

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 JUNE 2023 AT 10 AM.

Directly Elected Members

- * J R Davison
- * J Polhill
- * J M Ream
- * J Russell
- * T Wootton

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Co-opted Members

- * F Firth

Appointed Members

Bedford Borough Council

- G Coombes
- * N Gribble
- P Martin-Moran-Bryant
- * D McMurdo
- A Spice

Vacant Position

Vacant Position

Central Bedfordshire Council

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

Jointly Appointed

North Herts District Council

- * S Jarvis

- * Present (52%)

Doug McMurdo in the Chair

In attendance:

Phil Camamile (Chief Executive), Rachel Hughes (Senior Planning & Consents Engineer), Nadia Iantosca (Finance and Rating Officer), Phil Lovesey (Operations Manager), Alice Smith (Executive Assistant), and Nicole Souter (Principal Accountant)

ID Bedfordshire & River Ivel IDB, Minute

Action

18/23 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

18/23/01 The Chairman welcomed Nicola Gribble, Nick Andrews, Anna French, Helen Wightwick and Tracey Wye to their first Bedfordshire and River Ivel IDB meeting.

19/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

19/23/01 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Tony Brown, Graeme Coombes, Philippa Martin-Moran-Bryant and Andrea Spice.

20/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

20/23/01 The Chairman, Doug McMurdo, declared an interest in Agenda Item 17.10, the proposed adoption of the Chairman's Allowance and Members Expenses Policy, as a potential beneficiary of this policy, should it be introduced. RESOLVED that this be noted.

21/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2023

21/23/01 The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 13 February 2023 were confirmed and signed as a true record. Arising therefrom:

21/23/02 05/23/02 West of Bedford Growth Master Plan

The Chief Executive confirmed that the agreement had not completed before the 31 March 2023 and the Board would therefore no longer be actively pursuing the matter, in accordance with previous resolution no. 05/23/02. If any maintenance work needed to be done on the Marsh Leys system in future, the Board would serve notice on the riparian owners to carry out the work in the usual manner. RESOLVED that this be noted.

22/23 ENGINEERING REPORT

22/23/01 The Engineering Report was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:

22/23/02 Ampthill Road

Frank Firth asked officers to confirm that this work would be at no cost to the Board. The Operations Manager confirmed that this work would be at no cost to the Board. RESOLVED that this be noted.

22/23/03 Housing development at Hitchin Road, Henlow

The Senior Planning & Consents Engineer confirmed that regular site visits were being carried out to monitor progress of the works and that officers were comfortable with the work carried out to date. Members were advised an up to date as built drawing was currently awaited following some agreed changes in design.

22/23/04 As previously agreed, upon completion of the works and satisfactory sign off by the Board's officers, the legal agreement would be signed off by the Chief Executive and Chairman. RESOLVED that this be noted.

22/23/05 Nick Andrews and Helen Wightwick requested councillors from Central Bedfordshire be notified of the next anticipated site visit to allow for a member of the Council to also be present. RESOLVED that this be noted.

Post meeting note: Site meeting with Nick Andrews and the Boards Senior Planning & Consents Engineer Rachel Hughes took place on the 29th June.

AS/RH

23/23 OPERATIONS REPORT

23/23/01 The Operations Report was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:

23/23/02 Culvert Maintenance

Frank Firth questioned if officers were aware of the extent of the work required at Clophill and Wilstead and if the Board had the internal resources to carry out the work, or if an external contractor would be required. The Operations Manager confirmed that the culvert maintenance, CCTV survey and jetting required specialist equipment and would therefore be contracted out. RESOLVED that this be noted.

24/23 BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

24/23/01 The revised Biodiversity Action Plan (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:

24/23/02 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to monitor progress in achieving the targets set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, the Board should have oversight of progress made and it was agreed to include a section within the Operations Report to enable the Board to do this at future meetings.

24/23/03 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to add an additional objective for 2023/24 to ensure that the Board delivered its environmental improvement targets set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

ID Bedfordshire & River Ivel IDB, Minute	Action
<p>24/23/04 Members were advised that the updated plan demonstrated the Board's commitment to fulfilling its statutory duty as a public body to conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity.</p>	
<p>24/23/05 Members praised the work of the Board's Ecologist, Operations Manager and GIS Technician.</p>	
<p>24/23/06 Tracey Wye requested a meeting with officers to obtain a greater understanding of SUDS contributions and how local groups interested in biodiversity could assist the Board in its work. The Chairman suggested an Induction Day be arranged for both new and existing members to discuss items of this nature and visit some of the Board's key sites. The Group's Ecologist would also be invited to attend, to discuss biodiversity and other environmental matters. Members felt that this would be beneficial. RESOLVED that this be noted.</p>	<p>PC/AS</p>
<p>24/23/07 James Russell referred to the poor reputation held previously by the Board in relation to conversation and biodiversity and was pleased to see a positive change in the way work was now being carried out. He advised as per the Environment Act 2021 that there was an additional duty on public bodies to enhance rather than merely conserve the natural environment. RESOLVED that this be noted.</p>	
<p>24/23/08 Julian Polhill recommended that the Board investigate the ability to obtain hedge-laying grants, which were currently available to landowners as this may assist with meeting some of the objectives set out in the plan. The Operations Manager advised that the Board did not own any of the watercourses it maintained, however, would look into the possibility of accessing this funding by working with landowners. RESOLVED that this be noted.</p>	<p>PL</p>
<p>25/23 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023 AND REAPPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2023/24</p>	
<p>25/23//01 The detailed Internal Audit Report for 2022/23 and the Internal Audit Report that forms part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/23 as prepared by the Board's Internal Auditor, together with the Management Team's responses and agreed actions, (copies of which are filed in the Report Book), were considered in detail and approved, subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Board was satisfied that the Internal Auditor was independent (see Practitioners' Guide 2022 Paragraphs 1.36 and 4.11); (ii) the Board retrospectively approved the internal audit programme of work, having regard to the key risks identified in the Risk Register (see Practitioners' Guide 2022 Paragraphs 1.36 and 4.16); and (iii) the Board was satisfied with regard to the competence of the Internal Auditor and retrospectively approved the letter of engagement (see Practitioners' Guide 2022 Paragraphs 1.36, 4.1 and 4.13), including the signed letter of engagement. 	

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<p>25/23/02 The Internal Auditor’s recording of a substantial level of assurance awarded on conclusion of the audit was noted.</p>	
<p>25/23/03 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to approve the re-appointment of TIAA Ltd. to undertake the Board’s Internal Audit for the next financial year 2023/24.</p>	
<p>26/23 FINANCIAL REPORTS AND RECONCILIATION TO THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023</p>	
<p>26/23/01 The Financial Report and reconciliation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2023 was considered in detail and approved (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). Arising therefrom:</p>	
<p>26/23/02 Income and Expenditure Account</p> <p>The Principal Accountant reported a modest deficit of £10,929 for the year ending 31 March 2023, which was considerably better than the budgeted deficit of £409,096, mainly due to the planned reduction in Joint Administration Costs that had been achieved during the year. RESOLVED that this be noted.</p>	
<p>27/23 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023</p>	
<p>27/23/01 Following the approval of the financial reports and reconciliation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31 March 2023, the AGAR was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:</p>	
<p>27/23/02 The Annual Governance Statement shown in Section 1 of the Board’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023 was considered in detail and approved.</p>	
<p>27/23/03 The Accounting Statements shown in Section 2 of the Board’s Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023 were considered in detail and approved.</p>	
<p>28/23 DATE OF COMMENCEMENT PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023</p>	
<p>28/23/01 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 2023 would be available for inspection</p>	<p>AS / NS</p>

for the 30-working day period commencing 26 June 2023 and ending on 04 August 2023. RESOLVED that this be noted.

28/23/02 It was noted that the provisional dates shown on the agenda had not been amended, following the decision to defer the Board meeting date to allow sufficient time for Bedford Borough Council to appoint its new members after the Local Elections in May 2023. RESOLVED that this be noted.

29/23 MATERIAL CHANGES TO THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

29/23/01 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 material changes or matters arising.

30/23 CORRESPONDENCE

30/23/01 Co-Option of Member

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Frank Firth to fill one of the eight casual vacancies on the Board following his resignation from Central Bedfordshire Council. It was also agreed and thereby RESOLVED that Mr Firth would continue his role as one of the Board's four representatives on the Bedford Group's Joint Management Committee.

31/23 DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

31/23/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED for the next Board meeting to take place on Monday, 06 November 2023 at 2pm, which would be held in the Board Room at Vale House, Broadmead Road, Stewartby, Bedfordshire, MK43 9ND and virtually via Microsoft Teams.

32/23 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32/23/01 Water Resources East: (WRE) contribution for 2023/24

The annual invoice of £800 from WRE for 2023/24 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved for payment.

NS

32/23/02 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to continue to review the Board's membership of WRE annually.

NS

32/23/03 The Chief Executive informed members that the WMA's Project Development Manager, Giles Bloomfield was likely to be appointed as ADA's new representative on the WRE Board, following the retirement of David Thomas, Engineer and CEO of the Middle Level Commissioners. It was hoped as part of the appointment, the subscription fees of the Bedford Group and WMA Member Boards would be waived/reduced. Further updates would be provided at the next meeting. RESOLVED that this be noted.

PJC

33/23 OPEN FORUM: TO HEAR FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, WITH LEAVE OF THE CHAIRMAN

33/23/01 There were no members of the public present at today's meeting.

34/23 CONSORTIUM MATTERS

34/23/01 Unconfirmed minutes of the last Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting held on 02 May 2023

The unconfirmed minutes of the last Joint Management Committee meeting held on 02 May 2023 were considered in detail, noted and adopted. There were no matters arising.

34/23/02 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.

34/23/03 JMC's Schedule of Paid Accounts

The JMC's Schedule of Paid Accounts for the period 1 December 2022 to 31 March 2023 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

34/23/04 JMC's Financial Report

The JMC's Financial Report for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

34/23/05 Group's Performance Report for 2022/23

The Group's performance report for 2022/23 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

34/23/06 Objectives for 2023/24, as recommended by the JMC

The draft objectives for 2023/24 (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 2023/24:

- (i) To ensure that total expenditure does not exceed the approved expenditure budgets for 2023/24 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 £1.5m, unless there is an extraordinary event. Any costs that are incurred over and above the budget of £1.5m are to be itemised, identified, and costed separately.
- (iii) To ensure that the EA's annual precept charges on the Boards are fair and that it is spent on work that benefits the Drainage Districts.
- (iv) To continue improving the main-river network that the Boards watercourses discharge into at key known trouble spots by working with the Environment Agency using the Public Sector Co-operation Agreement.
- (v) To identify suitable locations to create additional off-line storage areas, which will reduce reliance on the main river network, reduce flood risk downstream 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 Boards to provide services to them outside the Drainage Districts, particularly during high rainfall events.
- (vii) To devise an alternative approach of ensuring that the drainage infrastructure which serves new developments is appropriately maintained in perpetuity, without attempting to enter into complex/costly legal agreements and seeking up-front (and largely inadequate) commuted sums from developers.
- (viii) To develop a plan (with targets) to reduce carbon usage, which includes consideration of procuring the most carbon efficient technologies when replacing/refurbishing fixed and mobile plant and sourcing green energy and introducing an annual reporting system for the Group to monitor its carbon reduction.
- (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 reduce arrears during 2023/24.
- (xi) To increase the number of followers and posts on the Group's social media platforms.

- (xii) To develop and monitor KPIs that help each Board measure and monitor the delivery of its Biodiversity Action Plan.

34/23/07 Group's 1st Annual Carbon Report

The Group's 1st Annual Carbon Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:

- 34/23/08** Tracey Wye felt that the Board should be more ambitious than only aiming for a 50% reduction in carbon usage. The Chair advised members that greater narrative and information would be provided at a future meeting and that this initial 'base line' report had only been produced to calculate the Board's carbon usage. RESOLVED that this be noted.

AS

34/23/09 Schedule of Charge Out Rates

The Schedule of Charge Out Rates for 2023/24 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

34/23/10 Capital Financing and Reserves Policy

The Capital Financing and Reserves Policy (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and adopted. There were no matters arising.

34/23/11 Chairman's Allowance and Members Expenses Policy

The Chairman declared an interest in this agenda item and left the meeting room, taking no part in the discussion. James Russell, Vice-Chairman then chaired the meeting for this agenda item.

- (i) The Chairman's Allowance and Members Expenses Policy (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:
- (ii) It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to ask Defra to approve a Chairman's Allowance of up to £3,500 pa, in accordance with Schedule 2, section 1(1) of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

PJC

34/23/12 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 26 September 2023. Should members wish to raise any item for discussion at the next meeting, they should contact any of the Board's representative or the Chief Executive directly.

35/23 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

35/23/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Board's Standing Orders.