

## MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners  
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016

### PRESENT

R G Jones Esq (Chairman)	S R Court Esq
G Hopkin Esq (Vice Chairman)	T Hopkin Esq
T E Alterton Esq	J Lilley Esq
A Payne Esq	

The Clerk to the Commissioners and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

### Apology for absence

An apology for absence was received from M Cornwell Esq.

### C.942 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk reminded the Commissioners of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect them.

The Vice Chairman, the District Officer and Mr T Alterton declared interests as landowners in planning matters.

Mr Court declared an interest (as a reserve member of Fenland District Council's Planning Committee) and as a member of March Town Council.

Mr T Hopkin declared an interest in District Officer matters.

### C.943 Confirmation of Minutes

### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### C.944 Clerk to the Commissioners

The Clerk informed the Commissioners that he intended to stand down from the office of Clerk of the Commissioners at the end of 2016, that the Middle Level Commissioners would be taking appropriate steps to appoint his replacement and would keep the Commissioners informed.

C.945 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That R Jones Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners.

C.946 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That G Hopkin Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

C.947 Appointment of District Officer

RESOLVED

That T D Hopkin Esq be appointed District Officer to the Commissioners during the ensuing year.

C.948 Land Drainage Act 1991  
Fenland District Council

The Clerk reported that Fenland District Council had appointed Councillor S R Court and re-appointed Councillors Mrs J French and M Cornwell to be Commissioners under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

The Clerk also reported that Councillors Keane and Quince were not re-appointed.

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The Chairman welcomed Councillor Court.

C.949 Land at the Slamp

Further to minute C.916, the Clerk reminded the Commissioners of the 5 year 'Farm Business Tenancy' agreement with the Middle Level Commissioners to hire the land at the Slamp for the annual rent of £200.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners continue with the tenancy agreement and that there should be no increase in the level of rental.

C.950 Water Framework Directive

Further to minute C.918, the Clerk reported that the Anglian River Basin Liaison Panel, of which he was a member, have considered the draft updated River Basin Management Plan revision and the regional programme of projects funded by Defra for Water Framework Directive. He reported that he had also been advised that the statutory Plan to be sent to Ministers would be a

“high level” generalised document and not contain the list of local “measures” which appeared in the many schedules to the 2009 Plan. Whilst this made the 2009 Plan rather cumbersome, it did at least set out the measures expected in relation to a water body, whereas the present framework leaves the relevant measures to be discussed locally. Part of the ongoing work is to settle what “mitigation measures” are appropriate to the artificial and heavily modified water bodies of the Fens to ensure that they satisfy the requirement to reach Good Ecological Potential. The Middle Level Commissioners' Environmental Officer, Cliff Carson, is a member of a Group, looking at reasonable mitigation measures for such bodies, which are likely in fact to correspond with what was already in our Biodiversity Action Plans and therefore require, as previously advised, little additional work.

The Clerk advised that he had commented on the revised plan but had to date received no feedback on either this or on the earlier flood risk management plans despite promises from the Environment Agency that this would occur.

The Clerk reported that he had, however, continued discussions with the Environment Agency's local Water Framework Directive teams. For IDBs in the MLC area, it has been accepted that the Middle Level area will be designated as one water body for the purposes of the 2015 Plan and that, with the exception of Bury Brook, the whole of the "water body" will be designated as artificial; the exception being Bury Brook which is classed as heavily modified.

#### C.951 Water Transfer Licences

The Clerk reported that Defra have advised that they propose to bring into force the changes to the water abstraction licensing system, which were outlined and enacted in the Water Act 2003. Successive proposed implementation dates have, however, come and gone. Most significant amongst these is the requirement that abstractions simply transferring water from one watercourse to another by IDBs become subject to licensing.

The Clerk reported that the Environment Agency have however also now consulted on a proposed charging regime for transfer licences. This following correspondence with Rory Stewart MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, appears to be a "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 but he had continued to object to it on the basis that, since water is transferred to serve licences granted to end user abstractors by the Agency, the costs of administering such licences should already be met. He had also taken the opportunity to raise this matter during the Ministerial Visit to Denver, as did representatives of the Downham and Ely IDB Groups. It was also pleasing to report that ADA, after inaction on the matter, appeared at last to be taking this up with Defra.

The Clerk reported that the Defra consultation appeared in December but was then withdrawn hours later. It was however, formally reissued in January with a period for responding lasting until 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### C.952 The installation of palisade security fencing at the Commissioners' 2 pumping stations

Further to minute C.922, the Chairman felt that action was now required at North Creek pumping station. The Clerk confirmed the ownership of the roadway to the pumping station.

Mr Lakey reported that he had spoken to Fenland District Council regarding fly tipping along this area. The Commissioners discussed security issues. The Chairman felt that the Commissioners should see what the Council did and then decide what action needed to be taken.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Chairman, Vice Chairman and District Officer be authorised to arrange for a fence to be erected, if considered appropriate.
- ii) That the Clerk confirm to the Chairman the dimensions of the land owned by the Commissioners.

#### C.953 Consulting Engineers' Report

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

## **March Fifth D.D.C.**

### **Consulting Engineers Report – March 2016**

#### **Weed Control and Drain Maintenance**

The maintenance and drain works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Commissioners at their last Annual Meeting.

The summer district inspection indicated that the majority of the Commissioners' district drains were in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. However, the inspection highlighted emergent aquatic weed and vegetation growing along North Creek Pump drain, reach 20-21. With the Chairman's approval this reach was included in the annual programmed machine cleansing works last year. Reach 17-18-19 had been omitted from the previous year's planned machine cleansing programme and was carried forward into last year's machine cleansing programme.

Following a request by the Vice Chairman, and with the Chairman's approval, South Creek pumping drain, reach 1-2-3, was also included in the programmed machine cleansing works to help reduce the mass of aquatic weed required to be manually cleaned from the pumping station weedscreen.

A recent joint inspection of the Commissioners' district drains was undertaken with the Vice Chairman and District Officer; the inspection indicated that the majority of drains are currently in a satisfactory condition. However, as the Commissioners' annual meeting falls during the early part of the growing season, a subsequent inspection will be undertaken during the summer.

#### **North Creek Pumped System**

The Commissioners' drains within the North Creek area are in a generally satisfactory condition. Sporadic stands of reed and aquatic vegetation are evident in reach 20-21-23-24-25-26. It is recommended that this reach is treated with a Roundup application followed by machine cleansing after harvest to remove the weed mass from the watercourse. It is also recommended that reach 20-21 (between the road and the pump), is included in the programmed machine cleansing works annually, to prevent submerged aquatic weed collecting at the weedscreen and requiring manual cleansing. Dense stands of emerging watercress are present within the Flaggrass Hill area, reach 27-28-29-30-31-32, and will require an application of Roundup herbicide as soon as adjacent field cropping allows access. It was also noted that the eastern bank of reach 19-23 is particularly steep and will benefit from the side slope being trimmed back to return it to its original profile. The field access culvert at the same location has begun to deteriorate and the concrete bagged headwall shows signs of collapse. As minimal flow is generally experienced at this location it is recommended that the headwall is removed and the culvert sides made good with material won

from the adjacent bank trimming works. The culvert will be monitored in the future to ensure no further deterioration occurs and replaced if required. Please refer to the site plan on the following page for locations.



Failed culvert and collapsing headwall



Reach 19-23 Proposed bank trimming to Eastern bank

### **South Creek Pumped System**

The recent inspection indicates the Commissioners' drains within the South Creek area are also in a generally satisfactory condition. Historically district drains in the South Creek area have been prone to late occurring infestations of submerged weed growth, most notably semi-buoyant Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*). It is recommended that reach 1-2-3 be machine cleaned



on an annual basis to prevent future issues with large accumulations of aquatic weed at the manually cleansed weedscreen. It was noted that two plastic discharge pipes have been installed in the small drain adjacent to the pump access track. The landowner has stated that the pipes have only replaced the old existing drainage pipes and carry the surface water from the nearby industrial units. The Commissioners may wish to take the opportunity to discuss how they

wish to proceed with this matter.

### **Creek Road/Newlands Avenue/Foxglove Way – Gravity System.**

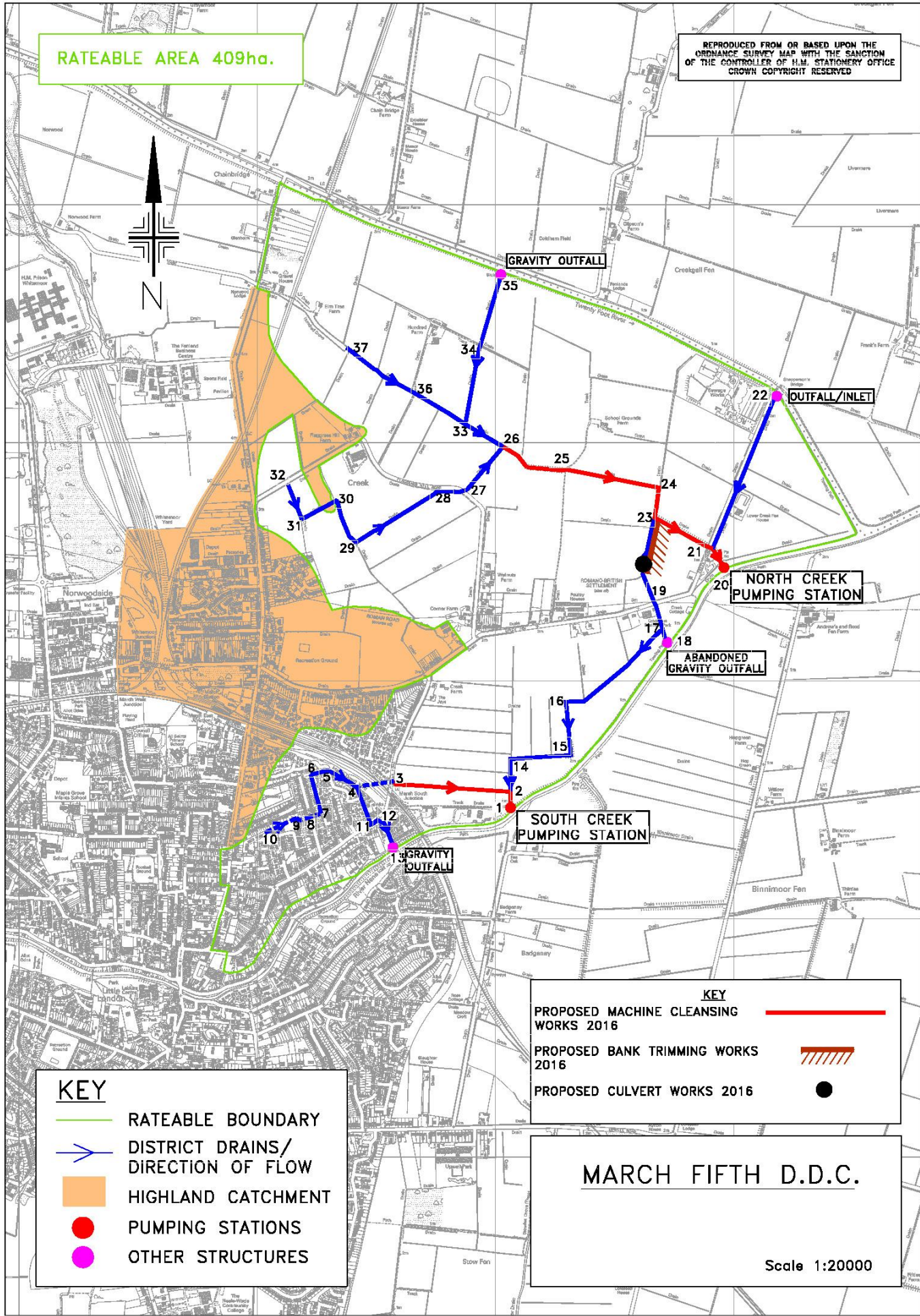
Regular visual inspections of drains in the Foxglove Way area have been undertaken during the last season. Pleasingly, the inspections have identified minimal amounts of domestic and household debris being fly-tipped into the Commissioners' watercourse during last year. The recent joint district inspection








Reach 4-11


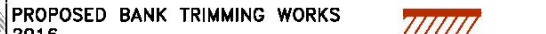

RATEABLE AREA 409ha.

REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE DRAINAGE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED



**KEY**

-  RATEABLE BOUNDARY
-  DISTRICT DRAINS/  
DIRECTION OF FLOW
-  HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
-  PUMPING STATIONS
-  OTHER STRUCTURES

- KEY**
-  PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING  
WORKS 2016
  -  PROPOSED BANK TRIMMING WORKS  
2016
  -  PROPOSED CULVERT WORKS 2016

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Scale 1:20000

highlighted dense stands of reed and bulrush upstream of point 11. It is recommended that the affected areas of reach 4-11 are treated with an application of Roundup herbicide and machine cleansed following the flail mowing of the adjacent bank in summer.

### **Invasive Aquatic Weed Control**

The eradication of the small infestations of aquatic invasive weeds, Australian Swamp Stonecrop (*Crassulla helmsii*) and Parrots Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*) within the Foxglove Way area are ongoing. The machine cleansing in 2014 removed the majority of dense accumulations of the invasive aquatic weed; however small sporadic isolated infestations are still evident. Continued visual monitoring and Roundup applications where necessary, will be carried out through the growing season to ensure the problem is controlled.

The Commissioners' flail mowing contractors, Mr J Steward and Messrs G Ashman, have indicated that they are available to undertake the Commissioners' flail mowing requirements for the ensuing year. A sum for the completion of flail mowing district drains has been included within the estimate.

The estimated costs of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance works are shown below. A provisional sum has also been included within the Commissioners' budget to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, bank slip repair or culvert clearance works to be undertaken.

<b>North &amp; South Creek Pumped System</b>				£	£
1.	Flail mowing of District drains	Item	Sum		2300.00
2.	Application of Roundup to control emergent weed and reed	Item	Sum		400.00
3.	Machine cleanse reach 20-21-23-24-25-26	1450	m @	1.20	1740.00
4.	Bank Trimming reach 19-23 & Culvert re-instatement	Item	Sum		800.00
5.	Machine cleanse reach 1-2-3	600	m @	1.20	720.00
6.	<u>Provisional Item</u> Allowance for any culvert clearance, bank slip repair, emergency or additional machine cleansing that may be deemed necessary later in the year	Item	Sum		1000.00
7.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangements and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum		950.00
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>£</b>	<b>£7,910.00</b>

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they will not be held responsible for the failure or efficacy of any treatment.



## **Pumping Stations**

Only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

## **Hours Run**

### **North Creek Hours Run March 2015 - March 2016 = 28**

North Creek Hours Run March 2014 - March 2015 = 160

North Creek Hours Run Feb 2013 - March 2014 = 82

### **South Creek Hours Run March 2015 – March 2016 = 110**

South Creek Hours Run March 2014 – March 2015 = 337

South Creek Hours Run Feb 2013 - March 2014 = 193

## **Changes to Planning Procedures**

Further to the introduction of the previously discussed pre-/post-application discussion process other procedures have been introduced, currently on a trial basis. These include, where relevant, a fixed fee basis for some services which has arisen from discussions and agreement with applicants, agents and engineering consultants.

These include the following:

- (a) In respect of relatively simple enquiries the Commissioners are currently offering a free Development Control and Consent “Surgery” on the third Tuesday of the month. Appointments are limited to 15 minutes during which applicants are able to discuss their proposals and at which it can be determined whether pre-/post-application discussion is required for Discharge/Byelaw Consent issues.
- (b) A soakaway certification and checking service which has been introduced for the processing of the acceptability of soakaways/infiltration devices in compliance with the Land Drainage Act and the Commissioners’/Boards’ byelaws where it can properly be shown to attenuate flows/volumes.
- (c) Completing the “Acceptability of Surface Water and Sewage Effluent Discharge” form. This is a simple form where responses are made to four questions related to surface water/treated effluent disposal.

This is not a consent document nor does it confirm agreement that a water level/flood risk management strategy has been agreed.

Initial internal discussions concerning the introduction of fixed fees for some types and sizes of development covered by the pre-application procedure have commenced.

## **Responses to Planning Applications**

One of the complaints aimed at the Commissioners relates to the failure to provide responses to planning applications in a timely manner. The main reason for this is because some LPAs, not only Fenland District Council, add planning applications to validation lists in week four or later. Unfortunately, the Middle Level Commissioners do not have the resources to check all the lists on a weekly basis (a potential total of 64 lists per week). Therefore, to maximise the number of planning applications captured the week 4 list is normally used.

Members will be aware that neither the Middle Level Commissioners nor the Commissioners are statutory consultees and, therefore, do not actually have to provide a response to the planning authority, and receive no external funding to do so. The main reason for supplying responses is to protect the Commissioners' district and ensure that any byelaw consents are sought.

More timely responses would be of benefit to all parties and discussions have been held with the leading Planning Authorities including the County Council and Fenland District Council but none are prepared to contribute to funding to improve resources. The now former Head of Planning at Fenland District Council advised in a letter dated 7 December that ".....the Council is not in a position to consider providing additional resourcing .....". As a result, the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has been instructed to concentrate on responding to pre-/post-application related issues and resultant planning applications as a priority with responses to other planning applications being dealt with when time permits, with greater reliance being placed upon our "Standing Advice". This particular document may require further strengthening if this arrangement is to continue over the long term.

However, the District Council's letter does advise that it "will continue to encourage applicants and agents to engage directly with yourselves at pre-application stage which clearly has benefits of providing at an early stage greater certainty to developers of your requirements". Whilst there has been an increase in enquires concerning prior discussion these have, to date, primarily been just prior to or just following the submission of a formal planning application.

Despite the Planning Authorities' position the Middle Level Commissioners are requested to respond to planning applications that may potentially be contentious and informal requests have

been received from Fenland’s Planning Officers to reinstate the weekly surgery session that occurred between late 2009 and late 2013. However, as the Commissioners are not a statutory consultee it is considered that whilst the comments provided by the Middle Level Commissioners on the Commissioners’ behalf would be of benefit to the Planning Authorities in making informed decisions, this request is not followed up.

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.

Following several years of working closely with Peterborough City Council (PCC), Fenland District Council's planning team has been, from January 2016, providing a shared service to share resources and enable the delivery of an improved and more cost-effective service that will, reportedly, save Fenland £137,000 a year and a total of £446,000 by the end of the 2018/19 period.

In addition, PCC will be providing Fenland District Council with a consultancy service to meet its requirements under the Floods and Water Management Act. Whilst this will cover ‘major’ planning applications, informal concerns have been expressed within Fenland and the potential adverse impacts on meeting its “growth” targets given that much of the development is self-build and/or “minor” developments.

**March Flood Investigation and Town Council reports**

The Commissioners’ Planning Engineer represented the Commissioners and respective March Boards at Cambridgeshire County Council’s organised meeting in September, and will do so again at another meeting due to take place in April. He also provides Fenland District Council with updates in respect of certain issues associated with water level/flood risk management problems within the Town Council’s area.

Relevant entries in the recent March Town Council reports are as follows:

<b>Gaul Road/Burrowmoor Road</b>	<b>October 15 update:</b> Sewers from Gaul Road to Creek Road pumping station cleared. 16 tonnes of silt and rubbish removed. Final leg to be cleared in conjunction with next routine wet well cleaning.  Last week September gullies to be installed o/s 59 and 63.
<b>Cedar Close</b>	<b>October 15 update:</b> Foul system investigated and no problems found. Surface water system all clear.
<b>New Park</b>	<b>October 15 update:</b> Block gullies found which have been cleared.

<b>Creek Road</b>	<b>February 16 update:</b> Ongoing jetting work is awaiting rail track permission to work under their asset.
<b>Strategic Flood Risk Management</b>	<p><b>October 15 update:</b> Cambridgeshire's Strategy for Flood Risk Management approved by Economy and Environment Committee on 8 September 2015. FDC Cabinet to be asked to endorse Strategy at its October meeting.</p> <p><b>November 15:</b> FDC Cabinet endorsed the updated Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy at its October meeting.</p>
<b>Planning Policy</b>	<b>December 15 update:</b> Lots of work is going on between the County, FDC and the local IDBs to find efficient and effective ways forward for drainage in new developments. This work seeks to take into account both the long successful history and efficient maintenance of IDB systems around March and the statutory requirement for new build and regeneration sites to consider sustainable drainage systems (incorporating measures to both reduce the impact of sudden intense rainstorms on life and property, and improve the quality of the water reaching our rivers).

## Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 32 new 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>
390	F/YR14/0929/F	Mr & Mrs Pankhurst	Residence	Station Road, March
391	F/YR14/0996/F	Mr R Towler	Residential (2 plots)	Creek Road, March
392	F/YR14/1020/O	The Wilkinson Family	Residential (30 plots)	Berryfield, March*
393	F/YR14/1026/O	Mr D Fisher & Executors of Mr J Easter (deceased)	Residence	St Johns Chase, March
394	F/YR15/0039/O	Mr J C Martin	Residence	Norwood Road, March
395	F/YR15/0095/F	Qualitex Hygiene Services Ltd	Office	Elm Road, March
396	Enquiry	The Wilkinson Family	Residential (30 plots)	Berryfields, March*
397	F/YR15/0162/F	Mr & Mrs M Smalley	Residence	Elm Road, March
398	F/YR15/0171/F	Mr G Lord	Industrial (2 units)	Creek Fen, March
399	F/YR15/0253/F	Mr D Gowers	Residence	New Park/Newlands Avenue, March*
400	F/YR15/0338/F	Mr M Thomson	Residential (2 plots)	Creek Fen, March
401	F/YR15/0381/F	Mr M Fitzjohn	Residence	Bramble Walk, March
402	F/YR15/0415/F	Mr S Rendell	Residence	St Johns Road, March
403	F/YR15/0440/O	Ms H Mason	Residential (2 plots)	Estover Road, March

404	F/YR15/0498/F	Mr J Walter	Residence	Elm Road, March
405	F/YR15/0585/F	Mr & Mrs G Thomas	Residence	Creek Road, March
406	F/YR15/0599/F	Ms D Frost	Residence	Estover Road/Cawood Close, March
407	F/YR15/0634/O	Mr T Warner	Residence	Norwood Road, March
408	F/YR15/0668/O	St Johns College, Cambridge	Residential (95 plots max)	Estover Road, March
409	F/YR15/0770/O	Mr M Hardiman	Residential (4 plots)	Creek Road, March*
410	F/YR15/0768/F	Mr R Speed	Residence	Creek Road, March
411	F/YR15/0771/F	Mr J Dean	Showman's Yard	Creek Fen, March
412	F/YR15/0822/F	Mr O'Canitrot	Residence	Creek Fen, March
413	F/YR15/0878/O	Circle Housing - Roddons	Residence	Station Road/St Johns Road, March
414	F/YR15/0897/F	Mr S Amps	Residence/ Business	Norwood Road, March
415	F/YR15/0953/F	Mr & Mrs D Coe	Residence/ Business	Elm Road, March
416	F/YR15/1074/F	Tradelink Direct Ltd	Industrial	Marwick Road, March*
417	F/YR15/1126/F	Mr J Gull	Residence	Elm Road, March
418	F/YR15/0036/CERTP	Mr H Farmer	Garage/boat store	Creek Fen, March
419	F/YR16/0075/F	Mr & Mrs A Kimber	Double garage	Foxglove Way, March
420	F/YR16/0119/F	Mr Monk	Residence	Highfield Road, March
421	F/YR16/0134/F	Tradelink Direct Ltd	Industrial	Marwick Road, March*

Developments that propose direct discharge to the Commissioners' system are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, surface water disposal to soakaways/infiltration systems or sustainable drainage systems.

*Residential development at Creek Road/Station Road (Foxglove Way), March – Construct Reason Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 163, 186, 287 & 318)*

Further to last year's meeting no further correspondence has been received concerning the extent of respective responsibilities of the former railway land to the north east of Points 4-5 that is up for adoption as a public open space (POS) by the District Council.

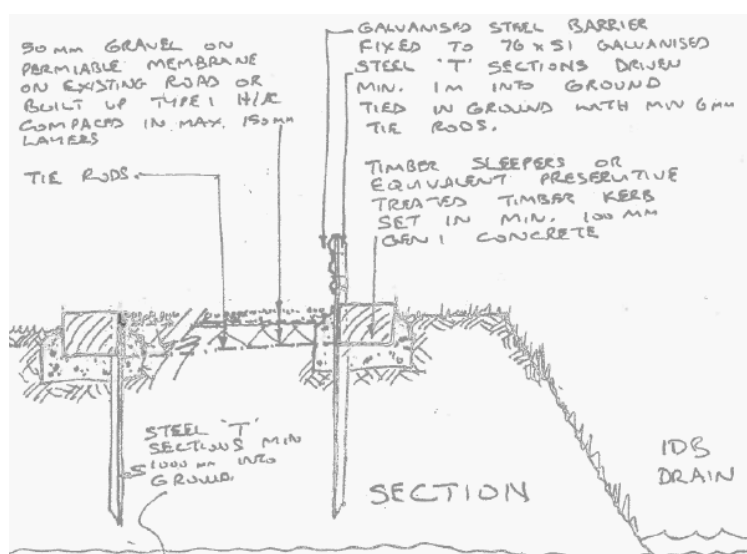
*Erection of 14 apartments comprising 8 x 2-bed and 6 x 3-bed with associated parking and landscaping and formation of vehicular access involving demolition of existing factory unit on land south of Creek Road, fronting Lambs Place, March - Snowmountain Enterprises Ltd (MLC Ref No 301) & Erection of 11 dwellings comprising of 5 x 3-bed houses, 4 x 2-bed houses, 1 x 2-bed flat and 1 x 1-bed flat over garage block and associated parking at land east of 21 Creek Road, March - Snowmountain Enterprises Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 322 & 361)*

Work on this development is now complete.

No further correspondence has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agent concerning this site and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

*Proposed residential development at 250 Creek Road, March – Mr M Hardiman (MLC Ref Nos 289, 299 & 388)*

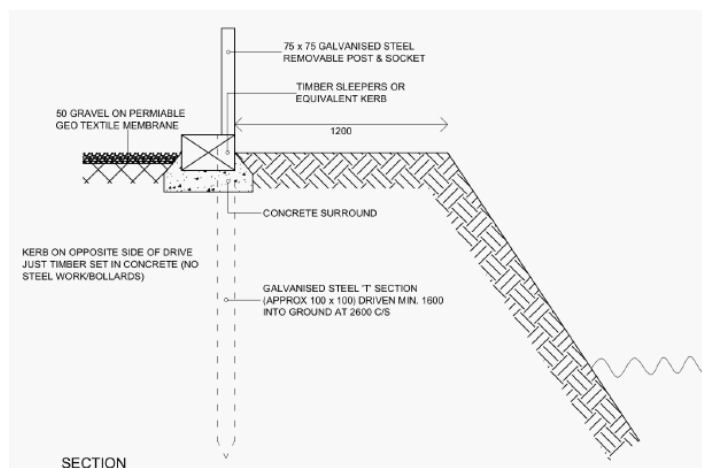
Further to the previous Board report a revised byelaw consent application was received. This was based on the comments made at the previous on-site meeting. Unfortunately the detail of the changes was not discussed before the application was re-submitted. The new layout consisted of an ARMCO barrier set out as shown in the extract below:



The application was refused on grounds that there was only to be 1m of space between the brink and the barrier and this was deemed to be insufficient to allow protection and stability for the bank if a car were to collide with it. The barrier was also a permanent barrier and hence would restrict access to works within the drain.

A further site meeting was requested to resolve the issues, this was attended by the Planning Engineer and the Assistant Engineer from the Middle Level Commissioners, Mr Hardiman and his agent, Ted Brand. Attention was drawn to the example of Foxglove Way and the fact that the Commissioners would be happy to approve a similar arrangement. It was suggested that drop down bollards could be used and they would be 1.8 metres from the brink of the drain. Both the use of bollards and the distance from bank top were not welcomed by Mr Hardiman. He was therefore advised that any revised plans will be sent out for consultation with the Chairman and the Operations Engineer and their comments would then be returned to Mr Hardiman.

A further detail was then received, that was similar to the previous submissions made. An extract is shown below for information.



As advised in the site meeting the comments were passed for internal consultation, and the response received was similar ie that the barrier restricts works in the drain and that 1.2 metres is not enough space to adequately protect the bank. The applicant was then advised that a further byelaw consent can be made but will be considered in line with the comments made in previous responses and if the Commissioners' requirements are not met the application is likely to be refused.

No further contact has been made regarding this site and it should be noted that the most recent application to Fenland District Council (F/YR15/0770/O) regarding this site has now been withdrawn.

*Erection of 6 no dwellings with garages at Edwards Buildbase, Station Road, March - Mr N King (MLC Ref Nos 315, 360, 374 & 386] on former Edwards Buildbase, Station Road, March & Erection of 8 no dwellings with garages at land north of Levante, St Johns Chase, March - Mr D Brownlow (MLC Ref Nos 316 & 358)*

Further to the last meeting, these sites have been the subject of advisory notices. As a result of post-application discussions it was determined that the impermeable area of the re-developed site is slightly less than existed in its former use, therefore, discharge consent was not required.

*Re-development of Three Acres off Creek Road, March – RME (International) Ltd (MLC Ref No 335); Erection of 2 x 41.4 metre high (hub height) wind turbines at Three Acres, South Junction, Creek Road, March – RME (MLC Ref No 347); Erection of 2.4 metre*

*high welded mesh fencing to perimeter of existing business site at Three Acres, South Junction, Creek Road, March – Mr R Moore (MLC Ref Nos 351& 354)*

See South Creek Pumped System, on page 2 of this report, above.

*Proposed leisure development including moorings east of Cromwell Works, Creek Road, March (MLC Ref No 344) & Erection of 2 x 3-storey 6-bed dwellings with detached garages and workshops at land west of Creek Cottage, Creek Fen, March – Mr M Thompson (MLC Ref No 400)*

Further to previous reports concerning proposals on this site (MLC Ref No 344), a revised proposal for the erection of three large dwellings and workshops was refused by the District Council in July, for the following reasons:

“1 The proposed development is located in an unsustainable location outside the settlement limits of March where residential development is not normally supported unless justified. Development in this location would introduce additional development into an area that is currently open and has a strong relationship with the adjoining countryside. The proposal is therefore contrary to Local Plan Policies LP3 and LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

2 The proposal has failed to demonstrate that a functional and financial need for a workplace home exists through a robust justification. Therefore the proposal is contrary to Local Plan Policy LP12 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014.

3 Policies LP2 and LP16 seek to deliver high quality environments, ensuring that people are not put at identified risks from development thereby avoiding adverse impacts. The site lies within Flood Zone 3 which is a high risk flood area. Accordingly, Policy LP14 (Part B) of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 requires development in Flood Zone areas 2 and 3 to undergo a sequential test to demonstrate that the development cannot be delivered elsewhere in the settlement at lower risk areas of flooding. The applicant has failed to undertake a sequential test and therefore has failed to demonstrate that the development cannot be delivered in lower areas of flood risk. Therefore the proposal fails to satisfy policies LP2, LP14 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 as it fails to deliver a high quality environment and instead puts future occupants at higher risk from flooding without justification.”

*Erection of a 2-storey rear extension and porch to side of existing dwelling New Park, March – Mr L Johnson (MLC Ref Nos 379 & 384)*

Further to the last meeting, a Freedom of Information (FOI) request from the applicant's agent, Morton & Hall Ltd, was recently processed on the Commissioners' behalf identifying the location of the Commissioners' pipeline and associated manholes.

*Residential development with associated parking south of Creek Road fronting Lambs Place, March – Almaren Ltd (MLC Ref No 380)*



Further to the last report a revised planning application for the erection of seven houses and two apartments was submitted to the District Council during the summer.

At the time of writing the District Council website advises that a decision on the planning application is pending.

*Erection of 30 dwellings (max) east of Berryfield, Berryfield, March – The Wilkinson Family (MLC Ref Nos 392 & 396)*

An outline planning application with all matters reserved for a residential development of up to thirty dwellings to the east of Berryfield has been submitted to the District Council.



**Extract from Maxey Grounds & Co Indicative Layout Plan**

In view of the withdrawal of the North East March Strategic Allocation from the Local Plan, refer to the Consulting Engineer's March 2013 Supplementary Report, there was considerable local concern regarding the development.

A response submitted to the District Council, on the Commissioners' behalf, was one of the last bespoke responses made before the introduction of the current policy (as detailed on page 7 of this report) and opposed the planning application.

Despite these concerns, which are briefly mentioned in the Officer's Report to the Planning Committee, it is interesting to note that the Executive Summary advises that:

"With regard to detailed considerations (such as highway matters; drainage/flood risk; amenity impacts and the impact upon the character and appearance of the area) the development would not lead to any unacceptable harm being evident."

and the report later adds:

"A Flood Risk Assessment accompanies the application. Whilst the comments and opposition of the Middle Level Commissioners has been carefully considered, the outline drainage strategy concludes that the development could deal with site drainage either by attenuation on site or direct discharge into the drainage boards system. Further discussions and dialogue with Middle Level Commissioners would be required in order to resolve which option is the most suitable. On the basis of the evidence which has been presented to date and the consultation responses it is Officers opinion that a strategy can be developed. Therefore a planning condition would be the appropriate manner in which to address this. It would be advisable on any future reserved matters application(s) to include drainage details.

Accordingly there is no flood risk or drainage related grounds in the context of the Local Plan and to the NPPF on which to object to the proposed development.

Planning permission was granted by the District Council subject to the imposition of planning conditions, including a pre-commencement condition requiring the provision of a detailed drainage strategy, just before Christmas.

Further consultation will be required if the development of this site proceeds.

*Outline with one matter committed detailed as access in relation to 95no dwellings (max) with associated landscaping, drainage and open spaces at land north of 75 - 127 Estover Road March - St Johns College, Cambridge (MLC Ref No 408)*

This planning application for what could be the first phase of a three phase residential development was submitted during the summer.

As with the Berryfield proposal (MLC Ref Nos 392 & 396), discussed above, this proposal has also caused considerable concern in the local area.



Extract from the Indicative Masterplan showing Phase 1 edged in red

The supporting documents advise that:

“It is proposed to manage surface water runoff from the proposed development via infiltration. To account for the low infiltration rates indicated by the on-site testing and the potential for seasonal perched groundwater the infiltration basin has been kept shallow (600 mm) and wide (to maximise the infiltration surface area). The infiltration basin has been sized to manage the 1 in 100 annual probability flood including the requisite 30 % allowance for climate change.”

“All proposals are subject to detailed design and the approval of relevant parties. It is envisaged that adoption and maintenance of the surface water management features will be undertaken by a private management company or Anglian Water. From recent correspondence with Anglian Water we gather that the basin depth is likely to be acceptable to them (provided it is fenced off).”

No initial contact has been made with the Commissioners but further consultation will be required if the development of this site proceeds.

The planning application is currently being considered by to the District Council.



Extract from Cannon Consulting Engineers Outline Surface Water Management Strategy

### ***Development Contributions***

Contributions received in respect of discharge consent will be reported under the Agenda Item – ‘Contributions from Developers.’

### **Fenland District Council (FDC) Neighbourhood Strategy**

Responses were made to the District Council, on the Commissioners’ behalf, in respect of:

(a) ***Fenland Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Draft Update October 2015 – Public Consultation***

The IDP provides support to the District Council’s Policy LP13 – Supporting and Managing the Impact of a Growing District of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 and also complements its adopted SPD on Developer Contributions.

The IDP has been reviewed following the Council’s decision in November 2014 not to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the time being and the Government’s regulations regarding pooling restrictions for S106 contributions for new developments. All

Parish and Town Councils and statutory and other providers were asked to identify their needs for the area earlier this year and these are set out in the Schedule to the IDP.

Generic responses were submitted to the Council relating to water supply (specifically water resources), waste water, Flood Risk Management Provision, Infrastructure Schedule (largely associated with the Towns) and Utilities and Flood Risk.

These comments together with other representations received will be considered and any amendments to the IDP will be set out in a report to Fenland's Cabinet and Full Council in due course to consider adoption of the document.

**(b) Fenland District Council (FDC) District Wide Level 2 SFRA**

Following concerns raised by local developers and agents in respect of Planning Inspectorate decisions concerning development within flood zones 2 and 3, shown on the Environment Agency's Flood Mapping, the Council is considering whether to embark on a Level 2 SFRA for the whole district, with the exception of Wisbech for which one was prepared in 2012.

The key reason for the production of a Level 2 SFRA is to allow FDC to undertake further analysis that provides an evidence base to determine the Sequential and Exception Tests across its District. It will focus on areas where there are potential development pressures in zones of medium (Flood Zone 2) to high (Flood Zone 3) flood risk and where there are no other suitable reasonably available development sites at lower flood risk after applying the Sequential Test. Completion of the Level 2 SFRA will provide the Council with the necessary level of information for a better understanding of flood risk at the local level and give better consideration of flood risk issues when making planning decisions in accordance with both National and Local planning policies.

**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.*

Further to the last meeting report the draft Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD was the subject of a public consultation from Friday 4 September to Friday 16 October 2015.

A response to the County, in respect of the SPD, was submitted on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners and, in addition to advising on some basic errors, identified the following:

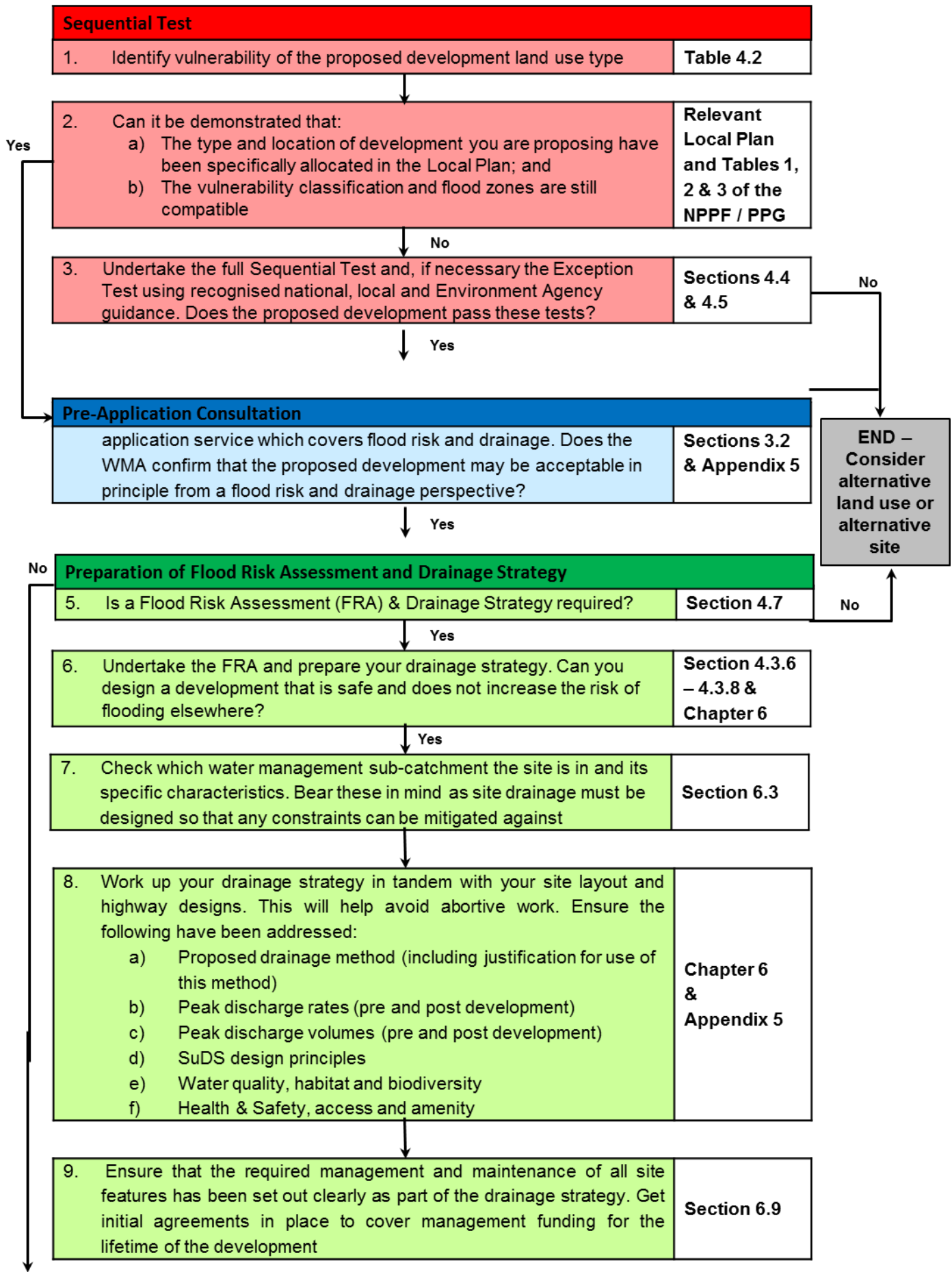
- Like the NPPF and PPS/G25, and the associated guidance documents, the SPD is generic and does not appreciate the special circumstances of water level/flood risk management within The Fens. Therefore, it is considered that further guidance is required to assist all parties involved within the planning process of the specific issues that are different to other parts of the Country, and must be considered when making planning decisions.
- The current document is “wordy” and is likely to become ineffective. A set of guidance notes for the target audience would assist and provide a more effective “journey” for users of the document.
- The document fails to readily identify the difference between the Environment Agency and the IDBs, our differing concerns and requirements and even differences between individual IDBs. The overriding impression given is one where the role, function and governance of the IDBs appear not to be clearly understood.
- Whilst the Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners appreciate that the use of SuDS does have a place within water level/flood risk management, particularly the discharge into managed watercourses, it is considered that, despite the significant emphasis placed on such facilities, the use of attenuation devices in The Fens is not always the correct or most appropriate solution. Therefore, care needs to be taken to ensure that resources and funds are not wasted by seeking to impose attenuation solutions when a direct discharge is acceptable to the local drainage authorities.
- The water resource issues raised predominantly refer solely to potable water supply but other water resource issues which exist within the study area, for example, agricultural use, navigation, amenity, biodiversity, were not fully considered, particularly if drought conditions, like those recently experienced, become more regular, and if the impact of climate change becomes a reality.

The response advised that IDBs may therefore not be able to accept the principles and policies which accommodate a County wide “broad brush” approach, which are not consistent with the more detailed requirements of their local areas, and went on to advise that:

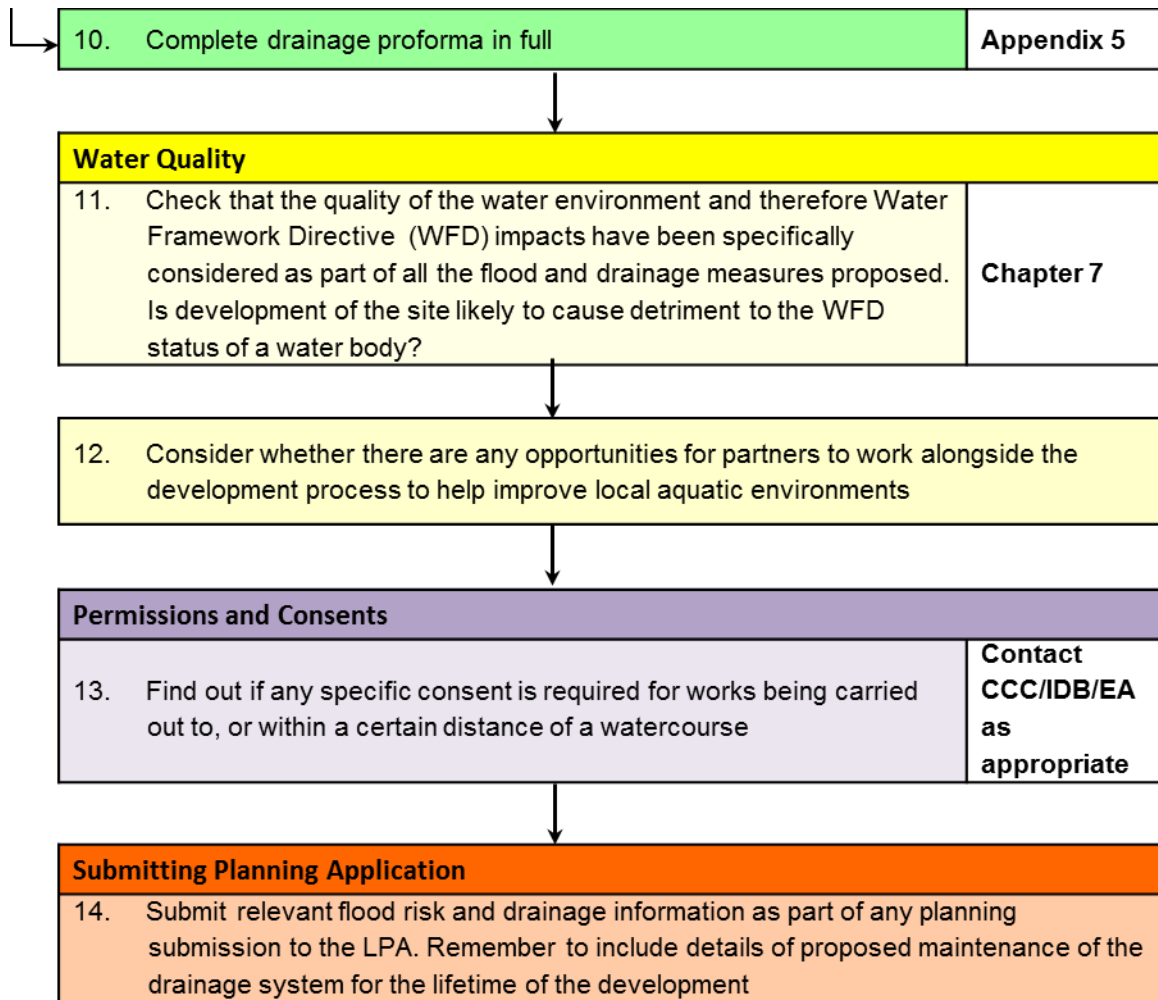
- a. In the flood risk areas managed by IDBs, development proposals are too often granted subject to planning conditions to allow LPAs to reach their targets, without sufficient regard to IDB comments on flood risk.
- b. LPAs receive fees for dealing with planning applications, IDBs do not; unless the developer chooses to follow an IDB pre-application procedure. Too often our advice is ignored and we are expected to provide a subsidised service for planning authorities to enable them to meet their targets, which the Boards/Commissioners are not prepared to do.
- c. We wish to encourage LPAs to, in turn, encourage developers to adopt the pre-application procedure. In the absence of the developer doing so, we can give no guarantee that, under the present arrangements, we will be able to respond to the Council's request for advice on flood risk.
- d. When dealing with issues related to our byelaws and consent procedures the Middle Level Commissioners and associated/administered Boards/Commissioners will promote and require continued adoption of and compliance with the relevant principles contained within PPS25 and the associated Practice Guide together with the provision of a FRA that meets their own requirements ie detailed assessments on the impacts on the respective water level/flood risk management systems and the provision of adequate evidence to prove that a viable scheme for appropriate water level/flood risk management exists, and that it could be constructed and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

The responses received during the consultation 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. This flow chart is considered to be overcomplicated but more importantly from the Board's/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 a 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 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 were issued to the Steering Group in late January for further consideration and comment and these are currently being considered.

The County Council currently hopes that the SPD will go before the County Committee on 9 June and subsequently 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

29 March 2016

With regards the two plastic discharge pipes that Mr Moore had installed in the small drain adjacent to South Creek roadway, the Clerk outlined the position and confirmed that the Commissioners owned the ditch.

The Chairman wondered if the application of Roundup on North Creek roadway would help. Mr Morgan felt that this was not necessarily the solution.

With regard to the residential development at Estover Road, March by St Johns College, Cambridge (MLC Ref No 408), the Commissioners expressed concerns regarding water flows and quantities and how they would be dealt with. The Chairman wondered where water would go with the District drains being some distance away. The Commissioners referred to the effects of the combination of this proposal with the Berryfield proposal by The Wilkinson family (MLC Ref Nos 392 & 396). The Chairman felt that the Commissioners needed something definite from the developer as to how the water would be dealt with. The Clerk raised the issue of whether the Commissioners would then refuse consent and require the developer to attenuate. Mr Court advised that Fenland District Council had so far refused the Berryfield proposal due to a number of issues, including flooding. Mr Alerton agreed that the Commissioners needed to adopt a planned approach.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) South Creek Pumped System

That the Clerk write to Mr Moore pointing out the Commissioners' ownership and the Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to take any necessary action.

- iii) Development at Estover Road, March (MLC Ref No. 408)

That the Consulting Engineers be requested to advise the developer of the Commissioners concerns regarding the drainage arrangements; that they were sceptical of the proposed attenuation arrangements and were, at present, minded to refuse consent for any increased flows and that the Commissioners required full details of the proposed drainage arrangements and how they would function.

(NB) - The Chairman, the District Officer and Mr T Alerton declared interests as landowners in planning matters.

(NB) - Mr Court declared an interest in all planning matters as a reserve member of Fenland District Council's Planning Committee.

#### C.954 District Officer's Report

The District Officer had nothing additional to report since he considered that matters of importance had been satisfactorily referred to in the Consulting Engineers' Report.

#### C.955 Environmental Officer's Press Release and BAP Report

The Clerk referred to the Environmental Officer's Press Release which had previously been circulated to members.

The Clerk drew the Commissioners' attention to the need to continue applying glyphosate mentioned on page 39 of the Report and to the potential funding bid.

The Commissioners considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

#### C.956 District Officer's Fee

(a) Agreement relating to District Officer's duties

Further to minute C.925(ii), the Clerk reported that Mr T D Hopkin had duly signed the agreement.

(b) Further to minute C.925(i), the Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2016/2017.

Mr Hopkin felt that no increase was necessary.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree that the sum of £800 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2016/2017.

(NB) – Mr T D Hopkin declared a financial interest when this item was discussed.

#### C.957 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.

#### C.958 Environment Agency – Precepts

a) The Clerk reported that the precept for 2016/2017 would remain unchanged at £1,196.

b) Local Choices Update

Further to minute C.928, the Clerk referred to the Environment Agency's newsletter dated April and reported that because of the appeals against the precept lodged some two years ago by the Commissioners (and other Boards) the Agency had introduced a Local Choices Precept Programme which involved a far greater input from IDBs and IDBs being much more able to influence the Agency on the works on which the precept would be spent.

C.959 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

(a) The Clerk reported that the sum of £1,416.91 (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency (£1,553.35 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2015/2016 less £133.44 overpaid in respect of the financial year 2014/2015).

(b) Further to minute C.929, 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.

C.960 Contribution from Developers

With reference to minute C.212(iii), the Clerk reported that the following contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume had been received, viz:-

<u>Contributor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Construct Reason Ltd	£3,336.25 (gross) £3,002.63 (net)

C.961 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

c) Subscriptions

That it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 5% in 2016, viz:- from £510 to £536. [The increase in 2015 was 4%]

## RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2015.

### C.962 Health and Safety Audits

Further to minute C.932, the Clerk drew attention to the continuing need to ensure that the Commissioners complied with Health and Safety Requirements and reminded the Commissioners of the arrangements with Croner.

### C.963 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Update

Further to minute C.933, the Clerk reported that the main recent items discussed were the County Council's project to install more rain gauges in Cambridgeshire; the impact of the A14 Project; Surface Water Management Plans and the new Supplementary Planning Document on flood risk, which the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer was involved with. The Clerk advised that the Planning Engineer did not feel that this document was yet in a suitable state commenting in particular, that it was too generic, did not really apply to the special needs of the Fens or properly set out the roles and functions of IDBs.

### C.964 Information regarding Asbestos

The Clerk reported that the Commissioners had a duty to provide details of any asbestos in their installations, especially pumping stations, to be recorded in a Register so that these were known and any contractors could be made aware.

## RESOLVED

That the District Officer confirm the position.

### C.965 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 Commissioners' bank mandates.

### C.966 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2014/2015

- a) The Commissioners considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
- b) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

### C.967 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

### C.968 Budgeting

The Clerk referred to the budget update reviewed by the Chairman. He reported that the 'actual' figure for insurances had subsequently been amended to that contained in the estimates due to the Commissioners receiving a refund for the Employers' Liability Premium.

### C.969 Review of Internal Controls

The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.

### C.970 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Commissioners considered their current Risk Management system.

The Clerk reported that the Commissioners had in place a Risk Management Policy which was last reviewed in 2015.

He reported that the Commissioners had in place operational, financial and governance polices and considered all of their key risks and how to mitigate against them at each scheduled meeting, at which operational and environmental risks were discussed, based upon engineer's reports, officer reports, budgets and costings covering the short/medium and longer term issues. Budgets were prepared and approved by the Commissioners.

The Clerk reported that insurances were in place that confirmed the cover was appropriate to the business. Budgets/year-end forecasts were reviewed at intervals by the Commissioners. This was deemed adequate for the size of the business and the District system was monitored on a regular basis to identify new/emerging areas of risk.

The Commissioners considered this current policy/strategy to be appropriate in between carrying out more substantial, periodic formalised reviews of risk assessment/management and met the requirements that they were assessed by.

- b) The Commissioners reviewed and approved the insured value of their buildings.

### C.971 Appointment of the External Auditor

The Clerk reported that, as had been previously mentioned, the recent Local Audit and Accountability Act changes the audit requirements for smaller public bodies including IDBs and such bodies as the MLC and Parish Councils.

The Act abolished the Audit Commission from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and, from that date, responsibility for external auditor appointments has transferred to a new body, Public Sector Audit

Appointments Ltd. Most contracts with existing external auditors will however continue until they expire after completion of the 2016/2017 audits.

The Clerk reported that from April 2017, smaller authorities will also be legally responsible for the appointment of their own external auditor and that this appointment must be made before the 31<sup>st</sup> December before the audited year, eg by 31/12/2016 for 2017/2018. The Clerk advised that the Secretary of State can however, appoint a body with power to appoint auditors for such smaller bodies which must then opt out from an appointing body. This has now been proposed, with a body proposed to procure audit services "en bloc" for these bodies. The new body is also supported and being funded by DCLG. The new arrangements will operate for a period of 5 years initially but is likely to run on 5 year cycles. It is likely that the procedures for opting out of this sector led body arrangement and appointing an external auditor individually will not be worthwhile for smaller authorities since this will involve the authority establishing an auditor panel and following a statutory appointment process and it is also likely that audit fees will be higher than under the "en bloc" arrangement.

The Clerk advised that all IDBs had to decide by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016 whether they were going to opt out of the new sector body arrangements and that the position can be reviewed during the first five year cycle. The Chairman had, in view of this, agreed that the Commissioners would opt in to the Sector Led body.

The Clerk also 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 Commissioners above the £25,000 limit, in a particular year.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners approve the actions of the Chairman to join the Sector Led Auditor Appointment body.

#### C.972 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.

#### C.973 Annual Governance Statement – 2015/2016

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

### C.974 Payments

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £20,102.01 which had been made during the financial year 2015/2016.

In response to the Chairman, the Clerk and Mr Lakey explained the reason for the temporary hire of JCB insurance.

The Chairman expressed concerned at the lack of consultation regarding the increased engineering fees and felt that an explanation and a longer period of notification of such increases was required. The Clerk agreed to write to him on this.

### C.975 Annual Accounts of the Commissioners – 2015/2016

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 as required in the Audit Regulations.

#### RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Return, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

### C.976 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners considered their future capital improvement programme.

The Clerk drew attention to the prospective automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment at both pumping stations.

#### RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle and be kept under review.

### C.977 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2016/2017

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2016/2017 and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 11.46% and 88.54%.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £16,399 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £1,879 and £14,520 respectively.



- iv) That a rate of 3.50p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £14,520 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.978 Display of rate notice

RESOLVED

That notice of the rate be affixed within the District in accordance with Section 48(3)(a) of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

C.979 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Commissioners be held on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017.