

# A shared understanding of flood prevention in the Fens – The Denver Complex

## client | partner Environment Agency – Anglian Region

Achieving shared understanding amongst seven different partners each with their own priorities and stakeholders is no easy task.

Two things made agreement and progress possible:

1. Engaging partners in a formal, designed process for collaboration with clear goals.
2. Gathering data from all partners to produce a visualisation of the pressures on Denver to foster common understanding.

## Helping stakeholders and communities understand flood management

The Denver Complex is essential to protect the people of the fens from flooding. It plays a huge role in the management



of the Ouse Washes in terms of river navigation, conservation, water abstraction, agricultural and land drainage and fisheries.

Concerns were being raised locally about the operation of the Complex and its potential impact on fish, and the supply of drinking water to Essex. A particularly contentious issue was how the use of Denver may affect river bed levels along the tidal River Great Ouse. A better understanding of the role the Denver Complex plays within the wider context was needed to explore and resolve any issues.

## Bringing stakeholders together and aligning thinking

By bringing the right organisations together, including the Environment Agency, Angling Trust and RSPB, we were able to combine data that wouldn't otherwise have been shared and create a visual, highly accessible, model.

The result of the project is a thorough common understanding of the Denver Complex amongst partners and a shared appreciation that a joint approach is required to fund and solve problems.

A range of insight tools have been co-created and made available online for future use and to help others understand the importance of the Denver Complex.



*“Being able to explain the purpose and operation of key assets in a visually engaging way allows a much improved dialogue between stakeholders and the Environment Agency, and enables us to move forward, setting the right course on decisions that will affect communities, the environment and the economy for many years to come.”*

Dr Geoff Brighty, Environment Agency Anglian Region Central Area Manager