

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
held at Hanson's, Needingworth Quarry on Friday the 10th June 2016

PRESENT

P Burton Esq (Chairman)	H Burgess Esq
J R Anderson Esq (Vice Chairman)	J M Green Esq
K Bird Esq	A Holloway Esq
P Lummis Esq	

The Clerk to the Board was in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Keith Bird, Hansons' representative, who was attending his first meeting of the Board.

B.536 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board. The Chairman declared an interest in any matter in which Lattenbury Farms were involved. Mr Bird declared an interest in any matters concerning Hansons.

B.537 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 8th January 2016 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.538 Clerk to the Board

Further to minute B.512, the Clerk reported that the Middle Level Commissioners hoped to appoint his successor at the end of the month and that he would advise the Chairman in due course of the appointment made.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Mr Smith.

B.539 Maintenance works in the District

Further to minute B.515, the Chairman reported that maintenance works had been completed, with the exception of a small area which had been flailed by Mr Burgess.

Further to minute B.515(ii), the Vice Chairman tabled a drawing showing the water ingress on land close to the Ferry Boat Inn.

He reported that the land was owned by the Ferry Boat Inn and was of the opinion it was an Environment Agency problem and they should be advised the next time it occurred.

B.540 Hanson – Progress Report

Further to minute B.516, Mr Bird reported that over the last 12 months the economic situation had improved. He referred to Hansons' proposed working areas which were on the Over and Willingham IDB side. Some land on this side had been transferred to the RSPB. On the Bluntisham side land south of the present abstraction site, currently occupied by D M K Green, was under consideration for works. Mr Bird explained Hansons' proposed operations.

B.541 Water Framework Directive

Further to minute B.517, the Clerk reported that the position remained as reported at the last meeting save that the River Basin Management Plan had been confirmed.

B.542 Water Transfer Licences

Further to minute B.518, the Clerk reported that the Defra consultation was formally reissued in January with a period for responding lasting until 8th April. Despite what had previously been stated, the consultation proposes that Transfer Licences may well have a volumetric quantity based on what has been taken in the previous 4 years. Members will be aware that the water transferred into IDBs in this area is mainly to serve irrigation licences granted by the Environment Agency and the costs in relation to which have already been recovered by the Environment Agency.

The Clerk reported that it also appears from Defra that their longer term aim, as part of the Water Abstraction Review, would be for IDBs to be given the power to take over water resources management within their catchments, from the Environment Agency. This was an interesting concept and discussion proposals, which would enable IDBs to deliver the abstraction licensing system and recover costs, were awaited. Defra are therefore keen that nothing in this present consultation will prejudice such an outcome and may well be willing to discuss more fully, the effect of the Transfer Licence proposal.

The Clerk reported that where a Board had more than one inlet, a separate licence would be required at a proposed "one off" charge of £1,500 imposed to recover the Agency's costs of considering the grant of the Transfer Licence, rather than an annual charge, where the abstraction took place from different watercourses.

The Clerk reported that within the proposals was an exemption for ports abstracting below the tidal limit and that he had queried why this was not also an exemption for IDBs.

Following discussions with Defra, he felt it possible that this exemption could also be granted to IDBs.

The Board discussed their inlet and wondered whether if these proposals came n, it should be stopped off.

RESOLVED

That this matter be reconsidered when the Defra decision was known.

B.543 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Inspection

Further to minute B.519, the Clerk reported that the Agency still proposed to raise low spots in the Middle Level Barrier Bank but that the position still remained very much as reported to the previous meeting.

B.544 Consulting Engineers' Report

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz:-

Bluntisham I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – June 2016

Pumping Station

Only routine maintenance has been carried out. The pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

Pumping Hours

Total Hours Run Nov 15 – Feb 16 = 188 (14098)

Total Hours Run Nov 14 – Nov 15 = 520 (13910)

Total Hours Run Nov 13 – Nov 14 = 932

Changes to Planning Procedures Update

These include the following:

- (a) Since the introduction of the development control and consent “surgery” the up take has been limited, but feedback from people that have used the service has been positive. The “surgery” has helped to improve received applications enabling them to be processed smoothly. The “surgery” will continue to be held on the third Tuesday of the month and this will be reviewed again at a later date.
- (b) The soakaway certification and checking service has been running for over a year and a number of people have taken up the process. Again like the “surgery” the feedback has been positive. Generally this has allowed simpler applications to be processed smoothly. The service will be continued and, as above, will be reviewed at a later date.
- (c) An initial surge in requests for the “Acceptability of Surface Water and Sewage Effluent Discharge” form has recently slowed but the feedback has been positive and the service will continue for the foreseeable future. However, we have had to advise some applicants/agents that this is not a consent document nor does it confirm agreement that a water level/flood risk management strategy has been agreed.

Responses to Planning Applications Update

Following the decision to “stand back” from the planning process standard letters are currently being sent to applicants to remind them of their responsibilities and duties under the Land Drainage Act and associated Byelaws.

Planning Applications

No issues concerning previous applications have been dealt with. The following 2 applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
003	H/16/00487/HHFUL	Mrs K Whelan	Residence	Ashton Close, Needingworth
004	H/00385/CLED	Mr R Hertlock	Storage Building	Mill Way, Needingworth

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Development Scheme (LDS)

No further correspondence has been received from HDC concerning the LDS and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

Huntingdonshire SFRA Update

The Commissioners have been contacted by JBA Consulting concerning an Update to the current SFRA.

A response was made by the Commissioners on behalf of itself and the respective Boards within the District Council's area. It is understood that this response, which included concerns previously raised with the District Council in regard to the current SFRA, are being considered.

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

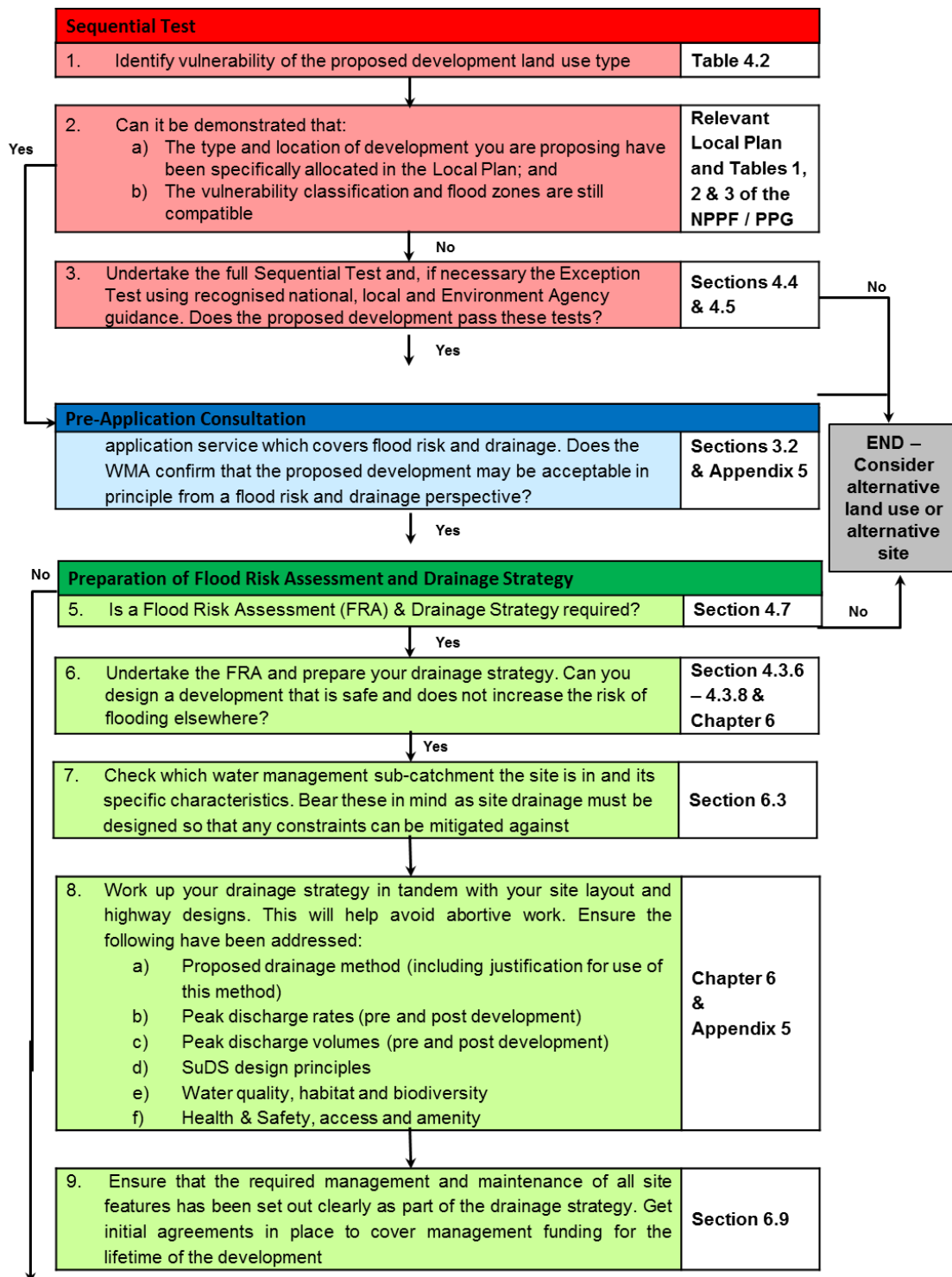
Note. A *Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)* is a document that provides further details and/or guidance with reference to policies and proposals contained in a *Development Plan Document (DPD)* or *Local Plan*.

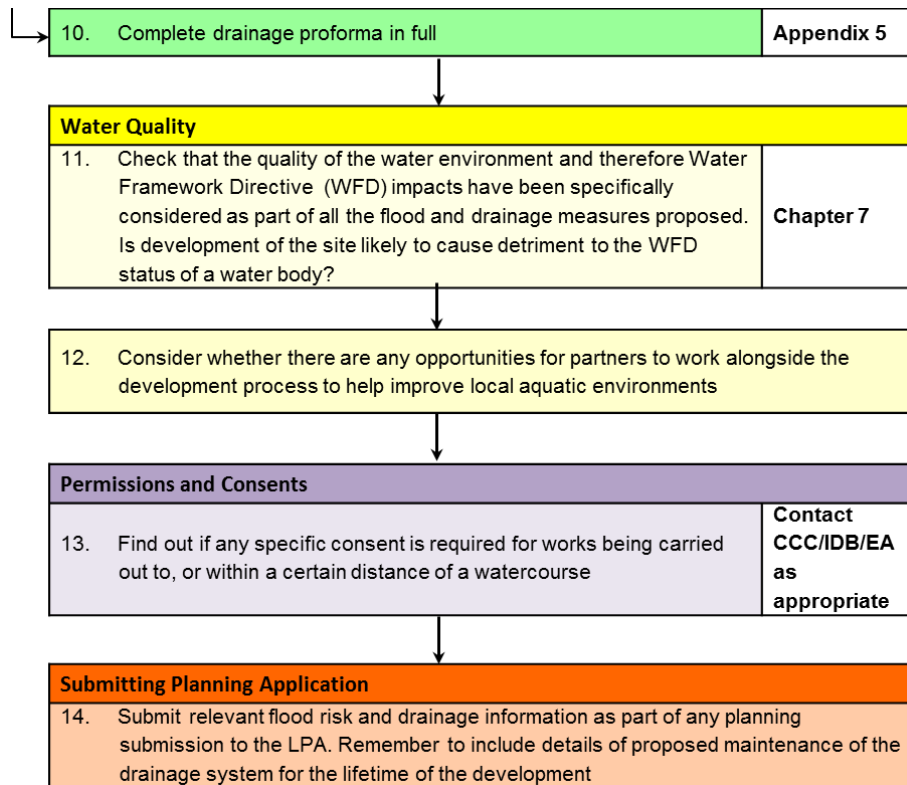
The responses received during the consultation undertaken in September/October were analysed and reviewed and a Steering Group meeting held in December to discuss the main issues raised.

Following the meeting a flow chart illustrating the process that it is considered that developers will need to complete when making a planning application was produced. This flow chart is considered to be overcomplicated but more importantly from the Commissioners' perspective the first contact with the RMA, that is likely to receive the discharge concerned, is in step 13 just prior to the submission of the planning application. The refusal by the Board/Commissioners to issue consent for either byelaw or discharge can, in the correct circumstances, be an obstacle to further progress. In addition, some of the answers required to complete steps 5-10 will require the RMAs involvement. Therefore, in order to ensure that the Board/Commissioners are involved at an early stage it is considered that any initial consultation with an RMA should be at least at step 4.

Sections of a revised draft document have been issued to the Steering Group for further consideration and comment and these are currently being considered.

In respect of SuDS the content disappointingly conforms to the generic contents of the NPPF rather than realising that this does not accommodate the special circumstances that occur within the Fenland situation.





In addition, emphasis is made to reducing flood risk but fails to consider other issues such as viability, sustainability, carbon footprint, land use, water resources etc all of which should also be considered. Failure to do so could have adverse impacts and actually reduce “growth” in the area.

The County Council currently hopes that the SPD will go before the County Committee on 9 June and subsequently be adopted by each of the Cambridgeshire local planning authorities.

Both the Middle Level Commissioners’ Planning Engineer and Assistant Engineer have and will continue to represent both the Middle Level Commissioners’ and associated Boards’/Commissioners’ interests by attending meetings and considering the various draft documents.



Consulting Engineer

2 June 2016

Bluntisham(357)\Reports\June 2016

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.

B.545 Pumping Station duties

The Board gave consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2016/2017.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,500 be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2016/2017.

(NB) – Mr Green declared an interest when this item was discussed.

B.546 Environmental Officer's Press Release and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Environmental Officer's Press Release dated April 2016, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

With regards to Cliff Carson's recommendation that waterside willows would benefit from pollarding, the Chairman felt that pollarding was carried out when required for the Board's functions.

Members commented on the number of otters now present.

B.547 State-aided Schemes

Consideration was given to the desirability of undertaking further State-aided Schemes in the District and whether any future proposals should be included in the capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.548 Environment Agency – Precepts

a) The Clerk reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2016/2017 in the sum of £1,710 (the precept for 2015/2016 being £1,710).

b) Local Choices Update

Further to minute B.524, the Clerk updated the Board on the recent Environment Agency/IDB Strategic Meeting.

B.549 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

- a) The Clerk reported that the sum of £171.70 (£1,080.77 less £909.07 paid on account) (inclusive of administration) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2014/2015 together with the sum of £846.83 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2015/2016.
- b) Further to minute B.525, the Clerk referred to the discussions with the Environment Agency over the monies available to fund highland water claims.

RESOLVED

That the position be kept under review.

B.550 Association of Drainage Authorities

The Clerk reported:-

- a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities would be held in London on Thursday the 17th November 2016.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association if a Member wishes to attend.

- b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

On the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association held in Prickwillow, Ely on Tuesday the 8th March 2016.

B.551 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute B.528, the Clerk reported that the issues reported in January still remained under discussion. The County Council were, however, considering a project to extend the number of rain gauges within Cambridgeshire.

B.552 Banking Arrangements Changes to the bank mandate

The Clerk reported that due to his impending retirement relevant changes to bank mandates to name his successor would be required in due course.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to make the necessary changes to the Board's bank mandates.

B.553 Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England

The Clerk referred to the recently issued Practitioners' guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory Annual Accounts and Governance Statements which will apply to Annual Returns commencing on or after 1st April 2016.

B.554 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.

B.555 Risk Management Assessment

The Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

B.556 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

The Clerk reported that from 2017/2018 smaller public bodies (Boards with income or expenditure less than £25,000) would not be required to undertake a formal audit but would need to have greater publication requirements in place. He advised that it would also be necessary to question the effect of "one off" payments such as development contributions taking the Board above the £25,000 limit, in a particular year.

B.557 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

B.558 Annual Governance Statement – 2015/2016

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2016.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.

B.559 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £19,098.65 which had been made during the financial year 2015/2016.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in the payment made to Lattenbury Services.

(NB) – Mr Green declared an interest in the payment made to D & M K Green & Sons.

B.560 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2015/2016

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2016 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2016.
- ii) That a breakdown of the elements of the administration charge be provided at the January meeting each year.
- iii) That surplus monies from electricity write offs be transferred to the pumping station capital account.

B.561 Dates of next Meetings

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Board be held as follows in 2017, viz:-

- i) Friday the 13th January 2017
- ii) Friday the 9th June 2017.

B.562 Land Drainage Act 1991 Huntingdonshire District Council

Mr Lummis advised that this would probably be his last meeting as he was likely to leave the Council in the autumn.

The Board expressed thanks to Mr Lummis.