

## RANSONMOOR DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners  
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### PRESENT

|                              |               |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| C D Boughton (Chairman)      | R E Mason Esq |
| M W Dale Esq (Vice Chairman) | W Veal Esq    |
| C Boughton Esq               | G Wakeham Esq |

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Commissioners) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed Messrs C Boughton and W Veal who were attending their first meeting of the Commissioners.

### C.1149 Declarations of Interest

Mr Hill reminded the Commissioners of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any of them.

The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in minute no. C.1160.

Mr Dale declared an interest in flailmowing and in matters relating to the District Officer.

### C.1150 Confirmation of Minutes

#### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

### C.1151 Appointment of Chairman

#### RESOLVED

That C D Boughton Esq be appointed Chairman of the Commissioners.

### C.1152 Appointment of Vice Chairman

#### RESOLVED

That M W Dale Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Commissioners.

### C.1153 Appointment of District Officer

#### RESOLVED

That M W Dale Esq be appointed District Officer to the Commissioners during the ensuing year.

### C.1154 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that Fenland District Council had re-appointed Councillor D Connor to be a Commissioner under the provisions of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

### C.1155 Excessive water from Greenvale and the Anglian Water sewage works and Ransonmoor Sewage Works Pumping main Fracture

Further to minute C.1116, the District Officer advised that there was nothing further to report concerning new discharges from the Greenvale site and Mr Lakey considered that water was being recycled on site.

Mr Mason reported on the sewage main being damaged three times in relation to the works associated with the development to the west of Wood Street for Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos. 316 & 334).

### C.1156 Updating DDC Byelaws

Further to minute C.1127(e), the Commissioners considered their updated Byelaws.

#### RESOLVED

That the updated Byelaws be adopted.

### C.1157 Policy Statement

Further to minute C.1127(f), the Commissioners 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.

Concerning the statement, the Commissioners discussed 6.1 and steps which could be taken by the Commissioners.

Mr Hill reported that the matter has previously been discussed at a CFRMP meeting, with various options considered. The Commissioners agreed to monitor the progress made by the CFRMP and reconsider the position further at their next meeting.

#### RESOLVED

That the revised Policy Statement be adopted.

### C.1158 Requirements for a Biosecurity Policy

Further to minute C.1132, the Commissioners considered their Biosecurity Policy.

The Commissioners discussed the problems associated with azolla and the potential threat of non-native invasive species. Mr Lakey reported that the Conservation Officer had provided information cards to Middle Level employees to help in identification.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Biosecurity Policy be adopted.
- ii) That the Conservation Officer be requested to produce an information sheet on non-native invasive weeds to be sent out with the drainage rate demands.

### C.1159 Clerk's Report

Mr Hill advised:-

- i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a second Chair's meeting was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and that discussions at this centred around :-

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

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

The Chairman reported on the discussions at the Chairs meeting concerning the future arrangements for Boards and the briefing paper put forward concerning the proposal for 'One Board'.

The Vice Chairman considered that as farming was changing with larger farms and therefore reduced numbers, this change to one board seemed a logical step and that a unified rate across the whole area would simply matters even further.

In response to Mr Wakeham, Mr Hill confirmed that no work had been done to date concerning costings for rating purposes, but if the proposals gained wide-spread support, this would one of the steps taken to assess the impact of a 'unified rate'.

#### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners support the proposal 'in principle'.

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Association had been held at the ICE building in Westminster on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

RESOLVED

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

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

d) Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members

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

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

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

The Commissioners discussed possible areas of training.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners participate in any training organised through the Middle Level Commissioners.

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 Commissioners:-

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

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

iv) Catchment Strategy

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

v) Water Resources East Group Meeting

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

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

vi) Anglia Farmers

Further to minute C.1144, Mr Hill 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 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The Clerk had recommended that the Commissioners also remain with Anglia Farmers. However, should the Commissioners 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.

Mr Hill reported that the Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Commissioners to remain with Anglia Farmers.

**RESOLVED**

That the actions of the Chairman be approved and the Commissioners remain with Anglia Farmers for a further contract period post 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

vi) 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.

#### C.1160 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

## **Ransonmoor D.D.C.**

### **Consulting Engineers Report – April 2019**

#### **Weed Control and Drain Maintenance**

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

An application of Roundup was made last autumn to district drains where it was required to control growths of emergent aquatic vegetation.

Cases of illegal fly tipping significantly reduced within the Ransonmoor district last year, however, this issue still remains a general concern in the March area and some surrounding villages. A provisional sum has been allocated to allow fly-tipped debris to be cleared, on the basis that the Ransonmoor area has been targeted in past years and unfortunately is likely to be targeted again.

A recent joint inspection of the Commissioners' district drains has been undertaken with the District Officer. The inspection indicates that the majority of drains are currently in a satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard.

The inspection did however highlight dense stands of reed and sedge along reach 23-24 (see plan on following page for locations). It is recommended this reach be treated with an application of Roundup herbicide, followed by machine cleansing after the harvest this year.



**Reach 23-24**

It was also noted that intermittent stands of reed are now increasingly prevalent along reaches 6-15 and 10-44-45. As the inspection took place during the early part of the growing season, it was difficult to distinguish between the bankside vegetation and aquatic vegetation along the watercourse. It is recommended that these reaches are flail mown following this year's harvest and a second inspection be carried out to identify any machine cleansing or other works that may be required thereafter. A provisional sum, based on previous year's expenditure, has been allocated within the Commissioners' costs, for any works that are likely to be required.



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RATEABLE AREA 1584ha



RANSONMOOR  
PUMPING STATION

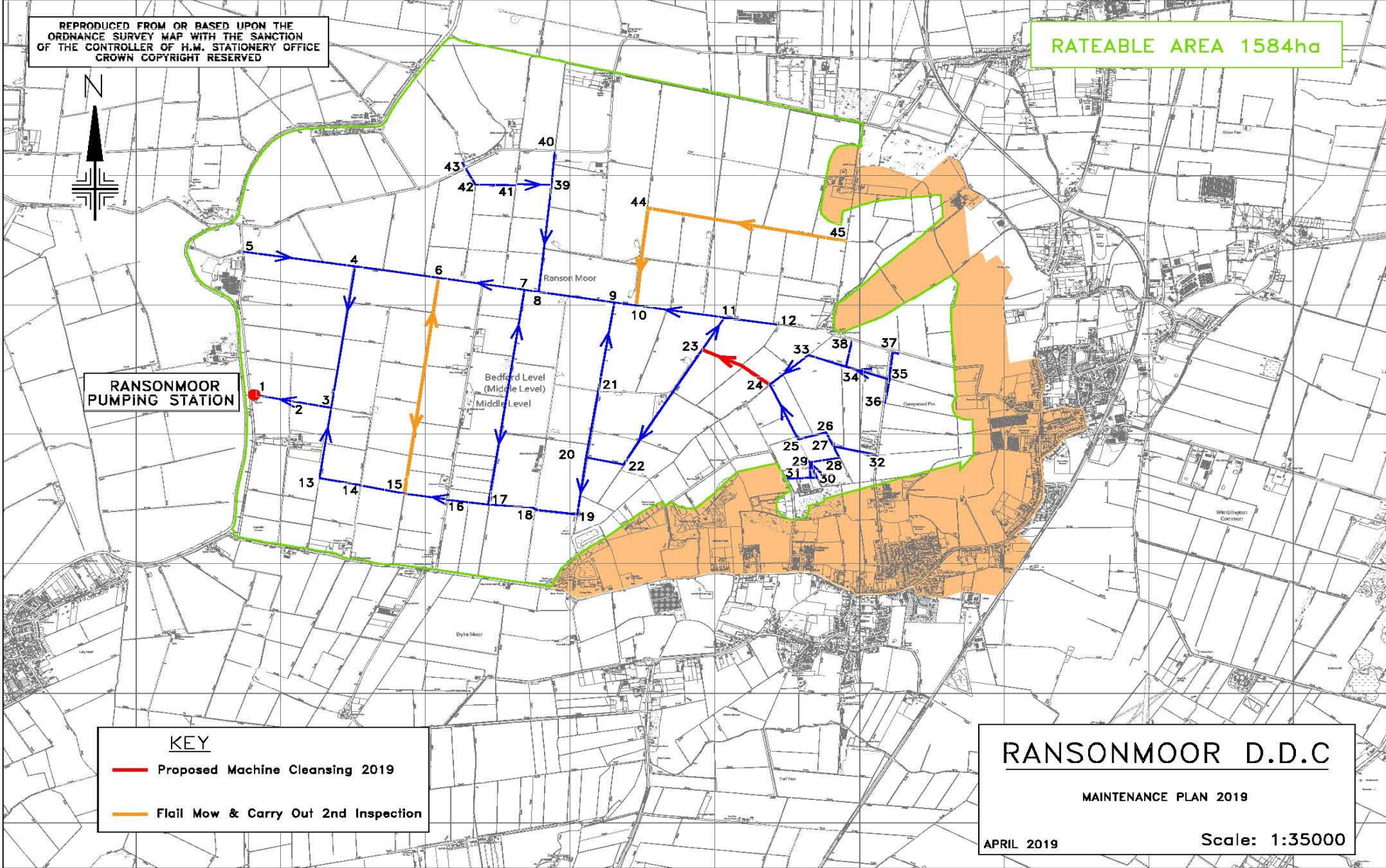
**KEY**

- Proposed Machine Cleansing 2019
- Flail Mow & Carry Out 2nd Inspection

**RANSONMOOR D.D.C**

MAINTENANCE PLAN 2019

APRIL 2019 Scale: 1:35000



The District Officer has indicated that he will be available to undertake the Commissioners' flail mowing requirements for the coming season. It is recommended that flail mowing is undertaken in advance of the machine cleansing works to afford the operator sufficient visibility of the working area. Clearance of numerous bramble patches within the Commissioners' drains will also be included in this year's flail mowing programme to prevent any further colonisation. Provision has been included within the estimate for this work to be undertaken.

A provisional sum has also been included within the estimate to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, culvert cleansing or emergency cott clearance works that may be required later in the year.

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance programme is as follows:

|              |   |             | £                |
|--------------|---|-------------|------------------|
| 1.           | <b><u>Provisional Sum</u></b><br>Allow sum to remove fly tipped materials from District drains as required  | Item    Sum | 400.00           |
|              | <b><u>Provisional Sum</u></b>   |             |                  |
| 2.           | Allow sum for Machine cleansing and Weed/cott removal from the District drains  | Item    Sum | 3800.00          |
| 3.           | Roundup application to control emerging aquatic weed growth in District drains  | Item    Sum | 1000.00          |
| 4.           | Flail mowing in advance of machine cleansing and to control bramble on banks, where required  | Item    Sum | 2000.00          |
| 5.           | <b><u>Provisional Item</u></b><br>Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance and emergency cott removal works                             | Item    Sum | 1000.00          |
| 6.           | Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works | Item    Sum | 950.00           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   |             | <b>£9,150.00</b> |

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

### **Pumping Station**

Other than matters previously reported only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

At last year's meeting it was asked if a timer could be fitted to the new diesel powered pump to allow it to be run for a set time, this could quite easily be done via the engine controller but the District

Officer, who was authorised to deal with the matter, confirmed he has not as yet progressed this. It was also agreed with the District Officer that the recently installed diesel engine should be serviced by E Rand who carried out the installation.

### **Pumping hours**

| Pump Hours Run | April 16 - April 17 | April 17 - April 18 | April 18 - April 19 |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Electric       | 159                 | 328 (487)           | 158 (645)           |
| Diesel         | 73                  | 3 (76)              | 48 (124)            |
| Total          | 232                 | 331                 |                     |

| Pump Hours Run | May 09 - April 10 | April 10 - April 11 | March 11 - March 12 | March 12 - March 13 | March 13 - April 14 | April 14 - April 15 | April 15 - April 16 |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Electric       | 484               | 219                 | 176                 | 835                 | 386                 | 527                 | 245                 |
| Diesel         | -                 | -                   | -                   | -                   | -                   | -                   | -                   |
| Total          | 484               | 219                 | 176                 | 835                 | 386                 | 527                 | 245                 |

### **Planning Applications**

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following 17 new applications have been received and dealt with since the last meeting:

| MLC Ref. | Council Ref       | Applicant                  | Type of Development  | Location                      |
|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 344      | F/YR18/0024/O     | Mr C Hamilton              | Residential (13 plots)   | Wimblington Road, Doddington* |
| 345      | F/YR18/0141/CERTP | Mr I Roberts               | Certificate of Lawful Use (Proposed): infill ditch to use land for domestic purposes | Cedar Avenue, Doddington      |
| 346      | F/YR18/0126/F     | Mr J Welcher               | Retail   | Benwick Road, Doddington      |
| 347      | F/YR18/0303/F     | Mr N Hawson                | Workshop   | Hospital Road, Doddington     |
| 348      | F/YR18/0305/F     | Mr N Hawson                | Equine (Stable)  | Hospital Road, Doddington     |
| 349      | F/YR18/2000/CCC   | Mr N Bowers                | Office   | Knights End Road, March       |
| 350      | F/YR18/0415/F     | Mr & Mrs Usher             | Residence  | Addison Road, Wimblington     |
| 351      | F/YR18/0512/O     | Ms M Joyce                 | Residence  | Benwick Road, Doddington      |
| 352      | F/YR18/0643/F     | Miss J Binge               | Residence (Outbuilding)  | Hospital Road, Doddington     |
| 353      | F/YR18/0682/F     | Mr P Roberts               | Residence (Extension)  | Addison Road, Wimblington     |
| 354      | F/YR18/0670/F     | Mr & Mrs Boughton          | Residential (2 plots)  | Benwick Road, Doddington      |
| 355      | F/YR18/0873/RM    | Mrs M Joyce                | Residence  | Benwick Road, Doddington      |
| 356      | F/YR18/0940/F     | Mr & Mrs Mair              | Agricultural (Storage building)  | Linwood Lane, March           |
| 357      | F/YR18/0971/F     | Mr C Boughton              | Leisure (Caravan park)   | Benwick Road, Doddington      |
| 358      | F/YR18/2012/CCC   | Goldstar Metal Traders Ltd | Office   | Knights End Road, March       |
| 359      | F/YR18/3135/COND  | Construct Reason Ltd       | Residential (28 plots)   | Wood Street, Doddington*      |
| 360      | F/YR18/1046/PNCO4 | Mr & Mrs Millar            | Residence  | Hospital Road, Doddington     |

***Planning applications ending 'CERTP' relate to Certificate of Lawful Use (Proposed)***  
***Planning applications ending 'CCC' relate to Cambridgeshire County Council***  
***Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters***  
***Planning applications ending 'COND' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions***  
***Planning applications ending 'PNCO' relate to prior notification change of use issues***

Developments that propose direct discharge are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, disposal to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Commissioners' requirements.

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

There has been one application for development outside the Commissioners' natural surface water drainage catchment but which discharge treated effluent into the Commissioners' system via AWSL's Doddington WRC.

Mr N Hawson chose to use the soakaway self-certification process for a workshop at Hospital Road, Doddington (MLC Ref No 347) and, in doing so, agreed that if the soakaway was to fail in the future he would be liable for discharge consent.

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

- *Construction of a 7MW solar farm at land east of Coneywood South Farm, Wood Street, Doddington – C S Solar (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 280 & 293)*
- *Erection of a 2-storey 24-bed care home and a 2-storey staff resources building and a 2-storey 20-bed extension at Askham House, Benwick Road, Doddington – Askham Care Homes (MLC Ref Nos 287, 291 & 292)*
- *Erection of 16 2-storey dwellings comprising: 12 x 4+ bed, 2 x 3-bed and 2 x 2-bed and associated garaging and infrastructure at land south of 32 Wimblington Road, Doddington – Larkfleet Homes (MLC Ref No 290)*
- *Erection of 10 dwellings at land east of Askham House, 13 Benwick Road, Doddington – Mr C Boughton (MLC Ref Nos 301, 304, 325 & 336)*
- *Proposed Solar Farm Scheme to the north of Bradney Farm, Knights End Road, Staffurths Bridge, March – Solar Power Parks Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 309 & 314) and Savills (MLC Ref No 311)*
- *Erection of a 5-bed detached house involving demolition of existing dwelling at Four Winds, Parsons Land Drove, Doddington – Mr St Clair (MLC Ref No 313)*
- *Erection of up to 7no dwellings on land to the north of 12-28 Wimblington Road Doddington - Mr & Mrs Pollington (MLC Ref No 343)*

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

*Waste transfer, processing and treatment facility at Lodge Farm, Knights End Road, March – Ferry Group Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 250 & 274) & - Goldstar Metal Traders Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 310, 349 & 358)*

Further to the 2016 meeting report a planning application has been submitted to the County Council, in its role as the WPA, for the demolition of an existing office portacabin; erection of an office accommodation building and establishment of relocated car parking facilities.

No recent consultation has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agents concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

*Proposed Residential Development of 37 units to the west of 17-37 Wood Street, Doddington - Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos 316 & 334)*

Further to the last meeting planning permission was granted for this development subject to the imposition of conditions including both surface and foul water disposal.

A subsequent discharge of conditions application for several items including those relevant to the Commissioners has been submitted and subsequently granted by the District Council.

Whilst the Decision Notice for the original planning application included a Drainage Advisory Note the Discharge of Condition notice did not include such an informative. The Drainage Advisory Note refers to the need to meet the Commissioners' requirements and advises that contact should be made at the earliest opportunity to discuss any such requirements.

No consultation occurred with any of the parties involved in the discharge of these conditions. Please also see the item "*Planning Committee Decision at Estover Road, March*".



**One of several photographs of the works supplied by the complainant**

Concerns have been raised by local residents concerning the piping and filling of the former private open watercourse along Wood Street and also the filling of an open watercourse to the rear of Wood Street. Both watercourses are outside of the Commissioners' rateable area and are, therefore, matters for the County Council, in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), to resolve. A particular issue regarding this was that no improvement works appear to have been undertaken to the downstream channel and therefore water simply collected at the downstream end and was unable to flow any further.

In respect of the issues a member of the LLFA's Flood and Water Team advised that:

"As these works relate to a Highways Section 278 agreement my colleague in highways development management also attended.

On discussion with my colleague and the works contractor it transpires that the ditch regrading works at the culvert outfall have not been fully completed due to Section 278/road space issues. Once these have been resolved the new ditch profile at the culvert outfall will be regraded to ensure a tie in with the existing ditch levels. As a result the ponding currently evident at the culvert outfall should subside as the waters flow downstream."

It is not known if these improvement works have been completed.

*Developments at Fields End Water Caravan Park, Benwick Road, Doddington – Mr C Boughton (MLC Ref Nos 332, 333 & 357)*

Further to previous reports a planning application has been submitted to the District Council for the change of use of land at the caravan park to include formation of lake with bridge, 20no site pitches, 4no glamping pods and associated toilet block, 1.8m high earth bund and roadway

The applicant's agents, Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd's (PHA) Design & Access Statement advises that:

"Drainage Strategy:

Lake: The lake itself will have a drain outlet set above the proposed waterline to ensure water will not overflow the desired level. The overflow will discharge to the nearest drain.

\*The necessary discharge consents will be obtained from the local drainage board upon receipt of planning approval.

Pitches: All pitches will dispose of their foul waste (chemical) at the toilet block, which has dedicated discharge points for chemical disposal. Tents and glamping pods will use the facilities within the toilet block, which also has a wash-up area. The toilet block itself will be connected to a below ground package treatment plant with field drains. The chemical waste will have a separate tank close to the toilet block allowing adequate access for emptying by lorry.

Toilet block: Surface water from the toilet block will discharge into the proposed lake. No surface water will be collected from the pitches or glamping pods.

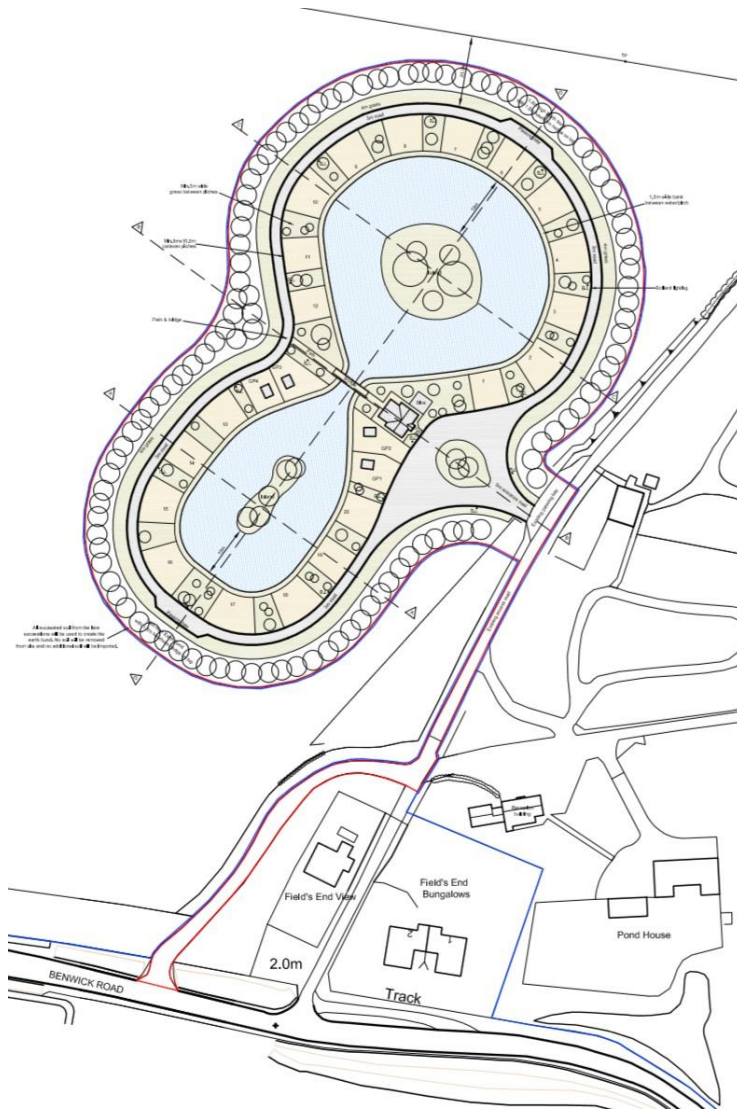
\*The necessary discharge consents will be obtained from the local drainage board upon receipt of planning approval.

Maintenance: All maintenance of the drainage systems will be carried out by the applicant (site owner)."

The application was originally opposed by the LLFA but following further review this was withdrawn. The LLFA's response included the following:

"Informatives

Part or all of your proposed development area falls within the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) catchment and/or that of Ransonmoor Internal Drainage Board (IDB) [sic] who's [sic] consents are managed by the MLC. All increased discharges proposed to enter watercourses directly or indirectly or any works affecting watercourses or access to or along them for maintenance if the site is within the Board's district will require MLC/IDB consent. It is therefore recommended that you contact the IDB/MLC to discuss their requirements. Further information is available at: <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/> "



Despite these comments no consultation has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agent concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

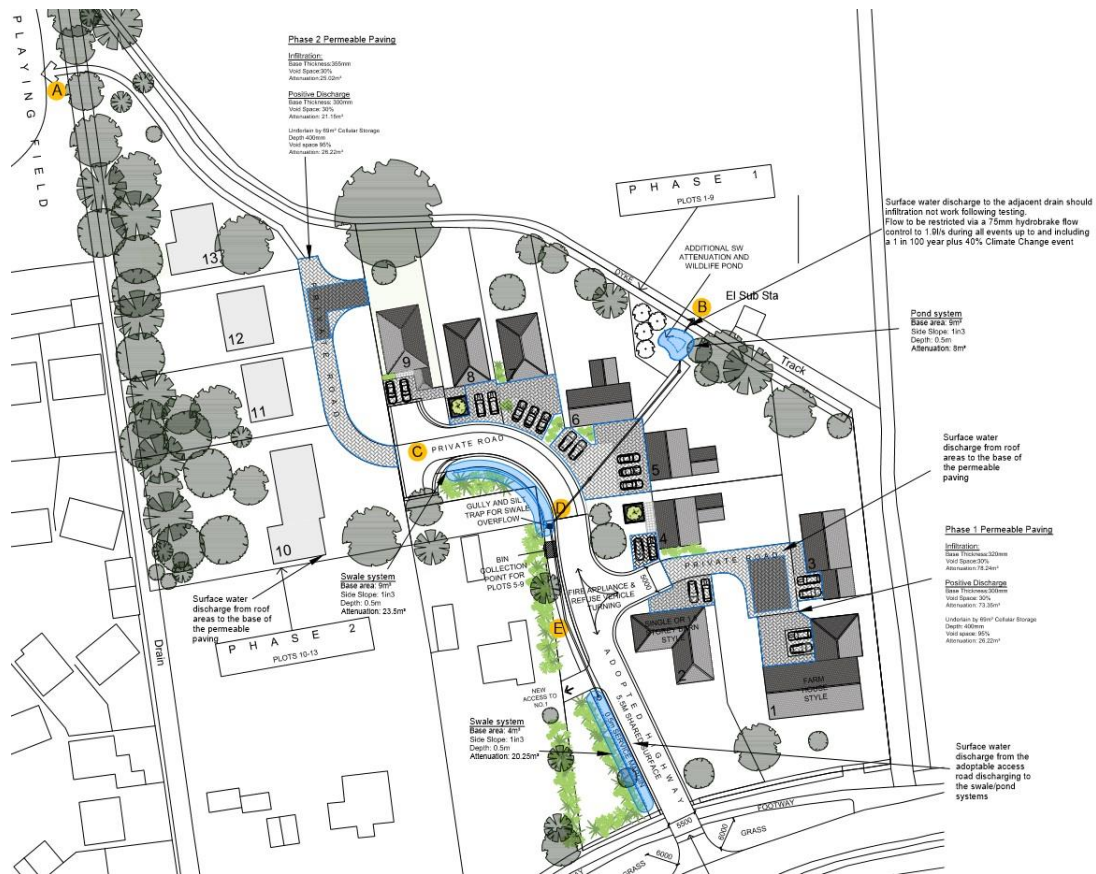
According to the District Council's Public Access webpage a decision is currently pending.

**Extract from Peter Humphrey Associates Ltd Site Layout Drawing Number 5877/02E**

*Erection of up to 13 dwellings involving the formation of a new access and the demolition of existing shed on land north and east of 1-3 Wimblington Road, Doddington - Mr C Hamilton (MLC Ref No 343)*

A planning application has been submitted and subsequently granted outline planning permission subject to the imposition of conditions including both surface and foul water Disposal. The Decision Notice includes the imposition of suitable conditions and includes a Drainage Advisory Note that refers to the need to meet the Commissioners' requirements and advises that contact should be made at the earliest opportunity to discuss any requirements.





Extract from MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltds (MTC) Drawing Number 2142-02

To date no consultation has been received from the applicant or the applicant's agents concerning this development and no further action has been taken in respect of the Commissioners' interests.

### **Development Contributions**

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

### **Fenland District Council (FDC)**

#### ***FDC Liaison Meeting***

A follow up meeting was held on 28 March.

#### ***Planning Committee Decision at Estover Road, March***

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

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

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

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

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

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

**"F/YR15/0668/O**

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

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

*Middle Level Commissioners strongly object to the application.*

*Members received a presentation in accordance with the public participation from Mr Graham Moore (Middle Level Commissioners), who was speaking on behalf of Middle Level Commissioners and March Fifth Internal Drainage Board [sic] and Mrs Liz Whitehouse, who were both speaking in objection to the Application.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)**

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

### ***Quarterly Meetings***

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

### ***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 Boards/Commissioners, in dealing with riparian issues.

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

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

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

### ***Hedge and Ditch Rule***

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

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

### ***Bank Instability - Environment Agency (EA)/IDB approach***

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

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

### ***IDB & LLFA Planning Process***

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

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

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

### ***Emergency Planning & Response***

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

### ***Skills & Apprenticeships***

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

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

### ***County Council Public Sector Services***

In addition to undertaking its role the group was advised that the Flood & Water Team may be extending its service to another County Council. The Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has raised concerns with the County Council's Flood Risk and Biodiversity Business Manager about the potential deterioration of service within Cambridgeshire as a result.

### ***RMA support & the Delivery of projects***

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

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

### ***RMA's Medium Term Programmes (MTP)***

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

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

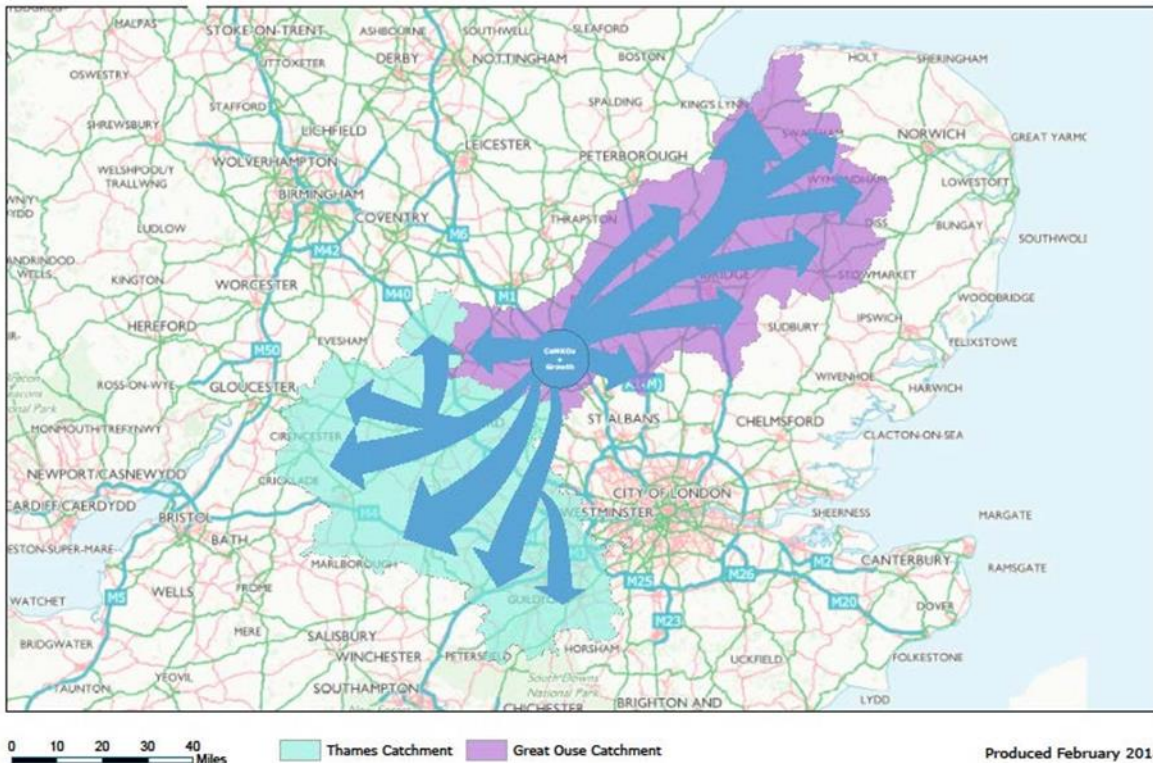
### ***Rain Gauges***

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

### ***Update on RFCC's Growth Work***

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

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



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

### ***Flood Risk Management Trainees***

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

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

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

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

### ***IDB Good Governance Guide/East Ridings of Yorkshire Council Guide***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***The EA's 2018 Flood Action Campaign***

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a) Environment Agency

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

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

(b) Cambridgeshire County Council

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



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

### ***Fenland Flooding Issues Sub-group***

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

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)**

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

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

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

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

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

The project is currently at the data collection stage and details of the Commissioners' system and any hydraulic models are being collated to inform Capita, the consultant who has been appointed to progress Phase 1 of the project.

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

Consulting Engineer

30 April 2019

Ransonmoor (329)\Reports\April 2019

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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](http://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](mailto:Claire.Bell@Environment-Agency.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely



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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](mailto: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*

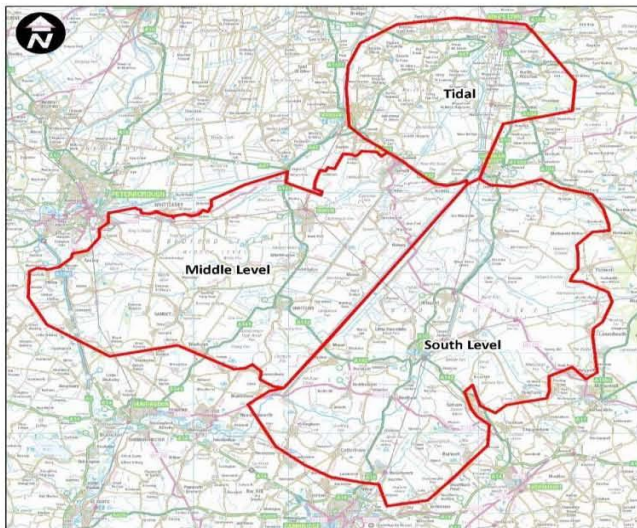
It is understood that there is a significant variation in the types of schemes which may be eligible for FCERM GiA funding. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the attention given to investigating a strategic approach should be proportional to the size of the scheme. Therefore, for smaller schemes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



The Chairman referred to lower pumping hours as compared to the previous year.

With regards to the proposed development to the west of Wood Street, Doddington for Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos 316 & 334), the Commissioners discussed the piping of the ditch to the east of Wood Street/Coneywood, Doddington and Mr Mason reported that the matter was being monitored closely by the Parish Council. Mr Hill reported that this had also been reported to the LLFA through the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer and was being monitored by them.

In relation to the proposed attenuation on this site, the Chairman queried who was going to maintain the system following the completion of the development.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) Weed Control and Drain Maintenance
  - a) That the recommended works be undertaken.
  - b) That M W Dale be authorised to undertake the flail mowing operations in advance of machine cleansing works.
- iii) Development to the west of Wood Street, Doddington - Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos 316 & 334)
- iv) That the Planning Engineer update the Chairman on the future maintenance of the attenuation structure at this site.

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest when the item concerning Weed Control and Drain Maintenance was considered and took no part in the decision.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in planning application (MLC Ref Nos 354) for Mr & Mrs Boughton.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in planning applications (MLC Ref Nos 332, 333 & 357) for Mr C Boughton.

#### C.1161 Capital Improvement Programme

The Commissioners considered their future capital improvement programme.

The Commissioners discussed the possibility of any major works within the next ten years. Both the District Officer and Mr Lakey considered that, following the recent major works at the pumping station, it was unlikely that there would be any.

#### RESOLVED

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

### C.1162 District Officer's Report

The District Officer considered that that all significant matters had been covered in the Consulting Engineer's report.

#### RESOLVED

That the Officer be thanked for his services over the preceding year.

### C.1163 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Mr Hill referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2018, previously circulated to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

The Chairman reported that there were two ponds created within the District; one by himself and one on land belonging to Mr Bellamy and asked that the Conservation Officer be updated.

The Commissioners discussed the possible trial of weevils to control azolla. In response to the Chairman, Mr Lakey reported that these have been used within the Middle Level administered boards, but he was unsure of the optimum time to introduce them.

#### RESOLVED

That the Conservation Officer be authorised to trial the use of weevils to control azolla in District watercourses.

### C.1164 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.

### C.1165 District Officer's honorarium

The Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's honorarium for 2019/2020.

#### RESOLVED

That there be no change in the District Officer's honorarium for 2019/2020.

(NB) – Mr Dale declared a financial interest when these items were discussed.

### C.1166 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2019/2020 in the sum of £5,858.58 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £5,580).

### C.1167 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

(a) Mr Hill reported that the sum of £1,364.20 (inclusive of supervision) had been received from the Environment Agency (£2,027.02 representing 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2018/2019 less £662.82 overpaid in respect of the financial year 2017/2018).

(b) Further to minute C.1125(b), Mr Hill referred to the discussions with the Environment Agency over the monies available to fund highland water claims.

### RESOLVED

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

### C.1168 Association of Drainage Authorities

#### a) Subscriptions

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

### RESOLVED

That the increased subscription be paid for 2019.

#### b) Future ADA Communications

Mr Hill referred to a letter received from ADA dated 18<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.ada.org.uk/communications).

### C.1169 Contravention of Byelaws – Earth Bund

Mr Hill reported that the matter had been reported by the Operations Engineer, following which a letter had been sent instructing that the bund be removed from the Commissioners' Byelaw distance. Upon receipt of this letter, the owner had contacted the Operations Engineer to request more time to complete the works. Mr Lakey reported that, due to the availability of machines, he had agreed to extend the time to 28 days and that the works had been completed satisfactorily within this period.

### C.1170 Contribution from Developers

With reference to minute C.377, Mr Hill reported that a contribution towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume had been received.

### C.1171 Health and Safety Audits

Further to minute C.1130, the Chairman reported that there had been no incidents.

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

Mr Hill reported on proposals to appoint Cope Safety Management on a 3 year contract to provide health and safety advice and that the cost to the Commissioners would be £200 per annum.

### RESOLVED

That the Commissioners accept the Health and Safety services offered by Cope Safety Management.

### C.1172 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Commissioners – 2017/2018

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

### C.1173 Defra IDB1 Returns

Mr Hill referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2017/2018.

### C.1174 Budgeting

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

### C.1175 Review of Internal Controls

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

#### C.1176 Risk Management Assessment

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

#### C.1177 Exercise of Public Rights

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

#### C.1178 Annual Governance Statement – 2018/2019

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

#### RESOLVED

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

#### C.1179 Payments

The Commissioners considered and approved payments amounting to £38,777.91 which had been made during the financial year 2018/2019.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest (as a Member of the Middle Level Board) in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners.

(NB) – The Chairman and Mr C Boughton declared interests in the payment made to Ransonmoor Farms Ltd.

(NB) – The District Officer declared an interest in the payments made to him.

#### C.1180 Annual Accounts of the Commissioners – 2018/2019

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

#### RESOLVED

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

C.1181 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2019/2020

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2019/2020 and were informed by Mr Hill 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 76.75% and 23.25%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £36,467 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 £27,989 and £8,478 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 11.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £8,478 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners 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.

C.1182 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.

C.1183 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next General Meeting of the Commissioners be held on Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.