



Danvm Drainage Commissioners

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2022 AT MOSS & FENWICK VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT

Elected

Mr J Duckitt Mr A Cooke Mr S Lomas Mr D Platt Mr N Welburn
Mr W Falkingham Mr C Platt Mr R Thompson

Appointed

Cllr C Hogarth Mrs G Ivey (C) Mr T Grady Mr J Gilliver Mr P Maddison
Cllr J Mackman

APOLOGIES

Elected

Mr D Atkinson Mr R Robinson Mr A Scholey

Appointed

Cllr M Crane Ms C Anderson Mr C Crowe Ms L Watkinson-Teo

ABSENT

Elected

Mr G Smith

Appointed

IN ATTENDANCE

Officers

Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Ms A Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance (DPF)
Mr R Towse – Director of Operations (DO)
Miss L Smith – Board Secretary

Andrew McLachlan
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139. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

139.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting noting apologies from, Mr Atkinson, Mr Robinson, Mr Scholey, Cllr Crane, Ms Anderson, Mr Crowe, and Ms L Watkinson-Teo.

140. Declarations of Interest

140.1. None

141. Health & Safety

141.1. None

142. Additional Agenda Items

142.1. None

143. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

143.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the previous meeting at Appendix A.

143.2. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hogarth and SECONDED by Cllr Mackman and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt these minutes as a true record of that meeting.

144. Matters Arising

144.1. The CEO advised that minutes 73.5 & 126.3 are now resolved.

144.2. Mr Maddison, in relation to minute 93.6, confirmed he had given a presentation at the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Meeting on the work of internal drainage boards. The CEO had spoken at the same meeting as an independent member regarding the precept payments.

144.3. Regarding minute 109.7 the CEO advised that the Asset Manager was working to identify locations where drainage systems are impacted by subsidence.

145. Policy & Finance Committee Meeting

145.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the Policy & Finance Committee held on 12th January and invited questions from Members.

145.2. Cllr Mackman highlighted the estimated increase in maintenance per meter and the Board discussed the financial impact this would have on maintenance operations.

146. Consortium Committee Meeting

146.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the Consortium Committee Meeting at Appendix C.

146.2. The CEO confirmed that the Consortium Committee agreed the shared services budget, shared staff, and shared resources for 2022/23 on behalf of the Board and that these were included in the budget paper for approval.

147. Budget & Rate Setting

147.1. The CEO presented the budget report and invited questions from Members.

147.2. The CEO presented financial reports, highlighting the large variance linked to pumping stations and explained that a large proportion of these costs had been recharged to the Coal Authority.

147.3. He informed Members of amendments to the recharge process for works completed by Board staff and advised analysis of the methodology for this process had been undertaken to better reflect staff costs.

147.4. The DO advised significant income had been received from wracking works completed by Board Operational Staff along the River Aire and that a further agreement was in place for these works to be completed again this year.

147.5. Mr Duckitt queried whether the purchase of the Boards new machine would be made from Board reserves to which the CEO confirmed it would.

147.6. Cllr Mackman queried why the forecast had not been completed for every line presented in the budget, to which the CEO advised definitive figures cannot be presented due to caveats such as extreme weather, however the commentary presented provided a best estimate as to the Boards final financial position for the year. He added that if he was to give an exact figure 3 months before outturn and didn't qualify this was an estimate he may be misleading the Board.

147.7. Mr J Gilliver arrived.

147.8. The CEO advised that at the time of writing, around £24k of rates remained outstanding, £20k of which related to accounts on hold due to common issues such as the ratepayers estate being in probate, however the majority would hopefully be settled by the end of the financial year.

147.9. In relation to Clay Dike, the CEO advised that this remained an ongoing issue and that evidence had been requested from TCA in relation to their responsibilities. The outcome had shown that the previous administration had, at the time, agreed to the flawed technical approach acting 'as the Board'. As a result of this, the CEO advised that the cost of improvements to Clay Dike would have to be made from base revenue, due to the difficulties in acquiring funding.

147.10. Members and Officers discussed the approach to be taken to resolve issues relating to Clay Dike, with Mr Duckitt suggesting that the scheme should be split into sections, finishing at

Stoney Lane. The CEO agreed and confirmed this was exactly the approach he intended to take.

- 147.11. Cllr Mackman requested that the CEO provide the Board with an indication of annual expenditure in relation to the Boards Capital Programme. **Action CEO.**
- 147.12. The CEO provided the Board with the latest update received from HMT in relation to usage of red diesel. He explained that ADA continued to work at a National Level for a definitive answer in respect of whether drainage boards could or could not continue to use red diesel.
- 147.13. As a result of the contradictory evidence which the Board had received at the time, the CEO advised that from April, Danvm Drainage Commissioners would cease use of red diesel.
- 147.14. Cllr Hogarth queried how much of the proposed increase in rates were due to the Government's decision to change the tax treatment of red diesel to which the CEO advised that there were additional indirect costs, however anything above the estimated 3% general inflation was due to these changes.
- 147.15. Mr Lomas highlighted that with the estimated additional 10p per meter in maintenance costs, this would mean an annual increase of £35k purely due to red diesel changes.
- 147.16. The CEO presented an illustrative five-year plan and explained that if the Board were unable to gain approval for capital funding, then the Board would need to borrow funds in the form of PWLB loans to support the Boards capital programme.
- 147.17. In respect of the budget presented in the papers, Cllr Mackman raised the financial pressures which would be faced by councils and individuals due to inflationary increases. He presented his view that a proposed 6.42% increase in the rate would not be affordable.
- 147.18. He continued to add that the recommended budget would mean c£70k increase in council levy payments and proposed that a 4.8% increase would be more appropriate resulting in a c£52k increase for councils and suggested the remainder of funds required should be met by Board reserves.
- 147.19. The CEO responded advising that the proposal is based on an estimated 3% inflation and that the Board had already committed to spending £350k of the Boards reserves in the next financial year.
- 147.20. Mr Cooke commented that the Boards biggest costs are labour and power, he advised that with energy prices expected to double, increase in national insurance payment, the importance of retaining skilled staff, the Board could expect to see substantial increase in costs and therefore it would be appropriate for the rate increase to reflect this.
- 147.21. Mr Welburn stated he had always previously objected to increasing the rate, however taking into consideration the factors raised by Mr Cooke and the Boards pumping stations, their maintenance, replacement, and energy usage, he felt at this time there was no other option for the Board.

147.22. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mackman to raise the current rate by 4.8%. This proposal was not seconded and was REJECTED BY MAJORITY.

147.23. It was PROPOSED by MR WELBURN and SECONDED by MR THOMPSON and RESOLVED BY MAJORITY that the Board approves a budget of £2,143,867 for 2022/23 and to meet the approved budget the Board sets the rate for 2022/23 at 11.6p£.

147.24. Cllr Mackman ABSTAINED.

148. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

148.1. The Chair drew attention to Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled at Appendix F.

148.2. It was PROPOSED by MR MADDISON and SECONDED by MR GILLIVER and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled to the value of £747,055.70 (net).

149. Internal Audit

149.1. The Chair drew attention to the internal audit report at Appendix G and advised a formal policy for the Boards reserves position was being produced and would be brought to the next Board meeting for adoption.

150. Policy Update (Health and Safety)

150.1. The CEO advised that a new consortium-wide Health and Safety Policy and Safe System of Work is currently being prepared by the consortium's Capital Delivery Manager who is a qualified member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH).

150.2. The Chair queried whether this policy sets out the responsibilities of the Board and officers, to which the CEO confirmed it would.

150.3. The CEO requested that authority be delegated to the Chair to adopt this policy, to enable it to commence at the beginning of April. Cllr Hogarth requested this be brought to the Board for ratification.

150.4. It was PROPOSED by MR GILLIVER and SECONDED by MR COOKE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the CEO in consultation with the Chair be given authority to adopt the consortium-wide Health and Safety Management Policy and Safe System of Work on behalf of the Board upon its completion, and to be brought to the Board for ratification.

151. Planning & Development Control

151.1. The DO gave a brief update in relation to Planning & Development Control across the drainage district.

152. Maintenance Update

- 152.1. The DO advised he had received a letter from a resident requesting the top section of Stream Dyke, Campsall is placed back on the Boards maintenance programme.
- 152.2. Mr Welburn declared an interest in this matter.
- 152.3. The Board concluded they knew of no reason why this watercourse is not already Board maintained and agreed to place this back on the maintenance map. **Action Asset Manager.**
- 152.4. The DO advised that he continues to liaise with the Environment Agency regarding the River Went and that a fully costed proposal relating to channel maintenance had been presented, which looked favourable to commence works in Autumn.
- 152.5. Regarding general maintenance operations, the DO advised this had been a positive year, with the operational staff now moving on to tree works to open-up previously neglected watercourses.
- 152.6. The Board discussed how to proceed in relation to concerns with Soak Dike. Both Mr Welburn and Mr Thompson declared their interest in this matter.
- 152.7. It was PROPOSED by MR GILLIVER and SECONDED by MR COOKE and RESOLVED BY MAJORITY that Notice be served on Canal & Rivers Trust in respect of Soak Dike. **Action DO**
- 152.8. Mr Falkingham, Mr Welburn and Mr Thompson wished to note ABSTENTION due to their interest.

153. Date of Next Meeting (s)

- 153.1. The BdSec advised that calendar invitations would be emailed to members to inform of future Board meeting dates.
- 153.2. The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.