

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING OF THE OUSE AND HUMBER DRAINAGE BOARD HELD AT 9.00AM ON TUESDAY 10 MAY 2016 AT BOOTHFERRY GOLF CLUB, SPALDINGTON LANE, HOWDEN, DN14 7NG

PRESENT: Mr R Patchett (Chair), Cllr K West* (Vice Chair), Cllr V Aitken*, Cllr M Stathers*, Cllr H Roberts*, Mr J Traill*, Mr J Atkinson*, Mr S Martin*, Mr C Mowforth, Mr R Falkingham, Mr J Hick, Mr I Screeton†, Mr J Sweeting, Mr J Wright, Mr A Wraith

* Denotes Appointed Member † Denotes Co-opted Member

APOLOGIES: Cllr A Galbraith, Cllr P Pollard*, Mr R Nicholls, Mr T Featherby

ABSENT: Cllr Bayram*, Cllr Wilkinson*

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING: held on Tuesday 9 February 2016 and as previously circulated were considered.

It was: -

Proposed: Mr Traill Seconded: Mr Hick

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes be ADOPTED as a true record.

There was one matter arising raised by the Chair, relating to the existing vacancy on the Executive Committee. The Chair sought nominations:

Mr J Wright was

Proposed: Mr R Falkingham Seconded: Mr J Atkinson

Mr C Mowforth was

Proposed: Cllr Aitken Seconded: Cllr West

After secret ballot Mr J Wright was duly elected to the Executive Committee.

4. POSITION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:

The Chair summarised the EGM held on 4 May 2016 at which the majority of members were in attendance.

The Chief Executive confirmed that adverts for his replacement had been posted on the Monster, Indeed, Reed, Jobsearch and ADA websites. He informed members that these had been viewed 387 times, 4 applications and 3 enquiries had been received since Friday afternoon. He confirmed the closing date was 7 June 2016.

The Chair felt a Recruitment Panel was the appropriate way forward.

In response to Cllr Aitken raising concerns regarding Cllrs potentially interviewing ERYC staff, the Chair felt potential conflicts of interest were a matter for panel members and how well a member knew an applicant was the key consideration. Cllr West stated she would seek guidance from ERYC's Democratic Services Dept.

In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive stated he was happy to do the first sift to remove non-suitable applications, but confirmation of those to be interviewed was a matter for the proposed Recruitment Panel.

Mr Falkingham, supported by Cllr Aitken agreed that the Chief Executive should do the first sift, showing the non-suitable applications to the Chair.

Mr Martin insisted that the Chief Executive show all rejected applications to the Chair, the Chair did not feel this was a problem. Mr Martin also felt that the remaining compliant applications must be circulated to all Board Members.

The Chief Executive explained that this was unusual and there would be potential Data Protection issues due to private nature of the information contained and that all information must be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Chief Executive confirmed that interviews were currently planned for last week of June and first week of July, and that applications would be sifted within 48 hours of the 7 June closing date.

In response to Mr Wright the Chair felt selection of the shortlisted applicants should be delegated to the Recruitment Panel.

It was:

Proposed: Mr Wright

Seconded: Cllr Aitken

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to delegate selection of the final interviews short list to a Recruitment Panel.

Members held an in-depth discussion regarding the makeup of the recruitment panel and its remit. In summary:

The panel membership should account for any potential conflicts of interest.

The panel should select/confirm the short listed applicants.

The panel should consist of between 5 and 6 persons with appropriate knowledge and skill sets.

The panel should be a balance of elected and appointed members.

Potential panel members, after availabilities were discussed, were: Chair, Cllr Aitken, Cllr Stathers, Mr Mowforth, Mr Atkinson, Mr Wraith, Mr Martin, Vice Chair; with final membership confirmed when potential for conflicts of interest were known.

Mr Traill suggested that the shortlisted applicants could be introduced to staff. The Chief Executive confirmed this had occurred at previous interviews he had been involved in.

It was: -

Proposed: Mr Wraith Seconded: Cllr West

And unanimously RESOLVED that the Chair speak with potential panel members to determine final membership.

5. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN:

- i. The Chief Executive presented the Annual Return and supporting documentation for members' consideration.

The Chief Executive explained the changes to the 2015/16 return emphasising that the Annual Governance Statement must be approved by resolution prior to consideration of the accounting statements.

Members considered the Annual Governance Statement and the Chief Executive detailed the relevant internal controls and audit processes employed by the Board. The Chief Executive also drew member attention to the relevant policy documents.

It was:

Proposed: Mr Wright Seconded: Cllr Aitken

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT be signed (Section 1)

- ii. Members considered the Annual Accounts as prepared by the Board's accountants, Hunter Gee Holroyd Ltd. The Chief Executive explained the details of the accounts answering Members queries accordingly.

It was:

Proposed: Mr Wraith Seconded: Cllr Roberts

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to APPROVE the Annual Accounts as presented.

iii. Accounting Statements (Section 2)

Members considered Section 2 – Accounting Statements – of the Annual Return.

The Chief Executive referred members to the relevant supporting documentation.

The Chief Executive highlighted that he had signed this document prior to submission to the Board in accordance with requirements.

It was:

Proposed: Mr Atkinson

Seconded: Mr Roberts

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Section 2 of the Annual Return – Accounting Statements for 2015/16 - be signed by the Chair. Papers were duly signed.

6. INVOICES PAID AND ACCOUNTS SETTLED

Members considered the Invoices Paid and Accounts settled for quarter 4

It was:

Proposed: Cllr West

Seconded: Mr Wraith

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to ACCEPT and CONFIRM payments made totalling £314481.16.

7. STAFFING:

Administration

The Chief Executive summarised the contents of the previously circulated report detailing changes to office staff hours and an expected saving of circa £15,000

Operations

The Chief Executive and Chief Engineer informed members they had serious concerns regarding delivery of the maintenance program as one member of staff had left and a second had been offered another job.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that this was a result of the low pay of operational staff and that he was at risk of losing his most versatile member of staff. Loss of this man would seriously jeopardise the Board's ability to insource work.

The Chief Executive explained that at current pay rates and with expected pay rises, by 2020 staff would be earning less than the target Living Wage of £9.00 per hour.

The Chief Engineer confirmed this was becoming a problem for other Internal Drainage Boards who were also losing staff to better paid jobs.

Mr Screeton felt strongly that the Board needed to build a good team and pay was an important factor.

In response to Mr Wraith, The Chief Executive and Chief Engineer felt a bonus system was inappropriate as it would be a bonus for "completing your day job".

Mr Martin felt the Living Wage was irrelevant and staff should be paid according to skills.

The Chief Engineer highlighted the commitment shown during recent major flooding events. Cllr Aitken supported this, commending staff for their efforts in Bubwith over the New Year.

Mr Mowforth felt the Chair should be involved in any decision unless it was a 'one off arrangement'.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Aitken

Seconded: Cllr Roberts

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer review staff salaries within existing budgets.

8. CAPITAL SCHEMES

The Chief Executive confirmed the LEP-LGF application would be submitted prior to the 13 May 2016 deadline.

He confirmed the LEP LGF application was for £250,000 and that £253,000 Local Levy funding had been agreed by the RFCC, as previously reported. Both sums for Eastington and Laxton.

In response to Cllr Aitken the Chief Executive explained the tender process and confirmed the Chief Engineer was working with Atkins and Lumsden and Carroll to finalise Stage 2 tender details.

In response to Mr Mowforth, the Chair reminded members the original cost estimates were generated by A & F Consulting and that for a number of reasons they had underestimated costs. The Chief Executive confirmed original grant applications had been submitted by A & F Consulting on behalf of Lower Ouse Internal Drainage Board.

In response to Mr Mowforth the Chief Executive and Chief Engineer outlined the cost savings made by Atkins.

Mr Martin stated he was unaware of what was causing the delays and that he had not seen a programme for the schemes. He felt he was short of information.

The Chair stated that the Chief Executive had been asked not to provide this information.

The Chief Executive reminded Mr Martin that members had previously criticised the amount of information provided because of changes that the Board was not in control of. He also stated that his Quarterly Reports fully explained all delays and any issues with the schemes.

He explained he was unwilling to recommend signing of contracts until Ouse and Humber Drainage Board's total funding contribution was known, and that this was dependent upon the LEP grant and that programmes were dependent on funding.

Cllr Aitken stated that the Chief Executive had been informing members of all changes.

The Chair explained in detail the delays that had taken place, focusing on issues with previous service providers and issues around the Humber Strategy.

In response to Cllr Aitken, Mr Martin offered to make contact with the LEP Board to hurry things along.

Mr Traill reminded members that the River Hull and Humber Estuary Strategies were major considerations for the LEP and that LEP funding was heavily interlinked with these large scale strategies. He also informed members that projects contained in these strategies were now subject to individual bids which had resulted in a bigger workload.

Cllr Aitken stated East Riding of Yorkshire Council had been working closely with the Chief Executive to address these problems.

Mr Martin stated he stood corrected and that he was happy to contact the LEP Vice Chair.

The Chief Executive confirmed that if the LEP – LGF application was successful it would allow Ouse and Humber Drainage Board more flexibility with how it contributed to the schemes.

In response to Mr Mowforth, the Chief Executive stated the current construction programme was approximately 6 months, but he could not give a start date as Stage 2 tenders had still to be submitted and funding was not confirmed.

In response to the Chair, Mr Traill stated that in his experience, starting work prior to grant award would nullify applications losing the potential for additional grant funding.

In response to Cllr Aitken and Mr Sweeting the Chief Engineer confirmed the schemes would not reduce risk of tidal flooding but would improve recovery time after any such event.

In response to the Chair, the Chief Engineer and Chief Executive explained that Atkins had been asked to provide support to the Chief Engineer during construction. A cost estimate was to be submitted.

It was confirmed that this matter had previously been delegated to the Executive Committee, who would refer back to the Board if required.

In response to Mr Falkingham, the Chief Executive again stated he could not recommend formally approving contracts at this meeting as Stage 2 tenders were not complete and he could not confirm the contribution required from the Board as the LEP grant was not decided.

The Chair felt that without proper consideration prior to formal approval, he would have to consider his position as Chair.

Mr Traill felt that it was unlikely there would be any clear decision required prior to the next Exec meeting on 28 June 2016.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Officers summarised the current position.

10. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Officers summarised the previously circulated report.

11. MAINTAINANCE PROGRAMME

The Chief Engineer circulated Maintenance programmes for 2015/16 (completed) and 2016/17 (planned)

12. ADA

The Chief Engineer informed members of upcoming ADA events.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to the Chair, the Chief Executive informed members that he would be preparing handover information for the new Chief Executive and that he had a list of priorities he was focusing on.

The Chief Executive thanked members for their support during his time at the Ouse and Humber Drainage Board.

It was:

Proposed: Cllr Aitken

Seconded: Cllr Roberts

And UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to thank the Chief Executive for all he had done for the Board.

The Chair thanked members for their contribution and closed the meeting at 11.40am.