

NIGHTLAYERS INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday the 9th May 2019

PRESENT

A Edgley Esq (Chairman)
S Edgley Esq (Vice Chairman)

S P Graves Esq

D G Collett Esq
T B Edgley Esq

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were 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 Councillor Mrs F S Newell, J Edgley Esq, L Edgley Esq, T Scott Esq and M Smalley Esq.

B.1031 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.

B.1032 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 31st May 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1033 Board Membership

Further to minute B.993, the Clerk reported that Mr Luke Edgley had accepted the invitation to join the Board.

B.1034 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillors Mrs F S Newell and P Murphy to be Members of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Miss Ablett also reported that Councillor D Green had not been re-appointed.

B.1035 Illegal Discharge – Cambridge Property Group

Further to minute B.995, the Chairman reported that the Clerk had contacted him the previous day and apologised for the late action as the letters the Board had asked to be written to the occupiers regarding the illegal discharge had not been sent. Miss Ablett advised that in view of the site being fully occupied and operational there would be treated effluent flows generated by the site, which would be discharging (via the Anglian Water network) into the Board's system and she confirmed the Clerk had sent an email to Liz Dent of Cambridge Property Group requesting their urgent attention to the matter.

B.1036 Drove 22, Carters Bridge

Further to minute B.996, the Chairman reported that, as resolved at the last meeting, the water levels had been kept lower during the winter and the position monitored. He advised that he did have a meeting on site and had asked the Middle Level Commissioners to obtain a quotation for the installation of a water control structure.

Mr Lakey, Middle Level Commissioners' Assistant Operations Engineer, advised that although the quotation had not yet been received from Fen Group, they had indicated that the cost would be in the region of £10,000, which included installation.

The Chairman enquired whether the Board were agreeable to pay for all the works or that Abbots Ripton Farming Company Ltd should pay as they were the only party benefitting.

Mr Lakey also raised the question as to who would be responsible for maintaining the structure and was advised that this would be the responsibility of Abbots Ripton Farming Company Ltd. It was agreed that no decision would be made until the Board had received a quote.

RESOLVED

That the water levels continue to be kept lower over the winter, the situation be monitored and the installation of a slacker be considered next year, once a quotation has been received.

B.1037 Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.1009(e), the Board considered their updated Byelaws.

RESOLVED

That the updated Byelaws be adopted.

B.1038 Policy Statement

Further to minute B.1009(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.1039 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute B.1014, the Board considered their Biosecurity Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Biosecurity Policy be adopted.

B.1040 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised that most items included in the Clerk's report were as a matter of report, however, there were a couple of points to bring to the Board's attention, these being Health & Safety, which would be discussed later in the agenda, and that of an option for future Board arrangements.

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.

Mr T Edgley advised he had attended the Chairman's meeting on behalf of the Board and reported to Members the discussions that had taken place in respect of the potential future arrangements for Boards, one option under consideration being the amalgamation of all the Boards into a single Board.

He reported that there would be some savings and smaller sub-committees would more or less operate in the same way as the Board does currently. He advised that he did not see how amalgamating would benefit the Board apart from some savings and considered the Board should stay as they were.

Members discussed and voiced various concerns regarding control, rates, protection of funds and assets. Miss Ablett advised that there could be differential rating, funds could be ring fenced and any assets could be owned by the new Board and investment in them charged to an area. She confirmed that the briefing paper was simply to inform the Board on one of the options and to obtain the Boards view.

The Chairman stated that the Board was a small Board that worked very well as it was.

RESOLVED

That the Board do not wish to amalgamate with other Boards or into a single Board at this time.

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. At least one member of this Board attended one of the two local workshops in the area and hence the Board 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 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.

The Vice Chairman reported that water intake into the Middle Level system was via one point at Stanground and current flows were very low and, in his opinion, unless there is reasonable rainfall there could be the possibility of shortages. He reported that part of the work of the group was to model the intake for Anglian Water which could hopefully lead to a better overall allocation for agricultural use.

vi) Anglia Farmers

Further to minute B.1026, 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.

B.1041 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers, viz;_

Nightlayers I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2019

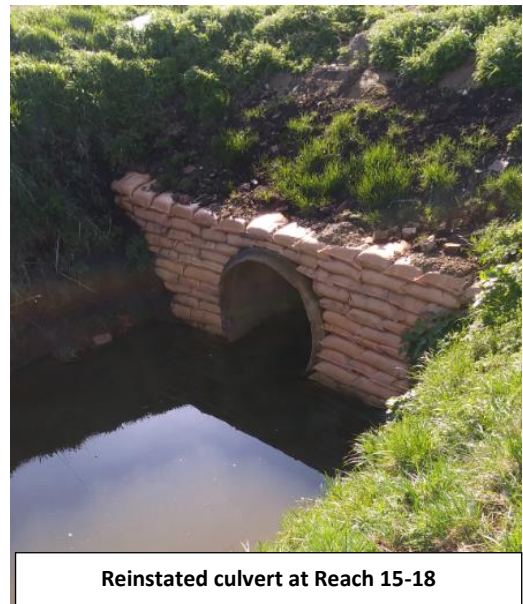
Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Board at its last annual meeting.

A Roundup herbicide application was applied early in the growing season to the Board's Campole drain, reach 19-21-22-23-24-25-26-27, to control vigorous growths of watercress and other emergent aquatic vegetation, followed by a second application of Roundup, later in the year. This will be continued this year with an early spring and late summer application, to avoid any further infestation.

The dislodged culvert pipe identified on reach 15-18 last year, has been reinstated during the annual machine cleansing works, as agreed at the Board's last annual meeting. A new stone foundation and concrete bagged headwall have been installed to prevent any future failures at the site.

The bank subsidence on reach 22-23 of the Campole drain has also been addressed. However, there are more signs of bank movement evident along other parts of the drain and these will be monitored to ensure they do not deteriorate any further and appropriate action will be taken if required.



A recent joint inspection of the Board's drains has been undertaken with the Chairman. This reveals that most drains remain in a generally satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard.

However, sporadic stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation are evident throughout the drains to the west of the system (reaches 8-9-10-11 and 9-28). It is recommended that the affected reaches be treated with an application of Roundup herbicide, followed by light machine cleansing post-harvest this year.

The Chairman has also requested the Main Pump Drain (reach 1-2-3) and Nightlayers Fen Drain (reach 3-4-5-6-7-8) are included in this year's machine cleansing programme, due to the large quantities of arisings experienced during last year's cleansing works in this area. Both drains are

susceptible to heavy silt deposits, therefore going forward the Chairman has requested they are machine cleansed every 2 years to maintain the drains to a satisfactory condition and reduce the quantities of arisings that need to be incorporated into the adjacent farmland.

It was also noted during the inspection that an undesignated private watercourse, that is responsible for allowing water flows from the town of Chatteris into the Board's system, is becoming increasingly overgrown and unmanaged. In a heavy rainfall event this may cause an issue if the water is restricted and allowed to back up into the residential areas. Due to the potential problems the private drain may cause, the Board may wish to take this opportunity to discuss if they would like to take any further action to reduce the risk of potential flooding (please see plan for location).



Overgrown Watercourse

At the Chairman's request, a provisional sum has additionally been allocated for any other emergency machine cleansing, cott removal, culvert clearance or bank slip repair works that may be required within the Board's drains later in the year.

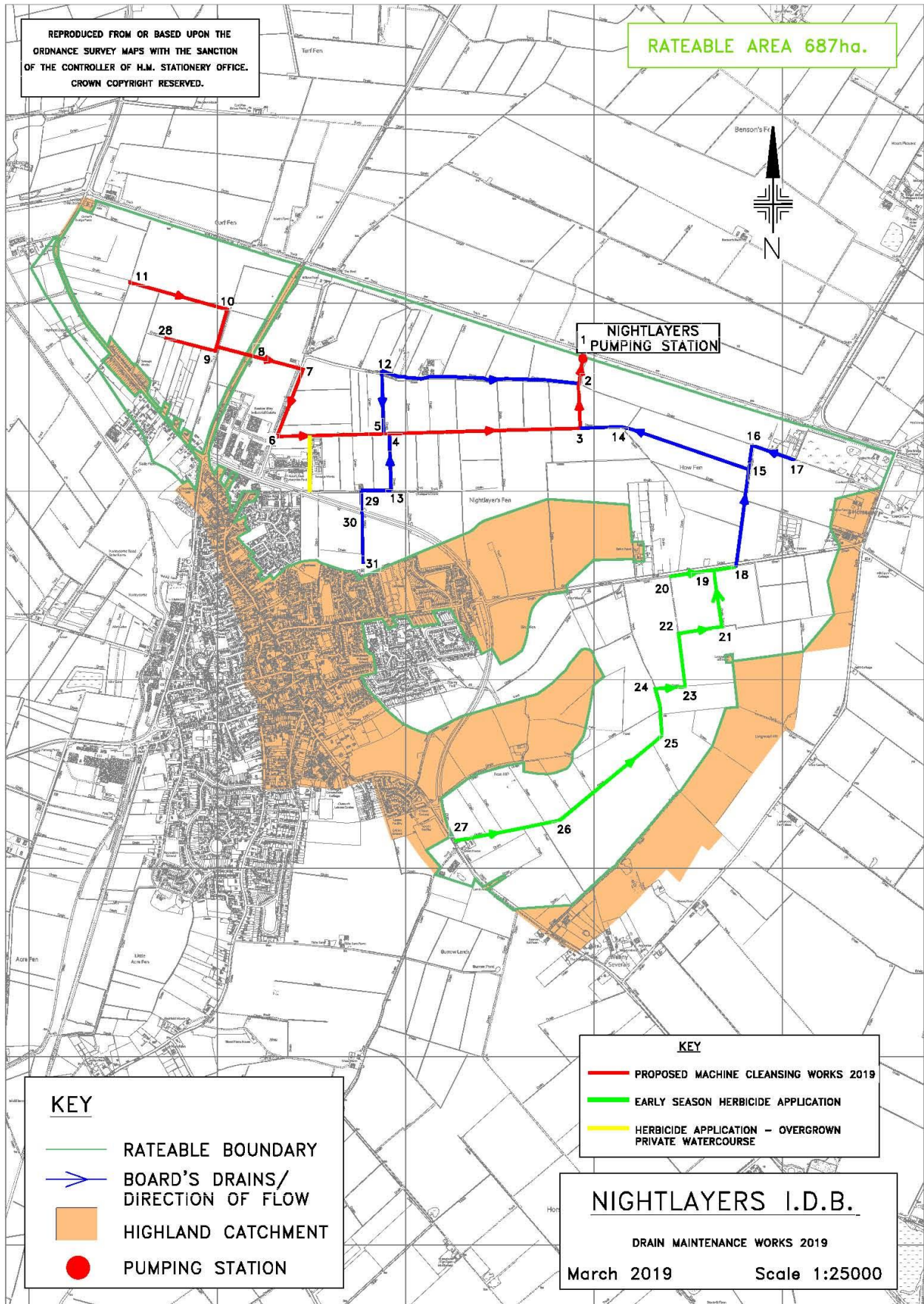
The Board's flail mowing contractors, Messrs Ashman, have indicated that they are available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements this year. A sum for the completion of flail mowing of Board's drains for the ensuing year has been included in the estimated costs.

The recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance programme is as follows:

1)	Roundup applications to control emergent aquatic weed and reed growth in District Drains	Item	Sum	1200.00
2)	Allow sum for machine cleansing Main Pump Drain Reach 1-2-3	400m	@ 1.20	480.00
3)	Allow sum for machine cleansing Nightlayers Fen Drain Reach 3-4-5-6-7-8	2500m	@ 1.20	<u>3000.00</u>
	Carried forward			4680.00

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KEY

- RATEABLE BOUNDARY
- BOARD'S DRAINS/
DIRECTION OF FLOW
- HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
- PUMPING STATION

KEY

- PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING WORKS 2019
- EARLY SEASON HERBICIDE APPLICATION
- HERBICIDE APPLICATION - OVERGROWN
PRIVATE WATERCOURSE

NIGHTLAYERS I.D.B.

DRAIN MAINTENANCE WORKS 2019

March 2019

Scale 1:25000

	Brought forward				4680.00
4)	Allow sum for machine cleansing Western Drains Reach 8-9-10-11 & 9-28	1100m	@	1.20	1320.00
5)	Allow sum for emergency machine Cleansing Cott removal, culvert clearance works in Board's Drains	Item	Sum		1500.00
6)	Flail mowing district drains	Item	Sum		2500.00
7)	Fees for inspection, preparation and Submission of report to the Board, Arrangement and supervision of herbicide Applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum		1000.00
TOTAL					£11,000.00

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

Pumping Station

Other than as reported below only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the Station's pumping plant is considered to be in a satisfactory condition.

Weedscreen Cleaner

Trials of a re-designed grab proved not to be any more efficient at removing rapid blockages of the weedscreen that occur at certain times of the year and consequently the original grab was refitted, this was at no cost to the Board. Following this, and with enhancement to the trolley positioning switches, the reliability seems to have improved.

The Board asked that a business case be developed in relation to a grant application for installation of a new automatic weedscreen cleaner and a wider weedscreen. However, this work has been held back as the Board should be aware that EA grant-in-aid (GiA) is fully committed until 2021 and hence no funding is likely until after that time at the earliest. It is also noted that a recent application for a weedscreen cleaner attracted only £5K in GiA money, although this was supplemented with £31K of Local Levy (which is given at the gift of the RFCC). The business case has to be built upon reduction of risk and the key generally is to define how many properties move from one risk band to another. Based upon previous experience the Board should budget £6.5K for building the case and attempting to gain business case approval. It is, of course, never certain that an application will be successful or that money for such a scheme will be available in the future. Also, it is worth remembering that properties protected cannot be double counted, ie any properties counted for this scheme cannot then be used for supporting the case for any other scheme.

Pumping Hours

Total Hours Run	May 16 – May 17	May 17 – May 18	May 18 – April 19 (Approximate figure)
No 1 electric	264	533	180
No 2 diesel	59	13	45

Total Hours Run	May 11 – March 12	March 12 – May 13	May 13 – May 14	May 14 – May 15	May 15 – May 16
No 1 electric	126	565	418	475	404
No 2 diesel	2	252	94	31	11

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 23 new applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
764	F/YR18/0509/F	ALS Foods & Pharmaceutical	Office/Store (Extension)	Metcalfe Way, Chatteris*
765	F/YR18/0483/F	Mr & Mrs Jaggard	Residence	Pound Close, Chatteris
766	F/YR18/0577/F	Beauville Properties Ltd	Residential (20 plots)	New Road, Chatteris*
767	F/YR18/0597/F	Mr Pilgrim	Office	Doddington Road, Chatteris
768	F/YR18/0647/F	Mr L Hancock	Residence	Pound Close, Chatteris
769	F/YR18/0814/F	Chatteris Development Ltd	Residential (2 plots)	Railway Lane, Chatteris
770	F/YR18/0805/F	Mr B Steers	Residence	High Street, Chatteris
771	F/YR18/3110/COND	N & M Hobbs	Retail (Garden Centre)	Doddington Road, Chatteris
772	Enquiry	BWB Consulting	Unknown	Metcalfe Way, Chatteris
773	F/YR18/0860/RM	FRW (UK) Ltd	Residence	Doddington Road, Chatteris
774	F/YR18/1001/F	Mr S Baxter	Residence (Day room)	High Street, Chatteris
775	F/YR18/1024/F	J Stannard & M Northfield	Residence	Horseway, Chatteris
776	F/YR18/1022/F	Mr K Betts	Residence	Park Street, Chatteris
777	F/YR18/1064/F	Mr D Fills	Residence (Extension)	Wood Street, Chatteris
778	F/YR18/1053/F	Mr & Mrs Tuffin	Residence (Extension)	Saddlers Way, Chatteris
779	F/YR18/1106/F	Dr & Mrs P McKen	Residence (Extension)	St Martins Road, Chatteris
780	F/YR18/1149/F	Mr & Mrs Powell	Residence	Doddington Road, Chatteris
781	F/YR19/0040/F	Mr & Mrs Darr	Residence (Extension)	Gull Way, Chatteris
782	F/YR19/0101/O	Mr & Mrs Jaggard	Residence	Pound Road, Chatteris
783	F/YR19/0139/F	Ms R Pasqualino	Residential (2 plots)	Wood Street, Chatteris

784	F/YR19/0140/F	Mr Baxter	Residence (Day room and siting of mobile home)	High Street, Chatteris
785	F/YR19/0163/F	Mr I Baker	Residential (2 plots)	Chapel Lane, Chatteris
786	F/YR19/0213/O	Mr S Colgrave	Residential (2 plots)	King Edward Road, Chatteris

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

Developments that are known to propose direct discharge to the Board's system are 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 effluent into the Board's system via Nightlayers' Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

No applications for Infiltration Device Self Certification or the Checking Service have been received since the last meeting report.

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 Board's interests:

- *Development of land west off Fenton Way and east of Iretons Way, Chatteris – R W Simpson Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 464 & 570); Client of Grounds & Co (MLC Ref No 560); Allpress Farms Ltd (MLC Ref No 566); & Produce World (Chatteris) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 659, 663 & 754)*
- *Erection of workplace homes - Mr G Collett (MLC Ref Nos 370 & 551) & Midland Ventures Ltd (MLC Ref No 492) and Erection of up to 3no dwellings at land south west of (Womb Farm) Doddington Road [George Way], Chatteris - Mr G Collett (MLC Ref No 726)*
- *Residential development with associated landscaping, open space and infrastructure at land east of Wenny Road, Chatteris - Cannon Kirk (UK) Homes (MLC Ref Nos 535 & 698) and Client of Cannon Consulting Engineers (MLC Ref Nos 667 & 676)*
- *Erection of 20 dwellings comprising; 8 x 2-bed and 11 x 3-bed houses, 1 x 3-bed bungalow and garages at land south of Tern Gardens, Chatteris – Construct Reason Limited (MLC Ref No 563)*
- *Erection of a 3-storey block of 6 x flats comprising of 4 x 2 bed and 2 x 1-bed flats involving the demolition of existing building at 26 Bridge Street, Chatteris - Mrs R Jinks (MLC Ref 588 & 683) & Green Deal Construction Ltd (MLC Ref 708)*
- *Erection of 8 houses comprising of 1 x 4-bed detached, 6 x 3-bed semi-detached and 1 x 3-bed detached with garages at site of former 91 High Street, Chatteris – J A Investments (MLC Ref Nos 600 & 608)*

- *Residential development on land north and east of 209 New Road, Chatteris – Client of Opus International Consultants (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref No 617), King Partnership Homes (MLC Ref Nos 617 & 620) & Langwith Construction (MLC Ref No 718)*
- *Residential development involving demolition of existing buildings at 54 Bridge Street, Chatteris - City Dial Retirement Benefit Trust Scheme (MLC Ref No 634) & J A Investments (MLC Ref No 755)*
- *Proposed wind turbine, substation, transformer buildings and associated works on land west of Nightlayers Farm, Long Nightlayer's Drove, Chatteris - Client of Amazi Consulting Ltd (MLC Ref No 650)/Long Nightlayers Drove Renewables Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 651 & 657)*
- *Installation of a Biomethane Injection pipeline (to inject into the National Grid) involving the erection of an associated plant compound with 2.4m high boundary security fence and gates at Gas Pipeline for Anaerobic Digester Plant, Iretons Way, Chatteris – Little Green Consulting Ltd (MLC Ref No 661) & Pretoria Energy (MLC Ref No 666)*
- *Erection of 7 no single storey dwellings comprising of 6 x 3-bed with garages and 1 x 2-bed at land north of 35-45 New Road, Chatteris – Construct Reason Ltd (MLC Ref No 662)*
- *Extension & alterations to former Co-operative Store, Bridge Street, Chatteris – Client of Stirling Maynard (MLC Ref No 675) & Aldi Food Stores (MLC Ref No 680)*
- *Erection of 2 x 2-bed flats at land east of 22C Pound Road, Chatteris - Mr J Capper (MLC Ref 705)*
- *Residential Development at land west of 9 Doddington Road, Chatteris – Mr George Munns (MLC Ref Nos 720 & 737)*
- *Erection of 10 x 2-storey 3-bed dwellings including 1 x with detached single garage, 2 x with detached double carports on land north east of 81 - 87 High Street accessed From Slade Way, Chatteris - Mr T Mannion (MLC Ref No 752)*
- *Erection of up to 4 x dwellings involving the demolition of existing dwelling and associated outbuildings at 14 - 16 Wenny Road Chatteris – Ms C Morley (MLC Ref No 753)*

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

Erection of 20 dwellings with associated garages, parking and landscaping on land to the south of 116 - 122 New Road, Chatteris - Beauville Properties Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 312 & 766)

Further to previous Board reports, circa 2003, a planning application for this site was submitted to the District Council in June but was subsequently withdrawn in October.

Members will be aware that there are several issues with this site including the lack of a readily available surface water outfall which has resulted in flooding incidents in the immediate area.



Extract from L Bevens Associates Architects Ltd Drawing Number CH17/LBA/431/FP-1-100 Rev. H

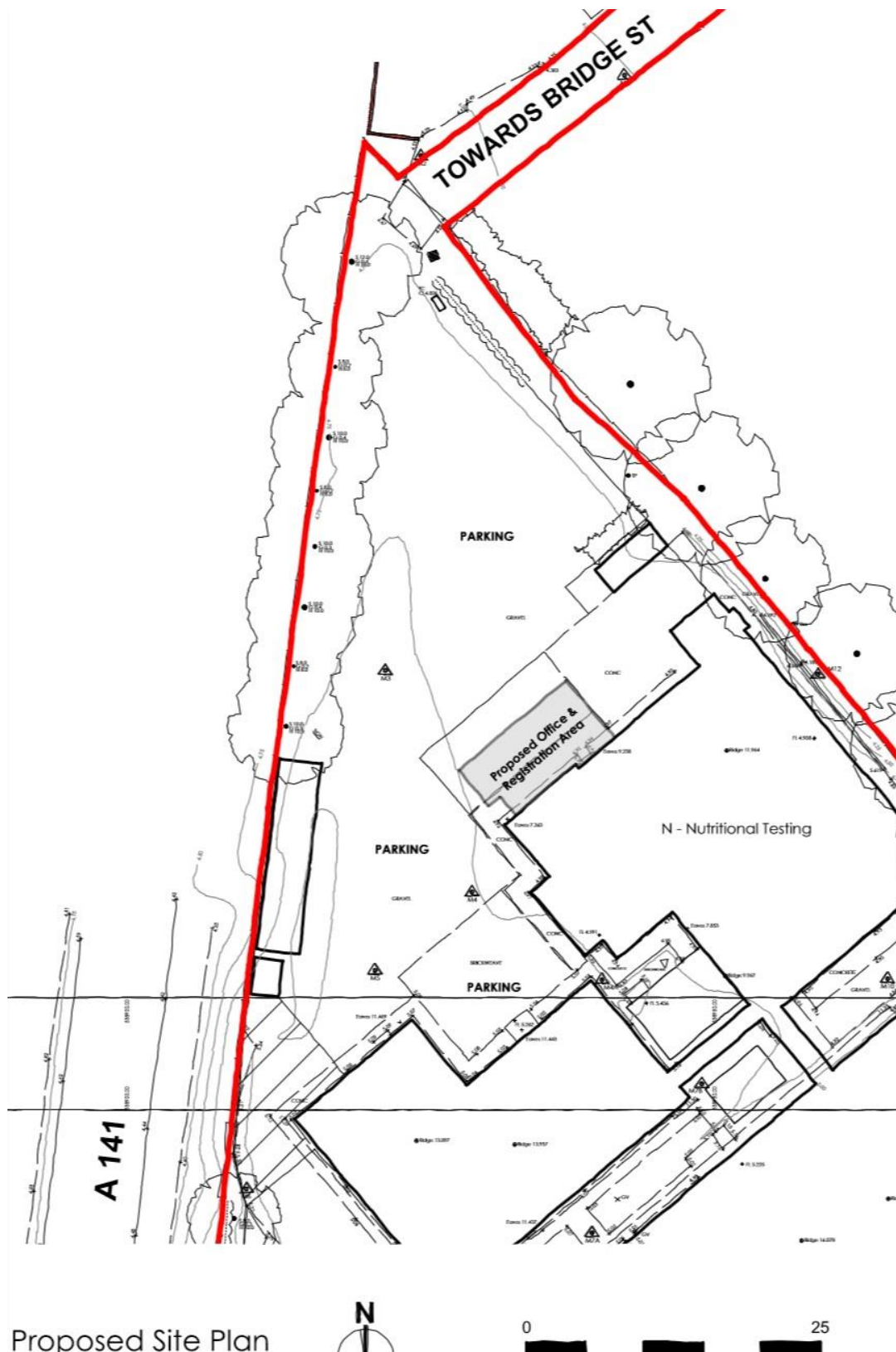
Mixed Use Development on land south east of London Road, Chatteris - Hallam Land Management Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 481 & 537)

Discussions between the District Council and the applicant's agent, Bidwells LLP, and respective legal teams continue but, according to Fenland District Council's (FDC) Public Access web page, a decision on this site still remains pending.

The Board has yet to be formally contacted.

Developments at Medcalfe Way, Bridge Street, Chatteris – Eclipse Scientific Group (MLC Ref No 605) & ALS Food & Pharmaceutical (MLC Ref Nos 740 & 764)

Further to last year's meeting report a revised planning application was submitted to the District Council in May 2018 for the erection of a single-storey extension to the existing building to form an office and alterations to accommodate a proposed cold store. Planning permission subject to the imposition of planning conditions was granted by the District Council in June 2018.



Extract from Infinity Architects Drawing Number 17-029-A-001 REV B

As with the previous application the application form advises that surface water disposal will be to an “existing watercourse”.

It is presumed, but not known, that the enquiry received from BWB Consulting (MLC Ref No 772) was associated with this development.

Development Contributions

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

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. However, members may be interested in the principles established at the Committee Meeting in respect of the Board’s interests.

The 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:

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.

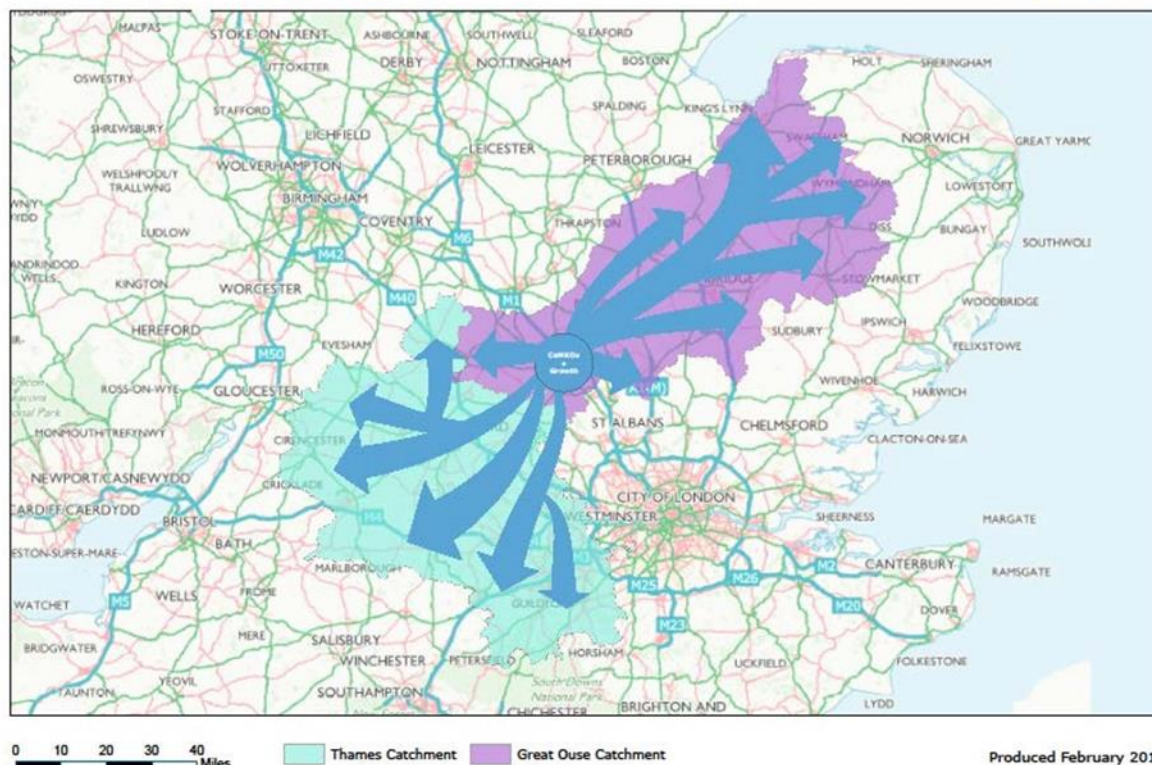
Rain Gauges

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

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 is looking for RMA involvement in the production of these papers.

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/>

The EA's 2018 Flood Action Campaign

Research undertaken by the EA in conjunction with the Red Cross reveals that most 18-34 year olds do not know what to do in a flood. Further information can be found at:

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

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

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>

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 issues within the Board's catchment.

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

1 May 2019

Nightlayers(320)\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



MCIWEM CWEM CEnv

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

Mobile: 07824 431597

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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

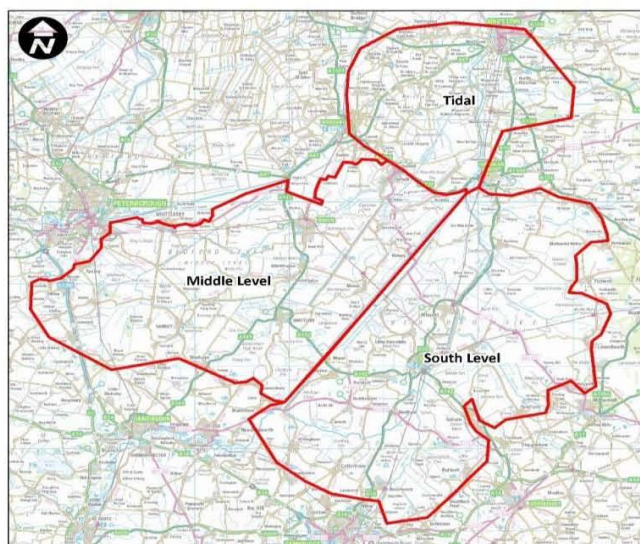
It is understood that there is a significant variation in the types of schemes which may be eligible for FCERM GiA funding. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the attention given to investigating a strategic approach should be proportional to the size of the scheme. Therefore, for smaller schemes (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



Norfolk County Council



Mr Lakey reported on a private watercourse running North from the Junction of the A142 Isle of Ely Way, Chatteris bypass and Short Nightlayers Drove East, which was becoming increasingly overgrown and unmanaged, and could result in water flow being restricted and causing issues in residential areas. He advised it would cost the Board in the region of £1,500 to cleanse the drain, which could be paid by the adjacent landowners and enquired whether the Board wished to take any action to reduce the risk of potential flooding.

The Chairman stated that the Board did not want to take on the watercourse. However, he agreed that the drain required cleansing but not at a cost to the Board. Mr Lakey stated that, in view of the lack of maintenance, the Board could request that the adjacent landowners/occupiers pay for the work. Miss Ablett enquired whether the Board wished for the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer to contact the landowners, but advised that there would be a cost to the Board in him doing so.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had recently contacted him and advised that the business case for a new automatic weedscreen cleaner and a wider weedscreen had not been progressed as the Environment Agency grant-in-aid was fully committed until 2021 and therefore there would be no funding available until this date. He further reported that the Clerk had advised him that it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain grant-in-aid for weedscreen cleaners.

The Chairman stated that he did not agree with the Environment Agency's view regarding grant-in-aid for weedscreen cleaners as if the water cannot get to the pump due to the accumulation of weed this could have serious consequences.

Miss Ablett advised the Board that the time may come when the Board requires grant in aid to fund the replacement of the pumping station and any properties protected cannot be double counted i.e. they can only be used to support one scheme and cannot be used to support another.

The Chairman stated that 2-3 years down the road the Board may need a bigger pump as the town was continuing to grow all the time and therefore any scheme applied for would be for a new pump, together with a new weedscreen cleaner.

Mr Lakey advised that the Board may be slightly limited to the size of pump they could install due to the Middle Level Commissioners' restrictions on how much the Board was allowed to discharge.

Miss Ablett referred Members to a number of applications where, following the Consulting Engineer's initial response, no further correspondence had been received from the applicants. Several of the Members advised that a couple of the applications had proceeded and therefore considered it necessary for the Consulting Engineer to write to the applicants again.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

That the recommended works be undertaken.

- iii) That the Planning Engineer write to the adjacent landowners/occupiers and Highways regarding the lack of maintenance and request immediate action.
- iv) That the business case for any grant-in-aid scheme be put on hold and considered again at the next meeting of the board.

- v) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer writes again to all applicants identified as not having responded to the Board's initial correspondence.

B.1042 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

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

B.1043 District Officer's Report

The Chairman reported that as mentioned in the Consulting Engineer's report all drains were in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard and the weedscreen cleaner was working as it should.

He further reported there had been a problem with the pumping station alarm but this had been resolved.

He added that a replacement handrail was required for the pumping station bridge at Point 2.

The Chairman advised that although the illegal discharge by Cambridge Property Group was in hand it must continue to be pursued and brought to a conclusion.

RESOLVED

That the Middle Level Commissioners be asked to supply the handrail and deliver it to Nightlayers Farm for the District Officer to install.

B.1044 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.1045 District Officer's Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2019/2020.

Miss Ablett referred to the Middle Level Commissioners' pay award indicator which was 3.0%.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £3,852.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2019/2020.

(NB – The District Officer declared a financial interest when this item was discussed).

B.1046 State-aided Schemes

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

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.1047 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2019/2020 in the sum of £3,288.21 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £3,132).

B.1048 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

- a) Miss Ablett reported that the sum of £1,238.30 (£4,197.84 less £2,959.54 received on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2017/2018 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £3,239.80 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2018/2019.
- b) Further to minute B.1005(b), Miss Ablett referred to the discussions with the Environment Agency over the monies available to fund highland water claims.

RESOLVED

That the position be noted and the situation kept under review.

B.1049 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.1050 Health and Safety

- a) Further to minute B.1012, the Vice Chairman reported that although he had not attended any training courses, he had attended various meetings, including those regarding health and safety. He confirmed there had been no issues with health and safety and no incidents to report.
- b) Miss Ablett reported that a letter had been sent to the Chairman on the 25th April advising that it had been agreed at the Chairs meeting to enter into a 3 year contract with Cope Safety Management with the annual payment being split between the Boards. Assuming all Boards joined the arrangement, she advised that the cost to the Board would be £200 per annum. However it was understood that particularly in the first year or so extra support may be needed and this could be provided at a day rate of £500 or at an hourly rate of £85 for part days.

RESOLVED

That Cope Safety Management be appointed for a period of three years at a cost of £200 per annum, together with additional charges for any extra assistance requested.

B.1051 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.1052 Defra IDB Returns

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

B.1053 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.1054 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1055 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 Mechanical and Electrical Engineer revalue the Board's assets in 2020.

B.1056 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.1057 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.1058 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £41,059.02 which had been made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(NB) - The District Officer declared an interest in the payment made to him.

B.1059 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.1060 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 21.14% and 78.86%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £22,924 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 £4,846 and £18,078 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 3.75p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £18,078 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.1061 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.1062 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Thursday the 4th June 2020.