

ALCONBURY AND ELLINGTON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2018 10am at Brookfield Farm, Great Stukeley.

PRESENT: H Raby (Chairman), K Baker, M Baker, E Ruston, J Sewell, and R Warrener.

IN ATTENDANCE: F Bowler (Chief Executive/Clerk); J Oldfield (Director of Operations) and R Easom (Committee Clerk).

OBSERVING: Clara Kerr, Planning Services Manager (Growth), Huntingdonshire District Council

1 APOLOGIES for absence were received from Mr B Chapman.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

During discussion of the Technical Report, Mr Raby and Mr Keith Baker declared an interest concerning Cambridgeshire County Council, Lead Local Flood Authority, consenting works on a new development at Brampton Park Golf Club.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2017

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record for the Chairman to sign.

4 MATTERS ARISING

A14 Road Improvement

Mrs Ruston asked if the Clerk had anything further to report regarding obtaining a GIS mapping layer from Highways England in order to clearly see the areas which would be changing from agricultural land to special levy as a result of the A14 improvements. The Clerk said a mapping layer had been obtained but it was only an outline map and not good enough to enable editing of individual parcels of land. Therefore, changes could only be estimated but there will definitely be a reduction in agricultural rates and an increase in the special levy.

Easton

Mr M Baker said since the last meeting further maintenance works had been carried out and some residents had again been complaining about the arisings being deposited on the bank of the watercourse. However, Mr Baker also reported that the watercourse appeared to be much deeper and to be flowing much faster. The Director of Operations said, although the Board is permitted to leave arisings following maintenance works being carried out, the Board's contractors had been asked to return to the site and carry out some re-instatement works.

5 WORKS PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD APRIL TO DECEMBER 2017 AND PROPOSED WORKS PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21

The Director of Operations presented the Works Progress Report together with an A3 plan showing maintenance works completed.

A14 Road Improvement

The Director of Operations explained that maintenance works on the watercourse between Brampton and the A1, although shown as complete, were not entirely completed due to access restrictions. The watercourse is on the boundary of the A14 construction site. The Director of Operations added that all Highways England's alterations to channels were consented and technically correct. There are both temporary and permanent consents and Highways England have demonstrated that, technically, there will be no negative impact.

Mrs Ruston said that, since some alterations have been made to the channels, land adjacent to Olivia Cottage, Park Road, Brampton had been flooded; water had been washing over the top of a new culvert. The Director of Operations said new culverts had been sized to be the same as existing culverts on the same watercourse or to pass the 1 in 100 year flood event. Mr Raby added that debris could be a problem where a partial blockage occurs. The Clerk asked Mrs Ruston to provide her with details and dates in order to add the incident to the Board's flood log.

Members accepted the Works Progress Report for the period April to December 2017.

The Director of Operations presented the proposed Works Programme together with an A3 plan showing the maintenance works proposed.

Members approved the Works Programme 2018/19.

Request for Work – Watercourse 22, Spaldwick

The Works Programme included a request for works from a landowner in Spaldwick on Watercourse 22. Watercourse 22 is in the programme for 2018/19 however, the request extended upstream of the adopted section of Watercourse 22 to include an additional 700 metres of watercourse maintenance, 400 metres of which is outside the drainage district. As the Board's powers relate to the benefit of the drainage district, the Board could undertake this maintenance work, which would have an estimated cost of £5,000. Officers added that provision had been made in the estimates for this work to be carried out.

Members approved the request for the above works on Watercourse 22 at Spaldwick.

Huntingdon Riverside Park

The Director of Operations said he was proposing that the Board also carry out work outside the Board's district between the ring road and the main river, it was public open space and had been dredged a few years ago. This being another case of the Board undertaking maintenance works for the benefit of the drainage district.

Officers said they would bring the proposal to the next Board meeting on 22 May 2018 and include estimated costs.

Discussion took place:

Alconbury Brook

Many members again voiced their concerns about the lack of maintenance on Alconbury Brook. Mr Warrener said that just recently 15 acres of his land flooded after only 2 inches of rain.

The Director of Operations said in theory the A14 road improvement works were fully attenuated. Also, he believed the EA would not consider carrying out any works upstream of Alconbury as they were currently following a government funded initiative to investigate Natural Flood Management, which aims to slow the flow of water. He did, however, believe there was a possibility of convincing the EA to carry out maintenance works on Main River between villages and downstream.

Mr M Baker raised the issue of clearing watercourses and improving the flow contributing to flooding elsewhere in the district. Mr Warrener agreed. He said Woolley holds back water as does Hamerton. The Director of Operations added that it has been said, by others, that the Board are to blame for more water going through Alconbury Brook, however, with properly maintained watercourses the flow could be managed in-channel where appropriate conveyance is maintained.

The Clerk said the Board could pay an increased precept to the EA if they were to undertake to carry out maintenance works where the Board requests it. Alternatively, the Board may be able to carry out works itself, under the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement.

6 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) FOR THE PERIOD NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2017

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members accepted the Technical Report.

For the benefit of the observer, HDC Planning Service Manager, Clara Kerr, the Director of Operations commented on the following planning application to which the Board had objected and details of which had been provided to members:

Planning Application No 17/01879/REM – Land North West End of Dorling Way, Brampton

Application No: 17/01879/REM
Location: Land North West End Of Dorling Way Brampton
Proposal: Reserved matters approval sought for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.
Grid Reference: 519609, 271731

The Board **objects** to this application for the following reasons:

1. Any development; including landscaping within 9m of the top of the bank of the watercourse requires the Board's prior consent. The Board has not yet been consulted on these proposals.
2. The landscaping and tree planting shown on the submitted drawing are unacceptable as they will restrict access for the Board's plant and machinery to maintain the watercourse.

The Director of Operations outlined the scenario that despite the Board's objection, an applicant could get planning permission. The Board is not a statutory consultee and the planning authority could choose to ignore the Board's comments, the applicant could then find that he could not go ahead with the landscaping for which he has been granted permission as he would be in contravention of the Board's byelaws. He said there was a lack of understanding in Planning Departments regarding the need for access strips to enable large plant to gain access and carry out maintenance works.

Ms Kerr, commented that the planning department has a Landscaping Officer and asked how much contact, if any, the Board has with them and suggested that the Board enter into discussions with Landscaping Officers at an early stage, before outline planning permission and reserve matters. Ms Kerr provided officers with her contact details and said she could put the Board's officers in touch with HDC's Planning Department Landscaping Officer.

7 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS 2018/2019

The Director of Operations presented the report adding that the policy was consistent with the Bedfordshire & River Ivel and the Buckingham & River Ouzel Boards.

Members approved the report and the following recommendations:

- (i) **The general development contribution should be increased to £5 per impervious square metre from 1st April 2018;**
- (ii) **The Clerk should be authorized to negotiate appropriate commuted sums from developers when the Board agrees to adopt new works.**

8 REVIEW OF ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/2019 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE

The Clerk presented the General Estimates for 2018/19 which recommended a zero percentage increase in the rate and special levy for the 2018/19 financial year.

Income from Rates and Special Levies

The Clerk highlighted the fact that the General Estimates for 2018/19 included an estimate of the land which will be changing from agricultural rates to Huntingdonshire District Council special levy. The GIS map layer which had been provided by Highways England, and upon which the calculations were based, could be subject to some change. However, it appeared that change to the total annual assessable value could result in, approximately, a 13% increase in HDC's special levy. It was hoped that final data would be available for 2019/20. The Clerk also said that members could consider a rate reduction.

Maintenance Expenditure

The Clerk said the maintenance contractors who secured the maintenance works contract for 2016/17 and 2017/18 have proved economical. However, provision has been made in the estimates for 2018/19 and the two subsequent years, for the possibility of a different contractor and a potential increase in costs.

Provision had been made in the estimates for the requested works at Spaldwick, as detailed in the Works Programme (Agenda item 5 above), but not allowed for was any works at Huntingdon Riverside Park, nor any works on Main River.

The Chairman asked about the culvert jetting. The Director of Operations said culvert jetting would be carried out near Sainsbury's (Toby's Trunk) as there was a need to ensure that culvert was free flowing. Mr Warrener commented that Toby's Trunk was the only route for the surface water and the Chairman agreed.

The Board agreed the to a zero percentage increase in the rate for the financial year 2018/19 of 3.95 pence in the pound of Annual Value giving a rate and special levy income of £77,642 and authorised the Chairman to sign and seal the rate.

The Clerk agreed that she would send a letter of explanation regarding the Special Levy increase to the Chief Executive of Huntingdonshire District Council.

9 FINANCE REPORT for period 1 April to 31 December 2017

The Clerk presented the Finance Report which included individual Board receipts and payments; cheque list; investment and bank account balances.

The Finance Report was approved.

10 (i) INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017/18

The Clerk presented the internal auditor's Interim Internal Audit report dated December 2017 and reported that Adequate Assurance had been given with no recommendations arising from the audit, so far. She added that the internal auditor had stated that due to further segregation of duties he was expecting to be able to provide Substantial Assurance when he concludes the audit at the end of the financial year.

The Chairman asked how many other Boards achieve Substantial Assurance. The Clerk said there were not many and those that did usually had a separate rating officer and another finance officer.

Members accepted the Internal Auditor’s Interim Internal Audit Report dated December 2017.

(iii) TO APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Clerk explained that Gowing Internal Audit Services Ltd would no longer be offering their services to the Board after the current financial year as Mr Gowing was retiring.

Several of the Lincolnshire Drainage Boards, which the Bedford Group are aligned with for internal audit purposes, have carried out a formal tender process and a company called TIAA had been chosen to carry out the internal audits. Some of the Lincolnshire Boards are already using them for the current financial year.

Members approved the appointment of internal auditors, TIAA, to the Board.

11 BYELAWS – DEFRA AMENDMENT

The Clerk presented the report on the following Defra amendment to the recently approved Byelaws:

The addition of item 1(c) shown in red.

1 Application of Byelaws

- (a) these Byelaws shall have effect within the District;
- (b) the watercourses referred to in these Byelaws are watercourses which are for the time being vested in or under the control of the Board.
- (c) for the purpose of these Byelaws, references to a watercourse are to be construed as including:

a drainage system as defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010;
a large raised reservoir as defined by the Reservoirs Act 1975; and
a body of water as defined by the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.

The deletion of “*Watercourse*” means *watercourse or waterbody*” from the list of expressions and their meanings under:

33 Interpretation

~~“Watercourse” means watercourse or waterbody;~~

Members approved the Defra amendment to the Byelaws and the revised copy was presented for the Chairman and Clerk to sign and seal.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 22 May 2018 – Board Meeting

The meeting closed at 11.12 am.