

MANEA AND WELNEY DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
held at the Lamb & Flag Public House, Welney on Wednesday the 5th June 2019

PRESENT

J E Heading Esq (Chairman)	P D Hawes Esq
R M C Sears Esq (Vice Chairman)	M E Heading Esq
C M Barnes Esq	P Jolley Esq
C J Crofts Esq	Mrs A J Langley
M D R Fairey Esq	C Marks Esq
C F Hartley Esq	C W Sears Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Commissioners) was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from N Cook Esq, J H Hawes Esq, and N V M Walker Esq.

C.831 Declarations of Interest

Mr Hill 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 any of them.

C.832 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 6th February 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.833 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that Fenland District Council had appointed Councillor Charlie Marks to be a Commissioner under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Mr Hill also reported that Councillors Buckton and Sutton had not been re-appointed.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Marks to his first meeting of the Commissioners.

C.834 Updating DDC Byelaws

Further to minute C.800, the Commissioners considered their updated Byelaws.

RESOLVED

That the updated Byelaws be adopted.

C.835 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank Works

Further to minute C.802, Mr Hill referred to the Newsletter from the Environment Agency dated May 2019.

The Chairman reported on the drop-in events being held later this month, which he hoped to attend. He further reported that, following last year's inspection visit to the Barrier Bank Works, it was his intention to arrange an inspection visit next year to view the completed works.

C.836 Replacement of Tractor and Flail Mower

Further to minute C.811(ii), the Chairman reported that the mower was in reasonably good condition and, as had been discussed at the previous meeting, it was his intention to get quotations for its' replacement during the next financial year. He considered the tractor should also be replaced at the same time as a 7-8 year cycle for replacement would be reasonable. In response to the Vice Chairman, the Chairman reported that currently the repair costs were low with the Commissioners' Superintendent carrying out the majority of the repairs and servicing himself.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to obtain quotations for the replacement of the Commissioners' tractor and flail mower.

C.837 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a third Chair's Meeting was held on the 11th March 2019 and that discussions at this centred around :-

- 1) The provision of increased support to IDBs on Health and Safety management and control.
- 2) The Future investment planning for the Lower River Great Ouse catchment.
- 3) Future planning for IDBs and DDCs administered by the Middle Level Commissioners.
- 4) Member training.

One option for future Board arrangements discussed at the second and third meetings was the subject of a briefing paper.

The Chairman outlined the current administration and drainage arrangements for the Boards within the Middle Level and how the drainage arrangements for the Commissioners and their neighbouring boards differed. The Chairman supported the reasons for the creation of a single drainage board within the Middle Level but considered, for the Commissioners, a similar

arrangement with Sutton & Mepal and the area of Upwell, who both drained as the Commissioners do to the Old Bedford River, would be more appropriate.

Mr Hill referred to the similar views expressed by the Sutton & Mepal IDB at their recent meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners could see no benefit from amalgamating with the Boards within the Middle Level but would support the possibility of an amalgamation for those Boards draining to the Old Bedford River being investigated further.

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 13th November 2019.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to obtain a ticket for the Annual Conference of the Association for any Commissioner who wishes to attend.

b) Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse Branch

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 12th March 2019. The meeting format was changed this year and included a morning workshop session led by the EA. Topics covered were water resources, PSCAs and future planning of FRM. Robert Caudwell spoke for ADA in the afternoon followed by talks from Brian Stewart, the FRCC Chair, Paul Burrows, the FRM Area Manager and Claire Jouvray, the Operations Delivery Manager.

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 3rd March 2020.

c) Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members

That, at the Annual Conference last November, ADA launched the publication of the Good Governance Guide for IDB Board Members. It provides Members with a comprehensive guide to their role as water managers servicing the local communities. The document has been produced with the financial support of Defra and will provide Members with knowledge to help expand their grasp of the role, and how best to execute their responsibilities on the Board.

That a copy of the Guide for each Member has been included with this agenda and can be downloaded from the ADA website.

That ADAs workshops were well attended and are helping to deal with the questions being raised by Defra following the Audit Commission Report which criticized aspects of IDB governance. At least one Commissioner attended one of the two local workshops in the area and hence the Commissioners will be able to record in the IDB1 Defra return that training has been provided on Governance. In addition to governance Defra appear to expect over time that training will be given for the following; Finance, Environment, Health, safety and welfare

and Communications and engagement. The Commissioners may wish to consider an order of priority for future training and a timetable for delivery.

d) Workstreams

That ADA annually review their workstreams and an update is included.

iii) The New Rivers Authorities & Land Drainage Bill

That this Bill has completed its Committee stage in the House of Commons and passed through its Third Reading. It has now started its progression through the House of Lords.

The Bill, which has been prepared by Defra, aims to put the Somerset Rivers Authority onto a statutory footing as a precepting body, but it would also enable the reform of IDB ratings annual value lists. It does this by recognising the need to ensure that the methodology through which IDBs calculate and collect drainage rates and special levy sits on a sound legal basis that can be periodically updated to contemporary values better reflecting current land and property valuation.

With the above in mind ADA has been working with Defra and a number of IDBs to test a new methodology using contemporary valuation and Council Tax lists that could be applied via this legislative change.

The Chairman referred to the problems within the Somerset Levels and the steps taken to address them which could lead to the creation of a new authority.

Mr Hill reported on the work carried out by ADA to update the agricultural and special levy valuations upon which rates and levies are made. He reported that for the creation of new boards and for the possible extension of existing boundaries, legislation would need to be changed and, as had been reported previously, the Commissioners may be required to carry out a revaluation should the legislation be changed. The Chairman referred to the importance of getting the balance correct if a revaluation is required.

iv) Environment Agency consultation on changes to the Anglia (Central) RFCC

That a consultation is taking place on the constitution of three RFCCs following a formal proposal for two new unitary authorities to be formed in Northamptonshire (West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire) has been submitted to the Government for consideration. If approved these authorities would coming into existence on the 1 April 2020.

In Buckinghamshire the decision to create a single unitary authority replacing the existing five councils has been made by the Government, subject to Parliamentary approval. It would come into existence on the 1 April 2020.

Each new authority will be a unitary authority, delivering all local government services in their respective areas, including their functions as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFAs).

The membership of Thames RFCC, Anglian (Central) RFCC, and Anglian (Northern) RFCC currently includes representation from one or both of the existing county councils. To reflect the changes proposed the membership of all three RFCC will need to be varied before 1 December 2019.

At the same time to better reflect a catchment-based approach it is proposed to change the name of Anglian (Central) RFCC to Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC. ADA has stated that it supports the naming revision.

C.838 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Manea & Welney D.D.C.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2019

Pumping Stations

Other than the matters previously reported or described below, 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.

Pumping Hours

Glenhouse

Hours Run	30 May 14 – 7 May 15	7 May 15 – 7 May 16	7 May 16 – 23 May 17	23 May 17 – 15 May 18	16 May 18 – 9 May 19
No 1	243	211	119	270 (4599)	10 (4609)
No 2	244	247	117	194 (4560)	113 (4673)
No 3	266	231	92	254 (4570)	115 (4685)
No 4	255	223	105	258 (4591)	90 (4681)
Total	1008	912	433	976	328

Purls Bridge

Hours Run	30 May 14 – 7 May 15	7 May 15 – 7 May 16	7 May 16 – 23 May 17	23 May 17 – 15 May 18	16 May 18 – 9 May 19
No 1	210	123	91	314 (10434)	50 (10484)
No 2	198	429	84	293 (9546)	77(9623)
Total	408	552	175	607	127

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 9 new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
583	F/YR18/1147/RM	Mr S Wilson	Residential (5 plots)	Westfield Road, Manea
584	F/YR19/3005/COND	Mr E Barnes	Residential (15 plots)	Park Road, Manea*
585	F/YR19/0019/F	Mr M Doggett	Infilling and piping of drain and erection of a timber shed (retrospective)	Teachers Close, Manea
586	F/YR19/0050/F	Mr C Barnes	Residence	Parkview Lane Manea
587	F/YR19/0043/F	Mr & Mrs Weavers	Residence (Extension)	Charlemont Drive, Manea
588	F/YR19/00136/F	Mr D Carrington	Equestrian (Stable block)	Wisbech Road, Manea
589	F/YR19/0144/O	Mr P Gale	Residence	Station Road, Manea
590	F/YR19/0172/RM	Mr E Barnes	Residential (15 plots)	Park Road, Manea*
591	F/YR19/0208/F	Mr D Carrington	Residential (Static caravan)	Wisbech Road, Manea

**Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters
Planning applications ending 'COND' or 'DISC' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions**

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

Some of the above are likely to discharge treated foul water effluent into the Commissioners' system either via private treatment plants or Manea Town Lots Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

No further correspondence has been received from the applicants or the applicants' agents concerning the following developments and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

Erection of 14 dwellings; comprising; 2 x 3 storey 5/6 bed, 1 x 3 storey 5 bed, 5 x 2 storey 4 bed and 6 x 2 storey 3 bed with associated garaging at Station Road, Manea – Mr Short and Mr Fox (MLC Ref Nos 446, 449, 482 & 511)

Erection of an Anaerobic Digestion Plant, associated infrastructure, lagoon and feedstock clamps at land south west of Crane Farm (Colony Farm), Fifty Road, Manea – A & E G Heading Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 573 & 579)

Proposed residential development in the vicinity of Station Road, Manea – Lovell Partnerships Limited (MLC Ref No 578)

In view of the absence of recent correspondence and any subsequent instruction from the Commissioners it will be presumed, unless otherwise recorded, that the Commissioners are content with any development that has occurred and that no further action is required at this time.

Residential development (Delilah Close) involving demolition of existing buildings at International House, Station Road, Manea - Mr J Daniels (MLC Ref No 365) & Homestead Development Company Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 386 & 436)

Further discussions with the management company have commenced.

Erection of 26 dwellings at land west of 49-49A High Street, Manea - Cole Properties (Manea) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 415 & 471)

In the absence of the outstanding information from the applicant and its engineering consultant a recommendation still remains outstanding at this time.

Therefore, in order to resolve this matter and guide further discussions it would be beneficial to receive the Commissioners' opinion, further instruction and approval to initially write to the parties concerned in order to resolve this potential issue.

Development to the east of Park Road, Manea – Mr E Barnes (MLC Ref Nos 431, 438 & 485 + 525, 561, 584 & 590)

(a) Land north east of 9 Park Road, Manea Road, Manea – Mr E Barnes (MLC Ref Nos 431, 438 & 485)

Whilst discharge consent for the disposal of treated foul effluent water has been granted consent, a recent review identified that issues relating to surface water disposal remain outstanding.

(b) Erection of 15 dwellings on land east of 11 - 21 Park Road, Manea - Mr E Barnes (MLC Ref Nos 525, 561, 584 & 590)

Further to previous reports two submissions have been made to the District Council.

The former was an application for the discharge of conditions four and five. Condition five relates to surface water disposal and was imposed at the request of the County Council, in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

A Reserved Matters planning application was submitted in February.

A detailed assessment of the proposal has not been undertaken but it is understood that the use of an existing watercourse is being utilised to form a balancing feature.

Currently the LLFA remains opposed to the suggested means of surface water disposal and according to the District Council's Public Access webpage a decision remains pending.

Applications for both byelaw and discharge consent (for treated effluent), have been received.

The byelaw consent has been returned as it is not required by the Commissioners, as the structures in question are located in the highland of the district and would have to be approved by the LLFA at the County Council.

The discharge consent application was recommended for refusal because it did not meet the Commissioners' minimum validation requirements however, an application is still required. It is understood that the applicant has advised that he will contact his Consulting Engineer to have a revised application submitted for review. This has yet to be received.

With the exception of the above the applicant, its agent, Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd, and its engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd, have not contacted the Commissioners to enquire whether this approach is acceptable or would be approved should the proposal proceed.

Therefore, in order to resolve this matter and guide further discussions it would be beneficial to receive the Commissioners opinion, further instruction and approval to initially write to the parties concerned in order to resolve this potential issue.

Residential development, garages, associated parking, the formation of allotments, public open space, and a new access on land west of Teachers Close, Manea - Portman Developments (MLC Ref No 453), Client of Woods Hardwick (MLC Ref Nos 514 & 538) & Matthew Homes (MLC Ref Nos 545, 551 & 557)

It is understood that development has commenced on site.

Development at Knyverton House, Wisbech Road, Manea - Mr M Balaz (MLC Ref No 516) & Ms A Kusynova (MLC Ref No 524)

Members will be aware that applications for both encroachment within the Commissioners' maintenance access strip and discharge consent were submitted in late December 2017.

The issues surrounding this site remain outstanding and the Chairman advised us that he would deal with the matter and inform us of any further contact that may be required.

Proposed residential development to the north west of The Grange and south east of New Road, Welney - Client of JPP Consulting (MLC Ref No 559) & Mr R Boyd (MLC Ref No 567)

Further to the last meeting report an on-site meeting was held with the applicant's engineering consultant, JPP Consulting, to clarify various issues.

Revised drawings have been supplied. These are being considered and responses are being prepared.

Following approval from the applicant for us to write to the Borough Council a response has recently been made to an enquiry from the Borough Council in respect of the discharge of a pre-commencement condition advising on the Boards' position.

Culvert Application (No 1)

JPP Consulting has advised that the invert of the box culvert will be lower than the existing pipe under New Road.

Headwall application (No 2)

A larger scale drainage layout in the area of the headwall showing the protective revetment required has been provided on the subsequent revisions to the drawings.

Works within the 9m strip application (No 3)

Updated cross sections using survey data have been provided. No provision is included for any channel re-profiling.

All applications

Details of the temporary works, method statements and the management company long-term funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of the facilities in perpetuity remain outstanding at this time.

In order to guide further discussions and resolve the current position it would be beneficial to confirm the following:

- The frequency and timing of access to the drain, spoil disposal etc and the payment of any subsequent additional costs involved.
- Whether there should be a legal agreement between the Commissioners and the Company in this respect.

The Commissioners' opinion and further instruction on the above is requested.

Fenland District Council (FDC)

FDC Liaison Meeting

The follow up meeting was held on 28 March.

Planning Committee Decision at Estover Road, March

Members may be aware of the District Council's decision in relation to the outline planning application for a residential development at Estover Road, March. However, members may be interested in the principles established at the Committee Meeting in respect of the Board's interests.

March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners requested that the Planning Engineers represented them at the Planning Committee's September meeting.

It was interesting to note that the Commissioners' presence was acknowledged with one Councillor stating that as the Commissioners have made the effort to attend the Committee should listen to them. Another comment made was that the Committee is concerned that Statutory Consultees do not attend the Planning Committee Meetings.

There was considerable support for the Drainage Boards particularly from Cllrs Bligh, Laws and Newell, but you will note the comments which were quite rightly made by Cllr Sutton and Nick Harding.

In view of this it appears that, within Fenland at least, the comments of the LLFA, as a Statutory Consultee, override that of the Commissioners, even though they have to receive and transfer any flows and deal with any resultant problems at their ratepayers' expense.

Relevant extracts from the minutes from the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 12 September are copied below:

"F/YR15/0668/O

LAND NORTH OF 75-127, ESTOVER ROAD, MARCH, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

OUTLINE WITH ONE MATTER COMMITTED DETAILED AS ACCESS IN RELATION TO 95 NO DWELLINGS (MAX) WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING, DRAINAGE AND OPEN SPACES

Middle Level Commissioners strongly object to the application.

Members received a presentation in accordance with the public participation from Mr Graham Moore (Middle Level commissioners), who was speaking on behalf of Middle

Level Commissioners and March Fifth Internal Drainage Board [sic] and Mrs Liz Whitehouse, who were both speaking in objection to the Application.

It is the IDB not the Environment Agency, FDC, CCC or Anglian Water, which has to receive and transfer flows that emit from the site.

The site is located in flood zone 1 and the applicant has provided information to evidence that surface water from the development can be managed and there have been no objections from the Lead Local Flood Authority and Environment Agency who are statutory consultees. The Middle Level Commissioners are not statutory consultees; however the queries that have been raised by them have been looked at by the applicant but as this is an outline planning application and it would not be reasonable to supply the information requested currently and the details relating to the design of the scheme and details regarding the drainage scheme details are unknown. The condition that the LLFA have requested will put an appropriate safeguard in place to ensure a suitable strategy is established prior to the commencement of construction.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Laws stated that it is a windfall site but the drainage issue is an area of concern. With regard to viability, the site does not deliver what it should and although the Section 106 Officer has looked into this. The development is therefore less sustainable than it should be.*
- Councillor Sutton stated that he believes the development is sustainable. It is in flood zone 1 and the Lead Local Flood Authority who is a Statutory Consultee has no objection to the proposal. The issues concerning the discharge raised by Middle Level Commissioners and the IDB can be reviewed at a later stage and do not need to be considered today. Planning Committee Members have to make decisions on material planning reasons. The proposal does not go against the Neighbourhood Plan; if it did then Officers would not be recommending it for approval.*
- Councillor Sutton stated he can see no material planning reason to refuse the application.*
- Nick Harding stated that in terms of the surface water issues which have been raised. The IDB have recognised that the LLFA is the authority that we should be going to in consideration of these matters and if the NPPF is referred to it does state that major development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and should take account of the advice of the LLFA. The advice from the LLFA is that this development proposal with conditions is acceptable.*
- Nick Harding stated that he is very supportive of the IDB's they have a separate legal process which has to be complied with by persons who wish to discharge their surface water and just because planning permission is granted for a development it does not mean they are automatically going to get consent from the IDB's. The Developer still has to apply to the IDB and the detail for the scheme has to be agreed.*
- Nick Harding stated that with regard to Anglian Water, they have raised no objection to this application. They have indicated that they will make necessary improvements to their network to ensure they can deal with the water and therefore as we do not have an objection from Anglian Water, and members*

should consider on what basis would we be able to defend a reason for refusal based on foul water capacity.

Following the meeting the Planning Engineer advised the Clerk to the Commissioners that:

“Whilst I was concerned when we originally stood back and stopped making bespoke responses to the LPA in preference to writing to the applicant and/or agent, which does cause some problems, the planning decision confirmed that this choice was the correct one, as the Commissioners and associated Boards are not wasting their limited resources by issuing letters that will be ignored by the LPA. However, this procedure is, under the current circumstances, potentially wasteful as the developer, LPA and LLFA could put considerable effort into an application which may be granted planning permission but which a Board refuses to consent.”

There has been no significant involvement with the LLFA within Norfolk as they have a different response threshold to Cambridgeshire but it is presumed that in similar circumstances it would have a similar view.

NB. Within Cambridgeshire the LLFA responds to “Major” developments i.e.

- a) The provision of dwelling houses where the number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or the development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more;
- b) The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
- c) Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;

but within Norfolk it only responds to residential developments in excess of 100 dwellings.

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)

The Middle Level Commissioners’ Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards/Commissioners since the last meeting. The main matters that may be of interest to the Commissioners are as follows:

Quarterly Meetings

The most recent meeting was a joint meeting held with the Peterborough Flood & Water Management Partnership (PFLoW) of which the MLC are also a partner. The number of meetings held each year may reduce from four to three.

RMA support & the Delivery of projects

Following concerns raised by IDBs and other RMAs the EA Local Levy is funding two LLFA and IDB Flood Risk Advisors who have been recruited to assist in the delivery of projects. Based at Ely they are the Commissioners’/Boards’ point of contact in respect of FDGiA funding.

Initial meetings with the relevant advisor and the MLC staff have occurred.

RMA's Medium Term Programmes (MTP)

The RFCC has expressed a keen interest in knowing more about the different projects that partners in Cambridgeshire have put forward to the MTP for FDGiA. This is in part because the RFCC wants us to all understand each other's projects better. They would particularly like it if the RFCC Member Councillors for each County were familiar with all of the projects in their area and were able to champion them, not just the ones from their own organisation.

Therefore, the various relevant RMAs will be making presentations at Partnership meetings. As a result, as the largest promoter of such projects within Cambridgeshire, a presentation on the MTP prepared by the Middle Level Commissioners and its associated Boards has been made to the Partnership.

Rain Gauges

The Rain Gauge Network Project is progressing with the installation of gauges being undertaken in the next financial year.

Flood Risk Management Trainees

One of the trainees wrote an article which was published in the Winter 2018 edition of the ADA Gazette. The article can be found at

<http://flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=5c101ead23d6e#13>

County Council Public Sector Services

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has raised concerns with the County Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Business Manager about the potential deterioration of service within Cambridgeshire as a result.

RMA support & the Delivery of projects

Two LLFA and IDB Flood Risk Advisors have been recruited, they are based in Ely and will be the Commissioners'/Boards' point of contact in respect of FDGiA funding.

Initial meetings with the relevant advisor and the MLC staff have occurred.

Rain Gauges

The Rain Gauge Network Project is progressing with the installation of gauges being undertaken in the next financial year.

Highways England (HE) Environmental Designated Funds (Legacy funding)

This method of funding is being utilised by the following RMAs on the projects below:

(a) Environment Agency

Beck Brook at Girton - Legacy Fund and Local Levy match funding is being used to assist a flood alleviation scheme that was unable to achieve GiA.

Borrow Pits at Fenstanton – A potential flood alleviation scheme may be able to use Legacy funding.

(b) Cambridgeshire County Council

Bar Hill – Legacy funding for a potential £64k scheme.

Histon/Impington culvert replacement – The Legacy funding contribution is possible due to the site's close location to the A14.

Fenland Flooding Issues Sub-group

A meeting was held in April and there are currently no known issues within the Commissioners' catchment.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan

Local Plan review

In delivering development that supports the economy and housing for current and future generations, the Borough Council needs to balance this with the need to protect and enhance the environment.

The Local Plan for the borough currently consists of the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (adopted 2016).

These two documents have been internally reviewed and combined to create a new draft document which identifies a strategy and detail for delivering growth in the borough, identifying where development should be located and how it should be delivered up to 2036.

The draft Local Plan review was published for an eight week public consultation period from 4 March to 29 April 2019.

A response was submitted to the Borough Council on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and our associated Boards for whom we provide a planning consultancy service within West Norfolk.

Flood Risk Management (FRM) for the Fens Technical Group [previously reported as the Future Fenland Project]

The next meeting of the Technical Group is to be held in early June.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

The final report of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER), prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Commission ([CPIEC](#)) was published in September.

Jointly funded by the CPCA and Cambridge Ahead the report sets out how the CPIEC considers the area can sustain its own economy and support the UK economy whilst providing a better and more fulfilling way of life for the people who live and work in this area and details how this should be achieved, with fourteen key recommendations, and another thirteen subsidiary recommendations. Some of the suggested actions will be difficult to implement requiring close collaboration between leading institutions in the area, this is likely to include the relevant RMAs including the Commissioners and associated Boards, who will be needed to deliver them effectively.

Issues considered relevant to our interests include the following:

General

- a) The success of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a project of national importance.
- b) The Government should recognise the benefits further devolution to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would bring

Flood Risk and Water Level Management

- a) The area has not been subject to dramatic flooding events in recent years, which can mean the issue is paid little attention.
- b) Flood risk infrastructure should be considered enabling infrastructure, in that it allows a great deal of economic activity to happen in the first place (land being the most fundamental of all the economic factors of production).
- c) In the fens, water has an especially significant effect on the local economy with much of the area classified by the EA as being in flood zone 3 and this presents challenges to local economic development. Finding solutions to this problem is likely to have to happen little by little, with the finer points of detail being worked through with the EA, Anglian Water, and others. Wisbech should be seen as a UK testbed for new flood-

resistant approaches to development, and levels of investment in flood defence infrastructure should be substantially increased.

- d) It is estimated that during a serious drought scenario, England could face £1.3billion of lost economic activity every day.
- e) A requirement of 110l per person per day should be enforced in water stressed areas, and that in future councils should have the power to enforce 80l per person per day requirements for new developments where appropriate.

The Environment

NB. 'Natural capital' refers to the stock of living ('biodiversity') and non-living (eg minerals, water) resources that interact and provide a flow of services ('ecosystem services') upon which society depends. Some of these services are delivered locally, others may have national or international value. All other capitals (human, social, intellectual, manufactured, financial) are ultimately underpinned by natural capital.

- a) Climate change is already having a damaging effect on biodiversity and could put a strain on the water supply.
- b) Within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, most districts were put into the middle band for levels of natural capital, although fenland (perhaps unsurprisingly) scores highly on this measure.
- c) The fens must also be considered as one of the UK's greatest natural assets with a rich wetland ecosystem which affords great leisure opportunities. The value of this natural capital must not be overlooked.

Economic Growth

- a) The Commission reached the conclusion that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area is not one, but three economies, the Greater Cambridge area, which includes Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, and parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire; the Greater Peterborough area, the area around Peterborough; and the fens but should function significantly more as a single area than it does at present. This ought to be feasible whilst being compatible with each part of the Combined Authority area retaining its distinctive sense of place.
- b) A distinguishing feature of the whole area is how strongly it continues to grow outpacing both the East of England and UK over the last decade. This has been driven primarily, but not entirely, by rapid business creation and growth in Cambridge and

South Cambridgeshire, where knowledge-intensive sectors are strongly clustered, densifying and highly dependent on their location.

- c) Evidence from the review identifies that both employment and turnover growth have been picking up right across the area. Employment growth has seen strong growth numbers in all districts but has been highest in East Cambridgeshire. Looking at growth rates in the global turnover of companies based in the area between 2010/11-2016/17 all six districts have seen turnover growth of over 2% per annum. In South Cambridgeshire this rises to over 10% per annum, which shows impressive company growth.
- d) Many very large firms, such as McCain and Del Monte, have plants in the north-east of the county and export from here around the world. Figures show that primary sectors constitute 24% of East Cambridgeshire's turnover, and 17% of Fenland's with Wholesale and Retail Distribution making up 33% of Fenland's turnover, and 28% of South Cambridgeshire's.
- e) The Netherlands, which has similar prevailing conditions to the fens but produces much higher-value agricultural goods, should be seen as an exemplar.
- f) Laws governing planning permission may impede business growth.
- g) It is very important to support the growth of market towns.
- h) There is a need for companies to invest in their employees.
- i) There is potential for greater commercial office development, particularly in Peterborough.

Housing

- a) To account for the fact that actual delivery of housing has been less than previously predicted and if employment growth continues to be significantly above what is forecast it might be necessary to build in the range of 6,000 – 8,000 houses per year over the next 20 years.
- b) In some areas, particularly in the north of Cambridgeshire, house prices are too low to make sufficient profit from development, rendering them unviable.

- c) There is positive evidence that ecological considerations are being taken seriously in new developments, with the new Eddington District in Cambridge being a notable example. Eddington reuses surface level water, reducing wastage and minimising flood risk.

Infrastructure

- a) Utilities underpin all economic activity, and there are areas of concern, particularly regarding electricity capacity. The government has committed to banning new diesel and petrol vehicles from 2040, but if it is envisioned that these will be replaced by electric vehicles, substantial levels of investment into upgrading the grid will be needed.
- b) The importance that flood defence infrastructure and the equally clear stresses upon water in one of the UK's driest counties are recognised.
- c) The level of the infrastructure of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been inadequate for too long. The growth seen in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire seems very unlikely to be sustained in the future without further and significant investment in infrastructure.
- d) A package of transport and other infrastructure projects to alleviate the growing pains of Greater Cambridge should be considered the single most important infrastructure priority facing the Combined Authority in the short to medium term. These should include the use of better digital technology to enable more efficient use of current transport resources.

Projects that seem likely to further this aim are the full dualling of the A47, better connecting the Peterborough economy to the Fenland economy; the A10, better connecting the Cambridge economy to the Fenland economy; and improvements to rail between Peterborough and Cambridge, particularly the Ely North junction thus better connecting all three economies.

- e) There should be greater awareness of potential supply chains and scope for collaboration within the region.
- f) It was suggested that several elements were needed to underpin the approach to financing infrastructure:

- An Investment Fund should be created to execute priorities which leverages third party resources, meaning a sustainable momentum can be achieved by the prudent use of public resources (from both local and central government)
- An Investment Pipeline should be established showing what is feasible to be delivered over a three, five, and ten-year period
- A Mayoral Development Platform (such as a development corporation) is needed to facilitate and support development in collaboration with the private sector (investors and developers) and wherever practicable the community in which development takes place.
- Relevant RMAs possibly including the Commissioners and associated Boards may be asked to contribute to these.

Consulting Engineer

22 May 2019

Manea & Welney (317)\Reports\May 2019

Mr Hill referred to the Consulting Engineer's query in relation to the erection of 26 dwellings at land west of 49-49A High Street, Manea (MLC Ref Nos 415 & 471) and reported that further information had recently been received which would be reviewed by the Consulting Engineer.

Mr Hill referred to the maintenance of the Old Croft River being carried out under the Joint Maintenance Agreement with Upwell IDB. The Commissioners discussed the issues on the Charlemont Estate and the importance of getting all issues identified and resolved at the earliest possible stage.

The Chairman referred to these issues and the Commissioners responsibility to drainage and that its involvement should be to make sure matters are dealt with properly at the earliest opportunity.

Councillor Crofts referred to the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk plan which was currently out for consultation and that following this period all comments would be considered and assessed for the plan to be updated and adopted.

The Chairman recognised the need for long term planning and reminded the meeting of the vital importance for the proper maintenance of the River Great Ouse Catchment to ensure the proper drainage of the area.

Councillor Crofts reported that he took every opportunity to raise the point that drainage authorities should be statutory consultees with regards to planning to ensure the correct drainage for developments. The Chairman supported these comments and reported that, whilst the Commissioners supported development, their interest was in relation to flood risk and the need to ensure that the drainage requirements of developments were properly considered and correct for the development.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Planning Application – 49-49A High Street, Manea (MLC Ref Nos 415 & 471) and Planning Application – Park Road, Manea (MLC Ref Nos. 431, 438, 485, 525, 561, 584 & 590)

That the Planning Engineer be authorised to liaise with the Chairman to resolve any outstanding issues.

- iii) The Grange, Welney
 - a) That flail mowing be carried out annually; normally 2-3 cuts per year.
 - b) That slubbing be carried out as and when necessary to maintain adequate flows and capacity within the channel.
 - c) That a legal agreement be entered into, subject to the Clerk confirming the position with regards to the Joint Maintenance arrangement and obtaining the approval of Upwell IDB, should this be required.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr M Heading declared interests in the planning applications (MLC Ref Nos. 573 & 579) received from A & E G Heading Ltd.

(NB) – Mr Barnes declared an interest in the planning applications (MLC Ref Nos. 431, 438, 485, 525, 561, 584 & 590) received from Mr E Barnes.

C.839 District Superintendent's Report

The Commissioners considered the Report of the District Superintendent.

RESOLVED

That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and that the Superintendent be thanked for his services over the preceding year.

C.840 Conservation Officer's BAP Report

The Commissioners considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

The Chairman referred to the report and update from the Conservation Officer whom he normally meets at least twice a year and that he considered the report to be very satisfactory and showed the wide range of biodiversity within the District.

C.841 Maintenance Works in the District

Further to minute C.741, the Chairman reported that it was the Commissioners' policy to machine cleanse all District watercourses annually and to flail one side of the drains annually. He reported that he had recently discussed this flail mowing policy with the District Superintendent and they were currently trialling flail mowing alternate sides bi-annually and would monitor the effectiveness of this regime.

He reported that the pumping stations were currently in a satisfactory condition and referred to the insurer's requirement to inspect pumps on a five-year cycle as part of the engineering breakdown cover which, because of the costs involved, the Commissioners no longer had. Mr Hill referred to the Commissioners' policy to raise monies annually within the rate budget for future pump overhauls and plant refurbishment.

The Chairman referred to previous discussions to replace 2 of the diesel engines at Glenhouse pumping station with electric motors and considered that the Commissioners should be planning ahead and looking to get an application for grant aid drawn up.

Mr Hill referred to the current position regarding the availability of grant aid and possible future requirements.

Mr Fairey queried the benefits of converting to electricity due to the current costs associated with electricity.

Mr Jolley referred to modern diesel engines not being suitable for land drainage pumps.

Mrs Langley referred to current electricity renewals showing a 40% increase in unit rates.

Mr Barnes referred to the comments by Mr Fairey and queried if the Commissioners should consider replacing two units with electric motors and the other two with new diesel engines.

The Chairman commented that the pumping units at Purls Bridge pumping station were approximately 20 years old.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to discuss the replacement of the diesel engines at Glenhouse pumping station with the Consulting Engineers and, if appropriate, give approval for a grant aid application to be prepared for submission to the Environment Agency.

C.842 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2019/2020 in the sum of £73,460.49 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £69,962).

C.843 Association of Drainage Authorities Future Communications

Mr Hill referred to a letter received from ADA dated 18th October 2018 and to the form included with the agenda.

In order to continue to receive communications from ADA in 2019, ADA required a completed form from each Member. The form could also be completed and returned electronically via the link at www.ada.org.uk/communications.

C.844 State-aided Schemes Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

Mr Hill reported that the EA undertook a ‘refresh’ of its grant allocation schedule and optimised it to increase the likelihood of meeting the government outcome measure targets. As part of this some schemes were deferred in favour of those which could be delivered within the next two years with certainty and the programme has, as a consequence, become financially oversubscribed. This effectively means that there will be little or no chance of receiving grant for any new schemes between now and 2021 (at the earliest). This date marks the end of the six-year funding commitment and whilst it is understood that the EA are pressing hard to have another six-year settlement and, if agreed to by treasury, for this to be larger than the previous one to help address the increasing investment required to tackle climate change driven impacts. At this point in time we do not know what will happen and changes could be made in any event to the funding model, what outcome targets are or the process of securing grant. What is clear is that the further ahead that IDBs collectively plan their investment needs the more likely whatever grant is available will be accessible by them.

Some members will recall that in 2009 asset surveys were carried out on all IDB pumping stations. As ten years has now passed it might be timely to revisit and update these to reflect any changes that might have occurred and for this updated information to be used to plan for future investment needs. Similarly, as it is five years since these assets were valued for insurance reasons, it is also considered worthwhile revising the rebuilding estimates to reflect construction cost inflation.

RESOLVED

- i) That no proposals be formulated at the present time.
- ii) That the Consulting Engineers be requested to undertake an asset survey and recalculate the pumping station valuations.

C.845 Health and Safety Audits

- a) Further to minute C.821, the Chairman reported that he had regular meetings with the District Superintendent with regards to health and safety and that the District Superintendent had attended a number of health and safety courses. He considered that matters were currently being dealt with adequately; the main area of concern being lone working.
- b) The Vice Chairman reported that he had attended the Chairs meeting at which Cope Safety Management gave a presentation and he considered the proposals to be beneficial to the Commissioners. Mr Heading reported further on the meeting and the requirement of the Commissioners' insurers for regular inspections.

In response to Mr Jolley, Mr Heading referred to Cope Safety Management being available for advice and help in relation to health and safety but that the overall responsibility remained with the Commissioners.

Mr Hill reported on the annual cost to the Commissioners and that additional consultation could be arranged at £500 per day. The Chairman reported that he had agreed for the Commissioners to enter into an arrangement with Cope Safety Management at a cost of £400 per annum and anticipated meeting later in the year to review the Commissioners' health and safety arrangements.

In response to Mr Heading, Mr Hill detailed the lone working app which was currently being used by the Middle Level Commissioners.

RESOLVED

That the actions of the Chairman be approved.

C.846 Budgeting

Mr Hill referred to the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

C.847 Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill 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.848 Annual Governance Statement – 2018/2019

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

C.849 Payments

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £168,876.30 which had been made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(NB) – The Chairman and Messrs Hartley and M Heading declared interests (as Members of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest (as a member of the ADA Board) in the payment made to the Association of Drainage Authorities.

(NB) – Mr M Heading declared an interest (as the Vice Chairman of the ADA River Great Ouse Board) in the payment made to the Association of Drainage Authorities, Great Ouse Branch.

C.850 Annual Accounts of the Commissioners – 2018/2019

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2019 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Commissioners, for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

C.851 Dates of next Meetings

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Commissioners be held as follows in 2020, viz:-

- i) Wednesday the 5th February 2020 and
- ii) Wednesday the 10th June 2020.

C.852 Inspection of the District

At the conclusion of the meeting those Commissioners present travelled to Glenhouse pumping station where the Chairman introduced Andy Maddams, the Commissioners' District Superintendent, who gave a presentation on the operation of the site.

- i) Discharge into the Old Bedford River

Mr Maddams referred to the 4 discharge pipes; one for each pump which discharged into the Old Bedford River and that each pump could discharge 1 ton per second. He informed the Commissioners that the most he had operational at any one time were 3 pumps. He referred to the operation of the syphon breakers and reported that currently water was being let into the District via a 12" gravity fed pipe.

Mr Fairey queried if salinity tests were carried out and Mr Maddams reported that this was done at the intake at Salters Lode but he had a refurbished salinity tester which he did use

at the intake. The Chairman referred to the level of the river in relation to the levels within the District and also to the works being carried out by the Environment Agency to the Middle Level Barrier Bank.

ii) Workshop

Members viewed the workshop which housed the Commissioners' tractor and mower and Mr Maddams referred to the diesel storage tanks which held the diesel for the tractor and diesel engines for the pumps.

iii) Control Panel Room

Mr Maddams identified the various control panels which operated the telemetry, pumps and weedscreen cleaner. He reported on how the system could be managed to stagger the starting of the pumps and how the weedscreen cleaner operated in relation to the operation of the pumps.

He reported that, as today, when water was being let into the District, the telemetry could become 'confused' and try to operate the pumps so it had to be 're-set' when the water intake had finished.

In response to the Chairman, Mr Maddams considered the diesel engines were generally in good order and were not currently showing any major issues.

Mr Barnes referred to the Consulting Engineer's report which showed that the pumps had operated for approximately 4,600 hours and Mr Maddams confirmed each engine had operated between 4,600 and 4,700 hours.

In response to Mr Fairey, Mr Maddams reported that the diesel engines operated at approximately 1,500 rpm.

Mr Barnes referred to his proposal at a previous meeting to set one pump as the duty pump so that all engines did not reach the end of their useful working life at the same time.

iv) Weedscreen Deck

Mr Maddams referred to the four diesel engines and that the cabinets had recently been painted. He reported that because of the cabinets, the engines became hot when running and that there was quite a lot of vibration. With regards to the weedscreen cleaner, he reported that it did twist in high winds, which could cause damage and gave a brief report on the service/repairs carried out on the machinery. Mr Maddams reported that he had let the grass within the pumping station compound grow this season, which had provided a good habitat for invertebrates.

v) Tractor/Mower

Mr Maddams reported that the mower had a 8.1m reach with a 1.2m head and on the operation of the machine working within the District.

The Chairman referred to the proposals to replace the tractor and mower next year and Mr Maddams reported that both were working well with no major concerns.

In response to Mr Fairey, Mr Maddams reported that the tractor had done approximately 4,500 hours and the flail mower approximately 4,000 hours.

In response to the Chairman, Mr Maddams considered that, although there were no major problems with the mower currently, it was probably the right time to consider changing it as, due to the nature of the machine, it was likely to incur increased running costs in the future.

The Chairman considered it would be best to change both the tractor and flail mower at the same time. Mrs Langley considered the tractor to currently have a good trade-in value.

vi) Old Diesel Building

Mr Maddams reported that one diesel engine was generally complete and it was likely that it would be possible to get it working. He reported on the process to start the engines.

The Chairman reported on the condition of the doors to the building and the roof and considered that the Commissioners should look to replace the doors to the building this year.

Mrs Langley queried the roof and advised that Turner Roofing would be able to give a quotation to repair the problem areas.

RESOLVED

i) That the Chairman be authorised to obtain quotations for replacing the doors and, upon receipt, the Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to take any further action they consider appropriate.

ii) That the Chairman be authorised to contact Turner Roofing contractors for advice concerning the possible repair of the roof.