

EUXIMOOR INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Euximoor Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday the 5th June 2019

PRESENT

N R Russell Esq (Chairman)
C W Albutt Esq
J E Heading Esq

P Russell Esq
W Sutton Esq
F H Yeulett Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

The Chairman enquired whether ALL Board members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. All members were in agreement.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J T Clarke Esq and P M Tegerdine Esq.

B.980 Declarations of Interest

Miss Ablett reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

The Chairman and Mr P Russell declared interests in minute B.983.

The Chairman and Mr Albutt declared interests in minute B.993

Councillor Sutton declared an interest in all planning matters as a member of Fenland District Council.

B.981 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 6th June 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.982 Vacancies in Membership

Further to minute B.946, consideration was given to the filling of the two vacancies on the Board

RESOLVED

That no action be taken to fill the vacancies at the present time.

B.983 Flail mowing in the District 2019/2020

- a) Consideration was given to flail mowing operations in the District for 2019/2020.

RESOLVED

That the District Officer be engaged to undertake flail mowing operations on the District drains in 2019.

- b) Members considered flail mowing charges for 2019.

Councillor Sutton proposed that the hourly rate should be increased to £35 per hour to reflect current market rates and this was agreed by all Members.

RESOLVED

That the current charge be increased to £35 per hour.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr P Russell declared interests when this item was discussed.

B.984 Possible Amalgamation with March East IDB

Further to minute B.949, the Chairman advised that the Board were no further forward with the amalgamation than they were last year as he had not been contacted by either the Clerk or the Chairman of March East IDB.

Miss Ablett reported that, as had been resolved at the last Board meeting, Mr Albutt had duly reported to March East IDB at their meeting the following day, that Euximoor IDB were in favour of the two Boards amalgamating; to using differential rating for a period of 3 years and for the process to be commenced immediately.

However, she advised that she had been unable to locate any correspondence on file in relation to the amalgamation process having being commenced on behalf of the Boards.

Mr Albutt confirmed that as Vice Chairman of March East IDB he had not been contacted either and suggested the Board instruct the Clerk to progress the process immediately.

Mr Heading expressed his disappointment that nothing had happened over the previous 12 months and as the whole process was not a quick one the Board must ensure that the process be initiated with some urgency.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Clerk commence the amalgamation process immediately and as a matter of urgency.
- ii) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to take such action as may be necessary.

B.985 Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.958(e), the Board considered their updated Byelaws.

RESOLVED

That the updated Byelaws be adopted.

B.986 Policy Statement

Further to minute B.958(f), the Board reviewed and approved their Policy Statement which had been updated following the publication of the National Audit Office (NAO) report on IDBs in March 2017.

RESOLVED

That the revised Policy Statement be adopted.

B.987 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute B.963, the Board considered their Biosecurity Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Biosecurity Policy be adopted.

B.988 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a second Chair's meeting was held on the 17th October 2018 and that discussions centred around meeting Health and Safety legislative requirements and the possible options for increased efficiency in delivery of IDB/DDC services. Outline detailed proposals on the latter are to be brought before the next Chair's meeting for consideration.

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.

As the Chairman had been unable to attend the Chairs meetings, Mr Heading advised that both meetings had been satisfactory, well attended and had enabled Members to express their views on any matters.

Miss Ablett referred Members to the briefing paper relating to one option for future Board arrangements and advised the subject had been raised purely to encourage discussion amongst members on the future of Boards and the options available.

The Chairman expressed his concerns regarding the loss of local knowledge and setting of the drainage rate and confirmed that he would be against amalgamating into one Board.

Miss Ablett advised of the potential use of sub-committees to retain local knowledge and of differential rating being available.

Mr Heading agreed with the Chairman's comments regarding local knowledge as this was essential and advised that in the past the Middle Level Commissioners had various sub-committees, one of which dealt with all maintenance and engineering issues, so this could be overcome and he also considered the administrative benefits would be substantial. Mr Heading stated that, although he believed it was the right way forward, the Board must be prepared to have a more open view, must be the driving force for change and dictate where they wished to go.

Councillor Yeulett enquired about the financial benefits. Miss Ablett advised that neither she nor the Treasurer had been approached in relation to the financial implications, as yet, however she pointed out that this was just an option being put forward for consideration by the Boards and if Boards were in agreement it would then be discussed in more detail.

Members discussed the matter further.

Councillor Sutton advised that the only issue for the Board at this meeting was whether the principle was right for the Board. Miss Ablett confirmed that at this stage the Clerk needed to gauge Boards interest in the idea before looking into the proposal in more detail.

RESOLVED

That the Board agrees in principle with the amalgamation of all Boards into a single Board, but more information was required before an informed decision could be made.

- ii) Association of Drainage Authorities
- a) Annual Conference

That the 81st Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 14th November 2018 and had been well attended with the main speakers being Sue Hayman MP, Shadow Secretary for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Robert Hössen crisis management expert from the Netherlands, John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency and David Cooper Deputy, Director for Flood and Coastal Erosion Management at Defra.

Sue Hayman Affairs spoke about her first-hand experience of flooding in Cumbria, the impact of flooding on mental health, building on flood plains and river management without environmental change and funding.

Robert Hössen gave a presentation on how incident management is organised and dealt with in the Netherlands.

John Curtin gave a presentation on the effects of climate change and referred to the government's discussions regarding the likelihood, impact and severity of climate change.

David Cooper referred to the 25 year environment plan and to various Government publications made in 2018, which can be viewed online.

That the Officers had been re-elected, subscriptions would be increasing by 2% for the following year and the Conference marked the launch of the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members.

That the Conference also marked the first presentation of the Chairman's award which were presented to Ian Russell from the Environment Agency for his work on Public Sector Co-operation Agreements and to Cliff Carson, former Environmental Officer of the Middle Level Commissioners and the Boards, for his work which was instrumental in changing views concerning conservation.

b) 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 Member who wishes to attend.

c) 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.

d) 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. As no member of this Board attended one of the two local workshops in the area the Board will not 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 Board may wish to consider an order of priority for future training and a timetable for delivery.

e) Workstreams

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

iii) External Bodies Conservation Initiatives

That there are two projects which may have an impact on the Board:-

a) The New Life on the Old West project being led by Cambs ACRE which aims to improve public understanding of the unique nature of biodiversity in the Fens and to deliver improvements on community green spaces and the ditch network. At the time of report the project has received a £100k grant to develop the project to the point at which a further £3/4 million grant bid will be made to support delivery.

b) The Cambridgeshire Fens Biosphere, Heritage Lottery have provided £10,000 of funding to research what would be necessary to bring Biosphere Reserve status to the Fens. This project is being led by the Wildlife Trust with support from Cambs ACRE. If successful, this would lead to a new UNESCO designation. This would be a non-statutory designation which records the unique nature of the area. Most recently, the project received £1m for field scale alternative farming trial works in the Great Fen area and to assist with the Biosphere bid.

iv) Catchment Strategy

That the EA, LLFA, IDBs and other partners are co-operating in a piece of work which is looking at the pressures on the catchment from a development and climate change perspective. The aim will be to develop proposals which will guide and inform discussion makers.

v) Water Resources East Group Meeting

That the Middle Level Commissioners are setting up a Committee to discuss how they can work more closely with Anglian Water and other partners to ensure that the management of water and the quantity taken from the River Nene can be maximized in stressed years.

vi) Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.975, Miss Ablett advised that the running of the remainder of the Anglia Farmers electricity contract had been monitored and was pleased to report that the service provided had improved.

In view of the significant increase in prices observed a utility specialist was approached and like for like prices at the time of tender, for a sample of meters, were requested in order that a comparison could be made with the prices obtained by Anglia Farmers. Although some savings may have been made, overall the prices obtained from Anglia Farmers were found to be generally competitive.

A verbal report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their last Board meeting and, based on the results of the pricing comparison exercise and in view of the

service provided by Anglia Farmers having improved, the Middle Level Commissioners resolved to remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30th September 2019.

The Clerk had recommended that the Board also remain with Anglia Farmers. However, should the Board wish to choose to end their current contract, notice was required to be given by late January/early February 2019 following which they would then be responsible for negotiating their own separate electricity contract thereafter.

Miss Ablett reported that the Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Board to remain with Anglia Farmers.

RESOLVED

That the actions of the Chairman be approved and the Board remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30th September 2019.

vii) 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.

viii) 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.

B.989 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Euximoor I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2019

Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

At the Chairman's request an allowance has been made for any machine cleansing works, reed spraying and flail mowing deemed necessary within the district this year.

Pumping Stations

Other than matters previously reported or detailed below only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations appears to be mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

Reed Fen

Plant Condition

A recent inspection shows that the pumpsets continue to operate reasonably well and gives little indication of any major mechanical or electrical problems. The Board may therefore wish to again postpone any inspection/overhaul.

Realignment of the bent weedrake tines is in hand.

Telemetry

As requested, we have looked at the provision of a less expensive stand-alone telemetry system reporting, via text messages, to designated persons on pumping plant faults.

A budget cost was provided from Lee Dickens for their system detailed below:

The Suggested Monitored Points are:

| Dins | |
|--|---|
| Pump 1 Run/Stop | Weed screen Hand/Auto |
| Pump 1 Tripped/Not Tripped | Weed screen Run/Stop |
| Pump 1 Hand/Auto | Weed screen Tripped/Not Tripped |
| Pump 1 Hour Run (derived from Pump Status on time) | Weed screen Blocked (derived from difference in UPSTREAM & SUMP levels) |
| Pump 1 Run/Stop | Weed screen Phase Fail |
| Pump Panel Phase Fail | Telemetry Power Fail (derived from RTU) |
| Pump Station Door Open/Closed (security) | Outstation Battery Low (derived from RTU) |
| Grease Pump(s) status | |

| Ains | Douts |
|---|---|
| Upstream Water Level Sump Water Level Pump 1 Motor Current Pump 2 Motor Current Ambient Temperature | Remote Start/Stop Pump 1 Remote Start/Stop Pump 2 Remote Start/stop Weeds screen Weed screen inhibit operation |



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Remote Monitoring System**

A Complete Monitoring Solution

- Remote Terminal Unit**
 Discrete, IP rated RTU used to remotely communicate events and alarms off-site.
 Battery supported for long term operation.
 16 digital inputs, 8 analogue inputs and 4 digital outputs as standard.
 Serial port for connection to other intelligent devices.
- Sitewatch® Hosted Telemetry Service**
 No software installation is needed.
 Animated graphics mimic pump station status, accessed on a secure, password protected Web page.
 View historical data and alarm history.
 Receive Email and Text message alerts 24/7, 365.
- Project Management, Installation and Commissioning**
 We have an experienced team of engineers to manage your project, from system design to the installation and handover.
- Support**
 We can provide you with short or long term support contracts, tailored to meet your business requirement.

Pump Station



Remote Terminal Unit transmits your data Off-Site. RTU can read multiple sensors.

Inputs
Outputs
MODBUS

Physical terminations to analogue and digital input/output circuits. Serial connection to other intelligent devices such as a PLC.

Communication



RTU supports:

- GPRS
- GSM
- PSTN
- Radio
- Ethernet

Application



Your own secure, password protected Web pages. Graphical status and history displayed.

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However, the budget cost for the system is approximately £12,000.

Recently, for another local drainage Board, CTS Security of Kings Lynn has installed an alarm dialler unit which can operate via GSM and send text messages to designated persons in the event of an alarm being triggered. The cost of this type of system would be in the order of £2,000

depending on the number of signals that are required to be installed. Should the Board be interested we can pursue the matter further.

Pumping hours

Reed Fen

| Hours Run | May 14- May 15 | May 15- May 16 | May 16- May 17 | May 17- May 18 | May 18 – May 19 |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| No 1 | 803 | 382 | 149 | 722 | 54 |
| No 2 | 678 | 27 | 98 | 216 | 133 |
| Total | 1481 | 409 | 247 | 938 | 187 |

Iron Bridge

| Hours Run | May 14- May 15 | May 15- May 16 | May 16- May 17 | May 17- May 18 | May 18 – May 19 |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Total | 458 | 142 | 105 | 207 | 156* |

*approximate hours

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 3 new applications have been received since the last meeting:

| <i>MLC Ref.</i> | <i>Council Ref.</i> | <i>Applicant</i> | <i>Type of Development</i> | <i>Location</i> |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 28 | F/YR18/0379/PNC04 | Mr D Russell | Residence | Euximoor Drove, Christchurch |
| 29 | F/YR18/0392/F | Mr A Ambrose | Residence (Extension) | Euximoor Drove, Christchurch |
| 30 | F/YR18/0786/PNCO4 | Mr D Russell | Residence | Euximoor Drove, Christchurch |

Planning applications ending 'PNCO' relate to prior notification change of use issues

From the information provided it is understood that all the developments propose to discharge surface water to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

Fenland District Council (FDC)

FDC Liaison Meeting

A 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 and the principles established at the Committee Meeting in respect of the Board's interests.

The 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."

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards since the last Board meeting. The main matters that may be of interest to the Board 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.

Flood risk activities: environmental permits (formerly flood defence consents)

The Environment Agency's (EA) new Environmental Permitting Charging Scheme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-permitting-charging-scheme>. Early engagement with the EA is recommended as a slight redesign of the proposal may reduce the fees required.

Riparian Responsibilities

There has been discussion about issues concerning land owner's responsibilities on riparian "private" watercourses and the amount of time and resources that are taken up by various RMAs, including the Board, in dealing with riparian issues.

It was suggested that a recommendation be made to the RFCC. The options being considered are to do nothing; seek Government Support; or undertake an awareness campaign in the Public Domain with The Law Society, Local Government members etc. It is accepted by the partner members that some initial investment in time and resources may be required to progress these items further.

Discussions included the "Owning a watercourse" webpage, which replaced the Living on the Edge booklet, this is considered to be a backward step as the information that can be presented on the .gov.uk website is very limited.

The webpage can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>.

Hedge and Ditch Rule

Following a problem in the area covered by the Ely Group of IDBs this "common law" ruling that is mainly used to determine boundaries disputes and the requirements of the Land Drainage Act, notably Section 25, is currently being discussed with various parties including the former Commissioners' and Boards' Clerk, Iain Smith.

The latest ruling which dates to 2015 can be downloaded from the Mills and Reeve website, which can be found at <https://www.mills-reeve.com/boundaries-and-the-hedge-and-ditch-rule-12-07-2015/>

Bank Instability - Environment Agency (EA)/IDB approach

The EA and IDBs advised on their respective position in respect of reinstating channels that have failed. These are largely the same but due to cost constraints the EA now only stabilises channels where there are raised embankments.

For Award Drains the wording of the Award needs to be considered. Some refer to the landowner and not the Authority concerned.

IDB & LLFA Planning Process

An update was given on the LLFA's discussions with North Level and District IDB, the Ely Group and the Middle Level Commissioners in order to attain a collective approach where possible.

However, it was explained that all three authorities have different approaches to some items and that any discussions with the planning authorities and agents may be iterative.

The LLFA/AWSL/MLC Liaison meeting was briefly discussed. The EA expressed an interest in joining this group.

Emergency Planning & Response

A draft flooding newspaper article and a flood call questions template, for completion by reception staff when receiving a flooding related call, is currently being prepared by a member of the Flood & Water team.

Skills & Apprenticeships

The Government is promoting the use of Apprenticeships and it is noted that many authorities are using these in preference to other forms of training.

It is understood that the EA, together with other partners, is developing a new Apprenticeship Standard for Water Environment Workers in England. This aims to support the training and development of workers who carry out operational activities in organisations where there is a responsibility to manage the impact of water environments, natural or manmade, on the land and surrounding businesses and homes. The water environment includes rivers, coasts (the sea), lakes, wetlands, canals and reservoirs.

County Council Public Sector Services

In addition to undertaking its role the group was advised that the Flood & Water Team may be extending its service to another County Council. The 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

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

As part of closer partnership working, training has been given to junior members of Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council staff and an undergraduate studying for a FRM degree under the EA foundation scheme. The main purpose of the training was to give the candidates a better and broader understanding of water level and flood risk management and also how the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards/Commissioners operate.

Feedback from both the candidates and internally has been positive and it is hoped that this opportunity can be offered again when the occasion arises.

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>

IDB Good Governance Guide/East Ridings of Yorkshire Council Guide

Matters raised by the East Ridings of Yorkshire Council, who had governance concerns over IDBs within its area of jurisdiction, were briefly discussed.

It is understood that correspondence was copied to all LLFAs and that Cllr Steve Count (Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council) provided a response which advised that the County Council had good partnerships with IDBs in the County.

ADA has subsequently launched its Good Governance for IDB Members guide at the ADA Conference which is primarily aimed at new Board members. Five workshops were held during March and April.

Further details on the guide and the workshops can be found at the following link

<https://www.ada.org.uk/2018/11/ada-publishes-guide-to-good-governance-for-internal-drainage-board-members/>

Update on RFCC's Growth Work

In order to accommodate the projected "growth", 500,000 new homes within the Cambridge – Milton Keynes - Oxford (CaMKOx) arc, within the Great Ouse Catchment five Local Choices papers are currently being prepared on The Upstream Great Ouse Catchment, these will investigate the following:

- (i) Potential storage;
- (ii) Conveyance Study of the Main rivers to Denver Sluice, (this will investigate pinch points, silt deposition etc);
- (iii) A Modelling Workshop, (to use existing models as work needs to be completed now);
- (iv) An Economic Assessment, (this will include an assessment of Cost/Benefits and what it does to prevent flooding); and
- (v) The Bedford to Milton Keynes Waterway Link, (which will investigate potential benefits, water transfer/resources of the proposed new waterway between Kempston and the Grand Union Canal).



The EA's 2018 Flood Action Campaign

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/young-people-most-at-risk-in-a-flood-warns-environment-agency-british-red-cross>

This is one of five funds provided by HE associated with the Strategic Road Network – A1, A14, A47 etc., the others being Cycling, safety and integration, Air Quality, Innovation and Growth and Housing.

The potential environmental funding is available for the following areas noise, water, carbon, landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage and, therefore, could include flooding, pollution, water framework directive and biodiversity projects associated with the Strategic Road Network – A1, A14, A47 etc. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/highways-england-designated-funds>

(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 early April and there are currently no issues within the Board's catchment.

An Update to the original 2014 March Flood Investigation Report, following the floods of August 2014, has recently been issued and can be found at the following link <https://ccc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/March%20flood%20investigation%202019.pdf?inline=true>.

The March Community Flood Group is being re-promoted as the EA's funding and resources permit. It is hoped that a workshop will be held during the year.

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.

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

The EA has recently commenced the FRM for the Fens Project to determine the best way of managing future flood risk. As a result a technical group has been formed, including representation from the Middle Level Commissioners.

The project was discussed at the EAs Large Projects Review Group (LPRG) meeting in November. The LPRG stated that all partners who seek future Flood Risk Management Grant-in-Aid (GiA) funding but do not share its data for the Baseline Report are likely to be denied, or capped to 45%, as they will not be able to demonstrate a strategic approach.

The project is currently at the data collection stage and details of the Board's system and any hydraulic models are being collated to inform the successful consultant, who will be appointed to progress Phase 1 of the project.

A letter from the EA has been issued to the Chairman and a copy follows for your information. This included a copy of the "elevator pitch", used by the EA to provide some background to the project. Please note that the extent of the geographical area shown has recently been amended.

Consulting Engineer

16 May 2019

Euximoor (309)\Reports\May 2019

Letter to Chairman
Internal Drainage Boards
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs
PE15 0AH

Our ref: ENV0000678C
Your ref
Date: 15 January 2019

Dear Chairman

Flood Risk Management for the Fens

Between Local Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency, we are modern day custodians of arguably the richest legacies of flood risk and drainage management in the country. I am sure you and your Board are really proud, like I am, to have a responsibility for critical infrastructure within a landscape that is hugely important for the economy, communities, food, farming and the natural environment.

The future of the Great Ouse Fens is something I am passionate about and with IDB clerks and engineers we are starting a partnership and collaborative approach to their future flood management. This letter summarises where we are and some of the important steps ahead. We really need your ideas, enthusiasm, advocacy, support and knowledge about this fantastic part of the country.

In recent years flood and drainage management in the Fens has been undertaken in somewhat of a piecemeal approach and reactive manner. With climate change projections and many of our assets coming to the end of their design life, we now collectively need to take a more strategic and long term approach. This will enable us all to maximise financial leverage and present a stronger more considered investment case to funding bodies.

Flood risk management for the Fens is a project set up to consider what the future flood risk management choices for the Great Ouse Fens could look like. This will help us develop a strategic approach together that will underpin and frame all flood and coastal risk management investment in the Fens moving forward. This is a key requirement of Defra's partnership funding policy (see attached note).

The attached document provides further details about the project, including the details of those flood risk management organisations involved in the Technical Group. David will hopefully have already briefed you on this work and will be your primary engagement link as the project moves forward.

Supported by the Anglian (Central) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and with the help of the Technical Group, we have recently secured a funding package and obtained financial approval for Phase 1 of the project. The main products of this phase includes:

- A baseline report to gain a shared understanding of all land drainage and flood risk management assets, the economics, government grant eligibility level and partnership funding challenge for all sources of flooding. *This will be presented in a similar way to the Great Ouse Tidal River Baseline Report (we can provide a copy if you don't already have one) Anticipated delivery date Feb 2020.*
- Visualisation tools to showcase the findings of the baseline report in a way that informs and excites a wide variety of audiences. *Anticipated delivery date late 2020 after the baseline report to share key messages from the report.*

For Phase 1 we have not sought financial contributions from individual IDBs within the Great Ouse Fens, however the success of the work and effective use of the funding we have secured is hugely dependent upon the timely provision of asset and financial data from all Risk Management Authorities. Since July 2018, we have been working as part of the Technical Group on the specification and provision of this data.

We are aiming to appoint consultants for Phase 1 by early February 2019 and we are keen to have this data before then. Therefore it is vital that we have your support in helping your clerks and engineers to provide this information in a timely manner and by the 21 January 2019.

This will enable the project to move forward efficiently avoiding abortive costs, and help us to continue to support your IDB in seeking FCRM Grant in Aid (GiA) for individual investments. If we have gaps or deficiencies in the data then we will not be developing a strategic approach and are unlikely to be successful in maximising FCRM GiA funding for future projects.

Alongside Phase 1 we also collectively need to start to plan for Phase 2 of this work. Phase 2 is likely to start in approximately 5 years' time and most likely be a strategic options appraisal, to identify the choices for medium and long term flood risk management in the Fens.

Amongst the many benefits of this work, it will help us all better inform, influence and justify the source, nature and levels of funding required to

evolve and manage flood and drainage infrastructure over the medium and long term. The scope and governance arrangements for Phase 2 will all need to be developed and agreed collaboratively and there is no presumption that the Environment Agency will lead.

Initial estimates from similar projects are that Phase 2 may cost in the region of £10 million to £15 million, and significant levels of partnership funding will be needed to be sourced to unlock and complement FCRM GiA. Therefore an investment strategy will be developed in parallel to Phase 1. Your Board may want to consider sooner rather than later how they choose to plan for this.

In the short term, whilst the strategic work is progressing, we all still need to continue to invest in the flood and drainage infrastructure within the Fens, without prejudicing any medium and long term choices. To frame this and support investment decision making in being as effective and efficient as possible, through the Technical Group we are also developing tactical plans for the Fens. These are looking at how we apportion benefits across respective infrastructure and apply these to upcoming investments. Once these are ready it may be useful to present to your Board.

It is a really interesting and exciting time with all this work. I hope you and your Board are supportive of the approach. If you have any questions or would like further information then please contact David, myself or our Project Executive, Claire Bell (Claire.Bell@Environment-Agency.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely



PAUL BURROWS

Flood & Coastal Risk Manager for East Anglia Area (Great Ouse catchment inc North West Norfolk coast)

Mobile: 07824 431597

paul.burrows@environment-agency.gov.uk

The Strategic Approach for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Projects

Supplementary Local Guidance Version 1

In both Defra Policy Statements (Appraisal of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management June 2009 and Partnership Funding May 2011) demonstrating and evidencing a strategic approach to flood or coastal erosion risk is a requirement for every project, to ensure value for money for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid (FCERM GiA).

Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) and Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) form the large scale holistic view of risk management requirements at the catchment or coastal process scale, beneath which more detailed strategies, and the local scale risk management activities should be developed.

Primarily, all schemes seeking FCERM GiA allocation should be in line with or compliment any overarching strategic plan such, for example, the Great Ouse CFMP.

"SMPs or CFMPs will have collected information on the economic, environmental and social assets at risk, the defences or coast protection works that are in place and identified preferred policies. The SMP or CFMP will also have engaged with stakeholders and you may be able to draw some information from the results. Early links need to be made with SMPs or CFMPs and strategies (where applicable) as they may have already identified key issues and broad solutions (in CFMPs these are called generic responses). It is essential to link the problem back to the policy as defined in the SMP or CFMP (and for schemes, to the description of the strategy, where available) to ensure continuity is not lost. Any conflicts between the description of the problem for your project and the recommendation of the SMP or CFMP (or strategy) will need to be highlighted and reconciled before you can progress further." - Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Appraisal Guidance, 2010.

The meaning of a 'strategic approach' is described throughout the FCERM Appraisal Guidance, March 2010, mainly in Chapter 3. It needs to include consideration of wider factors such as the economic, environmental, recreational and social factors that may affect or be affected by the proposed investment opportunity. These wider factors will then subsequently influence the selection of investment options to manage or mitigate the flood or coastal erosion risks. At the early stages of appraisal a wide range and broad portfolio of options should be identified, such as a change in pumping regimes, storage options and combining flood cells and assets for example. These options should be appropriate to the scale and type of project being undertaken.

Any strategic evaluation should be done as early as possible when planning a FCERM project. Findings should be evidenced within the business case, however, as this is produced much later than the initial project submission is submitted to the Environment Agency (through PAFS) it may be required that evidence of a strategic approach be made available to the Environment Agency on request in advance of the programme refresh. Failure to submit such evidence on request, will result in the maximum grant rate for the scheme being reduced to 45%.

"Where there is not a clear strategic approach setting out how benefits are apportioned to individual investments within a system of assets, the maximum grant rate allowable will be reduced to 45%. This means that all risk management authorities, including internal drainage boards, could receive up to 100% grant levels. The reduced grant rate, relevant for all risk management authorities, helps preserve value for money in cases where investments may only score well because benefits are being double-counted." – Partnership Funding Policy 2011

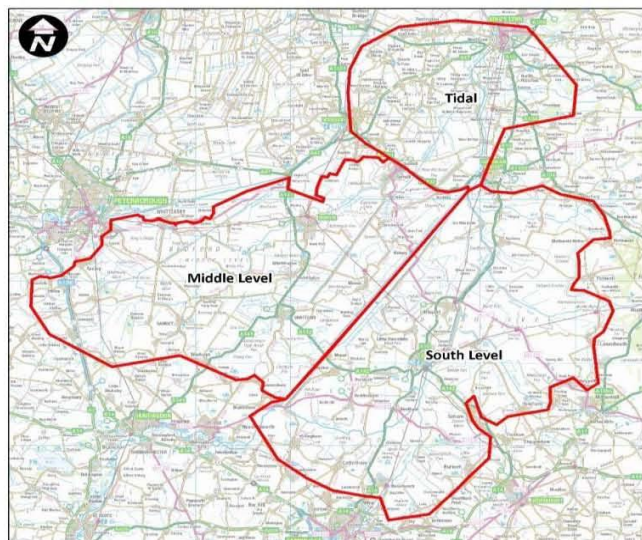
It is understood that there is a significant variation in the types of schemes which may be eligible for FCERM GiA funding. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the attention given to investigating a strategic approach should be proportional to the size of the scheme. Therefore, for smaller schemes (affecting a lower number of outcome measures and/or seeking a smaller sum of funding) a discussion of how a scheme aligns with a strategic approach may suffice. This could be evidenced, for example in notes accompanying a PAFS submission or captured within meeting minutes held in the early planning stages. Similarly, a larger scheme will require a more substantial demonstration. Any such scheme should be able to include, or reference any strategic analysis prior to PAFS submission or annual programme refresh.

This guidance reinforces the Defra Policy Statements ([Appraisal of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management June 2009](#) and [Partnership Funding May 2011](#)), if these National policies change in the future, this guidance will be amended accordingly.

Flood risk management for the Fens – planning together for a sustainable flood risk future

‘Flood risk management for the Fens’ is a project that has been set up to plan the best way of managing future flood risk in the Great Ouse Fen Area. We are currently in the **first phase** of this project which is developing a shared understanding of the situation and challenges for managing flood risk (from all sources) in the Fens.

A Technical Group (TG) has been formed of organisations (see below) who have **flood risk assets**, or represent those with assets, in the geographical area that has been defined as the Great Ouse Fens.



We are **working together** to set out all the data about flood risk in the area outlined – defining who is managing flood risk, asset maintenance costs and potential available Flood Risk Management Grant in Aid (Government funding). This will identify any difference in **investment needs versus available funding**.

The most important outcome for the first phase of work is for the TG to have a **shared understanding** of the issues and challenges for managing flood risk in the Fens, and to have a **shared ownership** for taking action to overcome these issues.

Pressures on the Fens will come from many sources including, for example, climate change causing sea level rise affecting the Tidal River and the systems discharging into it, and catchment pressures from housing and infrastructure growth.

Following this initial data gathering phase, which we hope to complete in the next 18-24 months, we will produce a **joint project plan** for the next phase of work. The outcome of Phase 2 will be to produce a jointly owned strategic plan reviewing all options that could manage flood risk in the Fens, taking in to account climate change and sea level rise and recommending actions that will be the best/ most appropriate way of managing flood risk in the Fens over the next 50-100 years.

The TG will work closely with the Environment Agency's Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Partnerships and Strategic Overview Team who are progressing a similar project for the Lincolnshire Fens, but at different timescales.

The TG understands that there are **many different areas of interest** within the Fens, and a lot of groups and individuals will be interested in the work of the project.

At this stage in the project, there is a very **strong focus on the flood risk management challenges** – specifically focusing on current flood risk management assets. We will keep interested stakeholders updated with the progress of this stage of the project and **our work will be overseen by the Anglian Central Regional Flood and Coastal Committee**.

The TG is aware of the importance of linking Phase 1 outputs to other projects shaping the future of the Fens landscape.

Flood risk management for the Fens Project

Phase 1
Data gathering
and collective
ownership

Phase 2
High level
action plan /
strategy

Phase 3
onwards
Phased action
plans

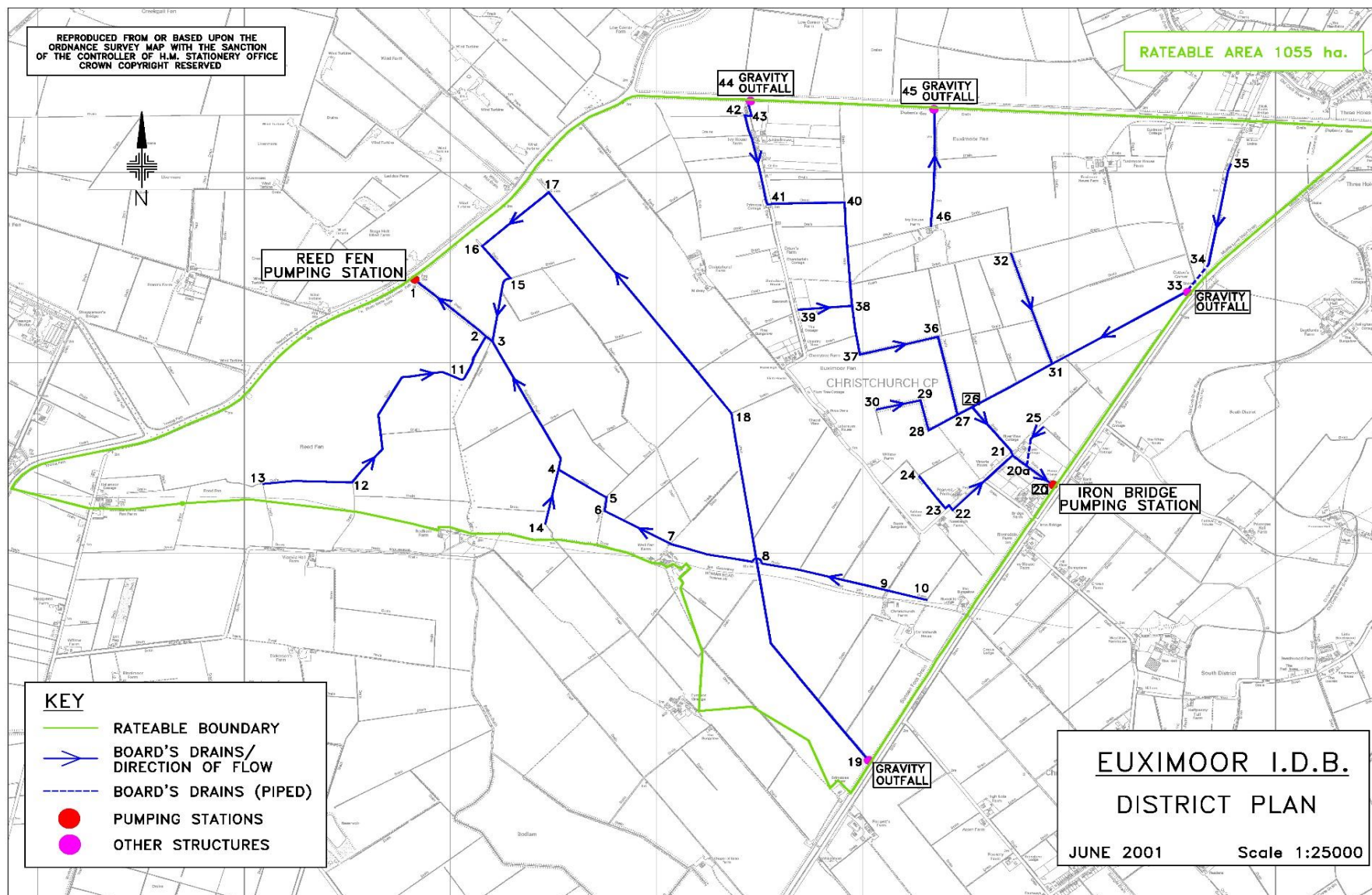


Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards



middle level
commissioners





Miss Ablett reminded the Board of their request at the last meeting for the Consulting Engineers to source a less expensive standalone telemetry system and referred them to the options shown in their report.

Mr Albutt advised that, as the Board's pump attendant, he monitored the water levels and the pumping station on a regular basis, and did not, therefore, consider it necessary to have any telemetry system. This was agreed by the Members.

RESOLVED

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

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr P Russell declared interests in the planning application (MLC Ref Nos 28 and 30 received from Mr D Russell.

B.990 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

Mr Heading advised that all capital equipment wears out eventually and there would come a time when it would require replacing and the Board must look forward and consider when that may arise and continue to raise funds accordingly.

He reported that, although substantial grants had been available in the past, the availability of such grants being available in the future was unclear and as obtaining grants may become more difficult in the future, IDBs were going to have to put forward a good structured plan for any application to be considered.

Members carefully considered their capital programme and the funds being accumulated for future works.

The Board were content that all aspects of future expenditure of both a maintenance and capital nature were being addressed by taking onboard and actioning, where necessary, all concerns raised by the Consulting Engineers in their report, having regular pumping station maintenance visits carried out, with any matters requiring attention being reported to the Chairman where immediate action was required, continually considering risk and by accumulating a fund for specific future works that may arise.

RESOLVED

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

B.991 District Officer's Report

The Chairman advised that there was very little to report and confirmed that the District was inspected on a regular basis to identify any problems that may arise.

There had been a slip between points 11-12 and Fen Group had been instructed to reinstate the bank, together with machine cleansing the drains from Point 13 down to Reed Fen pumping station and between Points 3-15.

He further advised that spraying works may be necessary, predominantly at Reed Fen pumping station, and he would arrange with the Middle Level Commissioners for this to be carried out.

RESOLVED

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

B.992 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2018, previously circulated to Members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP Report.

B.993 District Officer's Fee and Pumping Station duties

- a) The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2019/2020.
- b) The Board gave consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2019/2020.

Miss Ablett referred to the Middle Level Commissioners' pay award indicator which was 3.00%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Board agree that the sum of £1,287.50 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2019/2020.
- ii) That the Board agree that the sum of £742.00 be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2019/2020.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr Albutt declared financial interests when this item was discussed.

B.994 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.

Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

Miss Ablett 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.

Mr Heading considered it was important that an asset survey be carried out as it would be irresponsible not to, but if the District Officer was confident that he was already doing this than that should be sufficient.

The Chairman advised that the pump attendant surveyed the pumping station, together with regular maintenance visits by the Middle Level Commissioners and, as District Officer, he surveyed all other structures within the District on a regular basis, he was satisfied that regular inspections were being carried out.

RESOLVED

- i) That no proposals be formulated at the present time.
- ii) That no asset survey be carried out.

[Post meeting note – Due to the Board having not received all the necessary information relating to type of condition report and costs involved at the meeting, Members were provided with this information, post meeting, and asked whether they wished for asset surveys to be re-visited on behalf of the Board by the Middle Level Commissioners].

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineers be requested to re-visit and update the asset survey for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

B.995 Environment Agency – Precept

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2019/2020 in the sum of £3,757.30 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £3,578).

B.996 Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Subscriptions

Miss Ablett reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2019, viz:- from £542 to £553.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2019.

b) Future ADA Communications

Miss Ablett 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.

B.997 Complaint – Mr Wild

Miss Ablett reported that, because his land had been under water during the 2017/2018 winter period, Mr Wild was refusing to pay his drainage rates. However, the Clerk had advised him that payment of drainage rates was not optional and that the Board did have powers to recover unpaid amounts.

The Chairman advised that the reason for any flooding having occurred was due to Mr Wild not having maintained his private watercourses around the Main Drain.

Members agreed that it was the responsibility of landowners to maintain private watercourses and the lack thereof would be a contributory factor to flooding of their land.

The Chairman also advised that Mr Wild should be made aware that from Point 39 the watercourse became the responsibility of the Board and the drain had been maintained to a good standard from this point.

RESOLVED

That a letter be sent to Mr Wild, together with a large map of the District, advising that from Point 39 the watercourse becomes that of the Board and is maintained by the Board to a good standard. He was also to be reminded that the maintenance of private watercourses is the responsibility of the landowner and the lack of maintenance is a contributory factor to ineffective drainage of the land and the outstanding rates must be paid otherwise further action will be taken for collection.

B.998 Complaint – Mrs Crout – Entry onto land without notice and damage to fence

The Chairman reported that this matter had been dealt with and successfully concluded.

B.999 Health and Safety

Miss Ablett reported that at the autumn Middle Level and Associated Drainage Board's Chairs meeting, a request was made to seek to either take on an additional employee or employ a contractor to specifically support the Drainage Board's to help them meet their legal Health and Safety requirements and also deliver the specified requirements of the Board's insurers who are calling for evidence that appropriate measures are in place to manage Health and Safety.

The Chairman advised that he had been unable to attend the Chairs meeting but Mr Albutt confirmed that he had attended a Manual Handling training course on behalf of the Board. He had also attended the Health & Safety meeting at which it had been agreed to enter into a 3-year contract with Cope Safety Management with the annual payment being split between the Boards, which he thought was the correct way forward.

Miss Ablett advised that assuming all Boards joined the arrangement, the cost to the Board would be £400 per annum and if the Board required extra support in the first year or so this could be provided at a day rate of £500 (Hourly rate of £85 for part days).

The Chairman confirmed that he had not previously agreed for the Board to be included in the arrangement as, due to there being a cost involved, he considered it was a decision for the Board.

RESOLVED

That Cope Safety Management be appointed for a period of three years at a cost of £400 per annum and the Chairman be authorised to request further support as and when required.

B.1000 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2017/2018

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2018.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2018.

B.1001 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2017/2018.

B.1002 Budgeting

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

B.1003 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1004 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with their current Risk Management Policy.
- b) The Board reviewed and approved the insured value of their buildings.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineers be requested to re-visit the pumping station valuations.

B.1005 Exercise of Public Rights

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

B.1006 Annual Governance Statement – 2018/2019

The Board 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 Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

B.1007 Payments 2018/2019

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £35,399.94 which had been made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr P Russell declared interests in the payment made to Russell and Sons (Farmers) Ltd.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in the payment made to N Russell.

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

B.1008 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2018/2019

The Board 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 Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

B.1009 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2019/2020

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2019/2020 and were informed by Miss Ablett 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 92.60% and 7.40%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £36,728 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 £34,009 and £2,719 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 21.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £2,719 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1010 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.

B.1011 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Wednesday the 3rd June 2020.