



Ouse & Humber Drainage Board

MINUTES OF THE FULL BOARD MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH MAY 2024 AT 24 INNOVATION DRIVE.

PRESENT					
Elected	Mr T Featherby	Mr R Henley	Mr R Nicholls	Mr J Scutt	
Appointed	Mr G Baxter	Mrs K West	Cllr R Meredith	Cllr D Howard	Cllr H Roberts
APOLOGIES					
Elected	Mr Hick	Mr J Sweeting	Mr J Wright	Mr C Mowforth	
Appointed	Mr N Marwood	Mr B Blackledge	Mr J Traill	Cllr P West	
ABSENCES					
Elected	Mr T Screeton	Mr B Maclean	Mr C Mowforth		
Appointed	Cllr V Aitken	Cllr L Bayram	Cllr N Wilkinson		
IN ATTENDANCE					
Officers		Mr A McLachlan – Chief Executive Officer			
		Mr R Towse – Director of Operation			
		Mrs A Larkin – Director of Policy & Finance			
		Miss L Smith – Executive Assistant			
		Ms J Jackson – HGH Accountant			

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557. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

557.1. The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the Board, noting apologies from Mr Hick, Mr Marwood, Mr Blackledge, Mr Sweeting, Mr Wright, Mr C Mowforth, Cllr P West and Mr Traill.

557.2. The CEO advised Mrs J Jackson from Hunter Gee Holroyd; Board's accountants, would be attending to answer questions in relation to the Board's accounts.

558. Declarations of Interest

558.1. Cllr Roberts declared that he provided ecology services to the Consortium.

559. Additional Agenda Items

559.1. None raised.

560. Health & Safety

560.1. The CEO advised that there would be an update at Item 9.

561. Natural Environment

561.1. Cllr Roberts informed Members of the 10% biodiversity net gain applicable to all new developments, adding that for smaller sites, there was the option to purchase "credits" to contribute towards the improvement of local and national habitats (off-site).

561.2. Mrs J Jackson arrived.

561.3. The CEO advised that the Board's SDCO was investigating options for IDBs to manage land as part of a biodiversity net gain arrangement.

562. Minutes of the previous Full Board Meeting

562.1. The Chair drew attention to minutes from the previous meeting held on 5th February 2024.

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

563. Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting

563.1. Minutes from the Executive Committee held on 29th April 2024 were reviewed.

563.2. Cllr Roberts highlighted Executive Committee Minute 208, noting Mr I Screeton's resignation, leaving a vacancy for an elected member.

563.3. Cllr Roberts also highlighted Executive Committee Minute 209.8 (EC) and requested that the CEO provide further information to the Board.

563.4. The CEO explained that the Committee had asked him to review the management contracts with the five small "ADOC Boards", given that the 5-year fixed term was due to expire in March 2025. He explained that due to their small size, these Boards paid a fixed annual management

fee, linked to inflation, whereas the three larger Boards (Ouse and Humber, Danvm and Vale of Pickering IDBs) contributed financially on a proportionate basis.

563.5. In response to concerns that these Boards may not be operating as efficiently as they could be, he had taken an action to investigate an alternative cost model, in view to informing how to proceed.

564. Matters Arising

564.1. In relation to minute 543.5, the CEO reported that a meeting was held at the Board's offices, attended by the NFU, Environment agency and residents within the lower river Foulness area, which allowed for constructive discussions regarding concerns with Market Weighton Canal.

564.2. The CEO advised that he had reiterated the Board's current position in relation to the canal and how it was believed that the de-maintenance would allow for effective management and maintenance to be carried out by the IDB. This may be linked to the Board increasing its area.

564.3. Referring to minute 547.5, the CEO confirmed that electricity costs would be shown separately in the Board's financial reports from 2024/25.

564.4. The CEO confirmed that Schneider, (telemetry provider) had been working alongside the consortium electrician to investigate the installation of a device on pumping stations to enable the live energy monitoring.

565. Annual Health and Safety Report

565.1. The CEO presented an annual report on health and safety matters for 2023/24, commenting that a more efficient and effective procedure had been introduced for staff to report accidents and near misses. In this regard, he informed on health and safety statistics and actions for the previous year.

565.2. He confirmed that all scheduled H&S Programme meetings had taken place as planned with several actions completed along with a "Cross Sectional" meeting which invited views on health and safety from across the workforce / staff.

565.3. It was reported that staff had attended fifty individual formal training events provided by both external and internal trainers ranging from Cyber Security training through to safe use of equipment.

565.4. Cllr Meredith queried if first aid kits met the needs of the tasks operational teams were undertaking. The DO confirmed that this was the case and in addition additional kits, such as forestry kits had been purchased for staff conducting chainsaw duties.

565.5. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MEREDITH and SECONDED by CLLR ROBERTS and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board note and accept the annual Health and Safety Report.

566. Professional Appointments to the Board

566.1. The CEO confirmed that changes to National Audit Office guidance (specifically the appointment of internal auditors) meant that it was good practice to appoint all professional appointments to the Board annually. The CEO explained each of the external services provided.

566.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by MR SCUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board appoint; Wilkin Chapman LLP (Solicitors), Northern Internal Audit Services (Audit), Hunter Gee Holroyd Ltd (Accountants), Mason Clark Associates Ltd (Consulting Engineers), Mr Simon Jepps BSc MSc and Co. of Thomas Mackay Ltd (Hydrologist), Mr Ralph Ward FRICS and Co. of Frank Hill & Son (Valuer and Surveyor) and Cutler IT Ltd (IT Support), as professional service providers to the Board.

567. Annual Risk Register Review

567.1. The CEO presented the draft risk register and confirmed that a desktop review comparing risks against the previous year had been conducted, which investigated business risk to the Board and ensured effective control measures were in place along with secure governance to manage the way services were procured.

567.2. The CEO highlighted that there was little change from the previous year but noted a new entry on the risk register for succession planning, which had not been scored. He explained that this had been raised at the Joint Consortium Committee, to create a more detailed plan for the event that one or more members of the executive team became incapacitated, and to be discussed further at the Joint Consortium Committee.

567.3. It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by CLLR MEREDITH and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised risk register for 2024.

568. Accounting Statements and Annual Return

568.1. The DPF referred members to the 2023/24 accounts and annual return documents which had been prepared by the Board's accountant, Ms Jackson, from Hunter Gee Holroyd Ltd. She highlighted a surplus figure of £75k, commenting that this had largely arisen from a late request from the Environment Agency to carry out some additional PSCA works. She added that this improved the Board's reserves position, increasing the figure from £921k to £996k.

568.2. Ms Jackson outlined some of the variances from the previous year, commenting that whilst there appeared to be a reduction in total income, this was mostly due to less capital grant income being received, which fluctuates year on year.

568.3. Members discussed energy costs, which had increased from £93k to £303k, noting that this was £21k less than had been budgeted for. The DO confirmed that the current energy contract was in place until October and that it was difficult to forecast energy costs due to market volatility.

568.4. Mr Scutt queried the total amount of operational expenditure, and it was confirmed that watercourse maintenance totalled c£393k and staff costs c£156k.

- 568.5. The DPF informed Members that an old debt, to the value of £4.5k had been written off, due to the Board being unable to recover costs of damages to an asset caused by Northern PowerGrid.
- 568.6. Before approving the accounts, the DPF advised the Board must consider the “Annual Governance Statement with Internal Controls” and indicate agreement or disagreement with each statement and proceeded to read these statements to the Board.
- 568.7. It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by MR SCUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.
- 568.8. It was PROPOSED by MR SCUTT and SECONDED by MRS K WEST and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Accounting Statements for 2023/24.

569. Budget Refresh

- 569.1. It was noted that the refreshed budget reflects a cautious (£50k) estimate of anticipated funding from Defra following the Prime Minister’s announcement of £75m recovery funds for IDBs (nationally), however the total request for extraneous electricity is £91k (sunk costs) with an additional £907k recovery funding for some sunk costs and future urgent repairs.
- 569.2. The CEO advised that Officers had examined the budget and identified areas where there was a necessity for additional funds.
- 569.3. Mr Henley queried if the CEO was responsible for entering the claims for the whole Consortium to which he confirmed this was correct.
- 569.4. Mr Featherby queried if it were anticipated there would be a surplus at the end of the 24/25 period to which the CEO advised it had been budgeted to place £95k in reserves in March 2025.
- 569.5. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MEREDITH and SECONDED by MR SCUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the revised budget for 2024/25.

570. Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled

- 570.1. The Chair drew attention to invoices and accounts and invited questions from Members.
- 570.2. Mr Baxter queried the impellor at Crabley to which the DO advised an impellor had been fitted inside one of the pumps and an additional impellor will be fitted on the second pump shortly.
- 570.3. It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by MRS WEST and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board notes and approves the record of Invoices Paid and Accounts Settled to the value of £691,372.38 (net).

571. Internal Audit

- 571.1. The DPF confirmed the internal auditor had conducted the third interim audit for 2023/24 and drew attention to the report at Appendix F. It had been noted by the auditor that the Board is making a conscious effort to improve reserves.

572. Public Sector Agreements

- 572.1. The DO advised these were mainly EA works, however it had been confirmed in the last financial year the board would not be completing south bank maintenance which normally amounted to £20k of income. However, the Derwent and Esk team had requested PSCA works on the bank from Barmby to East Cottingwith, so this had been recouped.
- 572.2. A meeting had been held with the Environment Agency, attended by Officers, to discuss local choices in relation to the annual precept, and the EA had been responsive in listening to suggestions as to where the precept could be more effectively utilised.
- 572.3. An area of note was a section on the Delphin, near to the partially cut section of the upper canal which requires piling works.

573. Development Control & Planning

- 573.1. The DO confirmed that of 24 planning applications, the board had objected to five and placed conditions on seven.
- 573.2. Due to the proximity of home developments to watercourses in Bubwith, objection by the Board will continue until matters with drainage designs are resolved.
- 573.3. The DO confirmed that a landowner in Kilpin is currently exploring options for root cutting in pipe following planning refusal for removal of trees. The Board will not be using enforcement powers on this due to it being a civil matter and a neighbourhood dispute.
- 573.4. Consents have been issued for drainage at Howden Football Club and Northern PowerGrid works at Broomfleet, along with surface water improvement works by ERYC on Thorpe Road Avenue in Howden.
- 573.5. It was reported that both the CEO and Cllr Meredith had attended a parish council meeting in Ellerker with Yorkshire Water in relation to Crabley Creyke however there has been no feedback since this meeting.
- 573.6. Mr Nicholls has advised he has also attempted to contact YW in relation to this, as has his land agent, however this is still not progressing.

574. Capital Programme

Prime Minister's Announcement - £75m

- 574.1. Members and Officers discussed the indicative £75m of funding to be made available to IDB's this year, one constraint is that all funds are to be expended by 31st March 2025, therefore schemes such as building new pumping stations would not be deliverable.
- 574.2. The CEO reiterated that part of the fund will be set aside to make claims for excessive costs for last year, and for works where the Board may have to carry out repair works because of the poor weather, such as pump repairs and piling.

- 574.3. It was noted that whilst a bid had already been submitted for sunk costs, the formal bidding process for remaining funding will commence in June and the process is expected to be managed by the Environment Agency.
- 574.4. Due to this upcoming bidding process, combined with challenging delivery timescales, the CEO sought for delegated authority to be given to the Executive Committee to authorise Grant Funded capital spend of up to £300k per project, should funds become available.
- 574.5. For the same reasons, the CEO sought authority to negotiate procurement based on procurement thresholds for services set of the legal maximum of £214,904 for services and/or £300k for capital works.
- 574.6. Mr Henley queried the CEO's intended scope of works if funding was received. The CEO advised funds would be used for regrading, piling, berms, which would be achievable after this maintenance season. Additional bids which will benefit agriculture will also be placed.
- 574.7. It was PROPOSED by CLLR ROBERTS and SECONDED by MR R HENLEY and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board gives delegated authority to the Executive Committee in respect of authorising works and schemes funded by the Defra 2024 IDB grant up to £300k per project and authorises the CEO to negotiate procurement up to £300k or to the legal threshold.

575. Maintenance Programme

- 575.1. The DO advised that flailing is complete to 92%; some sections the operations team physically could not reach due to cropping and poor weather conditions.
- 575.2. This year, only 63% of work contracted out was completed, therefore additional works were needed to be completed by the Board's operational staff. A review of external contracts had been undertaken and contracted operations have now been reduced.
- 575.3. The DO provided a presentation to Members illustrating works completed this winter.
- 575.4. An email had been sent to Board members prior to the meeting enabling them to view the proposed annual maintenance programme. The CEO noted they were aware that there may be watercourses more deserving of resources however these provisional maps presented an anticipated programme of work.
- 575.5. In relation to SFI's and stewardship schemes, the CEO advised that drainage consents still apply and informed Members that damages from the Board cannot be claimed when operations are conducted to complete necessary maintenance.
- 575.6. It was PROPOSED by MR BAXTER and SECONDED by MR SCUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the annual maintenance programme.

576. Policies

- 576.1. The DO left the meeting.

576.2. It was PROPOSED by CLLR MEREDITH and SECONDED by MR SCUTT and UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Board approve the Financial Regulations and Staff Privacy Policy.

577. Date of Next Meeting (s)

- Friday 7th June – ADA Northern Conference
- Monday 29th July @ 9:30am – Executive Committee

577.1. The CEO informed members that May meeting will be held in June next year due to accounts.