

A MEETING OF THE BEDFORDSHIRE AND RIVER IVEL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD WAS HELD IN THE BOARD ROOM AT VALE HOUSE IN STEWARTBY AND VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025 AT 2PM.

Directly Elected Members

- J R Davison
- * J Polhill
- *v J Russell
- *v T Wootton

- Vacant Position
- Vacant Position
- Vacant Position
- Vacant Position
- Vacant Position
- Vacant Position

Co-opted Members

- *v F Firth

Appointed Members

Bedford Borough Council

- *v N Gribble
- * D McMurdo
- *v R Rigby
- A Spice
- M Towler
- J Weir

Vacant Position

Central Bedfordshire Council

- N Andrews
- A D Brown
- * A French
- H Wightwick
- *v T Wye

Jointly Appointed

North Herts District Council

A Willoughby

* Present (36%)

*v In attendance virtually

Doug McMurdo in the Chair

In attendance:

Phil Camamile (Chief Executive), Helen Hudson (Accountant), Nicole Hunter (Principal Accountant and RFO), Phil Lovesey (Operations Manager), Trevor Skelding (Principal Engineer) and Alice Smith (Executive Assistant).

ID Bedfordshire & River Ivel IDB, Minute

Action

17/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

17/25/01 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Nick Andrews, Jo Davison, Martin Towler, Helen Wightwick, Alistair Wiloughby and Jim Weir.

18/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

18/25/01 Doug McMurdo declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 of the Financial Report as Chair of the Bedfordshire Local Government Pension Fund. RESOLVED that this be noted.

19/25 MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 03 FEBRUARY 2025

19/25/01 The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 03 February 2025 were confirmed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

20/25 ENGINEERING REPORT

20/25/01 The Engineering Report was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:

20/25/02 Universal Studios

The Principal Engineer gave a verbal update confirming that a meeting had taken place with Universal Studios to discuss their proposed surface water management plans. These proposals have been agreed in principle by both the Board and the Environment Agency. Land Drainage Consents would be applied for, as required. RESOLVED that this be noted.

20/25/03 Kings Ditch

Frank Firth asked whether the cost of the proposed works at Kings Ditch could be reclaimed from the Environment Agency, given that the works were only required because of the failure of their asset. It was confirmed that a claim could not be made despite the adverse impact on the Board's asset, due to the challenging location of the Environment Agency's asset and ongoing maintenance being deemed by them as too difficult. As a result, Board officers had decided to protect the Board's asset by installing an automated penstock or a similar control structure. RESOLVED that this be noted.

20/25/04 The Chair asked whether the structure had been tested and expressed concern about the level of energy it was consuming at the Board's expense. The Operations Manager responded that he was unsure whether the asset had been tested by the Environment Agency or Bedford Borough Council. The Chair, in his capacity as a Bedford Borough Councillor, stated he would raise the issue internally with the Flood Risk Management Team. RESOLVED this be noted.

DM

21/25 OPERATIONS REPORT

21/25/01 The Operations Report was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:

21/25/02 A421 National Highways

Tom Wootton emphasised the vital importance of the A421 to the county and expressed disappointment over the lack of publicity and communication from National Highways regarding the improvement works currently being carried out to reduce the risk of future flooding events from occurring. It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED that the Chief Executive write to the Executives at National Highways to request improved engagement with both councillors and the public.

PC

21/25/03 Electricity Supply

Tom Wootton raised concerns about the recent increase in power outages across Europe and asked whether the Board had contingency plans in place should this happen in the UK for areas protected by electric pumps. The Operations Manager confirmed that the newly acquired diesel mobile pumps were such a contingency and could be deployed across the entire catchment area, if needed.

21/25/04 Kings Ditch and Beeston pumping stations were identified as critical assets, both of which were equipped with generator sockets to allow for backup power. Stewartby Lake and Pix Brook gates could be operated manually if required.

21/25/05 The Chief Executive added that, if further pumping capacity were needed—and the issue was not widespread across the East Anglian Region—the Water Management Alliance could provide additional mobile pumps to support operations within the Bedford Group's catchment. RESOLVED that this be noted.

22/25 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025 AND REAPPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2025/26

22/25/01 The detailed Internal Audit Report for 2024/25 and the Internal Audit Report that forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2024/25 as prepared by the Board's independent Internal Auditor, together with the Management Team's responses and recommended actions, (copies of which are filed in the Report Book), were considered in detail and approved.

22/25/02 Members were pleased to note that Substantial Assurance had been awarded by the Internal Auditor, with no recommendations made, which was a credit to the Group's Management Team and particularly to Nicole Hunter, the Group's Principal Accountant and Responsible Financial Officer. RESOLVED that this be noted.

22/25/03 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to reappoint Lighthouse UK Consultancy Limited as the Board's Internal Auditor for 2025/26. Arising therefrom:

22/25/04 The Board:

- (i) is satisfied that the Internal Auditor is independent (see Practitioners' Guide 2024 Paragraphs 1.36 and 4.11);
- (ii) retrospectively approved the internal audit programme of work for 2024/25 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book), having regard to the key risks identified in the Risk Register (see Practitioners' Guide 2024 Paragraphs 1.36 and 4.16); and
- (iii) was satisfied with regard to the competence of the Internal Auditor and retrospectively approved the letter of engagement for 2024/25 (see Practitioners' Guide 2024 Paragraphs 1.36, 4.1 and 4.13), including the signed letter of engagement.
- (ix) approves the internal audit programme of work for 2025/26 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book), having regard to the key risks identified in the Risk Register (see Practitioners' Guide 2025 Paragraphs 1.36 and 4.16); and
- (x) is satisfied with regard to the competence of the Internal Auditor and approves the letter of engagement for 2025/26 (see Practitioners' Guide 2025 Paragraphs 1.36, 4.1 and 4.13), including the signed letter of engagement.

23/25 FINANCIAL REPORTS AND RECONCILIATION TO THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

23/25/01 The Financial Report and reconciliation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2025 was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:

23/25/02 Income and Expenditure Account

The Principal Accountant explained that the Board had made a surplus of £1,366,589 during the 2024/25 financial year, which was largely due to the increase in interest rates, capital development income and Surface Water Development Contributions, following adoption of the WMA's Development Fees and Charges Policy.

23/25/03 Members were advised that the full claim for Highland Water Contributions had been received this year, but reductions were still likely to be imposed by the Environment Agency in future years. RESOLVED that this be noted.

23/25/04 Balance Sheet

The Principal Accountant reported that the Pension Fund Deficit figure had initially been based on a draft report from Bedfordshire Pension Fund Actuary. A final revised report had now been received, showing a £10,200 difference. The updated pension liability stood at £340,200. RESOLVED that this be noted.

24/25 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

24/25/01 Following approval of the financial reports and reconciliation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2025, the AGAR was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:

24/25/02 The Annual Governance Statement shown in Section 1 of the Board's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 was considered in detail and approved.

24/25/03 The Accounting Statements shown in Section 2 of the Board's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 were considered in detail and approved.

25/25 DATE OF COMMENCEMENT PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

25/25/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to publish the notice on the Board's website and also display the notice in the office reception, that the Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 would be available for inspection for the 30-working day period commencing 3 June 2025 and ending on 14 July 2025. RESOLVED that this be noted.

AS / NS

26/25 MATERIAL CHANGES TO THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

26/25/01 Members considered and approved the risk register for those risks with a risk assessment matrix score of ≥ 6 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). There were no matters arising.

27/25 CORRESPONDENCE**27/25/01 Water Resources East: Update and contribution for 2025/26**

The Water Resources East (WRE) update for 2025/26 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved for payment. Arising therefrom:

NS

27/25/02 Members noted the update, including the fact that ADA was no longer represented on the WRE Board. This raised concerns among some members, particularly regarding the value of continued membership. It was observed that the WRE Board was run and controlled by Anglian Water, and some members felt that the Board had seen limited benefit from its involvement.

27/25/03 Tony Brown highlighted the increasing costs and, given the lack of representation, suggested the Board should consider not renewing its subscription. Furthermore, Anna French questioned whether there were any risks in withdrawing and it was confirmed that there would be no direct risks to the Board or withdrawing its financial support.

27/25/04 James Russell acknowledged that WRE had contributed to strategic planning, particularly around the BMK Waterway project. However, it was noted that the Board would likely have been involved in these discussions regardless of its WRE membership.

27/25/05 Tony Brown proposed withdrawing from WRE, seconded by Frank Firth. Two members voted in favour, seven voted against. The motion was voted down and not carried.

27/25/06 Doug McMurdo proposed renewing the subscription for the coming year but writing to WRE to formally raise the Board's concerns and give notice of possible withdrawal the following year if these concerns were not addressed. This proposal was seconded by James Russell. Seven members voted in favour, two against. The motion was carried.

27/25/07 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to renew the Board's WRE subscription for 2025/26 and write to WRE outlining its concerns and intent to review future membership.

NS/PC**28/25 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

28/25/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED for the next Board meeting to take place on Monday, 27 October 2025 at 2pm, which would be held in the Board Room at Vale House, Broadmead Road, Stewartby, Bedfordshire, MK43 9ND and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

29/25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**29/25/01 Shefford Flooding**

Tony Brown expressed frustration over the ongoing lack of accountability for the maintenance of the sluice gate located on the River Flit, which no organisation had claimed responsibility for. It was confirmed that both Board officers and the Environment Agency are aware of this issue.

29/25/02 The Operations Manager reported that the Environment Agency was currently consulting its legal team, as the sluice gate is linked to a historically redundant canal. It was also noted that the Section 19 Flood Report, which includes Shefford, was expected to be published by Central Bedfordshire Council within the next 6 to 8 weeks.

29/25/03 While members acknowledged that the opening of the sluice gate would not have prevented the flooding of residential properties, it may have reduced the severity of the impact. It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to await the outcome of the Environment Agency's legal review and publication of the forthcoming Section 19 Flood Report. RESOLVED that this be noted.

30/25 OPEN FORUM: TO HEAR FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, WITH LEAVE OF THE CHAIRMAN

30/25/01 There were no members of the public present at today's meeting.

31/25 CONSORTIUM MATTERS**31/25/01 Unconfirmed minutes of the last Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting held on 29 April 2025**

The unconfirmed minutes of the last Joint Management Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025 were considered in detail, noted and adopted. There were no matters arising.

31/25/02 Confirmed minutes of the Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting held on 27 February 2025

The unconfirmed minutes of the last Joint Management Committee meeting held on 27 February 2025 were considered in detail, noted and adopted. There were no matters arising.

31/25/03 JMC's Operations Report

The JMC's Operations Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/04 JMC's Social Media Report

The JMC's Social Media Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/05 JMC's Schedule of Paid Accounts

The JMC's Schedule of Paid Accounts for the period 1 November 2024 to 31 March 2025 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/06 JMC's Financial Report for the year ending 31 March 2025

The JMC's Financial Report for the year ending 31 March 2025 was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/07 Group's Performance Report for 2024/25

The Group's Performance Report for 2024/25 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/08 Objectives for 2025/26, as recommended by the JMC

The draft objectives for 2025/26 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) were considered in detail and approved. It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED that the following objectives be adopted for 2025/26:

- (i) To ensure that total expenditure does not exceed the approved expenditure budgets for 2025/26 and plan for subsequent years' rate increases to deliver balanced and affordable budgets before 2026/27.
- (ii) To ensure that the total maintenance works budget does not exceed £1.87m, unless there is an extraordinary/high rainfall event. Any costs that are incurred over and above the budget of £1.87m are to be itemised, identified, and costed separately.
- (iii) To ensure that the Environment Agency's annual precept charges on the Board is fair and that it is spent on work that benefits the Drainage District.
- (iv) To continue improving the main-river network that the Board's watercourses discharge into at key known trouble spots by working with the Environment Agency using the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement and continuing to push for the de-maining of low/medium consequence main-rivers.

- (v) To identify suitable locations to create additional off-line storage areas, which will reduce reliance on the main-river network, reduce flood risk and increase access to fresh water for the purposes of irrigation, potable water supply, recreation and biodiversity.
- (vi) To set up Public Sector Co-operation Agreements with other Risk Management Authorities, which will enable the Board to provide services outside the Drainage District within the Board's watershed catchment area, particularly during high rainfall events.
- (vii) To build on the alternative approach introduced last year of ensuring that the drainage infrastructure which serves new developments is of sufficient capacity and appropriately maintained in perpetuity, without attempting to enter into complex/costly legal agreements and seeking up-front (and ultimately inadequate) commuted sums from developers. i.e. to double the amount of Surface Water Development Contributions collected by the Group in 2024/25.
- (viii) To continue to monitor, report on, and actively reduce carbon usage, in accordance with the Group's Carbon Management Plan.
- (ix) To support constituent Councils through ADA by actively lobbying DEFRA and DLUHC to disaggregate IDB Special Levies from the Councils' Revenue and Expenditure profiles.
- (x) To improve the collection of drainage rates and continue to reduce arrears during 2025/26.
- (xi) To continue to increase the number of followers and posts on the Group's social media platforms.

31/25/09 Group's Annual Carbon Report

The Group's Annual Carbon Report for 2024/25 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

31/25/10 Policy Updates

The following policies were considered in detail and approved (copies of which are filed in the Report Book). There were no matters arising. It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED that the following charge out rates and policies be adopted with immediate effect:

Schedule of Charge Out Rates for 2025/26
Financial Regulations
Supplier Performance Policy
Condition of Service and Benefits Policy

Planning & Byelaw Strategy
Plant Replacement Policy
LGPS Employer's Pension Policy Statement

31/25/11 Items for discussion at the next JMC meeting

There were no issues raised by members for discussion at the next Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting on 23 September 2025. Should members wish to raise any item for discussion at the next meeting, they should contact any of the Board's representatives or the Chief Executive directly.

32/25 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

32/25/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED that as there were no items of confidential business to discuss, a separate set of confidential minutes would not be produced for this meeting.

33/25 UNCONFIRMED CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (JMC) MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2025

33/25/01 The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the last Joint Management Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025 were considered in detail, noted and approved. There were no matters arising.

34/25 ANY OTHER CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

34/25/01 There was no other confidential business to discuss. The Chairman thanked members for their attendance and contribution, and declared the meeting closed.