

## Debenham flood risk management project

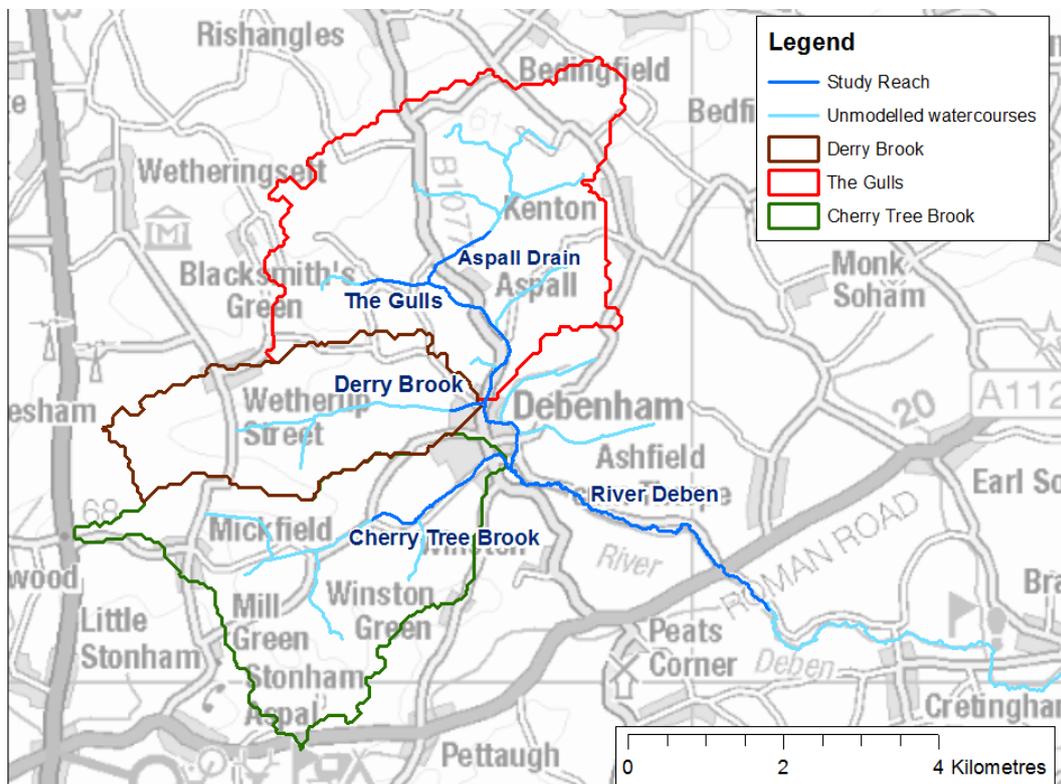
### Project update 2, spring 2015

#### Background

Debenham is in the headwaters of the River Deben and a number of tributaries meet in the village. There are no raised defences through the village which has experienced flooding on a number of occasions. The most notable recent event was in 1993 when approximately 33 properties were recorded as having been flooded, but there have been a number of other events recorded between 1912 and the present day. Residents have suffered as a result, property and roads have been damaged and highway routes have been closed. As a result the Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership is exploring flood risk management options for the village.

#### What have we done so far?

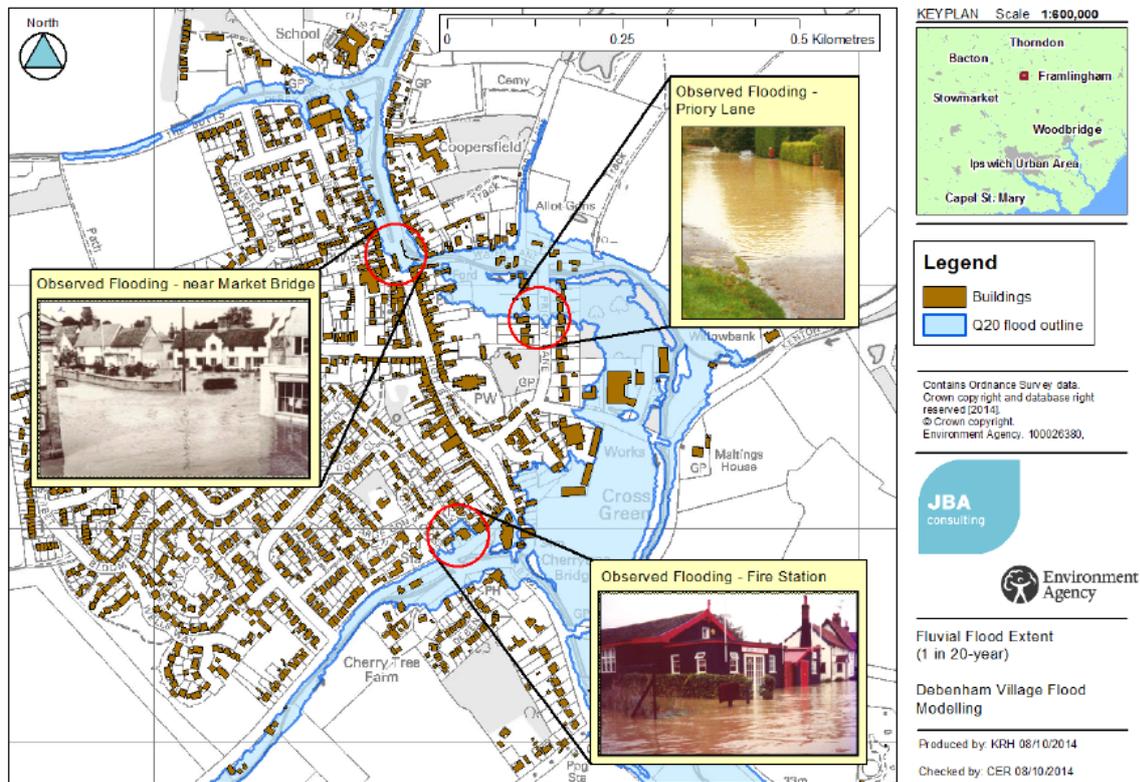
Since our last update in summer 2014, the computer model of the river system has been completed allowing us to better understand the current flood risk in the village. The model has also been extended up to Aspall to improve our understanding of flood risk here.



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Map of the study area and modelled watercourses

The newly modelled areas at risk of flooding in the village are larger than currently shown on our flood map for planning. However they correlate well with the historic photos and information you have provided. The updated flood mapping information will be added to the GOV.UK website this spring/summer, as well as being made available to Mid Suffolk District Council to help them make planning decisions.



Baseline model results against historic flood photos

We have continued collecting flow data from the Gulls and Cherry Tree watercourses to increase our understanding of flows through the village.

We have also started discussions with landowners over some of the concepts that have the potential to reduce flood risk and how we can work with them to deliver potential solutions.

We are also working closely with the River Deben Holistic Water Management Project which is trying to develop new ways of delivering flood alleviation, to provide more reliable water resources for all users, and to improve water based ecosystems and water quality. See [www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp](http://www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp) for details.

## Ways of reducing flood risk

As mentioned in our previous project update, we are investigating a number of possible ways of reducing flood risk in the village. We now have an indication of potential costs for the concept of upstream flood storage and a two-stage channel downstream of the village, as well as the flood risk benefits each provides. These were the most popular concepts from the feedback at our drop in event in 2013.

### Example of a two-stage channel

From this:



To this:



However, these initial results indicate that the cost of both ideas outweighs funding likely to be available from government sources. For any scheme we consider, the benefit it provides has to be substantially greater than the cost of delivering it, if it is to attract public funding. We are therefore in the process of investigating whether there is the potential for alternative locations and/or smaller features that could be naturally incorporated within the catchment. This includes “Natural Flood Management” measures such as small pond features on corners of fields. In addition to flood risk benefits, these features can also improve water quality and reduce sediment volumes entering rivers. Over the coming months we will have further discussions with landowners and farmers about this approach.

With the concept of creating a two-stage channel downstream of the village, a large part of the cost would be the disposal of excavated material. If this material was to be taken and used by a local farmer it would help to reduce costs. Local support such as this will therefore be very important to this project.

## Next steps

Once finalised later this year, we will review the outputs of the work to refine the location and nature of the features.

If the cost of measures to reduce flood risk outweighs the benefits, additional partnership funding will be required to supplement government funding. We are investigating potential sources, however we will want to work with communities and partners to obtain funding from local sources and reduce costs. This is likely to be those who benefit from any proposal that reduces their flood risk.

At this stage there is no guarantee that we will be able to secure sufficient funding to deliver any of the proposals. However, the more local support we have, the greater the chances of securing government funding.

We will update the community with more details later in the year once we have results from the ongoing studies.

## How do I get further information?

For more information or to discuss the project, please contact:

Will Todd, Environment Agency [william.todd@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:william.todd@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Jane Burch, Suffolk County Council [jane.burch@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:jane.burch@suffolk.gov.uk)

[or view www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp](http://www.greensuffolk.org/hwmp)