

MINUTES OF THE INFORMAL BOARD MEETING OF THE OUSE AND HUMBER DRAINAGE BOARD HELD AT 9.00AM ON TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2014 AT BOOTHFERRY GOLF CLUB, SPALDINGTON LANE, HOWDEN, DN14 7NG

PRESENT: Cllr K West, Cllr Aitken, Cllr Pollard, Cllr Mole, Cllr Bayram, Cllr Burton, Mr J Atkinson, Mr R Patchett, Mr S Towse, Mr T Featherby, Mr J Wright, Mr R Nichols, Mr I Screeton, Mrs H Ellis, Mr S Martin, Mr J Sweeting, Mr C Mowforth

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Morrith (Chief Executive) Mr E Allen (Chief Engineer) Mrs Y Huitson (Secretary).

APOLOGIES: Mr J Traill, Mr R Falkingham, Cllr Lane

ABSENT: Mr A Wraith, Mr J Hick, Cllr Evans

1. The Chief Executive opened the AGM section of the meeting.

Mr Patchett questioned Cllr Evans membership of the Board and was informed by the Chief Executive that Cllr Evans had 'resigned' from the Board but as an appointed member a replacement member was in the gift of ERYC who had been made aware of the situation. A replacement was not likely until after next years' local elections.

The Board wished to record its best wishes to Cllr Lane in light of his recent serious illness.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

Mrs Ellis and Mr Wright declared an interest in item 10 on the agenda.

Mr Sweeting declared an interest in item 19 on the agenda

3. **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The Chief Executive notified the meeting of concerns raised by some members regarding meeting dates and the need to ensure that these were convenient for the maximum number of members.

After discussion it was: -

Proposed: Mr Atkinson

Seconded: Cllr West

And **AGREED** that where ever possible meetings of the Full Board be scheduled for the 2nd Tuesday of February, May, August, and November

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON:** -

Mr Atkinson informed the Board of his decision not to stand for re-election, thanking the members for their support.

The Chief Executive thanked Mr Atkinson for his support, guidance and Chairmanship

It was:

Proposed: Mr Patchett

Seconded: Cllr Burton

And **AGREED** that members formally thank Mr Atkinson for his contribution and dedication as Chair.

Nominations for the position of Chair were made: -

Mr Patchett	Proposed: Mr Sweeting	Seconded: Cllr Bayram
Cllr West	Proposed: Mr Atkinson	Seconded: Cllr Pollard

After a secret ballot and by a majority of 9 to 8 Mr Patchett was **ELECTED** as **CHAIR OF THE BOARD** for the forth coming year 2014/15.

Mr Patchett thanked members for their confidence, stating he believed that successful delivery and good governance were the main focus of Board Members. Mr Patchett assumed Chairmanship of the meeting.

5. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR:**

The merits of having either one or two Vice Chairs was discussed by members. The consensus was that one Vice Chair was appropriate.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Burton	Seconded: Cllr Pollard
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And **RESOLVED** that Cllr West be **ELECTED** as Vice Chair for the forthcoming year 2014/15

6. **ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Members discussed the structure of the Executive Committee. In summary: -

- If possible the committee should reflect the membership profile of the Full Board.
- Members should have experience relevant to the committees function.
- The committees function was to consider important issues prior to making recommendations to the Full Board.
- Where appropriate, the Full Board could delegate specific decisions to the Executive.
- The Chair and Vice Chair must be members.

After discussion it was:

RESOLVED to **ELECT** Mr Atkinson, Cllr Aitken, Mr Falkingham, Mr Featherby, and Mr Towse to the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** with permanent members the Chair and Vice Chair

7. **Minutes of the Full Board Meeting held on 13 May 2014** and as previously circulated were considered, it was:

Proposed: Cllr Bayram	Seconded: Cllr West
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And **RESOLVED** that the minutes be **APPROVED** and **CONFIRMED** as a true record. There were no matters arising.

8. **Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting** held on 2 July 2014 and previously circulated were considered, it was:

Proposed: Mr Atkinson

Seconded: Mr Sweeting

And **RESOLVED** that the minutes be **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED**. There were no matters arising.

9. **Minutes of the informal Board Meeting** held on 4 August 2014 and previously circulated, were considered, it was:

Proposed: Cllr Bayram

Seconded: Cllr Burton

And **RESOLVED** that the minutes be **APPROVED** and **CONFIRMED** as a true record. There were no matters arising.

With the agreement of members, the Chair requested item 10 on the agenda was deferred until after items 11 and 12.

11. **FINANCE AND AUDIT REPORTS:**

The Chief Executive summarised the previously circulated financial information for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.

ii It was:

Proposed: Mr Sweeting

Seconded: Cllr Burton

And **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** and **ACCEPT** the Income and Expenditure report for Quarter 1 as presented.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Burton

Seconded: Cllr Aitken

And **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Income and Expenditure report for Quarter 2 as presented.

- iii The Chief Executive summarised the previously circulated Balance Sheets for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Burton

Seconded: Mr Towse

And **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** and **ACCEPT** the Balance Sheets for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 as presented.

- iv Details of the Invoices Paid and Accounts settled for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 were considered by the members. After answering members queries, it was:

Proposed: Cllr Burton

Seconded: Cllr Aitken

And **RESOLVED** to **CONFIRM** and **APPROVE** expenditure of £236189.46 and £348997.64 for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 respectively.

- v The Chief Executive summarised the details of the Board investments and cash balances. After consideration, it was:

Proposed: Cllr West

Seconded: Cllr Burton

And **RESOLVED** to **CONFIRM** and **ACCEPT** the Investments and Cash Balances as presented.

- vi The Chief Executive summarised changes to the electricity supply contract, confirming that the number of supply contracts had been reduced and start dates synchronised. Savings of circa £4,000 would be realised compared to original renewal quotes.

12 SCHEDULE OF MATTERS RESERVED AND DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES policies as previously circulated were discussed by the Board. Members acknowledged these documents had previously been subject to detailed discussion at the July Executive and August Board Meetings.

The Chief Executive confirmed they were based upon ADA model documents and were consistent with existing policies and contracts of employment.

It was

Proposed: Cllr Aitken

Seconded: Cllr Bayram

And **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** and **ACCEPT** the “Schedule of Matters Reserved for the Board” and “Division of Responsibilities” policies as presented.

15. PUBLIC SECTOR COOPERATION AGREEMENT:

The Chief Executive summarised the background and function of the previously discussed agreement and confirmed that the agreement had now been signed.

A discussion followed, in response to member queries the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer confirmed the agreement was not a binding contract, discussions were planned regarding a joint, open ‘booked’ maintenance programme.

In response the Chief Executive confirmed initial works programmes were for 5 years, reviewed annually.

Cllr Bayram felt this was a good course of action.

In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive clarified that Board staff would not be responsible for operation of the canal lock, but could support/supplement Environment Agency staff in emergency situation and also confirmed that any financial implications would be considered by the Board when setting the rate in February 2015.

Mr Wright felt it was important that the Board work with the Environment Agency to make improvements in the canal as this would benefit the whole system.

It was

Proposed: Cllr Bayram

Seconded: Mr Sweeting

And **RESOLVED** to **ENDORSE** the signing of the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement.

10. RIVER FOULNESS:

The Chief Executive referred members to the previously circulated report and letter concerning the River Foulness and Market Weighton Canal.

Mrs Ellis detailed the concerns of land owners regarding water level management and maintenance activities on the system and the impact of flooding adjacent to the river.

Mr Wright attended the meeting and felt the general consensus was to work with the Board.

Mr Featherby felt the timing of the letter was an opportunity to try and improve the system.

Mrs Ellis felt flooding had been worse in the last two to three years.

Mr Allen explained that the river had been subject to many years of deterioration and in two years the Board had made significant improvements in weed and tree management especially in the middle to lower reaches.

The Chair reminded members that recently we had experienced a number of record rainfall events.

The Board agreed that a significant number of members had in depth, historic knowledge of the canal and river system and its management.

The Chief Executive confirmed that 7.690ha were below average spring tide and Environment Agency maintenance had been withdrawn as the river represents a low risk of flooding to residential property, and that land drainage was no longer a function of the Environment Agency.

The Chief Executive confirmed that maintenance was done under permissive powers and not a statutory duty.

Members considered the previously circulated flood maps, including the Yorkshire Water Authority original and concluded that flooding was consistent with the indicated areas both in the original design and more recent updates.

The Chief Executive confirmed the Boards current maintenance regime and expenditure, and raised concerns regarding the need to balance increasing demands, such as River Foulness, annual flooding adjacent to the River Derwent, capital refurbishments, etc against limited funding.

Members discussed the change of land profiles, acknowledging from personal experience the impact of modifying drainage systems.

Mr Wright felt that the duration rather than frequency of flooding was a primary concern.

Mr Featherby cautioned against building new embankments or raising land as this would increase flood risk in other areas.

Mr Martin felt it was unreasonable to pass responsibility for land shrinkage to the Board.

In response to Mr Martin the Chief Executive confirmed land levels had reduced by 300 – 600mm adjacent to the river when compared to ‘as built’ levels of the mid 1970’s. The last survey being in June 2010.

Mr Martin felt further surveys may be required in the future.

In response to Mr Mowforth, officers confirmed the river channel had returned to a more natural profile and as a result flow capacity would be slightly reduced due to narrower cross sections.

In response to Cllr Bayram, officers felt improved/new storage areas or additional pumps would not attract government funding.

In response to Mr Towse, the Chief Executive confirmed that clearing the section of canal upstream of the confluence would provide a small amount of additional storage but more beneficial would be the additional head of water to assist flows. Officers would include this in PSCA discussions.

The Chief Executive informed members that it was important that the Boards response to issues on the Foulness/Canal system was proportionate and balanced to ensure other areas of the Board were not disadvantaged and that expectation management was a key consideration.

Mr Wright felt it would be beneficial for landowners to understand what actions they could take themselves.

Members agreed with Mr Martin’s suggestion that a coordinated programme of self-help be developed.

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to detail the risks associated with maintenance of the system:

- Do nothing would lead to system failure in the medium term.
- A balanced approach based upon current budgets might not keep pace with climate change.
- Increased investment might only provide time limited benefits as climate change and changes in land profile still result in repeated/persistent flooding.

The Chair invited the Chief Executive to summarise the available options: -

1. Withdraw maintenance. Maintenance would then revert to riparian owners. The Board may then be required to issue Enforcement Notices to landowners who did not undertake work promptly and effectively.
2. Continue with current Board only investment/maintenance programme.
3. Work with landowners and the Environment Agency to identify where, if cost effective, improvements might be delivered.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Aitken

Seconded: Mr Wright

And **RESOLVED** to support **RECOMMENDED OPTION 3** and a meeting be arranged with all adjacent landowners and other stakeholders as soon as practicable.

Mrs Ellis informed members that persistent flooding of Bubwith Ings was impacting soil quality and wildlife. Similar issues were present on the Foulness.

The Chief Executive acknowledged this, reminding members that the Foulness and Canal were considered important habitat and this has to be considered in any maintenance programme.

13. STAFFING

The Chief Executive confirmed two new staff members are due to join the Board on 1 December 2014.

Officers informed members they were investigating options for a single depot. This would allow greater operational flexibility. Further updates would be provided.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Chief Executive informed the Board of one minor accident during the quarter. A member of staff slipped whilst entering a drain suffering minor bruising.

All risk assessments, method statements and Safe Working Practices had been reviewed and a new Health and Safety hand book prepared. The Chief Executive stated this was to be issued to all staff and a copy was to be left in each work vehicle.

16. HUMBER STRATEGY AND TIDAL SURGE:

i. **Humber Strategy**

Members discussed the previously circulated report. The Chief Executive confirmed the current position as detailed.

ii. **Tidal Recovery Work**

The Chief Engineer updated the Board on the current position of works. A discussion followed regarding the reasons for the delay. The Chief Engineer explained the issues with Environment Agency cost estimates explaining that the Board contractors were considerably cheaper.

17. LOCAL ISSUES

The Chief Executive summarised his recent discussions with the River Derwent Restoration Project Group, explaining improved water management on the Lower Derwent SSSI would improve drainage of adjacent land and allow some habitat improvements.

The Chief Executive summarised recent discussions with ERYC regarding Old Derwent Drain. In response to Cllr Bayram, the Chief Executive felt the drain was likely to be a riparian issue but was definitely not an IDB asset.

Members felt the assistance should be given where possible but was concerned that the Board should not be exposed to any risk or financial liability.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that he may be required to attend ERYC Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

18. REPLACEMENT VEHICLE

It was confirmed that the new Land Rover had been delivered. Officers stated they were monitoring the most appropriate time to replace the ex MWDB vehicle. This might be within the next 12 – 18 months.

19. CAPITAL WORKS

i. **Flood Alleviation Schemes:**

The Chief Engineer updated members on progress with the new Flood Alleviation Schemes, stating he was content with the progress and work undertaken by Atkins Ltd. Further meetings were to take place with landowners. A discussion followed, in summary: -

In response to the Chair, the Chief Engineer stated he didn't have concerns regarding power supplies.

In response to Mr Towse a public open event had been arranged for 25 November 2014 between 2pm and 7pm at Gilberdyke Village Hall. Notices and invitations had been issued.

ii. **Horsefair Development:**

The Chief Engineer updated members on the progress of the North Howden Development, confirmed the intention to build circa 800 new homes. A discussion followed regarding the improvements required to the Board infrastructure. The Chief Engineer confirmed the strategic importance of these improvements as they would also improve flood risk to circa 2,500 properties in Howden. He also confirmed that capital costs would be covered by the developer, with a possible FDGiA contribution.

20. GENERAL MAINTENANCE:

The Chief Engineer updated members, stating all maintenance works were on programme.

He also informed members that the failed Faxfleet pump unit was beyond cost effective repair and that prices were being sought for a replacement unit costs circa £30k.

In response to Mr Featherby, the Chief Executive stated the electrical panel was in good order but some minor modifications would be required for condition monitoring equipment associated with the new unit.

The Chief Executive clarified these modifications at the request of Cllr Aitken.

In response to Cllr Aitken, the Chair stated that Faxfleet pump station was difficult to access during the tidal surge but did keep running. Also additional pumps were set up to help drain flood waters.

The Chief Executive confirmed that repairs had been completed to Wholsea Bridge, but no invoice had been submitted yet.

21. CONSENTS:

Members were informed that the Minister had upheld the refusal of planning permission for the River Valley Wind Farm.

22 ADA UPDATE:

Members discussed the abolition of the IDB's in Wales and the possible risk of reorganisation of the Somerset IDB's.

In response to Mr Featherby, the Chief Executive said there had been no direct criticism of the Drainage Boards, but there had been criticism of the number of organisations involved.

The Chair felt strong delivery and proactive working with the Environment Agency was required.

The Chief Executive clarified works underway on the south bank of the Estuary for Mr Sweeting.

Cllr Aitken felt it was important to promote the Estuary issues through the local MP's

Members discussed Officers roles with the ADA

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Bayram

Seconded: Cllr West

And **RESOLVED** to **ENDORSE** the appointment of the Chief Executive to the ADA Policy and Finance Committee and the Chief Engineer to the Board of Directors of the ADA.

No other business was presented. The Chair thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting at 12.30pm.