

BENWICK INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Benwick Internal Drainage Board
held at the Lakeside Lodge, Pidley on Thursday the 10th June 2019

PRESENT

D R Stokes Esq (Chairman)	A Miscandlon Esq
M Jackson Esq (Vice Chairman)	R E Stacey Esq
D J Caton Esq	N G Thacker Esq
R G Few Esq	G Wakeham Esq
M Fisher Esq	R Wicks Esq

Miss Lorna McShane (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Guy Wakeham and Councillor Robert Wicks who were attending their first meeting of the Board.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs D Laws and J M Palmer Esq, R A Dring Esq and P N Fountain Esq.

B.1146 Declarations of Interest

Miss McShane 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 District Officer declared an interest in minute no. B.1158.

B.1147 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 14th June 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1148 Board Membership

Further to minute B.1111, Miss McShane reported that Mr Guy Wakeham had accepted the invitation to join the Board and the Vice Chairman had spoken to Mr Paul Johnson, who had agreed to think about becoming a member of the Board.

A suggestion was made that Edward Jackson, the Vice Chairman's son, would be eligible for membership of the Board and it was agreed that he should be considered for future membership of the Board.

RESOLVED

That the Vice Chairman confirm whether Edward Jackson would be willing to become a Member of the Board and to inform the Middle Level office accordingly.

B.1149 Land Drainage Act 1991
Board Membership

Miss McShane reported:-

(a) That Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillor A Miscandlon and appointed Councillors Mrs D Laws and R Wicks to be Members of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

That Councillor T Butcher was not re-appointed.

(b) That Huntingdonshire District Council had re-appointed Councillor J M Palmer to be a Member of the Board under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

B.1150 Updating IDB Byelaws

Further to minute B.1125(e), the Board considered their updated Byelaws.

RESOLVED

That the updated Byelaws be adopted.

B.1151 Policy Statement

Further to minute B.1125(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.1152 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute B.1129, the Board considered their Biosecurity Policy.

RESOLVED

That the Biosecurity Policy be adopted.

B.1153 Clerk's Report

Miss McShane 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.

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 any of the 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.1141, Miss McShane 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 McShane 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.1154 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Benwick 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 the last Annual Meeting.

Advanced notices of this year's machine cleansing programme (approved by the Board at its 2007 meeting) have been sent out.

A recent inspection of the Board's system has been undertaken. The inspection revealed that most watercourses are generally in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. However, stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation are now becoming prevalent and showing signs of active regrowth throughout the district. It is recommended that Roundup herbicide is applied to drains within this year's phased machine cleansing works, and to any other Board's drains where it is deemed necessary to control reed and emergent weed growth. A sum for the cost of Roundup treatment has been included within the estimated costs.

It was also noted during the inspection that there is evidence of an early season bloom of filamentous algae (cott) growth along reach 14-16-17. Fortunately, these drains fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme and will be addressed following the harvest of the adjacent crops.



**Early season Cott growth
reach 14-16**

Flail mowing in advance of the machine cleansing works will be required to afford the machine operator maximum visibility. 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 this work has been included within the Board's estimated costs.

A provisional sum has been included within the Board's estimated costs for any emergency cleansing, culvert clearance or bank reinstatement works that may be required later in the year.

The estimated costs of this year's recommended maintenance works are as follows:

1 Machine Cleansing (Phased Programmed Works)

Copalder Area

Reach 22-21-23	600	m	@	1.10	£660.00
Reach 14-16-17-18-19-20-21	2000	m	@	1.10	£2200.00
Reach 12-13-14-15	500	m	@	1.10	£550.00

Broadalls Area

Reach 69-70-71-72-73-74	1500	m	@	1.10	£1650.00
-------------------------	------	---	---	------	----------

Ramsey Mere

Reach 80-81-82-83	1800	m	@	1.20	£2160.00
Reach 81-86-87	800	m	@	1.10	£880.00

2	Allow sum for Roundup application to control reed and emergent aquatic weed growth	Item	Sum		£1250.00
3	Flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing works	Item	Sum		£4000.00
4	<u>Provisional Sum</u> Allow sum for emergency Machine cleansing, culvert Clearance or bank Reinstatement works	Item	Sum		£2000.00
5	Fees for the inspection, Preparation & submission of report to the Board. Arrangement & supervision of herbicide applications & maintenance works	Item	Sum		£1900.00

£17,250.00

Orders for the application of herbicides are accepted on condition that they are weather dependant and the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments.

Pumping Stations

Other than the matters described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

Beezlings

At its last meeting the Board resolved to place an order with Metalcraft to install automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment and a replacement weedscreen at this installation. Metalcraft was therefore asked to provide a firm quotation and was encouraged to discount its price as it was not the lowest of the budget quotes.

Metalcraft's revised quote, which was less than its original budget price, was received during July in the sum £67,844 +VAT and covered manufacture and installation of the weedscreen cleaner and new weedscreen. Damming off and dewatering was not included and was to be carried out at cost by the MLC who were also to refit the handrailing.

Following approval of a Public Works Loan application, and with the Chairman's approval, an order was placed with Metalcraft on 1 November 2018.

At the time of writing this report the new weedscreen and the mechanical elements had been installed with the electrical works following on and completion/commissioning expected by the end of May/early June 2019.



During early tests it was seen that the grab could, during windy conditions, impinge on the concrete strut in front of the intake and when the grab is at the very lowest position the wire hoist ropes could rub against the strut, methods to alleviate this potential problem are being investigated.



Benwick Mere

The cracked delivery pipe has been welded.

Bettys Nose

Some repairs have been carried out to the automatic weedscreen cleaner. The machine is currently switched off due to birds nesting in the overhead gantry; these will be removed later in the year.

Broadalls

The motor winding resistance to earth has dropped to the minimum value recommended. This is disappointing as the pump was overhauled in August 2017. However, the condition of the motor may well be down to back siphoning water through the pump and it is recommended that this practice should be stopped. The problem could also be due to lack of use, (as can be seen below the pump has only operated one hour in the past year). It is therefore recommended the unit is lifted for inspection to determine the cause of the problem.

Ramsey Mere

The pump drive motor winding insulation resistance remains at a satisfactory level and will continue to be monitored.

Inlet

The new inlet penstock and pipework are still awaiting the Chairman's instruction regarding installation.

Pumping Hours between 2017/2018 – 2022/2023

Pumping station	Total hours run 2017-2018	Total hours run 2018-2019	Total hours run 2019-2020	Total hours run 2020-2021	Total hours run 2021-2021	Total hours run 2022- 2023
Beezlings	335	53				
Benwick Mere /lbbersons	153	21				
Betty's Nose	220	76				
Broadalls	17	1				
Copalder	111	64				
Ramsey Mere	31	4				

Pumping Hours between 2011/2012 – 2016/2017

Pumping station	Total hours run 2011/2012	Total hours run 2012/2013	Total hours run 2013- 2014	Total hours run 2014- 2015	Total hours run 2015- 2016	Total hours run 2016- 2017
Beezlings	7	424	210	212	151	132
Benwick Mere /lbbersons	23	295	211	102	75	84
Betty's Nose	30	553	629	137	129	99
Broadalls	50	500	70	92	6	24
Copalder	8	324	205	169	87	87
Ramsey Mere	1	60	123	15	72	31

Pumping Hours between 2005/2006 – 2010/2011

Pumping station	Total hours run 2005/2006	Total hours run 2006/2007	Total hours run 2007/2008	Total hours run 2008/2009	Total hours run 2009/2010	Total hours run 2010/2011
Beezlings	78	305	43	225	171	3
Benwick Mere /Ibbersons	30	133	77	217	220	209
Betty's Nose	133	70	134	44	424	186
Broadalls	44	140	47	243	437	170
Copalder	36	119	137	171	249	104
Ramsey Mere	3	186	191	152	100	157

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 5 new applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

<i>MLC Ref</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
308	H/18/01527/FUL	Mr M Jarman	Residence	Mere Drove, Ramsey Forty Foot
309	F/YR18/0986/F	Mr D White	Residence	High Street, Benwick
310	H/18/02619/FUL	Mr M Jarman	Residence	Mere Drove Ramsey Forty Foot
311	F/YR19/0068/O	Mrs J Montgomery & Mrs F Perry	Residential (15 plots)	Land north of 17 Doddington Road, Benwick*
312	F/YR19/0143/F	Mr T Sharman	Residential (2 plots)	Land west 20 High Street, Benwick

A development that is known to propose direct discharge to the Board's system is indicated with an asterisk. The remainder are understood to propose surface water disposal to soakaways/infiltration systems or sustainable drainage systems, where applicable. The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

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:

- *Residential development on land north east of 13 Doddington Road, Benwick - Harnson Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 246 & 254) and Proway Building Ltd (MLC Ref No 302)*
- *Erection of a retail unit and 1 x 1-bed and 2 x 2-bed flats above involving demolition of existing building at land west of 40 Lilyholt Road, fronting High Street, Benwick – Mr B Sisodiya (MLC Ref Nos 249 & 259)*
- *Erection of up to 10 no dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) at land south of 16A Doddington Road, Benwick – Mrs Mitchell (MLC Ref No 301)*

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 up to 15no dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) involving demolition of buildings at land north of 17 Doddington Road, Benwick - Mrs J Montgomery & Mrs F Perry (MLC Ref No 306 & 311)

Further to the last meeting report another planning application (MLC Ref No 311) was submitted to Fenland District Council in January for consideration.

The Geoff Beel Consultancy's FRA Ref GCB/BEVENS dated December 2018 which formed part of the submission documents advises that:

“Surface water drainage from the development will be partly achieved by soakaways to BRE 365 design requirements as part of a sustainable drainage system to Building Regulations approval with added attenuation to either the Anglian Water sewerage system or the riparian drain alongside Doddington Road and hence the nearby IDB main drains subject to approval from Anglian Water and Benwick IDB.”

In addition, a Drainage Strategy was later provided. A detailed assessment has not been undertaken but it is understood that no appropriate evidence has been provided concerning the suitability of infiltration devices at the site.

A plan contained within the Strategy illustrates a surface water attenuation pond but no evidence has been provided as to who owns the device concerned and, given the close proximity to the residences and that access to undertake maintenance is not provided, it is not certain that this solution is viable. It is therefore suggested that it does not meet the Board's requirements, as suitable evidence has not been supplied to confirm that the device can be constructed and arrangements have been established for the whole life funding, management and maintenance of the proposals.

To date, the applicant, its agent, L Bevens Associates Architects Ltd, and its engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd, have not contacted the Board to enquire whether this approach is acceptable or would be approved should the proposal proceed. An application for discharge consent, has not been received.

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

The original planning application (MLC Ref No 306) was refused planning permission by Fenland District Council in May 2019.

Reasons for refusal include development within the indicative floodplain extents as shown on the Environment Agency's FloodMap for Planning.

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

Public Consultation on the Draft Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) document

No further correspondence has been received in respect of this document.

Consultation on the proposed 2019 revision of the Local Validation Guidance List & Local Validation Check List for planning applications for the County Council's own development & for waste development

A Public Consultation on the proposed 2019 revision of the Local Validation Guidance List and Local Validation Check List for planning applications for the County Council's own development and for waste development was held from 28 February until 11 April.

The consultation responses received have been taken into consideration by the County Council and some additional revisions made to the proposed Validation List and Guidance Notes will be presented to the Planning Committee meeting on Thursday 16 May 2019 to seek approval for them.

A response was submitted to the County Council on behalf of both the MLC and the associated Boards/Commissioners for whom we provide a planning consultancy service. It was pleasing to note the inclusion of the Middle Level Biodiversity Manual (2016) and the reference and a link to our "Planning Advice and Consent Documents" within the Guidance Notes.

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.

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 March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners requested that the MLC 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."

It is presumed that in similar circumstances Huntingdonshire District Council would have a similar view.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Plan to 2036

Proposed Main Modifications Consultation

Public examination hearings were held on the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Proposed Submission between 17-20 July and 10-27 September 2018. Following this, proposed main modifications were identified by the Planning Inspector as necessary to make the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 'sound' and 'legally compliant'. Consultation on the proposed main modifications and associated sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment ran from 10 December 2018 to 29 January 2019.

A generic response to the Planning Inspectorate's Main Modifications was submitted to the District Council on behalf of both the Commissioners and our associated Boards, for whom we provide a planning consultancy service.

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)

The MLC 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 MLC 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 MLC 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 MLC 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>

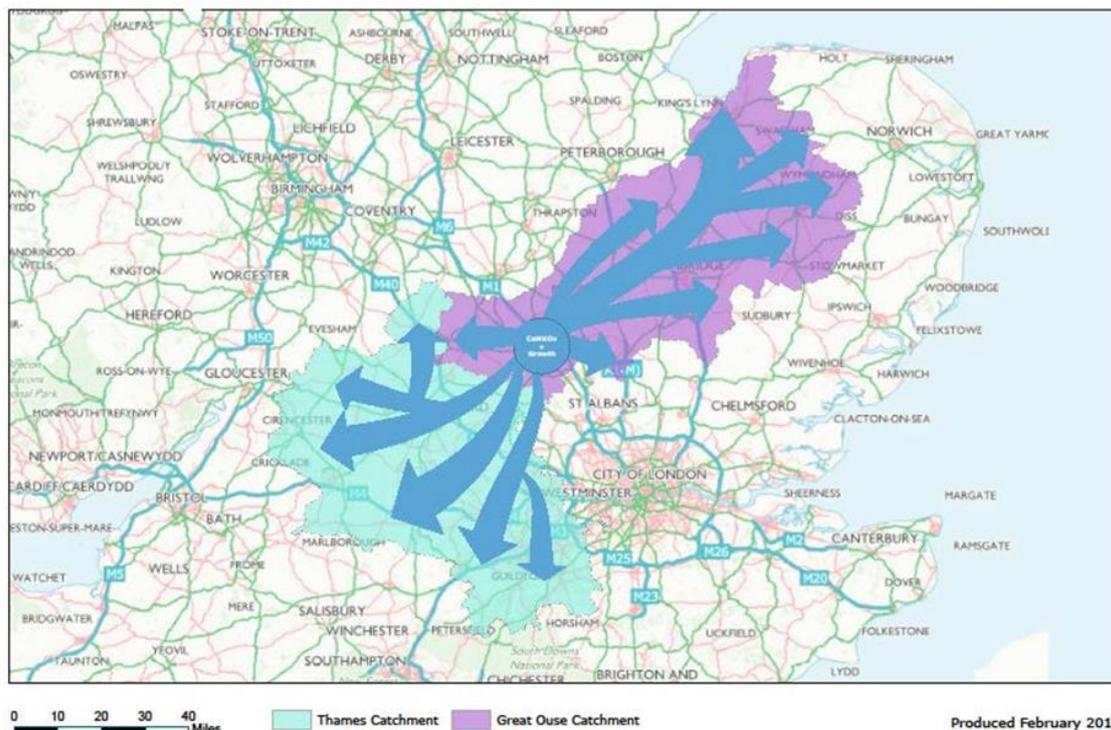
Update on RFCC's Growth Work

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).

Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford (CaMKOx) : Growth Corridor
Catchment of River Thames and River Great Ouse



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

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 flooding incident “within Benwick” was reported by the County Council at the November meeting but its exact location was not known. The Board has no record of flooding being reported. It is believed that this may be an issue for Cambridgeshire Highways. There are currently no other known issues within the Board’s catchment.

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 MLC.

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.

29 May 2019

Benwick(303)\Reports\May 2019

Consulting Engineer

creating a better place
for people and wildlife



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.

customer service line 03708 506 506
gov.uk/environment-agency

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

January 2019

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

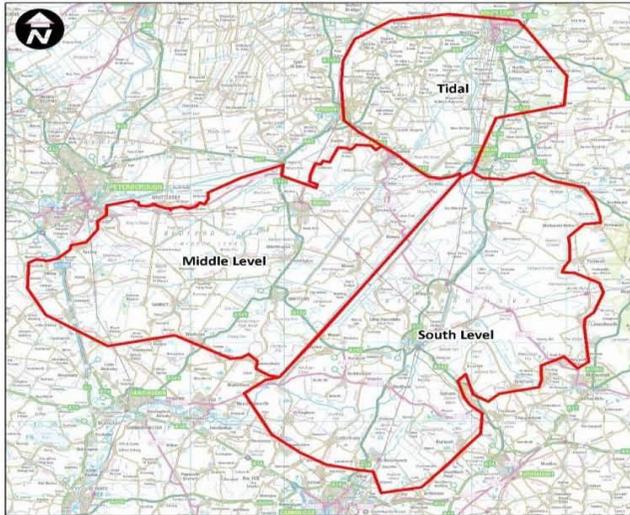
It is understood that there is a significant variation in the types of schemes which may be eligible for FCERM GiA funding. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the attention given to investigating a strategic approach should be proportional to the size of the scheme. Therefore, for smaller schemes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



Mr Lakey, Middle Level Commissioners' Assistant Operations Engineer, reported that a recent inspection of the Board's system had been undertaken which revealed that most of the watercourses are generally in a satisfactory condition and were being maintained to a good standard. However, there were stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation which were becoming prevalent and showing signs of active regrowth throughout the District and it was recommended that Roundup herbicide be applied to these drains as part of this year's phased machine cleansing works. The sum for the cost of Roundup had been included within the estimated costs.

It had also been noted during the inspection that there were early signs of cott growth along reach 14-16-17 and the Chairman confirmed that there was thick growth on Four Hundred Drove, points 69-84. Treatment for cott growth would be addressed following the harvest of the adjacent crops in these areas.

Messrs Ashman had indicated that they were available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements for the coming year and a sum for completion of this work had been included within the Board's estimated costs.

Pumping Stations Beezlings

The Consulting Engineers confirmed that the new weedscreen and the mechanical elements had now been installed with the electrical works to follow on and commissioning was expected by the end of June 2019. During tests it had been seen that the grab could, during windy conditions, impinge on the concrete strut and this problem was being investigated.

Broadalls

It was reported that the motor winding resistance had dropped to the minimum value recommended. This could possibly be due to lack of use as the pump had only been operated for one hour in the past year.

Planning Applications

- Residential development on land north east of 13 Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref No. 302)
- Erection of a retail unit with flats above at land west of 40 Lilyholt Road, High Street, Benwick (MLC Ref Nos. 249 & 259)
- Erection of up to 10 dwellings and land south of 16A Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref No 301)

The Board noted that there had been no correspondence or applications submitted and approved that the Consulting Engineers be requested to write letters to the Developers regarding the need to apply for discharge consent and further action be taken if necessary.

- Erection of 15 dwellings at land north of 17 Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref Nos 306 & 311)

It was reported that this application had been submitted to Fenland District Council in January for consideration and the drainage consultant had advised that surface water drainage from the development would be partly achieved by soakaways as part of a sustainable

drainage system. However, to date, the applicant and their consulting engineers had not contacted the Board to enquire whether this approach would be acceptable or would be approved should this proposal proceed.

RESOLVED

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

ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

That the works referred to in the Report be undertaken.

iii) Broadalls Pumping Station

That the unit be lifted for inspection by the Middle Level Commissioners' Mechanical and Electrical Engineers.

iv) That the Consulting Engineers be requested to write letters to the Developers regarding the need to apply for discharge consent and further action be taken if necessary regarding:-

a) Residential development on land north east of 13 Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref No. 302)

b) Erection of a retail unit with flats above at land west of 40 Lilyholt Road, High Street, Benwick (MLC Ref Nos. 249 & 259)

c) Erection of up to 10 dwellings and land south of 16A Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref No 301).

v) 15 dwellings at land north of 17 Doddington Road, Benwick (MLC Ref Nos 306 & 311)

In order to resolve this matter and guide further discussions, the Consulting Engineers write to the parties concerned.

B.1155 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.1156 District Officer's Report

The Board considered the Report of the District Officer.

The District Officer reported that at point 60 on the system there was still a concrete tunnel and an old pump and possibly a slacker in that location too. There was also an old wooden structure in position which had probably been there since before the war.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved and that the Officer be thanked for his services during the year.
- ii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Assistant Operations Engineer investigate the structure and the inlet and prepare a report.

B.1157 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

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

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.1158 District Officer's Honorarium and Pumping Station duties

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

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

RESOLVED

- i) That Mr D Caton be appointed as District Officer and that the Board agree that the sum of £515.00 be allowed for the District Officer's honorarium for 2019/2020.
- ii) That the Board agree that the District Officer be allowed the sum of £412.00 for undertaking health and safety duties for 2019/2020.
- iii) That the Board agree that the sum of £3,090.00 (£515 per station) be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2019/2020.
- iv) That, in future years, an increase in accordance with the Middle Level Commissioners' pay award be made for the District Officer's honorarium and for the provision of pumping station duties.

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

B.1159 Maintenance work in the District

The Chairman gave an update on the maintenance work to be carried out in the District.

B.1160 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 McShane reported that the EA undertook a 'refresh' of its grant allocation schedule and optimised it to increase the likelihood of meeting the government outcome measure targets. As part of this some schemes were deferred in favour of those which could be delivered within the next two years with certainty and the programme has, as a consequence, become financially oversubscribed. This effectively means that there will be little or no chance of receiving grant for any new schemes between now and 2021 (at the earliest). This date marks the end of the six-year funding commitment and whilst it is understood that the EA are pressing hard to have another six-year settlement and, if agreed to by treasury, for this to be larger than the previous one to help address the increasing investment required to tackle climate change driven impacts. At this point in time we do not know what will happen and changes could be made in any event to the funding model, what outcome targets are or the process of securing grant. What is clear is that the further ahead that IDBs collectively plan their investment needs the more likely whatever grant is available will be accessible by them.

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1161 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss McShane reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2019/2020 in the sum of £8,215.41 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £7,824).

B.1162 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

(a) Miss McShane reported that the sum of £223.84 (£1,282.54 less £1,058.70 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for the financial year 2017/2018 together with the sum of £398.42 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2018/2019.

(b) Further to minute B.1086(b), Miss McShane referred to the discussions with the Environment Agency over the monies available to fund highland water claims.

RESOLVED

That the position be kept under review.

B.1163 Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Subscriptions

Miss McShane reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2019, viz:- from £616 to £629.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2019.

b) Future ADA Communications

Miss McShane 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.1164 Land at Turf Fen, Chatteris

Miss McShane referred to an email dated the 8th June 2018 from Mr George Munns regarding a parcel of land he currently rents from the Board.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Board retain the land as an asset.
- ii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Solicitor take advice on the land value and initiate a rent review and serve notice for an October 2020 review, if appropriate.

B.1165 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board.
- ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
- iii) That the Chairman and the Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Board in connection with any appeal against the determination.

B.1166 Health and Safety

- a) Further to minute B.1113, the District Officer reported preparation of the risk assessments and work carried out by him during the current year.
- b) Miss McShane reported on the discussions at the Middle Level and Associated Drainage Board's Chairs meeting and that 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.

Miss McShane reported that the Clerk had now appointed Cope Safety Management on a 3 year contract at a cost of £27,000 to give advice and assistance to the Boards on health and safety matters, including assistance with the preparation of risk assessments.

This cost was to be divided between those Boards who wished to take up the services of Cope Safety Management and would be apportioned depending on the size of the Board, the number of pumping stations and employees of the Board.

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter dated the 25th April stating that for Benwick IDB the sum would be £600 per annum, plus £85 per hour for any additional work that the Board requested from the contractor.

RESOLVED

That Cope Safety Management be appointed for a period of three years at a cost of £600 per annum, together with additional charges for any extra assistance requested.

B.1167 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.1168 Defra IDB1 Returns

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

B.1169 Budgeting

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

B.1170 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1171 Risk Management Assessment

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1172 Exercise of Public Rights

Miss McShane 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.1173 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.1174 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £822,618.26 which had been made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(NB) – The District Officer, Messrs Few and Thacker declared interests in the payment made to them.

B.1175 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.1176 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 McShane 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 68.79% and 31.21%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £85,295 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 £58,677 and £26,618 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 16.70p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) a) That a Special levy of £24,574 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
b) That a Special levy of £2,044 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire 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 levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1177 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.1178 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Monday the 8th June 2020 at Ramsey Golf Club.

[Post meeting note –The Ramsey Golf Club was unavailable on Monday the 8th June 2020. Chairman therefore agreed that the next meeting of the Board be held on Monday the 15th June 2020].

