

## **Flood Forecasting Communications Information**

In 2017 the EA successfully piloted the inclusion on the .GOV.UK website of forecast river and sea levels in a small number of communities. These communities found the information useful to help them manage their risk of flooding. One of the river level gauges that has this forecast functionality is Viking Recorder in the centre of York. The pilot is still in a test phase and is gathering feedback to improve the service.

It is recognised that the forecasts shown on the .GOV.UK website differs from the information provided to partners and through media to the public, as well as from the flood alerts and flood warnings issued. This is explained on the .GOV.UK website, and is because the forecasts displayed are the raw model output from the National Flood Forecasting System and do not contain any forecaster adjusted values or commentary. Forecasters have more technical information available and apply their expert judgement. This will sometimes result in a different level forecast to that reflected in the flood warnings.

The .GOV.UK website includes the following statement – forecasts contain uncertainty and can change frequently. For the latest information, always check for up to date flood warnings and alerts in your area.

Environment Agency flood alerts and flood warnings are issued to provide partners and the public the best information we have, and the actions to take. An Alert is not in itself an early warning of property flooding, however does indicate that the risk is increasing so communities should be prepared for the possibility of reaching Flood Warning levels. We try to also balance how we phrase our messaging to ensure that it is meaningful. For a large alert area such as the Upper Ouse, with over 7000 properties in it, not every community will have plans that rely on the gauge at Viking recorder, and it could be a significant distance from them – so we tend to tailor our Flood Warning messages to convey these details. Flood Warnings should be the cue to take action, as these are only issued when we have a good level of confidence that that area will experience property flooding.

The forecast functionality on the gov.uk website is provided to provide additional information. However, these forecast levels are raw data and

may not be the same as those we use in communications with professional partners and the public.