, etc.).

Following our meeting, you were good enough to authorise a substantial increase in the capital expenditure programme and this is already being reflected by a big increase in the expenditure on the Sea Defences, for which I am most grateful.

With Privatisation of the Water Industry now imminent, with the consequent hiving off of responsibility for the Sea Defences from the Regional Water Authorities to the proposed new National Rivers Authority, I wonder if I may now revert to the point I briefly put to you at that meeting about the desirability of making expenditure on the Sea Defences a national charge.

In my local Lincolnshire context, the argument for this can be put with particular clarity. In 1953, as you will recall, we had the East Coast flood disaster in which many people were drowned and thousands of houses were flooded. Following that disaster, there was massive expenditure on the Sea Defences of the East Lincolnshire Coast (and no doubt elsewhere). This was 100 percent grant aided.

Thereafter, expenditure on the Sea Defences of Lincolnshire remained grant aided at a rate of 85 percent until 1984. The level of Grant Aid then reduced as follows:

1984/85	80%
1985/86	67%
1986/87	61%
1987/88	65% (up a little).

However, I am assured by the experts that Sea Defences only last for about 40 years and that the massive expenditure on them in the period 1953-58 will now need to be repeated in the early 90's. The already large capital programme (which you increased) is, I am

Cont'd/.....

told, only sufficient to patch up the existing Sea Defences which are now nearing the end of their life. Consequently, in the 90's, a capital investment programme comparable to that of the post-1953 period will be required on the Lincolnshire Sea Defences but, of course, expressed in the money terms of the 1990's.

It simply will not be possible for this to be financed as a precept on the rates or in any other form of Local Government taxation. Sooner or later - and one hopes before there is another flood disaster - there will have to be a capital investment programme to replace the Lincolnshire Sea Defences on a scale which can only be financed by the Exchequer.

These points have recently been forcibly put to me by men who have worked in this "industry" for many years and are nearing retirement and have no particular axe to grind since they will not be responsible for the Sea Defences when the problem arises in a very few years' time. They tell me that it would be much more sensible to face up to this problem now rather than to wait for some local system of financing to break down under the pressure of events.

At the moment, 35 percent of Capital Expenditure is met from precept, of which about two-thirds is paid for by the County Council and about one-third by the Internal Drainage Boards.

I am assured that the amounts of money involved would make it quite impossible for such Local Authorities to fund 35 percent of the required capital investment programme.

No doubt some form of "Rate Support Grant" arrangement could be built into the financial structure of the proposed new National Rivers Authority (or whatever it is ultimately called), but since RSG has proved such an infinitely complex mechanism in the past and the whole of Local Government Finance is in process of being altered, I hope that when the legislation affecting Sea Defences is being finalised, serious consideration will be given to the desirability of treating Sea Defences as though they were a motorway and fully funding them from the National Exchequer.

Please do not trouble to reply to the points raised in this letter as they clearly raise issues on which you will not wish the Government to take a hurried decision, but I thought that this would be a timely moment for me to put this general proposition to you again, particularly as one quarter of all the residents of my constituency live below sea level and are dependent upon the East Lincolnshire Sea Defences for their survival when there is an exceptionally high tide and a strong wind blowing from the East at a time of full moon, which is a conjunction which occurs two or three times every winter.

Lawson, *Peter*

PRIME MINISTER: MEET WITH J. PROV + SU PTAPEN.

May 86



CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET

SIR PETER TAPSELL M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

19th August, 1986.

Dear Prime Minister,

at Map

Sea Defences

Sir Peter Tapsell is at present abroad but I have read to him your letter dated the 16th August over the telephone and he has asked me to thank you very much for it.

Sir Peter has also asked me to say that he hopes that your hand is healing well and that it is not causing you too much pain.

Yours sincerely,

Glenys Wignate

(Private Secretary)

Prime Minister (4)

R20/8

PPS

mt

PM: meet. 18 re Sea Defences - S/S/86





10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

MAJ
cc James Prior
MAFF
CWO
Mr. Unwin, CO
LPO
CDO

THE PRIME MINISTER

16 August 1986

Dear Peter,

Following our meeting on 1 July I have reviewed with my colleagues the scope for additional Government financial help with the cost of strengthening the sea defences in East Anglia. In doing this, we have had to take into account the fact that sea defences on other parts of the coast also need some strengthening. We have also of course had regard to the paramount importance of keeping public expenditure under control.

Given all the many other demands on public resources this has not been easy. However, I am pleased to say that we will be able to make extra Government grant aid available this year and in the next three years. This year we will make an extra £1.25m available: officials will have to review urgently with Anglian Water Authority what extra works can be carried out in the time available, but the aim will be to increase Anglian's grant earning ceiling so that the Authority receives about £1m of this extra grant aid. In each of the following three years we will make an extra £3.5m of grant aid available for sea defence work. The precise distribution of the extra grant aid will have to be decided in the light of the sea defence requirements of the different drainage authorities, but clearly Anglian Water Authority will have the major claim on this extra assistance.

da

Moreover, in 1987/88 and 1988/89 we are making separate extra provision for a scheme which Southern Water Authority needs to carry out to rebuild the sea wall at Seaford: this scheme will not therefore be a claim on the extra £3.5m p.a. over the next three years.

The total extra grant aid provision, including the grant aid for the Seaford scheme, amounts to £16.75m over the period to the end of 1989/90. In order to find this money we will have to make savings elsewhere including a cut in the provision for coast protection. However, I am satisfied that this substantial transfer of funds to sea defence is necessary. Obviously it is now necessary for the Anglian Water Authority to act quickly to take advantage of the increase in their grant earning ceiling for this year and to draw up appropriate plans for the following years. I should also stress that, in addition to capital works, the Authority must ensure that they carry out a proper level of maintenance and repair work on their sea defences.

Michael Jopling will be informing the Water Authorities and making a public statement shortly about the additional finance.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Jim Prior.

*Yours
Hargrave*

Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.

SLW

7 August 1986

Thank you for your letter of 6 August about flood defence finance. The Prime Minister has noted the difficulties to which your Minister refers and that he is nevertheless willing to continue the search for savings in the course of the current survey. As I indicated in my letter of 4 August she hopes that this search will be successful. The Prime Minister would not wish her letter to Sir Peter Tapsell to be further delayed and on the basis set out in your letter of 6 August, therefore, the letter will issue tomorrow (Friday, 8) unless I hear to the contrary.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Jill Rutter (HM Treasury), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

(TIM FLESHER)

Mrs. E. M. Morris,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

✓



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

Tim Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Tim

This is all very silly, Jill Rutter is
going to get the C/Sec's views &

6 August 1986

Her case back to you. I have said

he will not want to deal

personally - M

Dear Tim,

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

My Minister has seen your letter of 4 August about flood defence finance. He has not insisted that the provision for flood defence should be ring fenced from other MAFF programmes; indeed, the offers to find extra money from land sales and to give up £1.5 million from the provision for the Sea Fish Industry Development Programme indicate that he has looked for and found offsetting savings. But he has been unable to identify the further savings totalling £4 million for 1987/88 and 1988/89 which would be needed to fully offset the additional cost of the essential flood defence work. He is nevertheless willing to continue the search for savings in the course of the current Survey.

If this is not acceptable to the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary, he sees no alternative but to postpone the Prime Minister's reply to Sir Richard Tapsell, despite the criticism which this further delay is likely to arouse and the risk that no extra work would be carried out before this winter.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Jill Rutter (HM Treasury), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

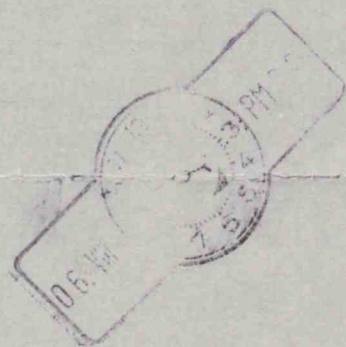
Yours sincerely,

liz Morris

2
MRS E M MORRIS
Private Secretary

Topsell mtg: PRIME MINISTER

May 186.





MS
CBG

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 August 1986

Dear Liz,

The Prime Minister has seen your letter of 31 July to Jill Rutter about flood defence finance. She has noted that your Minister proposes to find the additional sum required in 1986/87 from increased land sales and she hopes that this option will be examined for future years as well. More generally however she does not believe that provision for flood defence can be ring-fenced from other MAFF programmes in the way suggested in your letter and she very much hopes that Mr Jopling will feel able to reconsider the position bearing in mind the very difficult prospect for public expenditure over the next two years.

I am copying this letter to Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Jill Rutter (HM Treasury), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

[Handwritten signature]
[Handwritten signature]

Tim Flesher

Miss Elizabeth Morris
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

CEBG



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

A B/f ?

Miss J K Rutter
Private Secretary to the
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

31 July 1986

Dear Jill,

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

In view of David Norgrove's letter of 28 July my Minister has looked yet again at the financing of the work needed to improve sea defences. He is prepared to do all he can to find savings to offset the additional expenditure. He can now offer to offset from increased land sales the whole of the £1.25 million required in 1986/87 and to reduce the PES provision for coast protection by £2.0 million (instead of £1.5 million) in each of the three Survey years; in addition, for 1989/90 he will give up £1.5 million from the provision for the Sea Fish Industry Development Programme. He is unable to identify savings to make up the balance for 1987/88 and 1988/89, but this can be taken into account in the Survey as the Prime Minister suggests.

B/c

The Minister trusts that on this basis the Chief Secretary will be content for us to let the Prime Minister's office have a draft letter to Sir Peter Tapsell as requested.

I am copying this letter to David Norgrove (Prime Minister's Office), Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Yours sincerely,

E M Morris

**MRS E M MORRIS
Private Secretary**

PM's mtg with Pinar & PM
Tapsell MP May 86.



SRWAHL

PRIME MINISTER

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

You will remember that Mr. Jopling and the Chief Secretary could not agree who was to provide the small amount of extra money needed to finance better flood defences. You asked Mr. Jopling to meet the extra costs within his baseline, but that this should be a factor to be taken into account in the Public Expenditure Survey.

Mr. Jopling has come back to say that he can meet some of the additional expenditure, partly by extra land sales, partly by reducing the provision for coast protection and partly by cutting money from the Sea Fish Industry Development Programme. The years for which he says he cannot find the money are 1987/88 and 1988/89 and he believes this should be discussed in the Survey.

These are of course the two years which matter. Do you want to intervene again, to say that provision for flood defences cannot be ring-fenced from other MAFF programmes in this way and that you hope Mr. Jopling will reconsider the position bearing in mind the very difficult prospect for public expenditure over the next two years?

Yes - in more sales
not

DW

(DAVID NORGROVE)

31 July 1986

MR. FLESHER

// *Answers
pms request*

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

You will see that Mr. Jopling has come back on this in a pretty disgraceful way. I have asked the Prime Minister whether she wants to intervene again. If she decides to do so, so much the better. If not, you will need to tell the Chief Secretary's office. I have told them not to respond to Mr. Jopling until the Prime Minister has had an opportunity to intervene. If she is not going to do so they will need to consider their position so that we can get a reply off to Sir Peter Tapsell. (You will see that MAFF have provided, separately, a draft reply.)

DNG

DAVID NORGROVE)

31 July 1986

SRW(19)



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

31 July 1986

Dear David,

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

Thank you for your letter of 28 July to Ivor Llewelyn.

attached As requested I attach a draft letter to Sir Peter Tapsell for the Prime Minister's signature. This takes account of the letter from the Chairman of the Anglian Water Authority which Sir Peter handed to the Prime Minister at their meeting on 1 July. The draft is of course subject to the Chief Secretary's agreement to the approach proposed in my letter to Jill Rutter of today's date and copied to you.

The Prime Minister may wish to copy her letter to Mr Prior as he was present at the meeting on 1 July and wrote to the Prime Minister on 30 May requesting the meeting.

I am copying this letter to Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office), Joan McNaughton (Lord President's Office), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Morris

Elizabeth Morris
MRS E M MORRIS
Private Secretary

DRAFT LETTER FOR PRIME MINISTER'S SIGNATURE

Sir Peter Tapsell MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

CTVA

Following our meeting on 1 July I have reviewed with my colleagues the scope for additional Government financial help with the cost of strengthening the sea defences in East Anglia. In doing this, we have had to take into account the fact that sea defences on other parts of the coast also need some strengthening. We have also of course had regard to the paramount importance of keeping public expenditure under control.

Given all the many other demands on public resources this has not been easy. However, I am pleased to say that we will be able to make extra Government grant aid available this year and in the next 3 years. This year we will make an extra £1.25m available: officials will have to review urgently with Anglian Water Authority what extra works can be carried out in the time available, but the aim will be to increase Anglian's grant earning ceiling so that the Authority receives about £1m of this extra grant aid. In each of the following 3 years we will make an extra £3.5m of grant aid available for sea defence work. The precise distribution of the extra grant aid will have to be decided in the light of the sea defence requirements of the different drainage authorities, but clearly Anglian Water Authority will have the major claim on this extra assistance. Moreover, in 1987/8 and 1988/9 we are making separate extra provision for a scheme which Southern Water Authority needs to carry out to rebuild the sea wall at Seaford: this scheme will not therefore be a claim on the extra £3.5m pa over the next 3 years.

The total extra grant aid provision, including the grant aid for the Seaford scheme, amounts to £16.75m over the period to the end of 1989/90. In order to find this money we will have to make

savings elsewhere including a cut in the provision for coast protection. However, I am satisfied that this substantial transfer of funds to sea defence is necessary. Obviously it is now necessary for the Anglian Water Authority to act quickly to take advantage of the increase in their grant earning ceiling for this year and to draw up appropriate plans for the following years. I should also stress that, in addition to capital works, the Authority must ensure that they carry out a proper level of maintenance and repair work on their sea defences.

Michael Jopling will be informing the Water Authorities and making a public statement ^{should} [~~next week~~] about the additional finance.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Jim Prior.

BMAASQ SM



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 July 1986

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

The Prime Minister has seen the note about flood defence finance attached to your letter to me of 24 July.

BF
- //

In the normal way this would of course be handled in the Public Expenditure Survey. However, in view of the need to begin work as soon as possible to improve the flood defences, the Prime Minister hopes Mr. Jopling will agree to absorb the additional expenditure over the three years within his base line and she has asked that this should be a factor to be taken into account in the Survey.

I should be grateful if you could let me have as soon as possible a draft letter for the Prime Minister's signature to Sir Peter Tapsell. He has been promised a reply this week.

I am copying this letter to Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office), Joan MacNaughton (Lord President's Office), Brian Unwin (Cabinet Office) and Murdo Maclean (Chief Whip's Office).

(DAVID NORGROVE)

Ivor Llewelyn, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

PRIME MINISTER

FLOOD DEFENCES

You saw Mr. Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell at the beginning of the month to discuss the need for more money to be spent to rebuild the sea defences along the coast of East Anglia and Lincolnshire. You accepted the need to strengthen the defences and asked Mr. Jopling and the Chief Secretary to discuss the finance and to report back to you.

They have done so, but have been unable to reach agreement. The Chief Secretary is not willing to anticipate the Survey and argues that if this is a high priority Mr. Jopling should be willing to rearrange his programme to find the money.

Mr. Jopling says the work is unrelated to agriculture and fisheries and he should therefore not be required to find the money.

The Lord President does not wish to use up negotiating capital before the Star Chamber and so is unwilling to intervene.

The sums involved are small, with a net cost of £0.4 million in 1986/87, £4.5 million in 1987/88 and 1988/89 and £2 million in 1989/90. The domestic agriculture baseline is over £700 million a year. Moreover, the fact is that flood defence is part of Mr. Jopling's responsibilities even though it is not in his Ministerial title. It would be wrong at this stage in the Survey to rule against the Chief Secretary when Mr. Jopling has other bids outstanding. Equally you may prefer not to over-rule Mr. Jopling completely.

Agree to ask Mr. Jopling to find the money from within his baseline, but that this should be a factor to be taken into account in the Survey?

(over)

Yes
not

will respect it
is not
unrelated -
farm land
was flooded
badly in the
1950s floods

It is also disturbing that Mr. Jopling sees flood defence as somehow a peripheral or separate part of his responsibilities. One possibility would be for you to say that you see flood defence as an integral part of MAFF's responsibilities and therefore that its funding cannot be separated from that of agriculture and fisheries: the balance between them has to be a matter of priorities. I am sure this might have to be said at some stage. But you may feel that to do so now would rub salt into a wound.

Go gently at present - Disturbance in hospital (Wentworth) for a hernia operation. MB

DW

DAVID NORGROVE

25 July 1986



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's Private Office

David Norgrove Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

24 July 1986

Dear David

In Tim Flesher's letter of 1 July recording the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell on East Anglian sea defences he asked for a report on this issue. I now enclose a note which has been agreed with the Treasury; as you will see my Minister and the Chief Secretary have been unable to reach agreement.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Jill Rutter, and, with Tim's letter, to Joan MacNaughton and Murdo Maclean.

Yours etc

(W)

C I LLEWELYN
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

FLOOD DEFENCE FINANCE

1. The sea defences built following the 1953 floods have been causing increasing concern for some time. Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell saw the Minister of Agriculture about this in January. On 1 July, the Prime Minister met Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell to discuss the need for more money to be spent to rebuild the sea defences along the coast of East Anglia and Lincolnshire. In his letter of 1 July the Prime Minister's private secretary recorded that the Prime Minister had said that she accepted the need to strengthen these defences and asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Chief Secretary to discuss the issue and to report back to her by 23 July.
2. The Ministers met on 21 July, but could not reach agreement.
3. The Minister of Agriculture considers that the need for more money to be spent on sea defences, particularly on the east coast and at Seaford, is beyond question. Indeed the Chief Secretary does not question the merits of the proposal. The Minister has sought an extra £1.25 million in 1986/7, an extra £6 million in 1987/8 and 1988/9 and an extra £3.5 million in 1989/90. The Minister considers that this is the minimum increase in grant aid needed to get the necessary works done. It would do no more than partly restore the cuts of more than 50% made since 1983/4. The Minister has offered offsets of £0.85 million in 1986/7 (from increased land sales) and of £1.5 million in the other three years (by reducing the PES provision for coast protection). Any larger reduction in the provision for coast protection would transfer the problem of under funding from one area to another. The Minister is not able to offer offsetting savings from elsewhere in his Department's budget. The sea defence works are needed primarily to protect homes and people and are unrelated to the agricultural and fisheries programmes. Moreover, decisions on increasing the provision for sea defence cannot be delayed until the forthcoming PES round. The Minister has been pressing the Chief Secretary for the necessary provision since

March. The extra provision needs to be announced now so that at least some work can be done before the coming winter's storms; and it needs to cover the period to 1989/90 so that it provides an adequate basis for the necessary forward planning.

4. The Chief Secretary notes that the Minister of Agriculture attaches the highest priority to his bids for additional expenditure on flood defence. However, the net additions proposed are relatively small (£0.4 m in 1986/87, £4.5 m in 1987/88 and 1988/89 and £2m in 1989/90) and should in principle be absorbed within the domestic agriculture baseline of over £700 million a year. He cannot accept the argument that it is inappropriate to reduce agricultural or fisheries expenditure to increase the provision for flood defence: they are all part of the expenditure programme for which he is responsible.

5. In view of the points made in the Cabinet's discussion of public expenditure on 17 July, the Chief Secretary considers that it would be indefensible to concede this bid in advance of the full Survey discussions. Agriculture Ministers have already proposed substantial additional bids of £21.2 m, £19.6 m and £23.8 m on the domestic agriculture programme and over £100 m a year for IBAP. Moreover, Mr Jopling has entered markers for several further possible bids which are as yet unquantified (including those for alternative land use, fisheries and EC R & D which could be costly) and the demand led forecasts are expected to be revised upwards by substantial amounts both for IBAP and for capital grants (on which Mr Jopling has just reported the likelihood of a serious overspend in Northern Ireland in the current year). In these circumstances it is unreasonable to expect early settlement of the flood defence bid ahead of the PES discussions unless Agriculture Ministers are prepared to find offsetting saving to meet this particular additional bid or withdraw all their other additional bids of a policy nature.

24 July 1986

PM, meeting with
Provi ; 5/86



SUBJECT CC MASTER"

JE MS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 July 1986

Dear Ivor,

James Prior MP and Sir Peter Tapsell MP came to see the Prime Minister today to talk about East Anglian sea defences. Mr. Gummer and the Chief Whip were also present.

Mr. Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell said that they had been prompted to see the Prime Minister by the deteriorating state of east coast sea defences. The Anglian Water Authority, which was responsible for the defences, had drawn their attention to a number of areas in which the defences had gone beyond repair and maintenance and needed to be replaced. Particular examples were at Jaywick, Aldeburgh and Sea Palling. Sir Peter had himself witnessed a major gap in the defences near Mablethorpe which was a highly populated area. The combination of a rising sea level, changes in coastal formation, natural wear and tear and a number of years in which expenditure had been insufficient had combined to produce a situation in which, without urgent work, a flood catastrophe was, in the view of the Anglian Water Authority, merely a matter of time. Moreover the consequences of such a catastrophe would be even greater than that of 1953 since there had been a good deal of housing development in the relevant areas. There were in addition other risks: one such was the development of £60 million worth of radio antennae at Orford Ness, to which Mr. Gummer drew attention.

The Chief Whip confirmed this view. His constituency was one of those which was most at risk, partly because of the improvement in flood defences further up the Thames.

Sir Peter Tapsell reported that the Anglian Water Authority had estimated that about £15 million a year would be needed over the next 10 years. Although he did not necessarily accept that figure it was clear that extra expenditure was necessary. It could not come from either private enterprise or from local authorities. Indeed there was a strong case for taking up sea defences as a national responsibility ahead of water privatisation when it would happen anyway. What the Anglian Water Authority required was an immediate indication that extra money would be available and that there would be some certainty of its continuing for the next few years. In his view, not to commit resources to the improvement of sea defences in the way suggested would be to risk a repeat of the 1953 floods only on an even more tragic scale.

JK

The Prime Minister noted that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food had already accepted the need for a strengthening of east coast flood defences even if not on quite the scale suggested by the Anglian Water Authority. She shared that view. Together with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Chief Secretary she would look at the problem to see what could be done.

BC 1
The Prime Minister would be grateful if your Minister, in consultation with the Chief Secretary, Treasury, could look urgently at the points raised by Sir Peter and Mr. Prior with a view to making provision for work to begin on strengthening east coast sea defences as soon as possible. She would be grateful for a report by ~~25~~²³ July. I should be grateful at the same time for a letter for the Prime Minister to send to Mr. Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell: in compiling it perhaps you could take into account the attached letter from the Chairman of the Anglian Water Authority to Sir Peter Tapsell which he handed over to the Prime Minister at the meeting.

I am copying this letter to Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office, H.M. Treasury).

*Yours
Tim Flesher*

TIM FLESHER

Ivor Llewelyn, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

PRIME MINISTER

FLOOD DEFENCE

Jim Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell have asked to come to see you to discuss financial provision for east coast flood defence. A brief from MAFF is attached. The position is that Jim Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell want to support the Anglian Water Authority's request for additional funding from MAFF for coast protection. It seems fairly clear that there are major potential problems with east coast flood defences some of which will now be thirty years old. As you will see from the brief, MAFF accept this case and are seeking to persuade the Treasury to agree in advance of the PES round to increase provision so that work can be carried out before the winter of 1986/87. The Treasury are very reluctant to agree, all the more so since they think it will jeopardise the settlements they have reached with other Ministers eg Lord Young. Their view is that MAFF attach such high priority to the needs of flood defence they should be able to re-jig their own priorities accordingly. There the matter stands.

MAFF's proposed line to take is on page 3 of the brief. I am sure that the best approach at your meeting with Jim Prior and Peter Tapsell will be to accept that there is a problem (as there undoubtedly is) and to look at whether provision can be made but without committing yourself as to whether resources should come from within existing MAFF provision or, as Mr. Tapsell would like, in addition to them.

John Gummer and the Chief Whip will also attend.

Tim Flesher
30 June 1986

JALAXI

FLOOD DEFENCE: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE RT HON JAMES PRIOR MP AND SIR PETER TAPSELL MP

BACKGROUND

1. Under the Land Drainage Act 1976 the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State for Wales give grant aid to Water Authorities and other drainage authorities to assist them in constructing sea defence, flood protection and arterial land drainage schemes. Each year grant earning ceilings (representing the volume of capital expenditure that will be grant aided) and percentage rates of grant are allocated to each of the Water Authorities. Water Authorities find the balance of their expenditure from precepts levied on County Councils and, although now to a very limited degree, from borrowing.

2. Since 1983/4, grant aid provision and grant rates have been progressively reduced. In 1983/4 grant aid totalled £24.2 million with an average grant rate of 55% (with an additional 15% for sea defence). In 1986/7 the provision for grant aid is £10.8 million at an average rate of 31% (with the sea defence supplement still 15%).

3. With the reductions in grant aid, much planned flood defence work has not been undertaken. The problem is particularly serious in the case of sea defences which tend to be very expensive works to undertake. Along the east coast of England the sea defences built after the 1953 floods have now seriously deteriorated. Anglian Water Authority has estimated that over the next 10 years they need to spend £150 to 200 million to renew their sea defences. They contrast this with the £8.2 million grant earning ceiling which has been allocated to them for 1986/7 for all sea defence, flood protection and arterial drainage work. Officials do not accept the whole of the Anglian Water Authority's claims, but acknowledge that there are serious sea defence problems at a number of points along the coast both in the east of England and elsewhere. The works involved could cost in excess of £80 million and at current levels of funding less than half the work in question is likely

to be completed by 1990. In nearly three quarters of the cases the work is needed to counter flooding of frequencies of one in thirty years or less. The homes of more than 50,000 people are estimated to be at risk. In addition to a number of problems on the Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Essex coasts, a major scheme expected to cost about £12.5 million is urgently needed at Seaford in the Southern Water Authority area.

PREVIOUS REPRESENTATIONS FROM MR PRIOR AND SIR PETER TAPSELL

4. Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell together with representatives of Anglian Water met the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 15 January 1986. They argued that sea defences along the east coast were becoming increasingly inadequate and that there was a very real danger of loss of life and damage to property. They pressed for substantially increased Government grant. A note of this meeting is at Annex 1.

ACTION SINCE 15 JANUARY MEETING

5. Following the meeting on 15 January, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food reviewed the grant aid provision for flood defence and the possibility of making extra money available for other parts of the MAFF budget. Following this review he wrote to the Chief Secretary as at Annex 2 seeking extra funds not only for 1986/7 but also for the three following years to 1989/90. For 1986/7 the Minister sought an extra £1.25 million to be offset by an extra £850,000 from MAFF property sales. For 1987/8 and 1988/9 he sought an extra £6 million offset by saving £1.5 million in each year from the PES provision for coast protection (anti-erosion) works. For 1989/90 the Minister sought an extra £3.5 million, again offset by a saving of £1.5 million on coast protection. The Minister stressed the need for early decisions if Water Authorities were be able to carry out any work before the winter of 1986/7.

6. The Chief Secretary replied as at Annex 3 on 12 May rejecting the Minister's requests. The Minister wrote to the Chief Secretary again as at Annex 4 on 27 May. While appreciating the Chief Secretary's problems in relation to the public expenditure survey as a whole, the Minister stressed the risks involved in not enabling extra work to be done before this coming winter. PES cuts in this area

have just gone rather too far in the last couple of years and, if some of these cuts are not rapidly restored, the Government face the risk of very grave criticism and possibly even a catastrophe.

LINE TO TAKE

7. In responding to the representations from Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell, the Prime Minister may wish to make the following points:

a) the Government well appreciates the importance of adequate sea defences. In allocating the available grant aid, priority is given to water authorities with particular sea defence problems.

b) The 1986/7 grant earning ceiling for Anglian Water Authority has been reduced by only about 5% compared to 1985/6 compared to an average reduction of 10% for Water Authorities as a whole. Moreover Anglian Water Authority receives grant rates varying according to locality from 37% to 56% (without sea defence supplement) compared to the average for Water Authorities as a whole of 31%.

c) Thus, within the constraints of the Government's policies for public expenditure and the need to ensure that land drainage and flood defence bear their share of the cuts in public spending, we have sought to do what we can for Anglian Water Authority.

d) At the same time the concern felt by those who live along the east coast of England is appreciated. Ministers have been reviewing whether additional resources can be made available. This is a difficult matter, but Mr Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell's further representations will be taken into account.

UD+WS

FLOOD DEFENCE: MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE RT-HON JAMES PRIOR MP AND THE ANGLIAN WATER AUTHORITY

1. You, Mr Trafford and Mr McIvor were present when the Minister and the Minister of State (Lords) met the Rt Hon James Prior MP and Sir Peter Tapsell MP together with Mr Henderson, Mr Norris and Mr Roughton from the Anglian Water Authority.
2. Mr Prior introduced the delegation, stressing that although only himself and Sir Peter Tapsell were here several other members of Parliament were extremely concerned about this issue. In his view sea defences were becoming increasingly inadequate; there was now a very real danger of loss of life and damage to property. He understood the land was sinking slowly and that tides were reaching increasingly high levels. He believed that there was a very real danger of another disaster. The money available for coast protection was simply not sufficient and he was determined to make sure the Government fully understood this.
3. Mr Henderson presented the detailed case. Behind an 800 mile coast line 20-25% of Anglia was below the high tide level. Engineers estimated that £150 million over the next 5-10 years was necessary to maintain and rebuild sea defences. Major defences put up in 1953 were in many places now badly in need of repair. Foreshore, beach and saltings erosion was continually exacerbating the problem. Anglia urgently needed £15 million for sea defences this year and had been granted only £8 million for all land drainage work. There was now a very serious risk to life in periods of bad weather. Anglia urgently needed recognition of the problem from central Government, cash, and certainty of future funding in order to develop a forward business plan.
4. Mr Roughton estimated that they needed to spend between 1½ and 2 million every year simply to prevent further deterioration in the area around Mablethorpe. £7 million was needed at Yarmouth; £3 million of that in the next 18 months. The Broads needed protection to prevent extensive flooding. These were also exposed areas on Humberside. These were all priorities where the risk to life was greatest. But he felt he could no longer reassure people that the authorities were doing enough.
5. Mr Norris explained that in Essex little work was needed on the Thames side or along the 100 miles or so of coast which protected mainly agricultural land. However, the rest of the coast did require a lot of work. Even preventive maintenance work was not being carried out at the moment; engineers were only able to cope with emergencies.
6. Sir Peter Tapsell said it was important to remember the enormous increase in population along the east coast since 1953. Hence there was a greater need for protection than ever before. Moreover, defences built in 1953 was slowly breaking up. This is clear even to a layman.
7. The Minister said he was grateful to the delegation for putting their case to him. He was very conscious of their worries. They, likewise, were surely conscious of the public expenditure constraints. He stressed that first priority must be given to flood warnings and urban sea defences. He also stressed the

importance of projects being fully and properly prepared and costed so that they could be properly assessed for grant. He had to say that in this respect some of Anglia's schemes were not as well thought out as they might be; he hoped officials would get together and discuss such problems urgently. He also stressed the importance of making sure that those commercial interests which benefitted from flood protection schemes bore part of the cost. The Minister assured Sir Peter Tapsell that he did not mean that rate payers and pensioners should be made to pay extra. He simply wanted to stress the importance of making sure in each case that commercial beneficiaries were approached. He accepted that there was not so much industry on the east coast as there was in the south of England where the Southern Water Authority had followed this approach with marked success. Mr Prior accepted that where new industry was built on the coast a contribution to flood protection should be made a condition of the planning permission. Lord Belstead asked whether attempts to fully exploit commercial sources had been made in Yarmouth. Mr Roughton said that they had certainly tried but it was not easy to identify direct beneficiaries. Mr Norris added that along the Thames coast commercial beneficiaries had contributed quite substantial sums.

8. The Minister said he was not suggesting that contributions from commercial beneficiaries were a cure all for sea defences. But he did want an assurance that Anglia would look at such possibilities again. Sir Peter Tapsell then expressed his view that sea defences should be financed entirely from central Government, like motorways.

9. Mr Norris said that in Essex they were having certain administrative problems with MAFF. Payments were being held up. Mr McIvor responded by saying that there were inevitably delays when schemes were not costed properly and where it was not clear the scheme would achieve the required result. The Ministry could not be expected to sign a blank cheque when a scheme was not worked out properly. The Minister hoped that officials from the Anglian Water Authority and from MAFF would get together to try to iron out these problems.

10. The Minister assured the delegation that he would be pursuing their case further within Government. He appreciated the urgency. It was a matter for the next PES round: indeed, he accepted the need for discussions with the Treasury before then. He wanted the delegation to know that his officials were taking a Treasury official to view the problem for himself the very next day. He agreed with a point previously made by Mr Prior that the Treasury needed to be aware of the full extent of the problem. The Minister added that it would not be useful to be greatly alarmist on this subject. Mr Prior took the point but said that they would certainly be keeping up the pressure on Government to act.

MR ANDERSON +1

cc Private Offices

Mr Smith

Mr Wilson

Mr McIvor

Mr Trafford

Ruth Rawling

RUTH RAWLING
16 January 1986

Mr Anderson's minute of 13-3-86 to Mr Lewelyn refers:-

6

ANNEX 2

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Private Offices | Mr Fitch |
| Mr Smith | Mr Wilson |
| Prof Bell | Mr McIlvor |
| Mr Jenkins | |

The Rt Hon John McGregor OBE, MP
Chief Secretary
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
London
SW1P 3AG

17 March 1986

FLOOD DEFENCE: FINANCE

You will be aware of the meeting that I had last month with Jim Prior, Peter Tapsell and members of the Anglian Water Authority to discuss the financing of sea defences along the East Coast. The meeting had been postponed from December when Jim Prior had hoped that you could also be present.

As you know grant aid for flood defence has been cut back severely over the last three years and in 1986/87 I have only been able to promise the Anglia Water Authority grant aid on £8.2m of capital expenditure. This would need to cover both inland defence schemes such as that being constructed to protect Lincoln from flood as well as sea defence schemes needed to protect such areas as Great Yarmouth, the northern Broadland, Jaywick and Mablethorpe. The Authority claim to need to spend £15m in capital expenditure in 1986/87 on sea defences alone, and see a continuing need to spend money at this level for some years to come.

As a result of the very large cuts that the Government have made in our expenditure on land drainage and flood defence, the PES provision for grant aid to water authorities for land drainage has fallen over the last 3 years from £30.9m to £12.5m. At the same time, there is growing evidence that many of the defences built after the 1953 floods are reaching the end of their useful life. There is also growing evidence that tides of 1953 proportions along the east coast are occurring more frequently. There is therefore a new urgency for major works to be undertaken. Some idea of the scale of the problem as a whole may be seen in the attached copy of a paper entitled "Flood Defence: The Present Situation" produced by my officials last December. This brings up to date the papers that you and I originally considered during last year's PES round, and shows where defences are most at risk.

I should stress that I would not claim that each and every bid submitted by Anglian Water Authority and the other Water Authorities must be accepted. All schemes put forward by the Water Authorities for grant aid are closely scrutinised by my officials to see whether they are technically sound and necessary, and are subject to rigorous cost/benefit appraisal. There are also constraints on

Water Authority expenditure imposed by limitations on their own resources of engineering staff and management. I would regard Anglia's bid for grant aid sufficient to allow them to construct capital works to the value of £15m as being excessive. However you will know that the sea defences along the coast at for example Sea Palling and Yarmouth in Norfolk, Jaywick and Clacton in Essex and Mablethorpe in Lincolnshire are all liable to be breached in the event of violent storms. An average tide backed by a strong wind recently nearly produced serious flooding at Mablethorpe and Skegness. An extreme tide could cause widespread flooding. I am also very concerned at the weak state of the sea defences at Seaford in Sussex where the wall defending the town centre is collapsing.

It is quite clear from recent correspondence that I have had from the Chairman of both Anglia and Southern Water Authorities that they will be quick to blame the Government if flooding occurs on the grounds that we failed to provide adequate funding. With the current levels of grant aid available I would have difficulty in persuading the public that this was not the case. I fully agree that the level of grant aid was too high 3 years ago, but I think that experience has shown that our cuts have gone too far and some relatively small but politically highly significant increases in grant aid are needed both in 1986/87 and in the longer term.

Taking first 1986/87, I think that, taking account of economic and political realities, I need an additional £1.25m in PES terms for grant aid for sea defence. £1m would be for the Anglian Water Authority and the remaining £0.25m would be for the other water authorities. This would restore the collective grant earning ceiling to the 1985/86 level and in my judgement is the minimum that would enable me to have a chance of avoiding political damage. After a thorough examination, I find that there is no prospect of my meeting the whole of this from my existing PES provision. We do have the prospect of increasing our property sales in 1986/87 above the current estimated level by some £850,000 and I would be willing to contribute all this sum against the additional grant needed. But I have no other funds available and so I must ask you to find an additional £0.4m.

It will not of course be sufficient to confine the enhancement of grant aid for sea defence to 1986/87. The political response to the modest increase in provision I have proposed for next year is bound to be adverse unless the Government at the same time makes it clear that it intends to allocate increased provision in the following 3 years. In PES terms I have concluded that to this end about £3.5 million a year should be added to the present planned provision for 1987/88 and subsequently. In addition there is the special problem of Seaford. The work required there will cost some £12.5 million on the latest estimate, and must be largely completed over 2 years for technical reasons if the scheme is to succeed. The Chairman of the Southern Water Authority has told me that he requires an assurance now that grant aid will be available on this scale in 1987/88 and 1988/89 before he can authorise preliminary work to start next year. This will require a further additional PES provision of £2.5 million in each of the years 1987/88 and 1988/89.

The total additional provision needed is therefore £6 million in each of the years 1987/88 and 1988/89, which would include cover for the Seaford scheme, and an extra £3.5 million in 1989/90.

cannot accommodate increases of this order within my existing overall PES provision for Flood Defence, Coastal Protection and Arterial Drainage. Nor could such increases be found from off-setting savings elsewhere within my departmental baseline. Because of the importance I attach to this requirement I am willing to offer a saving of £1.5 million in the present PES provision for coast protection works by local authorities in each of the Survey years. This will undoubtedly lead to severe criticism but I am prepared to face this since I am more concerned about the danger of not allowing the Seaford scheme and essential improvements in flood defences notably in East Anglia, but also elsewhere, to go ahead. To make any greater transfer from coast protection would, however, lead to such an outcry that it would outweigh the political credit to be obtained from enhanced support for sea defences. I must therefore look to you to provide the additional £4.5 million in 1987/88 and 1988/89 and £2.0 million in 1989/90 which I would require.

I appreciate that in putting to you proposals for 1987/88 and thereafter I am anticipating the 1986 PES round and I have no doubt that you would much prefer to defer consideration of all but my proposal for 1986/87 until later in the year. There are however very compelling reasons against holding up decisions because of the normal PES timetable.

The importance to life and limb of the flood defence programmes are such that we must reflect the planning realities in the timing of our decisions on forward expenditure plans. Authorities will need as much time as possible to draw up sound plans for spending the additional money I am seeking for 1986/87. This need is highlighted by the fact that major works are best carried out in the Summer months which are nearly upon us. The delay which would be involved in following the normal PES timetable would erode much of the practical value of the increased ceiling I am proposing. It will also seriously prejudice the political benefit we would expect to gain from some enhancement of planned levels of grant aid.

To these general considerations must be added the particular case of Seaford. If we fail to give the assurance sought by the Chairman of the Southern Water Authority we can be quite sure that responsibility for the resulting delay will be laid firmly at the door of the Government.

Furthermore, increased grant aid of £1.25 million in 1986/87 will be regarded as utterly inadequate by the other Drainage Authorities unless they are at the same time assured that grant aid in 1987/88 and beyond will be enhanced compared with the level already announced for 1986/87. The long planning cycle of flood defence works makes it virtually impossible for Water Authorities to plan ahead efficiently and take full advantage of the grant aid available if they do not know until the Winter of the previous financial year what level of support they can expect to receive.

There are bound to be occasions when decisions have to be taken on planned expenditure outside the normal PES timetable. This is one such occasion and I hope you will accept that we should now proceed to firm decisions on the basis of my proposals so that I

can not only announce some increase in grant aid next year but also give assurances about enhanced support to 1987/88 and beyond in sufficiently specific terms to allow planning and initiation of essential flood defence schemes to proceed.

MICHAEL JOPLING

FLOOD DEFENCE: THE PRESENT SITUATION

Mrs Lewis Square

Introduction

1. This paper provides details and costs of works now regarded as necessary for adequate protection of life and property from coastal erosion, river and sea flooding.

Sea Defence

2. Annex A shows that the estimated cost of schemes required to alleviate the main current sea defence problem is £83.8m. Works costing £34m are now significantly behind schedule due to reduced grant and borrowing restrictions on water authorities over the past 2½ years; this will increase to some £53m by 1990 under current funding arrangements. Three quarters of the schemes are required to counter floods of frequencies of under 30 year; by way of comparison the Thames Barrier and its associated defences are built to resist a flood of 1 in 1000 years. The situation in eastern England is particularly serious. Defences built after the 1953 floods have now seriously deteriorated and it is estimated that the Essex coastline alone will need renewal works of upto £100m over the next 10 years. Three recent North Sea surge tides have exceeded the levels of 1953 and the general tendency is for tides to rise whilst the land gradually tilts into the sea. Part of the Wash and the whole of Broadland remain relatively unprotected from a full North Sea surge.

Inland flood problems

3. Annex B and its associated map show schemes necessary to remedy current inland flooding problems. In total 44 schemes are required at an estimated cost of £147m. With one exception all the schemes are needed to protect major urban centres against flood risk; villages and works likely to cost less than £0.5m are ignored. The exception concerns the Great Ouse Washes in Cambridgeshire where upstream development has created flooding problems which could endanger large areas of the most productive agricultural land in the country and adversely affect wildlife. The urban flood risks are predominantly in the old industrial towns where river channels have been much altered for water power or even building space during C19 expansion. Many of the structures were probably inadequate when built but have become much more so since many are now derelict. The Yorkshire Dales towns are classic examples of this type of risk which is exacerbated by the flashy nature of the floods from the steep catchments.

Coast Protection

4. Annex C sets out coast protection needs for 1986 to 1988. The 42 scheme plotted are estimated to cost £65m. Government funding of coast protection grants has not been affected by PES reductions in recent years and rates of grant are now much higher than those for flood defence. Works have therefore generally proceeded at a reasonably satisfactory rate.

Overall Situation

5. In total therefore works costing £296m need to be carried out but it must be emphasised that the Annexes only provide the current assessment of major works. They do not account for the many smaller schemes which are sometimes undertaken without grant aid. More importantly the effect of time and tide will create new needs as quickly as present works are completed. The new needs will mostly arise through the gradual effects of sea and weather and, given adequate finance, programmes of remedial work can be planned. Breaches of sea defences such as occurred at Barnstaple two years ago, where 700 homes were flooded or floods in cities like York, create irresistible political pressures for immediate action and therefore disrupt existing programmes. Inland, continued urban development and deterioration of the system will create a continuing need for investment.

Maintenance

6. Annex D sets out Water Authorities' estimated maintenance expenditure in relation to existing sea and inland flood defence works for 1985/86. This amounts to some £40m, representing about 41 per cent of WAs' total revenue expenditure on flood defence of £95m. This is likely to be something of an underestimate, however, since the figures do not include the cost of salaries and other overheads attributable to maintenance, which cannot be separated out from administrative costs in general.

Conclusion

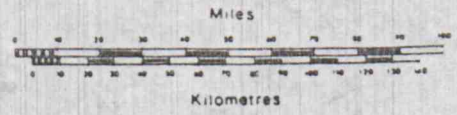
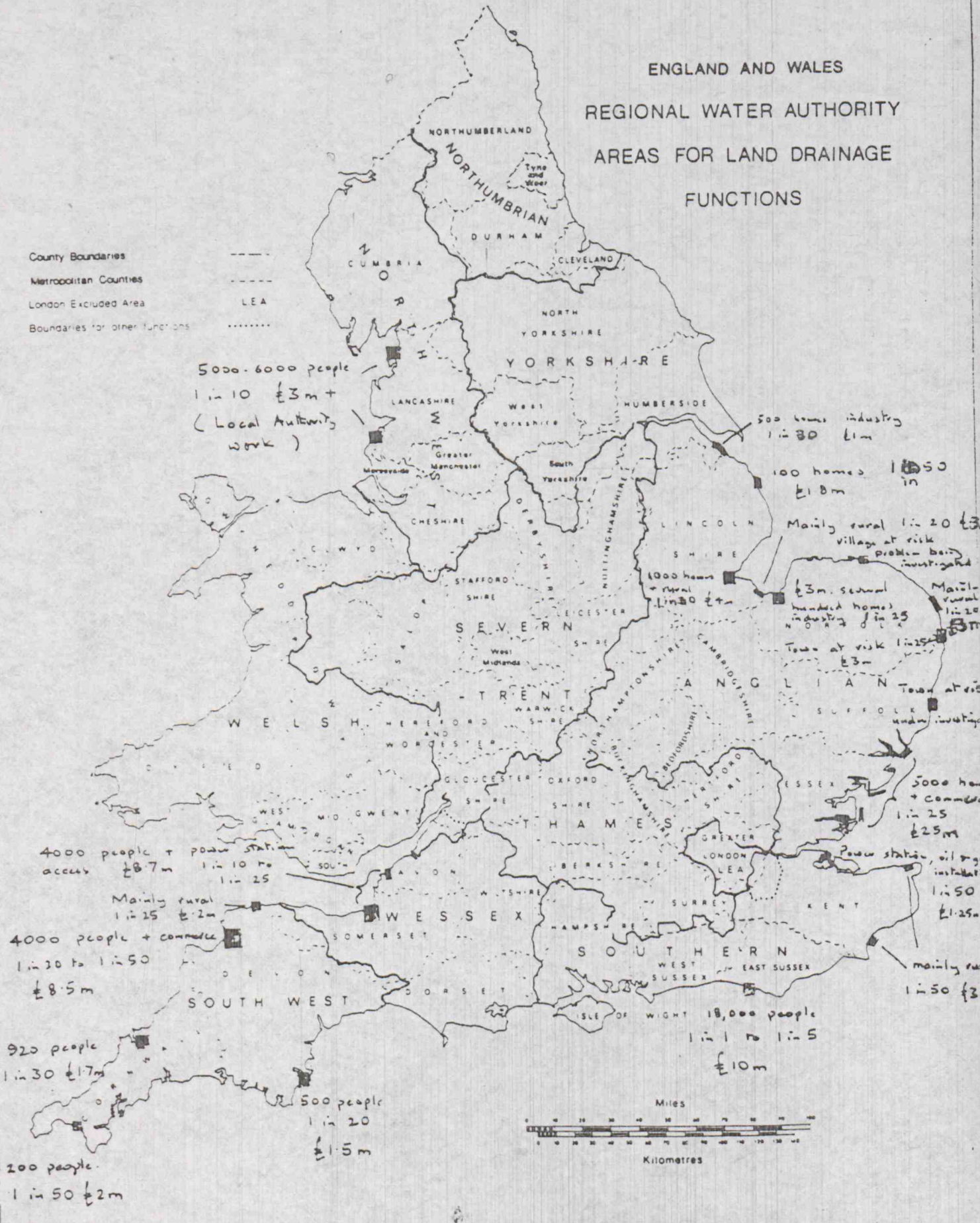
7. The new arrangements for flood defence must therefore provide sufficient finance not only for a continuing programme of replacement of deteriorated defences but must also remedy the under financing of recent years. Nature has no regard for financial constraints and there is already a grave risk of severe flooding in a number of heavily populated and environmentally sensitive areas. To date the post 1953 sea defences have held but many are beyond their natural life. Should the worst happen experience in 1953 and more recently at Barnstaple is that risks to life apart, Government will be strongly criticised for inadequate attention to defences, and will be forced to accept the heavy additional expense in financing compensation claims, renovation of property, emergency and urgent remedial works. It should also be noted that manpower and expertise tends to disappear as financial allocations rundown and the ability to cope with emergencies is correspondingly reduced. Thus a planned and properly funded programme of works would prove less expensive in the long run and would significantly reduce the risks to life and property.

MAFF

December 1985

ENGLAND AND WALES
REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
AREAS FOR LAND DRAINAGE
FUNCTIONS

- County Boundaries - - - - -
- Metropolitan Counties - - - - -
- London Excluded Area LEA
- Boundaries for other functions -



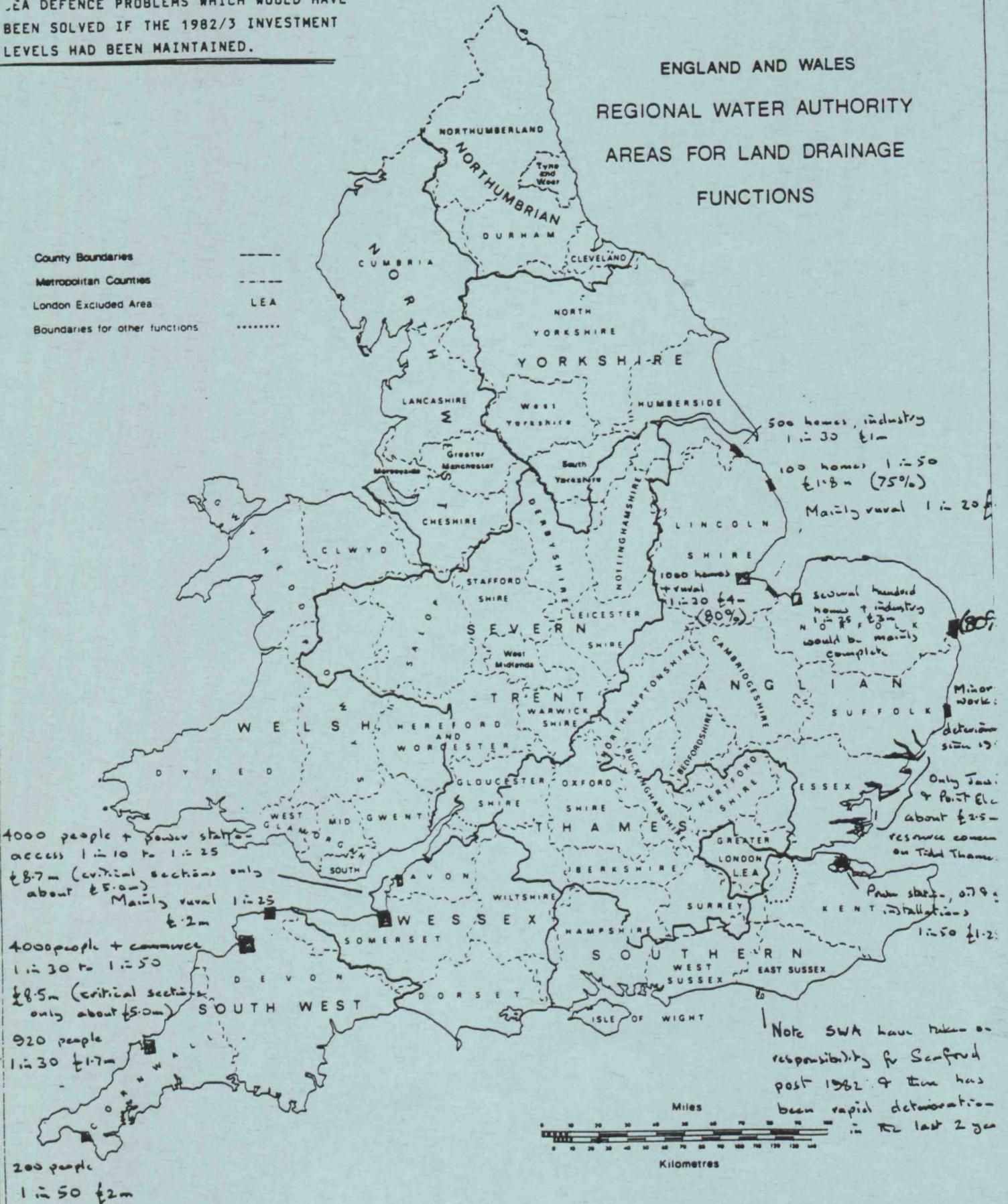
Current Major Sea Defence Problems

Location	Property etc at risk	Flood Frequency (1 in x yrs)	Est. Cost of Works (£ million)	Works complete had 82/3 level of funding continued	Cost (£m)	Outstanding Problem in 1990 current funding	
						%	Cost
LIMSBY etc	500 homes, industry	1 : 30	1	All	1.0	100	1
LINCS	100 homes	1 : 50	1.8	All	1.8	50	0.9
SH(R.WELLAND)	1000 homes + rural	1 : 30	4.0	80%	3.2	70	2.8
SH	Rural	1 : 20	3.0	None		100	3.0
SH(LINCS)	2000 homes + rural	1 : 8	3.2	None		55	1.8
NORFOLK	Village at risk	Under investigation					
NORFOLK (DOOR) BROADLAND)	Rural	1 : 20	3.0	All	3.0	70	2.0
N. YARMOUTH	4000 homes + commerce	1 : 25	3.0	None		20	0.6
DEBURGH	Part of town + adjacent rural area	Under investigation - deteriorating situation		None		100	2.5
ESSEX	5000 homes + commerce	1 : 25	25.0	10%	2.5	90	22.5
ISLE OF GRAIN	Power Station, oil and gas installations	1 : 50	1.25	All	1.25	Complete	
S. & E KENT	Rural	1 : 50	3.0	None		Complete	
RAFORD	18,000 people	1 : 1 to 1 : 5	10.0			100	10.0
S. DEVON	500 people	1 : 20	1.5	None		Complete	
S. CORNWALL	200 people	1 : 50	2.0	All	2.0	100	2.0
S. CORNWALL	910 people	1 : 30	1.7	All	1.7	90	1.5
W. STAPLE etc	4000 people and commerce	1 : 30 to 1 : 50	8.5	All	8.5	Complete	
S. DEVON	Rural	1 : 25	0.2	All	0.2	100	0.2
W. BURNHAM ON SEA AND N. AVON	4000 people and power station access	1 : 10 to 1 : 25	8.7	All	8.7	600 people and power station still at risk	2.0
W. SOUTHPORT AND W. BRECAMBE	6000 people	1 : 10	3.0	None		Complete	
<u>TOTAL</u>			£83.8		£33.85		52.

LEA DEFENCE PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN SOLVED IF THE 1982/3 INVESTMENT LEVELS HAD BEEN MAINTAINED.

ENGLAND AND WALES
REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
AREAS FOR LAND DRAINAGE
FUNCTIONS

County Boundaries -----
Metropolitan Counties - - - - -
London Excluded Area LEA
Boundaries for other functions

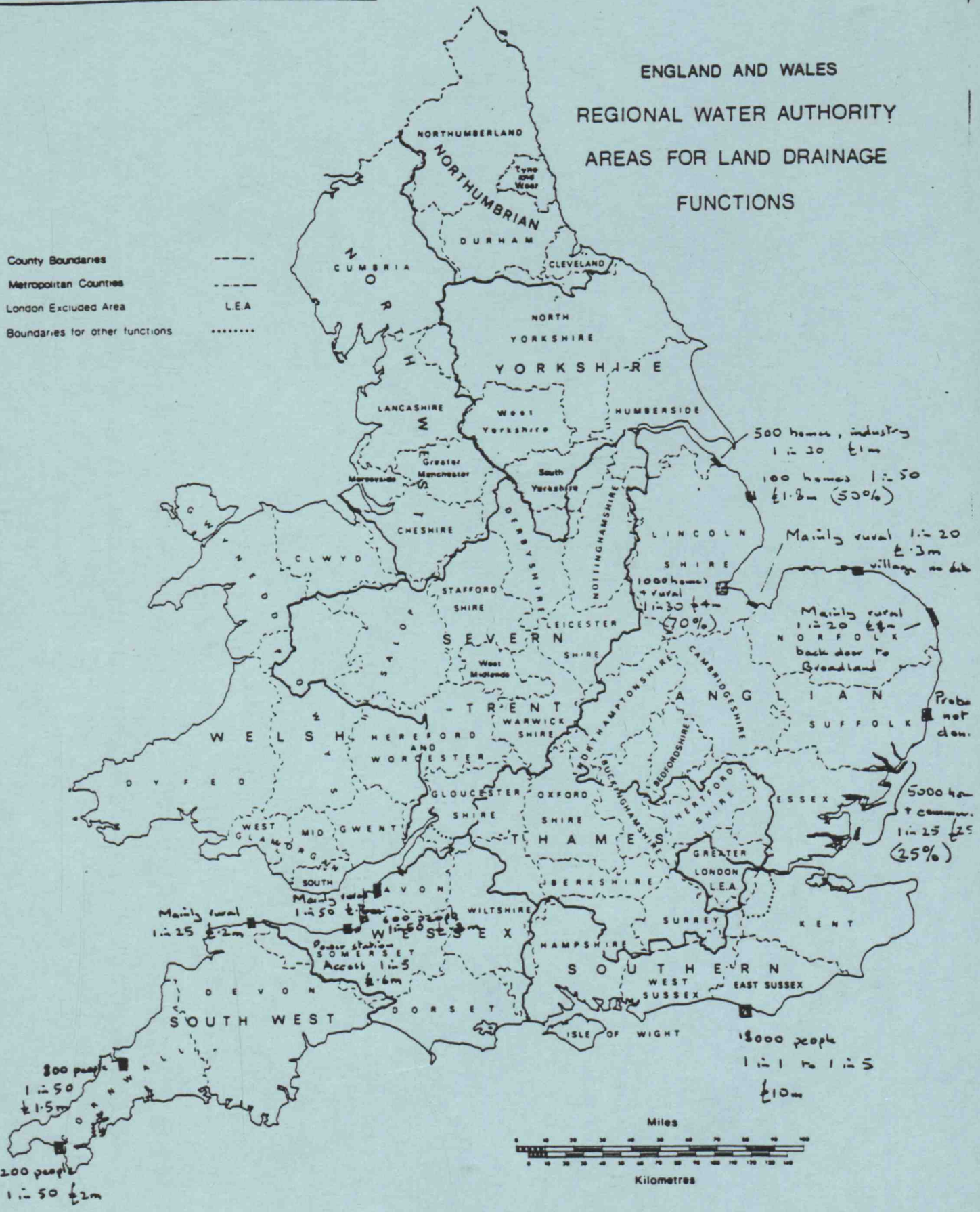


Note: figures in brackets indicate the probable present percentage completion without cuts.

**FENCE PROBLEMS LIKELY TO STILL BE OUTSTANDING
IN 1990 ASSUMING PRESENT RATES OF FUNDING**

**ENGLAND AND WALES
REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
AREAS FOR LAND DRAINAGE
FUNCTIONS**

- County Boundaries -----
- Metropolitan Counties - - - - -
- London Excluded Area L.E.A.
- Boundaries for other functions



Note: figures in brackets indicate expected percentage completion by 1990

II. OF INLAND FLOODING PROBLEMSNorthern Region i.e. Northumbrian, North West WA and Yorkshire WAWA Problems

Boroughbridge	£1.5m	1 : 14
Wakefield	£2m	1 : 20
Sheffield	£1.25m	1 : 10
Dewsbury	£3m	1 : 3
Cleckheaton	£1.5m	1 : 3
Huddersfield	£2.1m	1 : 8
York	£2m (River Foss only)	1 : 4
Yarm	£0.6m	1 : 20

DC Problems

Bradford	£5m	1 : 10
Wakefield	£0.5m	1 : 1
Lancaster	£1m	1 : 20
Middlesbrough	£1m	1 : 7
Leeds	£0.5m	1 : 1
Todmorden	£1.5m	1 : 10

Severn Trent WA

Birmingham, R.Tame	£5.8m	1 : 10
Rugby, R.Avon	£1.3m	1 : 5
Retford, R.Idle	£0.8m	1 : 5
Wolverhampton, Smestow Brook	£1.1m	1 : 10
Shrewsbury, R.Severn	£2.7m	1 : 25
Gainsborough, R.Trent	£1.4m	1 : 10
Kidderminster, R.Stour	£1m +	1 : 15
Nottingham, R.Trent	£1m +	1 : 15
Cheltenham) (S.98)		1 : 20
Worcester)	unquantified	1 : 25
Evesham)		1 : 15
Gloucester (S.98)	£0.8m	1 : 5

Anglian

Lincoln	£10m	1 : 10 (Current risk factor)
Mablethorpe	£1m	1 : 1
Kettering	£0.75m	1 : 10
Market Deeping	£1m	1 : 15
Ouse Washes - agricultural risk	£1m?	1 : 30

Wessex

Christchurch	£1.5-2m	1 : 10
Bridport	£3	1 : 2
Blanford	£1.1m	1 : 30
Bristol	£1m	1 : 20

Thames

R.Colne	£7.5m	1 : 10
Maidenhead	£10m	1 : 5
R.Mole (further work to complete)	£2.6m	1 : 5

Works in London urban area to be transferred to Thames from GLC (1/4/86):-

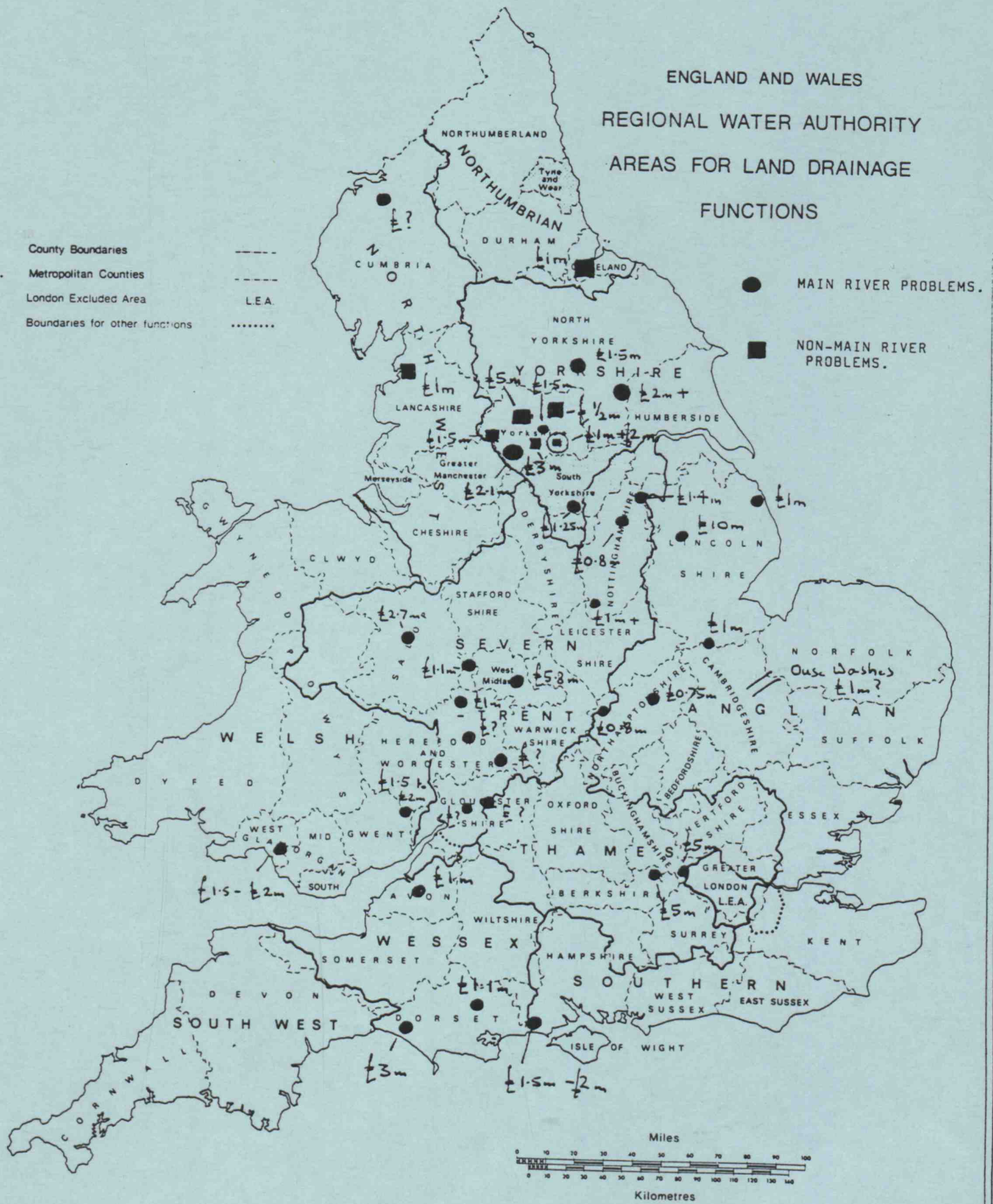
R.Crane)		
R.Wandle)	£45m	1 : 5
R.Beverley)	(GLC estimate)	
R.Ravensbourne	£15m?	1 : 5

Wales

Port Talbot	£1.5 to £2m	1 : 20
Monmouth	£1.5 to £2m	1 : 30
Merthyr Tydfil	£2m	1 : 25
Bridgend	£1m	1 : 25

44 schemes cost £147 million approx.

ENGLAND AND WALES
REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
AREAS FOR LAND DRAINAGE
FUNCTIONS

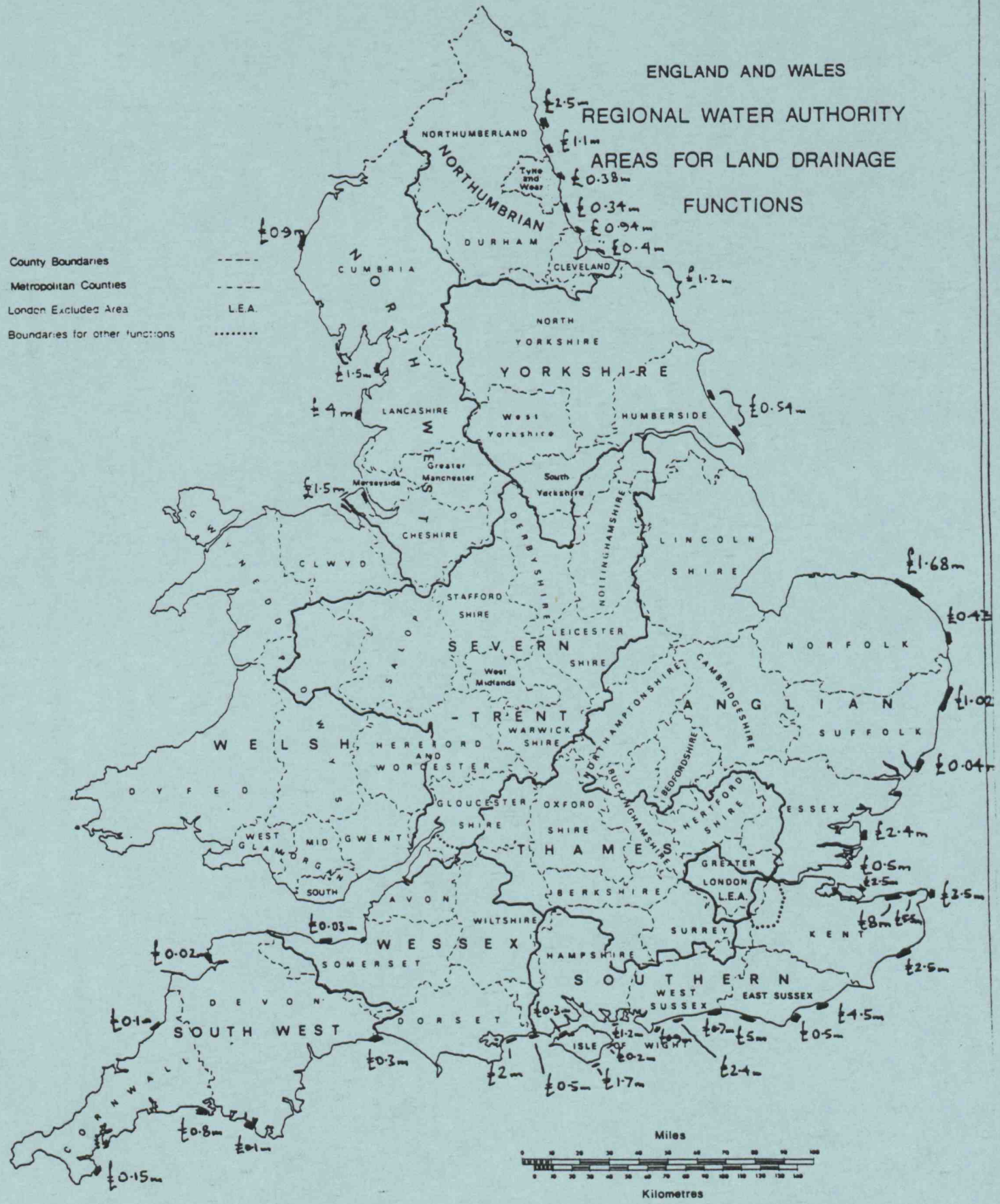


COAST PROTECTION NEEDS 1986/1988

ENGLAND AND WALES

REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
AREAS FOR LAND DRAINAGE
FUNCTIONS

- County Boundaries -----
- Metropolitan Counties -----
- London Excluded Area L.E.A. -----
- Boundaries for other functions



TOTAL = £64.77m.
42 schemes

WATER AND SEWERAGE AUTHORITY MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE : 1985/86 ESTIMATES

	<u>£ million</u>
Anglian	6.7
Northumbrian	0.9
North West	6.7
Severn Trent	4.4
Southern	5.1
South West	0.9
Thames	6.3
Wessex	2.4
Yorkshire	1.6 (approx)*
Welsh	4.6
	<hr/>
TOTAL	39.6
	<hr/>

(* Yorkshire's total operating/maintenance costs are £3.3m, but this includes £1.7m for administration which Yorkshire do not show separately in their accounts. The administration element has therefore been deducted for the purpose of this exercise).

Private Office
 Professor Bell
 Mr Smith
 Mr Cowen
 Mr McIvor
 Mr Jackson
 Mr Fitch
 Mr Wilson

2 Minutes



Treasury Chambers - Parliament Street SW1P 3AG

Mr. Dellow
 Mr. McIvor

~~Miss Christie~~

The Rt Hon Michael Jopling MP
 Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
 Whitehall Place
 London
 SW1A 2HH

12 May 1986

FLOOD DEFENCE: FINANCE

Thank you for your letter of 17 March seeking additional public expenditure on flood defence over the period 1986-87 to 1989-90.

I have considered very carefully the arguments you have put forward in support of an early decision but I am afraid that I see great difficulty in dealing with it in advance of this year's Survey. We are very soon to begin discussions on the Survey and I am bound to have regard to the many and serious pressures on public expenditure with which we shall have to grapple. Among these I am aware of some potential bids and uncertainties on agriculture programmes. So I cannot agree to settle your land drainage bid now, not least because it had implications beyond your programmes. It affects the external financing limit of the water authorities and probably also local government expenditure for both of which Kenneth Baker has the primary responsibility.

If you consider that it is imperative that the additional flood defence works should proceed immediately I must ask you, in consultation with Kenneth Baker, to find the resources by a reallocation of existing priorities within the flood defence and coastal protection area.

If you decide instead to put forward a bid in the Survey for extra flood defence spending, as part of your overall re-consideration of priorities, there are a number of points

2/15/85

which I will want to examine with you and Kenneth Baker and it may be helpful if I set these out now.

First, the cost of your bid is not fully brought out in your letter. You have bid for additional grant aid but the water authorities would have to match this with other finance to the tune of about 50 per cent. It must come either from the water authorities' EFL or from local authority current expenditure via the water authorities' precept, and it will be necessary to establish the extent to which it could be contained within the planned provision for these two categories of expenditure or would constitute a further bid for additional public expenditure. On the worst assumption the matching finance could more than double the increase in public expenditure implied by your bid. This is a matter which your officials and Kenneth Baker's need to elucidate quickly.

Second, we shall need to address the question of whether there is scope for some further reordering of priorities so that high priority schemes at present outside the planned provision for water authorities could be included at the expense of lower priority projects. I am well aware that you have done much in recent years to sharpen up the priorities which are used in selecting water authorities' bids for grant aid and that as a result of this, and of general pressure on resources, they themselves are being much more selective. But I believe that some relatively low priority projects are still proceeding.

Third, although I acknowledge that you have offered partial offsets to your bid for additional grant aid, I shall want to explore what further scope there is for reallocating resources between or within water authorities to offset the rest of the cost of your bid, and in particular whether you could make a larger switch from coast protection works to flood defence in view of the underspending which has been occurring on the former.

If you feel unable to tackle the problem in these ways and the need for additional flood defence works is as great and urgent as you say I shall need to ask you and Kenneth Baker to find off-setting savings elsewhere in your programmes.

I am copying this letter to Kenneth Baker together with
... a copy of your letter to me.

over

JM

JOHN MacGREGOR

Mr. Smith's Minute of 21 May to Mr. Lowdlyn refers.

cc. Mr. Basban

Mr. Cann

ANNEX 4

Miss Wordley

Mr. Wilson

Miss Tishler

Mr. Trafford

Mrs Adams.

Mr. McViggin C.M.

Mr. Hollis

Mr. Naylor / 21/25/86
Mr. McViggin

Miss Christie pl let
Naylor have a copy.
& pa.
27 May 1986

The Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP
Chief Secretary
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1P 3AG

FLOOD DEFENCE: FINANCE

I was very disappointed to receive your letter of 12 May turning down my request for additional funding for flood defence. I made my request for urgent additional funding two months ago. I set out in my letter of 17 March the serious problems we face and the serious risk that, if we do not make additional funds available for Water Authorities to use this summer, there will be flooding, damage to property and possible loss of life this coming winter. I am sure that I hardly need to remind you of the precariousness of some of the sea defences in East Anglia, the widespread anxiety and the political pressure for adequate Government funding so that improvements can begin. If we fail to provide any additional grant this summer and there is flooding this winter, the Water Authorities will certainly make sure that responsibility for this is laid at the Government's door. Thus we cannot wait until the forthcoming PES round.

You suggest that the necessary resources should be found by reallocation within the flood defence and coast protection area. However, as you also acknowledge, I have already taken steps to set priorities for flood defence work and to allocate the available grant aid to the Water Authorities with the highest priority requirements. There is no way that I can make further reallocations in order to provide additional funds for sea defences in East Anglia in 1986/7. Anglia is not the only region where flood defences are in need of improvement and where high priority works are not being undertaken because of the shortage of grant aid. That is why my letter of 17 March proposed using £850,000 raised from land sales to provide additional resources in 1986/7 along with £400,000 from the contingency reserve. It

/is really

2/29/5

is really quite essential that I announce the increased provision of £1.25 million this month so that work can be started this summer, before the coming winter's storms.

As for the survey years 1987/8 to 1989/90, I have offered to fund in each year £1.5 million of the extra flood defence expenditure by reductions in the provision for coastal protection. Again there is no prospect of finding the balance of the extra funds required by making further reallocations within the flood defence area; and any significantly larger reallocation between coastal protection and sea defence would simply transfer the problem of underfunding from one area to another. Moreover, I made clear in my previous letter the reasons why I need now to announce the increased provision for these years. If I do not do so, the small increase I am proposing for this year will be regarded as a totally inadequate response to the clear needs in this area. In addition there are the specific needs of Seaford, which without the increased provision I am proposing would consume about 25% of my total flood defence grant aid provision in 1987/8 and 1988/9.

As regards the effect on total public expenditure, any additional grant given in 1986/7 will have no repercussions on the Water Authorities' precepts. Precepts have already been fixed for 1986/7. An increase in grant aid will put more money in the pool available for capital works. The existing precept will therefore be used to build more protection. No additional borrowing will be needed to finance capital works because the Water Authorities will pay for any extra capital works from current income and specific grant. Thus the Water Authorities' EFL will only be increased by the amount of the increase in grant aid, £1.25 million. In subsequent years, the effect of increased grant aid on total public expenditure will depend on whether local authorities are willing and able to increase the precepts they pay to the Water Authorities and their successors. The future control arrangements on local authority expenditure in this area are currently under review, but given the current pressures I would expect an increase in grant aid to reduce rather than increase the likelihood of the precepts on local authorities being raised.

I am afraid that I regard it as quite essential that I should announce this month the increased provision which I have proposed for flood defence. Our recent PES cuts in this area have just gone rather too far and we need to reestablish a more defensible financial provision. In the longer run we will clearly need to review the precise financing arrangements in the light of the current interdepartmental review of land drainage and flood protection administration and finance. However, I am quite clear that the overall level of Government grant aid has fallen too far and that, if we do not take urgent action, we risk very grave criticism and possibly even a catastrophe.

I am copying this to Nicholas Ridley.

MICHAEL JOPLING
(Approved by the Minister
and signed in his absence)



-MOS(K) reply.

Letter (4)

ANNEX 1

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

20 June 1986

Dear Tony

The Prime Minister has received the attached letter from Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council about Lincolnshire Sea Defences. As you know Sir Peter Tapsell MP, within whose constituency the Council is, is coming to see the Prime Minister with Jim Prior MP on 1 July to discuss sea defences in East Anglia. I should be grateful if this letter could be taken into account for briefing and a suitable reply sent.

MOS(K) office dealing 8/6

Yours

Timothy Flesher

(Timothy Flesher)

A. J. Bastin, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries
and Food.

MABLETHORPE & SUTTON TOWN COUNCIL

A. G. ROGERS, B.Sc.
TOWN CLERK

TELEPHONE } MABLETHORPE 72424
 } WITHERN 50330



COUNCIL OFFICES,
VICTORIA ROAD,
MABLETHORPE,
LINCS.

16th June, 1986

The Prime Minister
The Rt. Hon. Mrs. M. Thatcher,
10 Downing Street,
London.

Dear Prime Minister,

Lincolnshire Sea Defences

Following the discovery of a large cavity in the sea wall earlier this year, my Council held discussions with the Anglian Water Authority on the condition of the sea defences at Mablethorpe and Sutton. The fears of local councillors were subsequently endorsed by a report from the water authority indicating that parts of the sea defences had a residual life of less than one year.

The contents of this report have been confirmed during site inspections by engineers from the Anglian Water Authority together with a number of councillors, some of whom have first hand knowledge of the 1953 floods.

As a result of the various surveys it is possible to determine the immediate danger areas, but even so it is abundantly clear that a massive injection of capital is needed to carry out the necessary restoration work. The Town Council is aware of the normal method of financing such work. However, despite the contents of a letter from Lord Belstead to the Clerk of the Alford Drainage Board dated 6th May, 1986, it is not possible to raise such a large sum of money locally - particularly in view of the current financial restrictions imposed on the water authorities. Additionally the burden on local ratepayers would be intolerable over a short period.

.../2

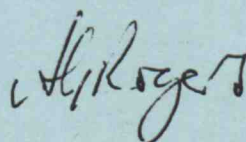
(6)

Since the last flood in 1953, the local population level has increased substantially with consequent increases in residential development, minor industries and the infrastructure to attract some half a million visitors per year to the area. A recurrence of the 1953 flood would therefore be disastrous in this situation, not only endangering life, property and valuable agricultural land but also resulting in tremendous loss of local and central government revenue (the net value of possible damage has been calculated at £1,176 million). The benefit/cost ratio of sea defence works is currently in the region of 33:1 but any delay in reparation will result in a substantial increase in expenditure for future years and a consequent drop in this ratio.

It is understood that the Anglian Water Authority has submitted a report to the Minister of Agriculture on the sea defences in Lincolnshire, the technical aspects of which have been accepted by that department. Therefore we would request your help in activating political support to enable funds to be released for whatever work is necessary on the sea defences. We now have a crisis situation which could at the very least result in a loss of business and investment confidence in the area, and at worst bring about a repeat of the tragic events of 1953. In view of the high percentage of elderly and retired people in Mablethorpe and Sutton, the consequences of the latter are unthinkable.

We earnestly request your serious and urgent consideration of the contents of this letter.

Yours faithfully,



A. G. Rogers
Town Clerk

cc. Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.

CIF



DA

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

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Acc/ 20 June 1986

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(Timothy Flesher)

A. J. Bastin, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries
and Food.

DA



Anglian Water

Bernard Henderson
CHAIRMAN

Ambury Road, Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE18 6NZ
Tel. Huntingdon (0480) 56181

Our Ref. BVH/YM/SF/3

Your Ref.

Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.,
House of Commons,
LONDON. SW1A 0AA

18th June 1986

Dear Sir Peter

SEA DEFENCES

Thank you for your letter of 6th June 1986.

The crisis facing our sea defences is deepening daily and it is now only a matter of time before there is a failure and someone dies.

Severe coastal weather conditions during the winter have accelerated the already serious deterioration of defences throughout the region. More than 130,000 people are at risk because of the 457 kms of first line sea defences which are in urgent need of repair and improvement, 68 kms of which directly protect towns and villages. Since the autumn, saltings which help to reduce wave action have shrunk by as much as 18 metres, beach levels have dropped by up to four metres and some sea walls have been undermined to the limit of their stability. Examples are at Jaywick, Aldeburgh and Sea Palling, and you yourself witnessed the 30 metre cavity which developed during just one storm on the Mablethorpe-Skegness frontage (resident population 44,000).

Faced with the prospect of an imminent failure of the defences, it is clear that more money must be made available for this crucial work. Simply to "hold the line" we should be spending £15 million a year on flood protection and to provide a properly increased level of protection the figure should be £20 million - more than two and a half times the present level of support is needed. This financial gap is threatening to become a physical one if we do not receive more support.

We had foreseen these problems. We had been submitting to MAFF a programme of increasing expenditure reflecting the worsening physical condition of our defences. You will know that we have urged greater financial support from the local authorities and, in recognising the extent of the danger and the magnitude of the problem, they have been as responsive as possible. Precepts have risen by up to 50% in two years. Faced with their own financial problems the councils are, not unnaturally, unable to promise any more assistance.

Sea defences are a National problem. The trend of falling MAFF support must be reversed NOW.

I hope this brief note has put the present position into perspective. Our concern is real and heartfelt and you will know from our previous discussions, and the evidence of your own eyes, just how crucial and worrying this problem is.

Bernard Henderson

Bernard Henderson

MABLETHORPE & SUTTON TOWN COUNCIL

A. G. ROGERS, B.Sc.
TOWN CLERK

TELEPHONE } MABLETHORPE 72424
 } WITHERN 50330



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The Rt. Hon. Mrs. M. Thatcher,
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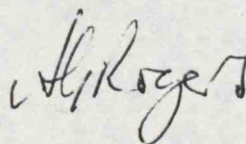
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It is understood that the Anglian Water Authority has submitted a report to the Minister of Agriculture on the sea defences in Lincolnshire, the technical aspects of which have been accepted by that department. Therefore we would request your help in activating political support to enable funds to be released for whatever work is necessary on the sea defences. We now have a crisis situation which could at the very least result in a loss of business and investment confidence in the area, and at worst bring about a repeat of the tragic events of 1953. In view of the high percentage of elderly and retired people in Mablethorpe and Sutton, the consequences of the latter are unthinkable.

We earnestly request your serious and urgent consideration of the contents of this letter.

Yours faithfully,



A. G. Rogers
Town Clerk

cc. Sir Peter Tapsell, M.P.



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place London SW1A 2HH

From the Minister's
Private Office

Timothy Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

13 June 1986

Dear Tim,

You wrote to Ivor Llewelyn on 5 June about the Prime Minister's meeting with James Prior and Sir Peter Tapsell on 1 July. ^{att:ap}

I should like to confirm that the Minister of State, Mr John Gummer, will attend from this Department and we will ensure that suitable briefing reaches you by 30 June.

I am copying this letter to Robina Finlay (Chief Whip's Office).

*Yours ever,
Valsei*

MISS V A HEATHORN
Assistant Private Secretary

PM Meeting with Proa + Topsem 5/86





10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

5 June 1986

The Prime Minister has agreed to a request from James Prior MP and Sir Peter Tapsell MP for a meeting to discuss East coast sea defences. The meeting has been arranged for 1630 hours on 1 July and I understand that your Minister has agreed to be present. I should be grateful if you would arrange for suitable briefing to be prepared, to arrive here by 30 June.

I am copying this letter to Robina Finlay (Chief Whip's Office).

Timothy Flesher

Ivor Llewelyn, Esq.,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

SRW



10 DOWNING STREET

Tim

availed to
July 1 at
16.30. Michael
Jopling will
come in from
of Lord Bellsted.
Will you
communion
briefly? OK

MRS RYDER

*done
CR
5/6.*

Robina Finlay says that James Prior has written to the Prime Minister about the sea defences on the East coast. There is a suggestion in his letter that the Prime Minister should see him and a couple of colleagues about this matter.

If such a meeting takes place, the Chief Whip would like to be included.

Shana

SHANA

4.6.86

cc: Mr. Alison

Caroline

As you will see the Prime Minister has agreed to see Jim Prior and Peter Tapsell about sea defences. Could you arrange a time and for a MAFF Minister to be present (John Gummer?) and ask for a brief.

N

Tim Flesher

3 June 1986

Lord Belstead.

Tim.

averaged for 1630
on Tuesday 1 July.
Will you be on
briefing?

ck.

4/6.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Prime Minister:
I imagine you
will want to agree
to the meeting?
Agree?
J
2/6

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

30th May 1986

Dear Margaret

Yes
ms

SEA DEFENCES ON THE EAST COAST

Peter Tapsell and I have been delegated by our Parliamentary colleagues with coastal constituencies stretching from Cleethorpes to the Thames to bring to the attention of the Government the parlous and dangerous state of our sea defences.

We have had sympathetic and useful meetings with Michael Jopling and his colleagues, but he is inevitably constrained by the Treasury in the help he can provide. He does, of course, know of our direct approach to you.

We are very worried that unless more work, which means increased expenditure, is carried out quickly there may be a disaster of 1953 proportions. For this reason we would like to present our case to you so that you are aware of the seriousness of the situation and its possible consequences.

I promise we will keep the meeting short and I am sorry to bother you. I am copying this to Michael Jopling and John Wakeham.

James Prior



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Prime Minister:

I imagine you
will want to agree
to two meetings?

Agree?

✓

2/6

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.

30th May 1986

Margaret Thatcher

Yes
ms

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James Prior



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