

HUNDRED FOOT WASHES INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Hundred Foot Washes Internal Drainage Board
hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Tuesday the 14th April 2020

PRESENT

S A Calton Esq (Chairman)	S A Davis Esq
L J Marshall (Vice Chairman)	P Harrington Esq
B R Burling Esq	J Taylor Esq
C A Carson Esq	D Tough Esq

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

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

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from C James Esq and G Murphy Esq.

B.1221 Standing Orders

Miss Ablett reported that to allow the Board to modify the manner in which they hold meetings (for a temporary period) whilst special arrangements are in place to deal with COVID-19, Defra have agreed to the adoption of modified standing orders. Members considered the adapted set of the new model orders, as supplied by ADA, which include two extra clauses at the end of them which include a change to the way in which meetings are held to allow remote attendance.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle.

B.1222 Declarations of Interest

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

Messrs Harrington and Marshall declared interests in minute no. B.1238 - Wash Superintendents' Fees.

B.1223 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 2nd April 2019 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1224 Appointment of Chairman

RESOLVED

That S A Calton Esq be appointed Chairman of the Board.

B.1225 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED

That L J Marshall Esq be appointed Vice Chairman of the Board.

B.1226 Election of Board Members

Miss Ablett reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2020 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2020 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.1227 Board Membership

- a) Further to minute B.1182(b), Miss Ablett reported that Mr Carwyn James - RSPB had agreed to replace Mr Chris Bowden and had been co-opted to membership of the Board in Area 3.
- b) Further to minute B.1193(d)(iii), Miss Ablett reported that Mr Greg Murphy at the Environment Agency had accepted the invitation to join the Board.

She advised, however, that both gentlemen had had to tender their apologies for this meeting.

B.1228 Ouse Washes Land Managers Group

Further to minute B.1183, Members considered the minutes of the Ouse Washes Land Managers Group dated the 17th September 2019.

B.1229 Ouse Washes Habitat Group (Ouse Washes Strategic Group)

Further to minute B.1184, Miss Ablett reported that the Chairman, Martin Baker, had advised that, the group has not met during the year. He was aware that the RSPB had been looking at the River Delph and the Environment Agency were starting to look internally at long-term options to manage the Washes in a changing climate. No details were known at this present time.

B.1230 Ouse Washes Section 10 Reservoir Middle Level and South Level Barrier Bank works

Further to minute B.1187, Miss Ablett referred to the Newsletters from the Environment Agency dated May, September and December 2019.

The Vice Chairman commented that the bank from Welney to Welmore was in a good condition and showed no signs of flood damage.

Mr Carson advised that, due to erosion from the high water levels during the winter, the work carried out last year between Mepal and Welches Dam had suffered some slippage and that on the non Washes side there had also been a lot of slippage caused by the heavy rain experienced shortly after the bank had been established so it was likely tht the Environment Agency would have to carry out repairs.

B.1231 Water Quality

Further to minute B.1188, the Vice Chairman referred to the Natural England report recently forwarded to Members.

B.1232 Header Drain Maintenance

Further to minute B.1192, the Washes Superintendent, Paul Harrington, confirmed that trees had been cut down and that access to the IDB drain from the inside of Mr Cochrane's wash was now very much improved.

B.1233 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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 support for the Biosphere bid 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) Future Meetings Agendas

That as meeting agendas are getting larger, to include more information to meet legal requirements and ensure members are well informed on issues that might concern them in their role as a Board Member, the Middle Level Commissioners are considering moving close to a paperless arrangement. It is therefore proposed that (for those members that have given email addresses) we will issue the agenda in electronic PDF format. The email will ask for confirmation of receipt of the document but will offer to issue a paper duplicate, but only upon request. The aim of this change is to reduce paper wastage, reduce cost and to reduce the carbon footprint of the office.

Miss Ablett further advised that the Clerk was also investigating a better document management system, which would make reading of electronic agendas easier, as is used by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve receiving future agendas in electronic format and that, where possible, these be received as a word document in order that it could be edited to highlight points to discuss and for the Clerk to investigate a better document management system.

iii) 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 was held on Tuesday the 3rd March 2020.

The format was as per the 2019 conference with a workshop in the morning and the conference in the afternoon. Topics covered were control of invasive species, water resources, planning and effective communications with the wider public.

That the date of the next meeting is Tuesday the 2nd March 2021.

d) Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Board Members

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

e) Workstreams

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

f) Further Research on Eels

Further to minute B.1109(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 £100 per year for the next 2 years towards further research on eels,

g) 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 on this matter as a result of this request.

iv) 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.

v) Environment Agency consultation on changes to the Anglia (Central) RFCC

That a consultation is taking place on the constitution of three RFCCs following a formal proposal for two new unitary authorities to be formed in Northamptonshire (West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire) has been submitted to the Government for consideration. If approved these authorities would coming into existence on the 1 April 2020.

In Buckinghamshire the decision to create a single unitary authority replacing the existing five councils has been made by the Government, subject to Parliamentary approval. It would come into existence on the 1 April 2020.

Each new authority will be a unitary authority, delivering all local government services in their respective areas, including their functions as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFAs).

The membership of Thames RFCC, Anglian (Central) RFCC, and Anglian (Northern) RFCC currently includes representation from one or both of the existing county councils. To reflect the changes proposed the membership of all three RFCC will need to be varied before 1 December 2019.

At the same time to better reflect a catchment-based approach it is proposed to change the name of Anglian (Central) RFCC to Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC. ADA has stated that it supports the naming revision.

vi) 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-aided works to progress during this time on a hold-the-line basis.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve in principle

vii) 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 this Board the requested annual contribution is £50.70.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve the requested annual contribution of £50.70.

viii) 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 general feeling of the Boards so far was that they recognised there could be problems with Boards and the need to amalgamate possibly ten years down the road but most seemed to be happy to continue with their current arrangements. However, this should remain under review and where appropriate amalgamations between Boards supported.

B.1234 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

Hundred Foot Washes I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – March 2020

Planning Applications

No issues concerning previous applications have been dealt with and no new applications have been received since the last meeting.

Local Plan Consultations

Further to the last meeting, the Middle Level Commissioners have responded to public consultations on the Board's behalf. However, these are primarily development based and do not specifically involve the Board.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan

Local Plan review 2016-2036

In delivering development that supports the economy and housing for current and future generations, the Borough Council needs to balance this with the need to protect and enhance the environment.

The Local Plan for the Borough currently consists of the Core Strategy (adopted in 2011) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (SADMP) (adopted in 2016).

These two documents have been reviewed and combined to create a new draft document which identifies a strategy and detail for delivering growth in the Borough, identifying where development should be located and how it should be delivered up to 2036.

The draft Local Plan review was published for an eight week public consultation period from 4 March to 29 April 2019.

The document was considered and a response was submitted to the Borough Council on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and our associated Boards (for whom we provide a planning consultancy service) within West Norfolk. The response included comments on consultation during the planning process and flood risk design.

The relevant Borough Council's web page advises that the submitted comments and suggestions are being reviewed with another version of the plan being issued for further consultation in line with its [Local Development Scheme \(LDS\)](#) "to take place towards the end of the year/earlier next year."

Local Plan review Programme 2019-2022

Local Plan Documents	2019				2020				2021				2022		
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	
Local Plan review	B / C	C / D	D	D	D	D	D/E	E	F			G	G	H	J

Key Stages of Local Plan Preparation		Regulation
A	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation (2016)	
B	Development of options – on-going engagement on issues and emerging options	
C	Publish and Consult on draft Local Plan	Regulation 18
D	Pre-Submission plan development	
E	Pre-Submission publication and consultation	Regulation 19 & 20
F	Submission of document to Secretary of State	Regulation 22
G	Examination (Including Hearing Sessions)	Regulation 24
H	Receipt of Inspectors Fact Check Report	
I	Receipt of final Inspector's Report	Regulation 25
J	Adoption	Regulation 26

East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC)

Withdrawal of emerging Local Plan

On 21 February 2019, East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) formally withdrew its emerging Local Plan. The Council has issued a statement providing formal notification of the plan's withdrawal which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/withdrawal-notice.pdf>.

Notice of Withdrawal of East Cambridgeshire Local Plan

The withdrawn Local Plan and related documents have been removed from the public domain, as per the legislative requirements.

Summary

The preparation of a new East Cambridgeshire Local Plan made good progress during 2016 and 2017. In October 2017, Full Council approved the Plan for its final round of consultation and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for the purpose of independent examination. That consultation duly took place, and the Plan was formally 'submitted' on 16 February 2018.

In June and September 2018, public hearing sessions were held as part of the examination of the Local Plan. The Inspector concluded that the plan is capable of being found sound, subject to modifications.

A Council may withdraw a plan at any time, for any reason, prior to adoption. Following receipt of the Inspector's modifications, ECDC voted to withdraw the emerging Local Plan at its February Council meeting.

For the avoidance of doubt, the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 will remain the adopted Local Plan for the district.

Further to this the ECDC issued “A Statement setting out the outcome of a Review of the Local Plan” during October. It includes the following:

“The East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 becomes 5 years old on 21 April 2020, and therefore a Review is required by that date. “

but adds:

“Outcome of the Review

On 17 October 2019, East Cambridgeshire District Council concluded a Review and determined that its Local Plan 2015 does not at the present time require to be updated. As such, no new Local Plan for the area is to be commenced.”

A copy of the Statement can be found at the following link:

https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20Review%20-%20Statement%2017.10.19_0.pdf

Fenland District Council (FDC)

FDC Liaison Meeting

A meeting was held at the end of March. Issues discussed included navigation related matters, notes on the LLCR, the Wisbech Garden Town, the FRM for The Fens project, the Future High Street Fund bid for March etc.

Another meeting is currently being organised.

Emerging Local Plan 2019-2040

Fenland District Council is preparing a new Local Plan for the period 2019-2040 which, when adopted, will replace the current Fenland Local Plan (May 2014). The Local Plan is an important document which will “determine what the district will look like in the future and how it will become an even better place to live, work and visit.”

'Live' Timetable for Production of the Fenland Local Plan (October 2019)

No.	Stage	Description	LDS Target	Actual dates
1	Consult on a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) scoping report	The SA scoping report sets out the sustainability objectives proposed to be used to appraise the economic, social and environmental effects of the emerging Local Plan policies. The SA scoping report is subject to consultation.	N/a	Consultation 11 th October to 21 st November 2019
2	Public participation (Regulation 18)	Opportunity for interested parties and statutory consultees to consider the options for the plan before the final document is produced. This stage may involve one or more public consultation rounds. We intend two rounds for the new Local Plan.	October 2019 & May 2020	Issues and Options Consultation Document Cabinet 18th September Consultation 11 th October to 21 st November 2019
3	Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19)	The Council publishes the Local Plan which is followed by a 6 week period when formal representations can be made on the Local Plan.	February 2021	
4	Submission (Regulation 22)	The Council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at Regulation 19 stage.	May 2021	
5	Independent Examination Hearing	Held by a Planning Inspector into objections raised on the Local Plan.	From the day it is 'submitted'	
6	Inspector's Report	This will report whether if the Plan is 'Sound' or 'Not Sound'. The Inspector may make recommendations to make the plan 'Sound'.	January 2022 (estimate – could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)	
7	Adoption of DPD (Local Plan)	Final stage, the Council will formally need to adopt the Local Plan and it will then be used in making planning decisions.	February 2022 (estimate - could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)	

Issues & Options Consultation

Between 11 October and 21 November 2019, the Council undertook a Public Issues & Options Consultation, held a 'Call for Sites' exercise, requested nominations for Local Green Spaces, and invited views on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

The consultation was in a questionnaire type format most of the content of which did not directly relate to navigation, water level and flood risk management matters or questions are not relevant to our duties and functions.

Where the questions raised were not specifically relevant to us but may be related to issues upon which we would like to make a remark we made a "comment". Responses relevant to the Board are:

Question 8: Renewable Energy

A comment was made concerning the location of the nearest appropriate grid connection and the potential detrimental effect that the export cable/main connecting into it may cause for example, channel crossings, transport routes and associated remedial works, the formation/uprating/reconstruction of access culverts/roads, and other works to accommodate specialist construction machinery and associated infrastructure the impacts of which are not generally considered as part of the planning process.

Question 11: Minimise Carbon Losses from Wider Activities

Should the Local Plan:

11a) Set out a specific policy on the loss of peat-based soils, and the carbon impacts of it?

Guidance was given concerning the Lowland Agricultural Peat Taskforce when launched by Defra and the East Anglian Fens peat pilot managed by Natural England.

Question 13: Design and Amenity

13c) Are there any specific local issues which need to be addressed through design policies?

Issues specifically referred to were the retention of on-site open watercourses and the provision of adequate maintenance strips beside water level and flood risk management systems, including protected watercourses, within the development's design.

Question 14: Optional Standards

14a) Do you think the Local Plan should include any of the following optional standards (subject to need and viability testing)? If so why?

ii) Water efficiency of new homes

The implementation and management, including enforcement, of water efficiency measures for residential, business and other users of potable water. Proposals should include suitable schemes which minimise the need to abstract water from the Main River system to ensure that it is available for other potential water resource uses ie agricultural irrigation, biodiversity, navigation, leisure and tourism etc.

Question 24: Natural Environment

How do you think the Local Plan should protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment?

The Conservation Officer advised that the Plan should include recreational and wildlife spaces being created as part of new residential developments and the incorporation of relevant biodiversity measures.

Question 26: Flood & Water Management

Do you have any views on how new development could reduce flood risk?

Our comments included but were not limited to the following:

- The extent of the Environment Agency's (EA) Indicative Floodplain and the constraint that this imposes on "growth" in the District.
- All relevant development proposals must be discussed with the relevant RMA including the appropriate Internal Drainage Board at the earliest opportunity, preferably at the pre-application stage.
- In addition to the requirements of the NPPF and associated technical guide, all applications for relevant developments must include a drainage strategy to demonstrate that:
 - (a) Suitable consideration has been given to the disposal of both surface and treated waste water flows and should detail any mitigation required;
 - (b) Appropriate arrangements have been made for developments adjacent to watercourses; and
 - (c) Issues of long-term ownership, funding and maintenance of the water level and flood risk management system are addressed.
- All proposals should have regard to the guidance and byelaws of the relevant RMA including the Internal Drainage Boards. Where appropriate the contents of hydraulic models and studies, such as the Middle Level Strategic Study must be considered.

Question 27: Any Other Issues

Is there anything else you would like to raise – has anything been missed, or are there any general comments you would like to make?

It was suggested that the retention and improvement of the rivers, their settings and associated corridors in the District for navigation, environmental, leisure and tourism

through the provision of related facilities together with the provision of a Water Space Strategy should be considered.

Question 28: Your Priorities

28b) Please identify any other top priorities.

The response advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards'/Commissioners' priorities were:

- To fund, maintain, protect and improve existing and make further provision of viable and appropriate water level and flood risk management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society.
- The implementation and management including enforcement of water efficiency measures for residential, business and other users of potable water.
- The retention and improvement of the rivers, their settings and associated corridors in the District for navigation, environmental, leisure and tourism through the provision of related facilities.
- To maintain, protect and improve the existing and make further provision of net gains to achieve environmental benefits to the waterways in the district.

The comments received during the consultation have been reviewed and a Key Issues Report has been prepared which summarises the main issues and points of view raised. The report is accompanied by full transcripts of individual's comments. The views expressed in response to the Issues & Options Consultation Document will inform the preparation of the Draft Local Plan.

Level 1 SFRA & WCS documents

Royal Haskoning DHV has been appointed to update the Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Study (WCS) for Fenland District Council as part of the evidence for the new Local Plan.

An Inception Meeting has been held and an information request is currently being processed.

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

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.”

Norfolk County Council

Minerals & Waste Local Plan

Norfolk County Council is preparing a Norfolk Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review, to consolidate its three Development Plan Documents (DPD), including the Site Specific Allocation DPD, referred to in the Board's April 2017 meeting report, into one Local Plan and ensure that the policies within them remain up-to-date and to extend the plan period to the end of 2036 to ensure consistency with the other plans being developed by the Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that most local plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every five years and this requirement was incorporated into the adopted Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

A public consultation on the draft Preferred Options document took place over a six week period from 18 September until 30 October. The County Council has reviewed the responses received and these, together with the other relevant documents, can be viewed on the County Council's webpage.

A response made on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and our relevant associated Boards, within West Norfolk, in response to a public consultation, advised that the document had been considered and the proposals were found to be outside the respective catchments and, therefore, no specific comments were made.

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 comprised responses from various interested parties including the Commissioners, several Parish and Town Councils, and various County Council departments went before the County Council on 16 May.

A copy of the report can be found on the Council's webpage 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/ccc_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/>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood and Water (FloW) Partnership [formerly the 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.

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.

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.

Consulting Engineer

25 March 2020

Hundred Foot Washes (347)\Reports\March 2020

RESOLVED

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

B.1235 Capital Improvement Programme

Members considered the Board's future capital improvement programme.

RESOLVED

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

B.1236 Washes Superintendents' Reports

The Board considered the Reports of the Washes Superintendents for the year 2019/2020.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Reports and the actions referred to therein be approved.
- ii) That the Reports be forwarded to the Area Manager Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire Area and to Natural England.

B.1237 Conservation Officer's Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Conservation Officer's Newsletter, dated December 2019, previously circulated to members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

Mr Carson referred to the Conservation Officer's comments regarding the Middle Level Mink project and advised that the traps were an efficient way of controlling mink, especially within a site like the Ouse Washes where there were so many high value breeding birds.

The Chairman reported that, in the members absence, he had responded to the Conservation Officer's enquiry of how many Boards would be interested and suggested this Board would probably be interested in funding the purchase of two mink traps at a cost to the Board of £421.36.

The Vice Chairman agreed as long as the traps were positioned in suitable locations on the Washes. He advised that the WWT had been trialling some traps already and were trying to obtain evidence to support a change in their policy.

The Chairman suggested the Conservation Officer liaise with both Washes Superintendents to arrange installation.

RESOLVED

- i) That the actions of the Chairman be approved and the Board purchase two mink traps at a cost of £421.36.

- ii) That the Conservation Officer liaise with both Washes Superintendents to arrange installation of the mink traps.

B.1238 Cleaning of culverts – 2019/2020

Miss Ablett reported that the RSPB had invoiced the Board in 2019/2020 for the cleaning of 14 culverts, at a cost of £10 each.

RESOLVED

That a payment of £10 continue to be made in respect of each culvert.

(NB) – Messrs Harrington and Taylor declared interests (as employees of the RSPB) in the payment made to the RSPB.

B.1239 Washes Superintendents' Fees

The Board gave consideration to the Washes Superintendents' fees for 2020/2021.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the sum of £1,424 be allowed for the services of the Washes Superintendents for 2020/2021.

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

B.1240 State-aided Schemes

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

Update on the EA grant-in-aid position

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

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.1241 Slubbing and spreading work

a) Slubbing work

The Board considered the tenders received from Fen Group and Russell Fowler Agricultural Contractor & Plant Hire to undertake slubbing work on behalf of the Board in 2020/2021.

RESOLVED

i) That the tender received from Fen Group in the sum of £40 per hour to undertake slubbing work in 2020/2021 be accepted by the Board.

ii) That tenders be requested again from both contractors in 2021.

b) Spreading work

Members considered the question of the undertaking of spreading work within the District.

The Vice Chairman reported that the work to be carried out for the coming year was the normal annual spreading work that had been included in the budget.

Mr Harrington advised that there would be some work for the RSPB in respect of soil spreading near the slacker inlets and any other work that could be achieved in the year whilst keeping within the budget.

B.1242 Environment Agency – Precept

Miss Ablett reported that the Environment Agency had issued the precept for 2020/2021 in the sum of £1,326.00 (the precept for 2018/2019 being £1,293.70).

B.1243 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Miss Ablett 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.1244 Illegal Activity and Unauthorised Use of Slackers

The Chairman reported there were certain shooting syndicates who, prior to the shooting season, had been feeding ponds and slaughtering the local ducks, in great numbers.

He advised that Kate Fagan, of Natural England, was to send a letter to all shooters on the Washes pointing out that this sort of action was not in the spirit of traditional wildfowling and Natural England would take action against it. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to send a letter last season but the Chairman hoped it would be sent this year.

The Chairman also advised that slackers were being opened illegally to let water onto land, so signs had been prepared and would be erected pointing out that using the slackers in this way was against the Board's Byelaws and was a criminal offence. He added that slackers would remain locked and hoped this, together with the signs, would be a deterrent.

Mr Harrington raised concerns regarding the responses he would receive from people, who ask on a regular basis to have the slackers opened throughout August and through to September/October to supply water to wildfowler pools.

Mr Taylor added that supplying the water in August was not a concern but the baiting of pools was an issue and of concern to the RSPB as birds were being shot. He advised that when Natural England send out the letter which he hoped would be before the 1st August it was inevitable that both the WWT and RSPB should expect a lot of criticism and should be prepared for this.

Mr Carson advised there was always an issue with the availability of water in September/October especially after a dry summer, when the water should not be available for flight pools at the expense of grazing cattle. The Chairman agreed as this had to be the Board's first priority.

The Vice Chairman advised that the ponds and wet areas should be maintained throughout the summer as some of the land owners will require water for their own cattle. He added the flight ponds should still be supplied with water but, if there is evidence of supplementary feeding, then it should be recorded and Natural England notified.

The Chairman advised the Superintendents that if they received repeated requests from the same individuals, he was happy for them to pass those requests to him to deal with as the Board cannot be seen to be supporting illegal activity.

Mr Carson stated there were two points to consider; the availability of water and the evidence of supplementary feeding and if the Superintendents had any qualms on either of these then they should refer it to the Chairman in the first instance and then to Natural England.

The Chairman advised that, if the Board did not get official backing from Natural England, he would advise them that there was virtually nothing the Board could do to assist with the problem.

The Vice Chairman appreciated the Board's stance regarding the issue of supplementary feeding of duck flight ponds as this accords with the views of the Wildfowling organisations and those of conservationists.

B.1245 Health and Safety

a) Further to minute B.1206, Miss Ablett reported that quotes were sought and a letter sent to the Chairman on the 25th April 2019 advising that it had been agreed at the Chairs meeting to enter into a 3 year contract with Cope Safety Management with the annual payment being split between the Boards. Assuming all Boards joined the arrangement, the cost to the Board would be £200 per annum. However it was understood that, particularly in the first year or so, extra support may be needed and this could be provided at a day rate of £500 or at an hourly rate of £85 for part days.

Miss Ablett advised that the Chairman had confirmed that the Board wished to be included in the arrangement with Cope Safety Management.

The Chairman advised that the charge of £200 per annum was for two visits per annum and that, in view of the expertise of both Washes Superintendents, he had reduced this to one visit per annum.

RESOLVED

That the actions of the Chairman be approved.

b) The Chairman referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit to the District on the 30th September 2019 and reported that COPE Safety Management were satisfied with the paperwork and controls kept by both WWT and RSPB.

Miss Ablett reminded Members that the Board is responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all Health and Safety legislation and are adequately insured. In view of this, all points for action raised by its' Health and Safety consultant must be implemented so as to avoid the Board's insurance policy from becoming invalid.

c) Miss Ablett referred to the ADA Internal Drainage Boards' Health, Safety & Welfare Survey 2018.

B.1246 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.1247 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss Ablett 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.

B.1248 Budgeting

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

B.1249 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1250 Risk Management Assessment

Miss Ablett 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. He 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/could 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.1251 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Miss Ablett 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.1252 Exercise of Public Rights

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

B.1253 Annual Governance Statement – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2020.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

B.1254 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £26,104.01 which had been made during the financial year 2019/2020.

(NB) – The Vice Chairman declared an interest in the payment made to him.

(NB) – Mr Harrington declared an interest in the payments made to him.

(NB) – Messrs Harrington and Taylor declared interests (as employees of the RSPB) in the payment made to RSPB Sales Ltd.

B.1255 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2019/2020

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2020 as required in the Audit Regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2020.

B.1256 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 Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 99.39% and 0.61%.

The Vice Chairman enquired whether, due to the financial impact of COVID-19 on its ratepayers, a large proportion of which are charity based, the Members should consider reducing the rate.

This was discussed by Members and in view of the recognition of the unique circumstances faced by its ratepayers it was agreed to reduce the rate by 16.7% to 20.0p. It was also agreed that the reduction would be for this year only and ratepayers needed to be made aware of this as the shortfall would clearly have to be recovered at some point as funds were needed to allow the Board to carry out essential repairs and remedial works identified in its medium/long term plan.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £20,641 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 £20,515 and £126 respectively.
- iv)
 - a) That a rate of 20.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
 - b) That ratepayers be advised that the Board has reduced the rate for this year only by 16.07% in view of the financial impact of COVID-19 on its' ratepayers.
- v)
 - a) That a Special levy of £119 be made and issued to the Borough Council for Kings Lynn and West Norfolk for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
 - b) That a Special levy of £7 be made and issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1257 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.1258 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday the 13th April 2021.