

BUCKINGHAM AND RIVER OUZEL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Board Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 at 2pm at Vale House, Stewartby

PRESENT: P Hirons (Chairman), V McPake (Vice Chairman), P Bowsher, F Chapman, A Dransfield, R Exon, R Haynes, J Kane, N Miles, D Osborn and D Prosser.

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Messrs Brown, Gowans, Gurney and Hunt.

2 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

During discussion of The Milton Keynes Parks Trust, Mr Bowsher declared an interest as an employee of the Trust.

3 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 November 2018

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 6 November 2018 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway (OxCam) and East West Rail

Mrs McPake said there had been various meetings regarding OxCam. There had been some proposals but no decisions on the route and it was too early to comment. Officers said IDBs were invited to an OxCam conference on 13 March 2019, regarding future development.

Mrs McPake said the public enquiry into this project was due to commence the following day, 6th February. Planners will hear proposals for the direct rail link between Oxford and Bedford, and Milton Keynes and Aylesbury. She said there were a lot of options and it was probably too early to discuss the impact of the project on IDBs.

Mrs McPake said regarding both the OxCam and East West Rail she would pass on more information when she receives it.

Board Policy Statement and Addendums: Assets in drainage district and ecological sites in drainage district.

Mr Dransfield asked whether the Clerk had taken the suggestions back to ADA. The Clerk said she had and the wording on 3.2 had been changed to *'the National Strategy sets out five objectives...*

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Bill

The Clerk reported that GDPR training had been arranged for employees on 26 February 2019. She said the training was also open to Board Members and asked them to let her know if they were interested in attending.

Progress of Work

The Chairman asked if the work on Claydon Brook was finished yet. The Director of Operations said the majority of the work had been completed but, at the landowner's request, work had ceased until the shooting season was finished. It was now due to recommence.

Planning Applications

Mr Dransfield asked if any progress had been made regarding the provision of training for planning officers and Council members. The Clerk said it was planned to host a joint training session with all three Boards and to invite planning officers from different local authorities. Initially, the Beds & Ivel Board Chairman is to discuss the initiative with Bedford Borough Council.

Mr Bowsher asked what the training was to cover and if it was concerning planning policies or policies which planners were not following. The Director of Operations said it was more concerned with individual planning applications, implementation of policies and developing closer relationships with planning officers.

To consider the Reconstitution of the Board

The Clerk reported that she was not taking this matter any further at present as Defra were currently carrying out a review of Board membership and she was awaiting the outcome. She advised members that Defra consultants may contact them as they are carrying out an anonymous survey of Board membership.

IDB Insurance – The Risk Factor Insurance Solutions

The Clerk said, following a suggestion from Mr Brown, she had arranged a meeting with the 'Risk Factor' insurance brokers to discuss the Boards' insurances on 21 February 2019.

Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway

Mr Kane asked if Mrs McPake had anything further to report regarding the above project. She said she did not but she would pass on Mr Kane's contact details to the Trust if he wished. However, officers pointed out that Mr Brown, Buckingham & River Ouzel and Beds & Ivel Board member was the Boards' representative and Mr Kane was content to leave the reporting on the project to Mr Brown.

5 UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 January 2019

The Chairman presented the minutes which were noted.

Discussion took place:

Government SuDS Review

The Clerk said she had still not received details of the updates to planning guidance needed to reflect the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework which were due to be announced by the Government in autumn 2018. Once received she will email to members.

Plant

The Chairman asked if any equipment had been purchased yet from the 2018/19 budget. The Director of Operations said Site Manager Eastern was looking at a second hand Claas 640 tractor this week.

Mr Haynes said, in his opinion, they were good tractors but officers should ensure that the vehicle had a good service history.

The Director of Operations said the tractor had had one previous owner and he was hoping to get a good deal as he was planning on going to the same supplier for the second hand telehandler and grab forks and a low loader trailer.

Mr Haynes said he was very concerned if the Board were planning to purchase a five year old telehandler with over 4000 hours and only 6 months warranty. He said these are complex machines and believed it could be troublesome and not money well-spent. He said he had no objection to the purchase of the second hand tractor but telehandlers tend to be well used.

The Chairman thanked Mr Haynes for his advice.

Consultations, Work Updates, IDB News

Office Equipment and IT hardware and software upgrades/replacement

Mr Dransfield was concerned about data security and asked about the back up procedures and security against ransomware. The Clerk said that the servers were backed up every weekday night on to a cartridge and put in a fire safe. There were also quarterly backups stored in a different safe. She said she was looking into 'cloud based' data storage as this is the main option provided by IT companies and they give assurances that the data will be safe.

Mr Dransfield recommended continuing with the physical cartridge backups in addition to any cloud based storage.

Improving our Management of Water in the Environment

The Clerk said she hoped to send out more details of this consultation within the next week.

6 REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2019/2020

The Director of Operations presented the Review of Development Contributions report. The Clerk said a combination of RPI and Construction Indices had been used to arrive at the 5.9% increase

Members approved the report and the following recommendations:

- (i) The general development contribution should be increased to £5.30 per impervious square metre from 1st April 2019. However, members also asked that the Clerk review the means of arriving at the percentage increase;**
- (ii) The Clerk should be authorized to negotiate appropriate commuted sums from developers when the Board agrees to adopt new works.**

Discussion took place:

Members were concerned as to how the Clerk had arrived at the 5.9% increase to the general development contribution. The Clerk said she had used the Office of National Statistics indices and agreed to clarify how the 5.9% had been arrived at.

The Chairman said there was some concern the Bedfordshire & River Ivel Board about the current investment climate of low interest rates and whether the commuted sum money would be sufficient for the long term maintenance of assets. The commuted sums are calculated over 30 or 50 years. Officers said the Treasury Green Book was used to calculate the discount rate.

Mr Miles asked whether the Board had an investment policy. The Clerk said the Board do have an investment policy. The previous investment policy had been to place funds only with

AAA Rating banks/organizations which is currently not possible. Also, the Boards cannot invest in anything which is not related to the industry. The Joint Management Committee examine investments at their quarterly meetings.

Mr Dransfield said as much commuted sum money as possible should be taken from developers. The Director of Operations said Defra's stance was now not to favour commuted sums, as this might stifle development.

Mr Kane asked what the actual costs would be for the long term maintenance. The Director of Operations said it is based on a schedule of activities and frequency of maintenance. It is scheduled and then discounted back to present day figures by using the Treasury Green Book discounting principles.

Mr Bowsher clarified that the costs are calculated but the problem is the Treasury Green Book NPV (net present value) is assuming 3.5% interest can be gained and currently interest rates are as low as 0.5%.

The Clerk said she is currently achieving 0.75% on a 32 day notice account.

The Clerk said the Board does not have to adopt assets. It has always been the Boards' policy to adopt as a public body, as it was seen as a better option than management companies being responsible for the long term maintenance as they would often not carry out the work.

Mr Miles asked if it was possible to have a briefing note on this subject. Mr Dransfield said it would also be useful to know if Lead Local Flood Authorities have the same problem and what their approach is.

The Chairman asked that a briefing note be produced explaining more about commuted sums for long term maintenance.

7 PROGRESS OF WORK REPORT - APRIL TO DECEMBER 2018 FOR THE WORKS PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Director of Operations presented the Progress of Work report including the A3 plan showing the completed works in black. He said there was quite a lot of works still to be commenced, as shown in red, which was mainly flailing works, however, there was still January, February and March to report on. All carried forward work was either completed or underway.

Members accepted the Progress of Work report April – December 2018.

Discussion took place:

The Chairman asked about the area of red, outstanding at Twyford. The Director of Operations said it was due to access issues.

Invasive non-native species – Giant Hogweed

The Chairman asked if the Board could control giant hogweed. The Director of Operations said the giant hogweed was the riparian owner's responsibility. He said it was best to spray when it is less than a foot high to avoid it seeding. The Board need to take steps not to be distributing seed as this would be committing an offence and therefore controlling it would enable future watercourse maintenance works to be undertaken effectively.

Mrs McPake asked if officers had made any contingency plans in the event that Glyphosate is banned. The Director of Operations said it is licensed to be used until 2021 and that may be extended. More

mechanical clearing would need to be carried out if spraying was not permitted and it would be less cost effective.

8 REVIEW OF WORKS PROGRAMME 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 COMMENTARY

The Director of Operations presented the Review of Works Programme including the schedule and A3 plan showing the categories of watercourses in the Board's district.

Members approved the Works Programme 2019/20.

The Parks Trust Partnership Working

The Director of Operations said in recent discussion with the Parks Trust it had been agreed that if the Parks Trust carry out watercourse maintenance which is of help to the Board then it is recommended that officers be empowered to make a contribution, on a case by case basis.

Members approved the continued partnership working with the Parks Trust and contributions to watercourse maintenance works which are in line with the Works Programme.

Discussion took place:

Buckingham County Council, Leckhampstead – Watercourse M8-5

The Chairman asked whether the requests for work at Leckhampstead, brought to the Board in the 2018/19 Work Programme and not approved, was still an item for discussion. The Director of Operations said the Council was progressing its Natural Flood Management project that was focusing on upstream works rather than downstream works.

The Parks Trust

Mrs McPake said the Parks Trust were very good at clearing debris from the trash screens at Walnut Tree, Milton Keynes, despite the screens being Milton Keynes Council responsibility.

9 TO REVIEW ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE 2019/20 FINANCIAL YEAR

9 (i) JOINT ESTIMATES

The Clerk presented the estimates of the income and expenditure and reminded members that the JMC had agreed the Group Account estimates at their meeting on 21 January 2019 and explained that the Buckingham & River Ouzel Board pay 40% of the joint cost.

Computer Equipment/Hardware Maintenance

The Chairman asked how long the replacement IT equipment was expected to last. The Clerk said the current system was installed over 5 years ago.

Mr Bowsher asked whether the Board used an IT consultant and whether the market had been tested. The Clerk said the market had not been tested for a number of years and the IT consultants used are on the Boards' preferred supplier list. The service is good and there are a lot of security features in place.

9 (ii) CAPITAL AND MAINTENANCE DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Clerk presented the Capital and Maintenance Development Fund/Grant in Aid Works estimates and highlighted various schemes.

Discussion took place:

Caldecotte Scheme (Part GiA Funded)

The total estimated GiA/development income in 2021/20 was £3M and the estimated expenditure would be £3.2M. The Chairman asked if it was advisable to take on such big schemes. The Director of Operations said that the scheme was only £500,000 originally but consultants have updated the estimates. As part of developing the study for the scheme, Officers were liaising with landowners and developers regarding technical details and partnership funding contributions. However, he believed that if there is a flood risk benefit from the Board carrying out such work then it should do so. If it is a big liability the Board could take out a Public Works Loan Board loan in order to spread the cost over a longer period.

The Clerk said the criteria for a PWLB loan depended on a business case and whether underwritten by the EA or Defra.

Mr Dransfield asked if there was a way of underwriting this risk. The Chairman said he was not sure what level of risk the Board could carry and asked if Defra get involved. The Clerk said the EA do, on behalf of Defra. She would not ask the Board to enter into anything it could not satisfy and once the business case was produced then the Board would know its financial commitment.

Mr Bowsher asked what the expenditure had been on the scheme so far. The Director of Operations said it was technical work by consultants. Originally there was some EA Regional Flood and Coastal Committee funding. There is currently a 6 year plan between 2015 and 2020 where the EA are helping to protect 300,000 homes from flooding and some local funding was committed from the RFCC local levy.

The Clerk said the cost to the Board of the Caldecotte scheme would be met from revenue. For example, the Eaton Bray scheme with £140,000 to be met from revenue in 2020/21.

Kingston Weir and Bridge, Broughton Brook

Mr Bowsher asked about Kingston Weir and if it was downstream of the bridge. The Director of Operations said it was and it had been a problem for many years. He had appointed consulting engineers to build up a study and he then intended to ask Anglian Water for a contribution. Mr Bowsher advised getting, in writing, the responsibility for any such structure. The Director of Operations said the problem with this arose because the weir, that contained an outfall, was built in the 1980s by AW, prior to AW being privatised and the National Rivers Authority being formed. Therefore, the query over ownership remains; whether the structure was a public sewer outfall structure or a weir structure.

9 (iii) MAINTENANCE ESTIMATES

The Director of Operations presented the Engineering Commentary and maintenance estimates.

The Chairman commented on the revised estimate for Flailing and Weedcutting/Spraying reducing from £182,688 to £122,844. Offices said it was down to lengths of watercourse covered compared to the estimate for flailing, based on a typical 500 metres per day. We are now realising the benefit of frequent flailing; it is much easier as less heavy clearing is required and is therefore more efficient. The 2019/20 estimate has been altered to a more productive 750 metres per day. It does depend on each individual watercourse however and, for example, how many fences there are.

9 (iv) OCCUPIERS' RATE FUND/GENERAL ESTIMATES

The Clerk presented the General Estimates and said she was recommending a small increase of 2% in rate and special level income for 2019/20. This would give a rate in the pound of 4.9 pence. The rate has been held at 4.8 pence in the pound since 2013. This had been possible due to land going from agricultural to urban; special levy, resulting in increased special levy income each year. However, to

be able to afford all estimated expenditure and maintain balances she was recommending a rate of 4.9p in the pound providing £669,312 rate and special levy income and working balances at the year end of £747,303.

Discussion took place:

Mr Bowsher suggested that in future, the recommended rate be highlighted in the table provided.

Mr Kane said small frequent increases are always preferable. The Clerk reiterated the point about increased special levy, due to land going from agricultural use to development, which had meant previous increases had not been necessary.

Mr Miles believed that a two percent was not small and said small increases were easier to defend. Although Mr Dransfield pointed out it was two percent over seven years.

Members approved:

- (i) Joint – Group Account – Engineering, Finance and Administration, Labour on cost and Plant Purchases and Funding;**
- (ii) Capital and Maintenance Development Fund; Capital Works – Grant in Aid Capital Programme Funding;**
- (iii) Maintenance Estimates;**
- (iv) Occupiers’ Rate Fund/General Estimates.**

10 TO SET THE DRAINAGE RATE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20 AND TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIRMAN TO SEAL THE RATE

Members agreed a two percent increase in rate and special levy income for 2019/20 resulting in a rate of 4.9p in the pound and rate and special levy income of £669,312 and authorised the Chairman to seal the rate.

11 TECHNICAL REPORT (INC. SCHEDULE OF CONSENTS) – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2018

The Director of Operations presented the Technical Report.

Members approved the Technical Report and Schedule of Consents – October to December 2018.

Discussion took place:

Buckingham Canal

Members agreed with the stance officers of the Board had taken with regard to The Buckingham Canal Society, following their request that the Board become a flood risk partner to the Society. They had asked the Society if they had liaised with the Environment Agency and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee regarding funding options and partnerships.

Planning Applications (Received from 1/10/18 to 31/12/18)

The Chairman commented on the large number of planning applications received from Aylesbury Vale District Council: 614 in the period. The Clerk explained they had been sending all of their planning applications whether in the Board’s area or not. She said the figures would be adjusted in the future.

12 TO RE-APPOINT THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2019/20

Members approved the re-appointment of the Internal Auditors, TIAA, to the Board for the 2019/20 financial year.

13 FINANCE REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2018

The Clerk presented the Finance Report which included:

- Receipts and Payments through the Board's individual bank account with Lloyds from 1 April to 31st December 2018;
- Cheque/Direct Debit list;
- Investment and Bank Account Balances as at 31st December 2018.

Members approved the Finance Report.

14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Milton Keynes Flood and Water Management Meeting

Mrs McPake said that a draft report from Aecom Consulting was to be submitted to the Flood and Water Management Meeting in March 2019 which would report on the flooding of 2018 in Milton Keynes.

Cllr A Dransfield

Cllr Dransfield said he was retiring from Milton Keynes Council but still planned attend the next Board meeting in May.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Board meeting – 21 May 2019.

The meeting closed at 4pm.

