



Vale of Pickering Internal Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2023 AT WINTRINGHAM COMMUNITY HALL MALTON

PRESENT

Elected Mr A Nutt (C) Mr J Stockdale Mr R Wainwright Mr M Morley Mr D Teasdale
Appointed Cllr D Cussons MBE Cllr M Potter

APOLOGIES

Elected
Appointed Cllr Tucker

ABSENT

Appointed

IN ATTENDANCE

Officers

Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer
Mr R Towse – Director of Operations
Miss A Cowen – Director of Policy & Finance
Mr D Martin – Asset Manager
Miss L Smith – Board Secretary

Members of Public

Andrew McLachlan
Chief Executive Officer and Clerk to the Board
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136. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

136.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board noting apologies from Cllr Tucker.

137. Declarations of Interest

137.1. None

138. Health & Safety

138.1. No concerns.

138.2. DO advised upcoming training events.

139. Natural Environment

139.1. No concerns.

139.2. CEO – BAP awaiting finalisation.

140. Additional Agenda Items

140.1. CEO drew Board's attention to the financial charts which were provided at the Board meeting.

141. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

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

141.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR POTTER and SECONDED by MR WAINWRIGHT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board adopt these minutes as a true record of the previous meeting.

142. Matters Arising

142.1. None

143. Minutes of Consortium Committee Meeting

143.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the Joint Consortium Committee at Appendix B and invited questions from the Board.

143.2. The CEO explained the purpose of this meeting, which is attended by Chairs and Vice Chairs – to discuss the shared consortium charges.

143.3. Cllr Potter drew attention to the discussion around savings for water companies in IDB byelaws and asked how this impacts the Board.

143.4. The CEO advised that there are sewage discharges into the Board's watercourses. He has written to the Minister regarding this. Impacts are safety of staff working in and around the watercourses and the serviceability of these watercourses, slips and blockages, due to the waste not being safe for operators to work in.

- 143.5. The DO confirmed that if we remove water company produced sewage discharge from watercourses and put it on the bank, even though the Board are not the producer, they will become liable for the waste.
- 143.6. Cllr Potter recognised that this is a serious problem which needs to remain prominent and continue to be pushed for change.
- 143.7. The Chair requested the CEO explain why there is a slight increase to the Consortium contributions. The CEO explained that as the turnover has increased due to special levy increase, the proportionate contribution has increased.

144. Budget & Rate Setting

- 144.1. The Chair drew attention to the Budget Setting Report at Appendix C.
- 144.2. The CEO explained the budget and the rate setting calculations, both agricultural and special levy charges.
- 144.3. The CEO advised that he had identified a significant amount of land that was not rates and this would be investigated in the coming year, the increase to special levy will be £118k. The CEO confirmed there had been a 6-week consultation process on special levy revaluation, however no response was received from the councils.
- 144.4. The DO and CEO drew attention to the fact that landowners had in effect been subsidising council and business rate payers from a number of years.
- 144.5. The CEO drew attention to the cost centres in the budget which itemised Board-anticipated expenditure. He explained that the high inflationary costs had been taken into account.
- 144.6. The CEO explained how costs are monitored and tracked to maintain control of the budget as far as is reasonably possible.
- 144.7. The CEO explained the purposes of the reserves, set at 50% of the Board's operating budget, which can assist with cash flow and are to be used in the event of emergencies. Given the significant increases due to inflation that the Board will face, the CEO is not recommending placing any further funds into reserves in the upcoming financial year.
- 144.8. He reminded members that the rates were harmonised last year across the district. A response has been made to the concerns raised by ratepayers in relation to the rationalised maintenance programme. A 17.6% increase has been recommended to cover additional maintenance activities and inflationary pressures.
- 144.9. The CEO commented that in comparison to some Boards across the sector, this is a relatively low increase, who are facing a 20-40% increase, largely due to energy price increases.
- 144.10. Cllr Potter queried the rationalisation programme, and how this had been received by landowners. The CEO responded and advised that the initial proposal was to reduce the

maintenance to a manageable level to ensure a professional service, however this was not well received so hard choices has to be made.

144.11. The Chair acknowledged that the Board made decisions which were right for the Board at the time, bearing in mind the possibilities around white diesel, however this has been reconsidered and comments from ratepayers have been considered which has meant that there would be further financial impact.

144.12. It was PROPOSED by MR NUTT and SECONDED by MR STOCKDALE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board implements the special levy transfers and approves the rate of 14.7p£ to meet a required budget of £706,709.

145. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

145.1. The Chair drew attention to the accounts presented at Appendix D and invited questions from the Board.

145.2. Mr Stockdale queried transaction 15122 - £14,730. The DO confirmed that this was due to the weed boat work on the Derwent on behalf of the EA; this money was reclaimed from the EA.

145.3. It was PROPOSED by CLLR CUSSONS and SECONDED by CLLR POTTER and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled for the last financial quarter to the amount of £166,211.18 (net).

146. Rates

146.1. The DPF referred to the previous meeting where the Board agreed to write off £6,971.60 historic drainage rates arrears which the Board were no longer able to reasonably recover. Further accounts have been identified since that meeting, to which the DPF drew attention to in the papers and recommended these are also written off.

146.2. It was PROPOSED by POTTER and SECONDED by NUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board write off the sums itemised above, totalling £1,148.92, from the drainage rates ledger.

147. Internal Audit

147.1. The DPF drew attention to the first interim Internal Audit report for 2023/24 at Appendix E.

147.2. No matters of concern had been raised and the auditor had noted that the Board have adopted a new method for valuing fixed assets and a formal reserves policy.

148. Development Control & Planning

148.1. The DO gave an update, explaining that there were no major planning matters to report.

148.2. He commented that there had been a notable improvement in communications with the two local planning authorities, who were now requesting much more information in relation to drainage proposals.

148.3. Cllr Potter advised he had asked what is happening moving forward in relation to NYCC and planning functions. Although it had not been confirmed, it seemed likely that strategic planning would cover the whole unitary area.

148.4. The CEO advised that in his experience of previous local government reorganisations, that the existing local plans will likely be referred to until a new one is adopted for the whole area.

Notable Developments

148.5. The DO advised that there had been some pre-development advice given regarding a small agricultural development in Wykeham and a solar farm near Sherburn.

Ongoing Planning and Enforcement Matters.

148.6. The DO explained that there were ongoing discussions with the Ryevitalise project regarding initiatives in the Board area and wider catchment area.

148.7. He referred to an ongoing enforcement action regarding fencing along the Board-maintained Seamer Drain.

Consents

148.8. There had been one consent issued for emergency rail culvert repair works.

149. Maintenance

149.1. The DO advised that overall, this year, all machines have stayed running along with some hire machines. There are three machines in the west part of the catchment with the Mecalac working near Scampson Drain at present.

149.2. The DO gave an update on how the Mecalac has performed over the winter and how it is still being utilised. He provided an update in relation to the registration with the DVLA so that it can be driven on the road. As this machine was built in Holland, it has not yet been registered in the UK. The Chair suggested that a letter be sent to the local MP in relation to this matter.

149.3. The CEO advised communicating with Robert Goodwill. **Action CEO.**

149.4. The DO gave an overview on general maintenance activities.

149.5. A presentation was then given by the DO and Asset Manager on the revised maintenance map and maintenance programme.

149.6. The DO advised that the previous maintenance map had been adapted to fit the Board's budget. Considering the increase in levy income, this had been revisited and the Board have been able to reinstate around 25km onto the network.

149.7. One third of the network has been completed this year, but there remains several historical issues which need addressing as they have hampered operational works. For at least the next

three years, the Board maintenance will be placed on a cycle to attempt to address these issues.

- 149.8. The Chair advised that both he and the Vice Chair had held a meeting with the CEO prior to the Christmas period in relation to the proposed maintenance map and highlighted the cost per metre, and the increase in cost to the Board for watercourses which are unable to be brought back into a serviceable standard within three years.
- 149.9. To summarise, the CEO advised there were 500,000m of watercourses on the original maintenance maps, which represented an extraordinary ratio of watercourses length to area for any IDB, and this was simply not sustainable both financially and/or operationally.
- 149.10. The Chair highlighted that he had received communications from one ratepayer in relation to the new maintenance map and advised it was important for landowners to realise that the level of service provided across the district is fair, and that the Board is no longer operated as three separate districts.
- 149.11. Cllr Potter agreed that informed decisions are made by the Board to benefit the entire district, and decisions are not made to benefit individuals.
- 149.12. The DO confirmed that the proposed plan was the best option for providing a consistent level of service across Board-maintained watercourses and to stay within the Board's budget.
- 149.13. The Asset Manager provided the Board with a presentation at the Chairs request, to show the analysis of machine-tracking information, which assists in the analysis of board operations.
- 149.14. The Board expressed praise for the work of the operational staff.
- 149.15. It was PROPOSED by MR TEASDALE and SECONDED by MR STOCKDALE and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised definitive maintenance maps and maintenance programme.

150. Board Membership

- 150.1. The Chair advised that a member of the public, Mr Alex Green a local farm manager had expressed an interest in joining the Board as co-opted member. The Chair confirmed that both he and the Vice-Chair had discussed this, had met Mr Green, and on the basis of that meeting proposed Mr Green be offered a co-opted position on the Board.
- 150.2. It was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to co-opt Mr Green to the Board.
- 150.3. Cllr Potter enquired as to how local authority-appointed members would be determined under the new North Yorkshire Council. The he had been advised that existing appointed members would remain on the Board until the end of the calendar year.
- 150.4. The CEO confirmed that the Board elections due this year will continue as normal.

150.5. In relation to the maintenance map, the Chair queried whether it would be beneficial to explain the maintenance plan moving forward to send out with the rates. **Action CEO**

150.6. The CEO encouraged Members to advise ratepayers to contact the Board's offices if they have any concerns and proposed distributing business cards to Members with the Board's contact details. **Action BdSec.**

151. Date of Next Meeting (s)

- Wednesday 24th May 2023 [since re-arranged to 31st May 2023]
- Wednesday 8th November 2023
- Thursday 8th February 2024