

BLUNTISHAM INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
held at Hanson's, Needingworth Quarry on Friday the 10th January 2020

PRESENT

P D Burton OBE (Chairman)	H Burgess Esq
J R Anderson Esq (Vice Chairman)	A G R Holloway Esq
J Neish Esq	

Miss Lorna McShane (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

The Chairman referred to the death of the Board's former Clerk, Mr David Noble OBE, on the 20th December 2019.

He informed Members that Mr Noble had been Clerk to the Board from August 1993 to May 2004 and that Mr Robert Cauldwell, on behalf of ADA, had attended the funeral earlier this week

RESOLVED

That the Board's appreciation of the services rendered by Mr Noble be recorded in the minutes.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from C Hudson Esq and J M Green Esq.

B.735 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 Chairman declared an interest in any matter in which Lattenbury Farms were involved.

Councillor Neish declared an interest in all planning matters as Chairman of Planning and Deputy Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council.

B.736 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 7th June 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.737 Maintenance works in the District

Further to minute B.714, the Chairman reported that most of the work in the 2019/2020 programme had now been completed although there was a small amount of work still to be carried out. The Chairman requested that if there were any problems with the priority of work, could Members please speak to him.

The Chairman advised that the 2020/2021 programme would include the ditch between Points 1-10 and Points 8-15 and if reeds near the pumping station needed to be removed this year he would do this work first and then carry out further works as the budget dictated.

RESOLVED

That the maintenance works be approved and that Lattenbury Farm Services be engaged to undertake them.

(NB) – The Chairman referred to his interest when this item of business was being discussed and took no part in the decision.

B.738 Hanson – Progress Report

Further to minute B.687, Hilton Law was not present to provide a report.

B.739 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank works

Further to minute B.715, Miss McShane referred to the Newsletters from the Environment Agency dated September and December 2019.

B.740 Clerk's Report

Miss McShane advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a fourth Chair's Meeting was held on the 26th November 2019.

The meeting commenced with a presentation with slides covering the lottery funded 'Fens Biosphere' bid. This UNESCO designation would have no statutory backing but instead aims to draw attention to the unique nature of the area. Good practice sharing would be facilitated and a framework of support for positive action developed. The idea is to frame the application around the Cambridgeshire peat lands and the IDB districts which provide a network of interconnecting watercourses. As this designation would not lead to a set of actions which would be enforced but could have a positive impact on the area the Board were asked (at this stage) to consider giving its approval in principle to the bid.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle

Health and Safety discussions followed and it was agreed that the new arrangement with Cope Safety Management was working well.

The future vision for the MLC and IDBs was discussed and is covered as a separate agenda item.

On member training, after discussion, it was agreed that members would benefit from training on 'communications and engagement' as it was felt that Boards generally had challenges in getting messages across to the public.

The only other item covered in any detail was in relation to Board agendas and minutes. It was resolved that the Chairs supported the move to reducing the amount of paper leaving the MLC offices and it was also agreed, for reasons of efficiency, that Chairs be provided with an action points list as soon as practical after the meetings but in advance of issuing draft minutes.

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 82nd Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 13th November 2019.

The conference was very well attended and the speakers this year were:-

Stuart Roberts - Vice President National Farmers' Union – an arable and livestock farmer who has also worked for Defra and Flood Standards Agency – who shared his views on the need for more radical and bold thinking on flood risk management and the supply of water for agriculture.

Bryan Curtis – Chair Coastal Group Network – Chartered Engineer and a member of CIWEM and ICE.

Bryan is Chairman of the Coastal Group Network. This is a network of Councils, Ports, Government bodies who provide a collective voice for the coast and management of the shoreline.

Robin Price – Interim Managing Director – Water Resources East (WRE)

Water Resources East is a partnership from a wide range of industries including water energy, retail, the environment, land management and agriculture who are working in collaboration to manage the number of significant risks to the future supply of water in the East of England. The NFU and ADA (via the David Thomas) have membership on the Board of WRE.

The conference was introduced by Robert Caudwell who asked all present to mark their appreciation of the work being done in the north east of England to respond to and manage the impacts of the floods. He stated his opinion that warnings at previous ADA conferences over the lack of river maintenance had fallen on deaf ears and that the flooding taking place at the time was clear evidence of the need to better balance capital investment with maintenance spending. He then went on to outline ADA's intention to lobby all parties throughout the general election. This included sharing the 7-point plan detailed below;

1. Long term investment horizons in the face of climate change challenges

Flood risk management delivers enduring benefits and authorities involved need to be able to plan ahead financially over multiple years and need to receive a sensible balance of capital and revenue funding, spread across the river catchments, in order to find efficiencies through climate change adaptation and resilience, and attract business investment.

2. Promote co-operation and partnership working to manage the water environment and reduce flood risk

Close cooperation between flood risk management authorities, water companies, communities, business and land managers needs the continued strong support of government to deliver adaptive and resilient flood risk maintenance and similar activities more efficiently and affordably.

3. Total catchment management

Total catchment management is now the widely accepted approach to managing our water and now is the time to increase and empower local professionals and communities to manage and operate these catchments together.

4. Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)

The next government needs to fully implement Schedule 3 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, to ensure future development can keep pace with the challenges of the changing climate, by ensuring that SuDS are maintained over the lifetime of a development.

5. Support local governance in flood and water level management decision making

In some parts of England there is an appetite for greater local maintenance delivery on watercourses and flood defence assets than that currently afforded from national investment. This can be achieved via the careful transfer of some main river maintenance to local bodies or the expansion of areas maintained by those local bodies, such as Internal Drainage Boards, where there is local support and transitional funding.

6. Local Government Finances

It is vital that Special and Local Levy funding mechanisms for drainage, water level and flood risk management continue to be part of this funding landscape to maintain the democratic link with local communities affected.

7. Brexit: Ensuring a resilient regulatory framework for the water environment

The next government needs to provide clear policy messages about how they wish to make the delivery of environmental improvements to the water environment easier and more effective as we transition from European legislation such as the Water Framework Directive.

Unfortunately, because the conference was held during the pre-election period sometimes known as *Purdah*, which restricts certain communications during this time, there were no representatives available from the Environment Agency or Defra which significantly restricted the debate on flood risk management, funding and maintenance issues. However, there was considerable support from the floor of the conference for the view that lack of maintenance had significantly contributed to the recent problems with the River Don and the flooding of Fishlake village.

Officers of the Association were re-elected, including Lord De Ramsey as President and Robert Caudwell as Chairman.

Subscriptions to ADA would be increased by 2% for the following year.

b) Annual Conference

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities will be held in London on Wednesday the 11th November 2020.

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 will be held on Tuesday the 3rd March 2020. The format will be as per the 2019 conference with a workshop in the morning and the conference in the afternoon.

d) Further Research on Eels

Further to minute B.578(e), ADA have advised that the valuable research work being carried out by Hull University on eels and eel behaviour in pumped catchments will be continuing for at least another two years. ADA consider that the financial support to the project to date provided by the IDBs has been positive and noted by the regulator (EA), leading to positive engagement on finding practical solutions at pumping station sites. They therefore consider that it would be useful if IDBs could consider whether they would be willing to continue their annual contributions to this research over that period.

RESOLVED

That the Board contribute £50 per year for the next 2 years towards further research on eels.

e) Floodex 2020

That Floodex 2020 will be held at The Peterborough Arena on the 26th and 27th February 2020.

f) Emergency Financial Assistance for Internal Drainage Boards

That whilst in East Anglia we have not had the unprecedented levels of rainfall which have occurred further north and in the west of the county in recent years this by no means equates to there being no risk of it occurring here. ADA have written to DEFRA seeking to formalise a mechanism for IDBs providing support to the EA in a major event to recover costs. An update will be given should there be any substantive movement from DEFRA

iii) Tactical Plans for the Fens Agreement

That the Environment Agency have set up a multi-partner group (FRM for the Fens) to steer work on developing strategic plans for managing flood risk in the lower Great Ouse catchment. This work is considered necessary to address the impacts of population growth and climate change, which are particularly relevant in this area. The EA is requesting approval to the approach being taken in principle and follows the letter sent in January 2019. The perceived value of this work is that it pre-apportions the benefits (land and property which would flood if not defended) so that applying for grant should be more straight forward and the amount of grant possible clearer. This should give increased certainty and clarity and resolves the issue of double counting benefits where for example a property is protected from

flooding by both EA and IDB assets. Work on developing the strategy could take up to 15 years though and the proposal also therefore includes a mechanism for allowing grant-in-aided works to progress during this time on a hold-the-line basis.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle

iv) Water Resources East (WRE)

That the Middle Level Commissioners' Chief Executive has been appointed as ADA's area representative on the Board of WRE. He will act as spokesman for IDBs who have an interest in the future management and provision of water in the East of England. This is particularly important as government consider plans to make the area more resilient and as the impacts of climate change start to bite in an area of rapid housing growth.

To facilitate a place on the Board requires a modest financial contribution from all IDBs within the area covered by WRE. The MLC contribution is their Chief Executive's time spent representing the Boards. For the Commissioners the requested annual contribution is £50.70.

RESOLVED

That the requested contribution be paid to WRE.

vi) Vision for the Future of Boards administered by the MLC

That Members will be aware that the Chair's meetings hosted by the MLC has had an item on the agenda for the last few meetings on future planning of administration and delivery of operations for the Board's collectively. As part of this process it has been agreed that members thoughts should be sought on what they envisage the collective future can and should look like to ensure the most resilient, delivery focused approach that can be achieved. Members should when developing their vision of water management in the fens in 2030 consider the challenges of maintaining representation, improving financial resilience, reducing duplication of work, the potential for cost savings, advantages and disadvantages of the various options available, the impacts of technology and sharing of resources and knowledge.

The information gathered from individual meetings will be collated and presented to the autumn 2020 Chairs meeting for their consideration.

The view of the Board was that they were not in favour of amalgamation at the present time and it was thought that amalgamated Boards were not as efficient as local volunteers who knew the area. However, they appreciated that some smaller Boards may need to merge in order to continue their function as Internal Drainage Boards. The Board also considered that they needed to recruit some younger Members to sit on the Board.

B.741 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Bluntisham I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – December 2019

Pumping Station

Only routine maintenance has been carried out. The pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

The 5 yearly electrical condition report has been completed.

Pumping Hours

Total Hours Run Nov 18 - Nov 19 = 400 (approximately)

Total Hours Run Nov 17 - Nov 18 = 860 (approximately)
Total Hours Run Nov 16 - Nov 17 = 549
Total Hours Run Nov 15 – Nov 16 = 560 (approximately)
Total Hours Run Nov 14 – Nov 15 = 520
Total Hours Run Nov 13 – Nov 14 = 932

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

The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has represented both the Middle Level Commissioners and their associated Boards on the Technical Group since the last Board meeting.

An article detailing the project was included on page 16 of the Summer edition of the ADA Gazette.

This can be found at <https://flickread.com/edition/html/index.php?pdf=5d1efbbc0a48b#16>

The project is further discussed under a separate Agenda item.

Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 6 new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, 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>
026	H/5006/19/CM	Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd	Creation of wetland habitat	Bluntisham Road, Needingworth
027	H/19/01166/REM	David Wilson Homes	Residential (120 dwellings)	South of A1123/west of Bluntisham Road, Needingworth
028	H/19/01638/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Ewers	Residence (Double garage and store)	Overcote Lane, Needingworth
029	H/19/01788/FUL	Mr Mustafa	Commercial (Fish farm)	Needingworth Road, Bluntisham
030	H/19/01737/FUL	Mr J Wenman	Gypsy/traveller site (Part Retrospective)	Needingworth Road, Bluntisham

031	H/19/01960/PIP	Mr & Mrs D Morgan	Residential (8 plots)	Russett Avenue, Needingworth
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Planning applications ending 'CM' relate to Full Application (Minerals)
Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters
Planning applications ending 'HHFUL' relate to Householder applications for Full Planning Permission
Planning applications ending 'PIP' relate to Permission in Principle

From the information provided it is understood that all the developments propose to discharge surface water to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). It is likely that treated foul effluent water emanating from some of these sites will be via Needingworth Water Recycling Centre (WRC). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

Proposed development to the north of Fairview and west of Enterprise Farm - (Bluntisham Farm), off Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Client of RSK Land & Development Engineering Ltd (MLC Ref No 011), Gladman Developments (MLC Ref No 013) & David Wilson Homes (MLC Ref No 027)

A Reserved Matters planning application was submitted to the District Council in June and is currently being considered.

Residential development on land adjacent to Fair View, Bluntisham Road, Needingworth - Luminus Homes (MLC Ref Nos 012 & 017)

Luminus, part of the Places for People Group, has rebranded and become Chorus Homes Group.

As requested in minute B.718 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters a letter has been sent to the parties concerned, albeit only recently, and a response is currently awaited.

Developments at Green Acres, Needingworth Road, Bluntisham

(a) *Change of use of agricultural land to one gypsy/traveller pitch including two dayrooms (retrospective) at land north of Green Acre – Mr R Harris (MLC Ref No 018)*

Further to the last meeting report planning permission was granted by the District Council in July, subject to the imposition of planning conditions including one relating to "foul drainage".

(b) *Change of use of the land to Gypsy & Traveller residential with the siting of one static caravan and one touring caravan and the development of a block of stable/utility block (part retrospective) at 2 Green Acre - Mr J Wenman (MLC Ref No 030)*

A Planning application was submitted to the District Council in September and is currently "In progress".

In a similar manner to Mr Harris' site (MLC Ref No 018) it is proposed that foul water disposal is to the private open watercourse on the eastern side of The Drove via a package treatment plant.

Development of existing vacant plot adjacent to Lodel Farm in Needingworth for (up to) 30 new residential units, including 12 affordable housing units at land north of Lodel Farm, Overcote Lane, Needingworth – Mr M Hudson (MLC Ref No 020)

According to the District Council's Public Access web page the planning process is still "In progress".

As with the Fairview site (MLC Ref Nos 012 & 017), above, a letter has been sent to the parties concerned as requested.

Erection of 40 dwellings with associated landscaping, parking, cycle and refuse storage, sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) and vehicular access point off Mill Way at land north of Sunryl, Church Street, Needingworth – Innerspace Homes Ltd (MLC Ref No 022)

The planning application was refused permission by the District Council because:

"..... the site is not allocated for development within the Huntingdon shire Local Plan to 2036 and as such it is considered to be in the countryside for the purposes of this plan. Being within the countryside, development of the site is contrary to development plan policies LP9 and LP10."

Residential development of up to 5 dwellings on land adjacent to 15 Mill Lane, Bluntisham – Mr Searle (MLC Ref No 024)

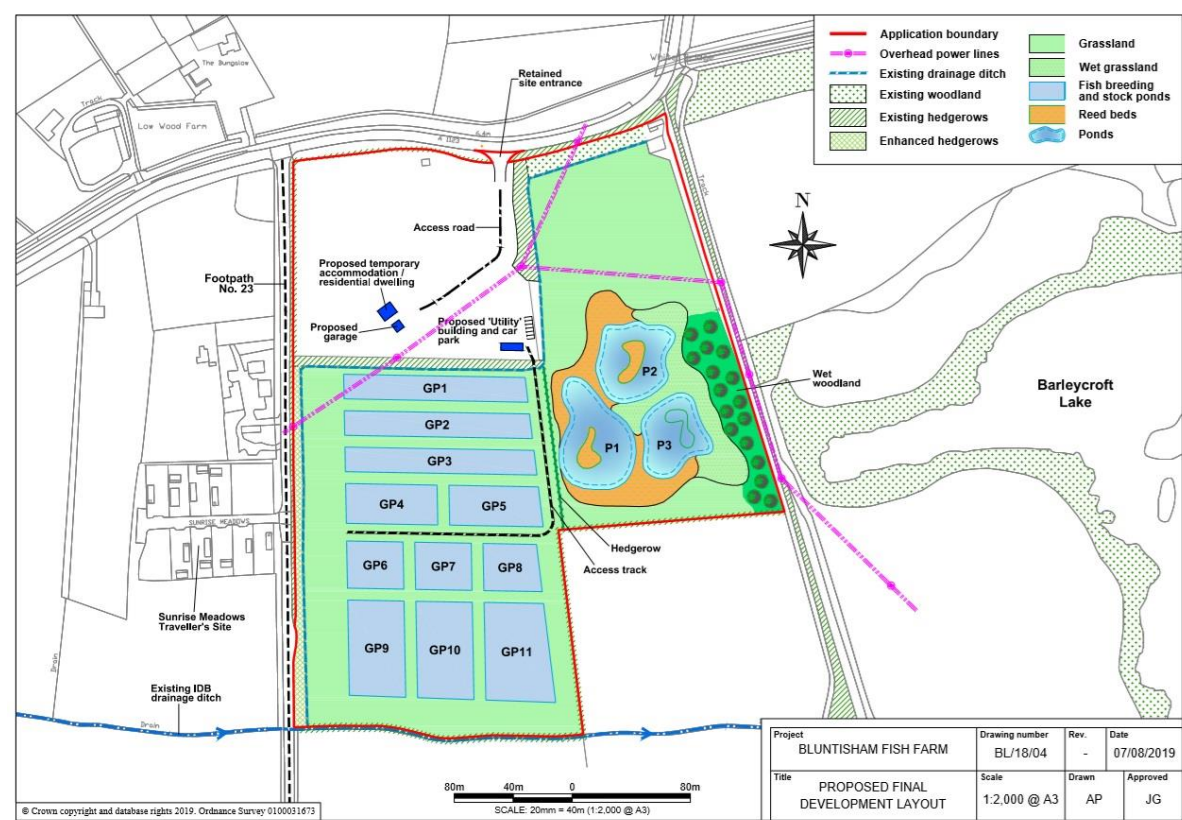
Permission in Principle (PIP) - The permission in principle consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.

Further to the last meeting report planning permission in principle was granted by the District Council in July.

Change of use of land to commercial fish farm and siting of mobile home for a temporary period at land south of White Bridge, Needingworth Road, Bluntisham – Mr Mustafa (MLC Ref Nos 025 & 029)

As discussed in the last meeting report, a planning application has been submitted to, and is currently being considered by, the District Council.

No correspondence has been received from the applicant or the applicant’s agents concerning the following development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board’s interests.



Extract from Drawing No BL/18/04

Creation of wetland habitat following excavation and processing of sand and gravel and associated changes to the related S106 agreement at Needingworth Quarry, Bluntisham Road, Needingworth – Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd (MLC Ref No 026)

This planning application seeks amendments to the existing planning conditions in order to regularise changes to the working and restoration schemes.

The proposals do not seek to increase the size of the quarry nor intensify the output beyond what is already permitted. The changes arise as both Hanson and RSPB have recognised that the working of the site and delivery of the restoration could be improved, most notably by creating larger reed bed cells.

8 large houses at land rear of Mill Meadows on land adjacent to 40 Russett Avenue Needingworth - Mr & Mrs D Morgan (MLC Ref No 031)

A PIP planning application was submitted to the District Council in September and according to the District Council's Public Access web page the current status is "Pending decision".

In the absence of any technical detail it is not possible to advise on the means of drainage or any impacts on the Board's system.

Local Plan Update and associated Consultations

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)

Cambridgeshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) document

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

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 report detailing the proposed revisions and the public responses which included responses from various interested parties including the Commissioners, several Parish and Town Councils, and various County Council departments went before the County Councils on 16 May.

A copy of the report can be found on the Council's webpage by using the following link and searching for "Review of the Local Information Requirements for the Validation of Planning Applications":

https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/232/Committee/8/Default.aspx

However, the relevant items, as far as the Commissioners and relevant associated Boards are concerned, are summarised below.

"3.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

3.10 Middle Level Commissioners – Middle Level Commissioners have made a number of comments: 1. The contents of the Middle Level Commissioner's response of 2017 remain relevant. 2. The Commissioners are pleased to note that the reference in the introduction on

page 2 of the 2019 LVL Guidance notes to the use of relevant and competent technical specialists and encourage this. 3. The commissioners and associated boards promote meaningful preapplication advice and work with CCC colleagues to ensure that any issues concerning flood risk, water level management, navigation and environmental issues are dealt with prior to the planning application process, which offers more certainty in the decision making process. The Middle Level Commissioners would be pleased if applicants and/or agents could be advised to contact the Middle Level Commissioners for advice within their jurisdiction. A web site link is given to their pre- and post-application procedure: <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/consents/>. 4. The Commissioners request that applicants and/or agents are reminded that should planning approval be given by Cambridgeshire County Council, to remind the applicant(s) agent(s) that any matters requiring consent under the requirements of the Land Drainage Act, the Highways Act, the Water Industry Act, the Flood and Water Management Act and/or the Middle Level Act 2018, which relates to navigation related issues, must be complied with before any work is commenced on site. 5. It is requested that any drawings that are submitted to County Council be to a recognised engineering scale including a scale bar and advice on what size of paper the drawing should be printed on. 6. The Commissioners are pleased to note that the reference in the introduction on page 2 of the 2019 LVL Guidance notes to the use of relevant and competent technical specialists and encourage this. 7. The Biodiversity Survey and Report (Paragraph 4) includes reference to the Middle Level Biodiversity Manual (2016), on page 5 - this remains current on 10 April 2019. 8. The Statement of Sustainable Design and Construction (Paragraph 5) includes or the provision of both a foul drainage strategy and water conservation strategy, on pages 6 and 7. This is supported but it is suggested that the latter should be applied County wide and not just applied to the South Cambridgeshire District Council's area. 9. The Flood Risk Assessment (Paragraph 7) gives a list of application types that is appropriate to provide a Flood Risk Assessment for. The last bullet point (on page 8) refers to developments of: "Less than 1 hectare within flood zone 1 which has critical drainage problems as notified by the Environment Agency." Unless the area is identified within a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment) the Environment Agency are unlikely to be involved. Drainage is the responsibility of several stakeholders, including Internal Drainage Boards and your Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Team. The latter are more likely to be aware of and have to resolve "critical drainage problems". It is reassuring to note and we applaud the inclusion of a reference and a link to our "Planning Advice and Consent Documents" webpage on page 9. 10. Additional Plans and Drawings (including cross-sections where required). (Paragraph 22), the inclusion of the section detailing other plans and drawings and suggesting suitable scales for these is noted and supported."

"4.0 Consideration of the Consultation responses

4.10 Middle Level Commissioners – 1. Noted with thanks. No changes required. 2. Pre application advice - References to Middle Level guidance will be retained, so no changes required. 3. References to Middle Level guidance are retained and it is recommended that the Middle Level Commissioners are added to the list of other bodies who provide pre-application advice. 4. Consent under the requirements of the Land Drainage Act is covered when necessary by informative at decision stage. 5. Drawings - This is covered by national guidance, so no changes required. 6. Technical specialists' reference - Noted with thanks. No changes required. 7. Biodiversity survey - Noted with thanks. No changes required. 8. Statement of Sustainable Design and Construction - This is already covered across all districts based on the relevant adopted policy guidance. The reference to South Cambridgeshire is only made as their requirements are stricter through adopted policy. Therefore no changes are required. 9. Flood Risk Assessment - Officers acknowledge that drainage is the responsibility of several stakeholders and have noted the acceptance to the Middle Level Commissioners planning advice pages. This will be retained on the new guidance and therefore no further changes are required. 10. Additional Plans and drawings - Noted with thanks. No changes required."

A copy of the Planning Committee Minutes can be viewed via the following link by searching for “Minutes – 16th May 2019”:

https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccs_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/232/Committee/8/Default.aspx

The final published versions of both the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Local Validation List and Guidance Notes can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/planning-applications/submitting-a-planning-application/>

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Local Plan to 2036

Infrastructure Planning and Delivery

In May the following was received from the District Council:

“I am writing with regards your continued input into the infrastructure needs for Huntingdonshire.

Thank you for your agency/company engagement over the last 18 month in the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). This was used to support the new Local Plan to 2036 which was considered for adoption by Full Council on 15th May. Please visit the following link and specifically documents INF/01 – 03 to view the final documents again <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/new-local-plan-to-2036/local-plan-document-library/>”

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Huntingdonshire District Council is currently reviewing the 2011 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). To inform the development of the SPD it needs to better understand current and future infrastructure requirements, what would trigger a developer contribution and how any Section 106 money that has previously been received has been spent. Also, what infrastructure has been delivered as a result thus enabling the District Council to test a revised Developer Contributions and CIL schedule against development viability and hence provide practical up-to-date guidance together with a schedule for land owners, developers and development management officers.

A Public Consultation (using a questionnaire format) was held between Tuesday 16 July and Friday 6 September but it was not considered appropriate to respond, primarily because the Commissioners and associated Boards do not currently have any infrastructure projects which are likely to require developer contributions through the planning process. However, the opportunity was taken to advise the District Council of the current and potential future funding processes in respect of our interests ie Grant-In-Aid funding, Green Infrastructure, Navigation and Partnership Working.

The response included the following summary:

“As discussed above, there are procedures in place for external funding which are available to the Commissioners and associated Boards and, therefore, they do not currently have any projects for the delivery of infrastructure that require developer contributions through the planning process. It is likely that this will remain the case in the short to medium term.

However, as the findings of the above projects and studies are completed and assessed, together with impacts as a result of changes to Government policy, seeking funding via the planning process may become necessary in the longer term. However, the extent, location and value of this is currently unknown and may take some time to determine.”

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:

Future Meetings

Following the successful “joint” approach future meetings will involve both the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP) and Peterborough Flood & Water Management Partnership (PFLoW). The MLC are stakeholders in both partnerships.

Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for England

A public consultation on the draft FCERM Strategy for England document was held between May and June.

Members of the partnership generally considered that amongst other matters the consultation could have been more ambitious; sought greater RMA involvement; and that surface water flooding should have been included.

Following the consideration of the responses it is intended to publish the final national FCERM strategy for England in 2020.

Local FRM Strategy

Both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Strategies are due to be reviewed soon and may be a joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough response.

The Environment Agency’s Joint Assurance Group

This group provides support to the RMAs on the delivery of Grant-in-Aid (GiA) funded projects and meets on a monthly basis to discuss business cases.

Partnership members generally agreed that it would be beneficial to understand what the EA, in its role as the approval body, would like to see in business cases and requested suitable good examples that could be used as guidance.

The EA advised that:

- (i) The lack of sharing of suitable business case examples may be for GDPR/commercially sensitive/economic reasons and advised that whilst the EA cannot 'circulate' these, other RMAs can.
- (ii) Due to the specialist nature of projects within The Fens it may not be possible to find enough suitable projects.

Property Flood Resilience Pathfinder Project

A £700k grant bid was made by a consortium of LLFAs. Confirmation of a successful bid is awaited.

Further details on the project can be found in Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Evaluation Final Evaluation Report October 2015.

Further details can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/29-million-extra-funding-to-boost-action-on-making-homes-more-resilient-to-floods>

Riparian Responsibilities

In order to raise awareness of and instigate discussion on an issue that causes difficulties for RMAs, including the Boards, primarily due to increased workload and costs, the County Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Team prepared an "Issues and Options Briefing Note" seeking changes to current practices that are inefficient and create inconsistency across the county in the use of public resources to address the issues associated with riparian assets. The document is currently being considered by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Cambs County Council Capitally Funded Highway Drainage Schemes

Schemes have been assessed and prioritised based upon level of flooding reported, ie high priority is property flooding or risk to life, low priority is highway only flooding and will be developed to provide estimated costs and prioritised to be delivered to available budget. There is an annual highway drainage budget of £1m, which needs to cover all staff, investigation, design and construction costs and, therefore, not all the schemes will be delivered in the current financial year.

The majority of investigation and design is delivered through Skanska or its supply chain, and managed by the County's Highways Projects team. Priority and funding are confirmed by its Asset Management team.

There are currently 22 schemes ongoing within the County, six of which are within the Fenland district, but none are within the Board's area.

District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) & Water Cycle Study (WCS) documents

Most of the SFRA and WCS documents are considered old and have not been updated as initially intended. All will require reviewing as supporting evidence when the respective District Council's Local Plans are updated.

A 'joint' County-wide document was suggested but was not considered possible due to the differing states of the various Local Plans across the County.

No reference was made to the funding arrangements for the provision of the updated documents.

Good Governance for Internal Drainage Board Members

In March and April 2019 ADA ran a series of five Good Governance Workshops for IDB Members. The recordings from these events will be available as a series of training modules via the ADA website later in 2019.

A copy of the slides used at the presentation can be found at the following link:

https://www.ada.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Good_Governance_Workshop_Slides_2019.pdf

Public Sector Co-operation Agreements (PSCA)

Following a problem encountered within North Level District IDB which required close liaison with Peterborough City Council, in its role as the Highway Authority, the possibility of arranging PSCAs with IDBs and Councils was raised but has not yet been concluded.

Updates on Highways England (HE) Scheme

The former areas 6 and 8 now form the East Region and the new term contractor is Ringway. The previous short-term Asset Support Contracts (ASC) have been replaced by a 15-year Road Investment Strategy (RIS) contract in order to ensure a consistent long-term approach.

Anglian Water Services Limited (AWSL) Price Review 2019 (PR19)

OFWAT like what is being proposed but not the associated costs. AWSL contends that it is trying to be "proactive and not reactive". **Note: In order to reduce charges on its customers AWSL**

currently appears reluctant to incur any unnecessary additional costs beyond what it is obliged to accept.

Requests have been made for suitable applications to be submitted to its project funding programme. It is hoped that a meeting with AWSL's Flood Partnership Manager will be arranged soon.

Consulting Engineer

9 December 2019

Bluntisham(357)\Reports\December 2019

Where he was able to Councillor Jon Neish, Huntingdonshire District Council, gave an update on the planning applications listed.

Creation of wetland habitat at Needingworth Quarry - Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd (MLC Ref No. 026)

This was a County Council application that was being progressed.

Residential Development (120 dwellings) to the north of Fairview and west of Enterprise Farm – David Wilson Homes (MLC Ref No. 027)

This was an outline application which had been passed with Reserved Matters to be approved.

Change of use of land to commercial fish farm at land south of White Bridge, Needingworth Road, Bluntisham – Mr Mustafa (MLC Ref No. 029)

The first application for this development had been withdrawn and a new application had been submitted and was currently being considered; the extraction part by Cambridgeshire County Council and the building was to be considered by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Eight large houses at land rear of Mill Meadows on land adjacent to 40 Russell Avenue, Needingworth – Mr & Mrs D Morgan (MLC Ref No. 031)

This planning application was currently before the Council for consideration and a decision.

The other updates on planning applications and information contained in the Consulting Engineer's Report was considered and noted.

RESOLVED

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

B.742 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle.

B.743 Conservation Officer's Newsletter

Miss McShane referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2019, which had previously been circulated to Members.

B.744 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.745 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss McShane reported that the sum of £943.31 (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency (£952.66 representing 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2019/2020 less £9.35 overpaid in respect of the financial year 2018/2019).

B.746 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Miss McShane reported that it was proposed by ADA to increase subscriptions by approximately 2% in 2020, viz:- from £553 to £565.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2020.

B.747 Health and Safety Report

Further to minute B.726(b), the Vice Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management and the matters that needed attention following their visit to the District on the 18th October 2019.

The report noted that there was a problem with access to the weedscreen which it suggested should be fenced. The Board felt however that a gate would be better as it would restrict access but would also allow weed to be removed and left to dry out before taking off site.

The Board also considered one of the concerns in the report about suitable edge protection.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Vice Chairman obtain two quotations for a V gate for the weedscreen area and, if less than £1,200, he be authorised to order and have the gate installed. For quotations in excess of this amount, the Vice Chairman to seek approval of the Board.
- ii) That the Middle Level Commissioners' Operations Engineer advise the Vice Chairman of the cost of providing two signs, viz:-

Danger Deep Water – Risk of Drowning.

Deep Water – Operative to wear Harness at all times.

B.748 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2018/2019

- a) The Board considered the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

RESOLVED

- i) That, after fully considering the internal controls put in place by their appointed administrators and the checks carried out by their appointed internal auditors, the Board were satisfied that, in all significant respects, the internal control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.
- ii) That the present policies concerning risk management, budget monitoring and insured value of properties are adequate for the size of the business and that they be continued.
- iii) That the Clerk and responsible financial officer review the internal audit strategy with the internal auditor to ensure the most appropriate method is in place to ensure the Board continue to comply with the Internal control objectives to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the authority.
- b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2019.

B.749 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss McShane referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2018/2019 and to the letter from the Minister and Annual report summary and analysis received from Defra dated August 2019, which the Board noted and approved.

B.750 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.751 Risk Management Assessment

Miss McShane reported that it was necessary every 4-5 years to consider the formal Risk Register and in between times to judge the risks when considering the Consulting Engineer's and other reports and when setting budgets and rates/special levies. She advised that these risks had been analysed by the use of the Risk Matrix and added that, although the risk registers for IDBs very rarely changed, they would change over time and it was important for Boards to consider formally and that consideration was due this year.

Members considered the Board's Risk Register.

RESOLVED

That the Risk Register be approved and kept under review and the policy to review risk between formal reviews be continued.

- b) The Board considered and approved the insured value of their buildings.

B.752 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Miss McShane reported that, as resolved at its' last meeting, the Board will continue with a limited assurance review and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

RESOLVED

To continue with a limited assurance review as has been carried out in previous years.

B.753 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.754 Payments to 30th November 2019

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £12,105.65 which had been made from the 1st April to the 30th November 2019.

(NB) - The Chairman declared an interest in the payment made to Lattenbury Services Ltd.

B.755 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2020/2021

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2020/2021 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 39.91% and 60.09%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £18,703 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 £7,464 and £11,239 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 12.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £11,239 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 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.756 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.757 Date of next Meeting

Miss McShane reminded Members that the next Meeting of the Board will be held on Friday the 5th June 2020.

Councillor Neish gave his apologies in advance as he would be unable to attend this Meeting because of another Meeting at the Council.

B.758 List of Board Members

The Chairman requested an up-to-date contact list of Board Members.