



Representing Drainage
Water Level & Flood Risk
Management Authorities

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NEWS RELEASE

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ADA announces the first tranche of River Maintenance Transfer (De-maining) pilots

After much preparatory work and engagement with Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency (EA) and other partners involved, ADA is delighted to announce that Defra have given the green light to a number of pilot projects to propose to “de-main” certain sections of main river across the country. The process involves investigating the passing of river maintenance and operational activities from the EA to Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) where there is mutual agreement, a locally generated appetite, and benefit to do so. If successful, the pilots will lead to the permanent passing of these activities to the IDBs concerned.

The catchment areas and IDBs concerned by these pilots are;

1. Norfolk and Suffolk Rivers, East Anglia (Norfolk Rivers IDB, East Suffolk IDB, Broads IDB)
2. Isle of Axholme, East Midlands (Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board)
3. South Forty Foot Drain Catchment, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire area (Black Sluice IDB)
4. Wormbrook and Allensmore Brook, Herefordshire, West Midlands (River Lugg IDB)
5. River Stour Catchment, Kent & South London area (River Stour (Kent) IDB)

Defra, the Environment Agency and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will be working with the local IDBs in these Pilot areas to:

- consult the local community and other interested parties on whether they support the change in designation;
- strengthen governance by ensuring local councils have a strong voice on the boards of the IDBs; and
- strengthen local accountability through regular reporting on the work of the IDBs.

If these pilots are a success, and de-maining is supported by the local communities, Defra and the Environment Agency have indicated that they may consider the same approach for other areas.

It has been concluded locally for these sections of river that IDBs may be able to provide routine maintenance and operational services where it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Environment Agency to do so because of their necessary focus on much higher flood-risk areas and assets. Local choices have been made which mean that the IDBs which are willing to manage these stretches of river, in addition to their own Internal Drainage Districts, may (where there are no

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complex structures) do so at nominal additional cost and with the support of local communities and local community funding arrangements under the umbrella and scrutiny of the Regional Flood & Coastal Committees.

An important element of these pilots will be the consultation with local communities so that they are fully aware of and agree with the planned river maintenance activities to be carried out by the IDBs. It is very important that people understand more about the importance of the river works being proposed for the economic, social and environmental benefit of the local area and communities, and these projects will aim to help spread the word.

Commenting on the announcement, Innes Thomson, ADA's Chief Executive said, "These pilots have been a long time coming and ADA warmly welcomes Defra's decision to go ahead. Many people have worked hard to prepare the way and we all look forward to working together to make these pilots work for everyone". Equally pleased with the Defra's announcement, the EA's Director for Flood & Coastal Risk Management Strategy, Catherine Wright, added "This is a great opportunity to understand community support for the local management of low flood risk watercourses. We will be working closely with ADA, IDBs and other interested groups to make the pilots a success."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

ADA is the membership organisation for those involved in drainage, water level and flood risk management. Its members include Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency, Regional Flood Defence Committees, Local Authorities, Natural Resources Wales, the Northern Ireland Rivers Agency, Consultants, Contractors and Suppliers.

ADA is involved in a wide range of work for and on behalf of its members helping to exchange ideas towards solving common problems and finding new, better ways of working. ADA responds to consultations from the Government, either on behalf of members or assisting with individual member responses. It represents all interests nationally and locally in relation to drainage, water level and flood risk management, for example, in relation to legislation and public inquiries. ADA acts together with other organisations to pursue the Association's objectives, including linking to Europe through ADA's membership of EUWMA, the European Union of Water Management Associations. ADA obtains and shares information on matters of importance and interest to members, and provides advice on technical and administrative problems. ADA is supported by a volunteer network of branches which bring together members for meetings at a regional level. ADA organises exhibitions and meetings for the benefit of members, maintains a website at www.ada.org.uk and publishes the quarterly ADA Gazette.

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ADA is a limited company employing 6 staff with offices based at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire. ADA welcomes enquiries from the press and can be contacted during normal weekday office hours at 02476 992889 or by e-mail at admin@ada.org.uk.

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