

LINDSEY MARSH DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Board held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, 8th September 2021 at 9.00a.m.

* Messrs	G.A. Crust (Chairman)	* Cllrs	T. Aldridge
*	S.W. Eyre (Vice-Chairman)		D. Andrews
	W. Cooper		S. Dennis
*	R. Crust	*	D. Edgington
*	T.H. Heys	*	A.J. Howard
	J.M. Mowbray	*	D. McNally
*	R.H. Needham	*	E. Mossop
	P.W. Pridgeon		W. Parkinson
	D.R. Tagg		P. Rickett
*	R.A.D. Unsworth	*	J. Swanson
			Mrs W. Bowkett

* *Present*

* Messrs A. McGill (Chief Executive)
* N. Kemble (Engineer)
A. Malin (Senior Operations Manager)
Mesdames N. Hind (Finance Manager)
* C.B. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

* *In attendance*

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J.M. Mowbray, Mr W. Cooper, Mr D.R. Tagg, Cllr Mrs W. Bowkett, Cllr S. Dennis, Cllr W. Parkinson and Cllr P. Rickett

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared an interest in item 7 Chairman's Allowance.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr R.H. Needham commented that the meeting should have been held in person given the importance of the topics to be discussed, Cllr T. Aldridge agreed. The Chief Executive informed members that Officers were regularly reviewing the situation regarding Covid-19 and had a robust policy which had meant there had been not cases of virus transfer within the office. Officers were looking to arrange a face to face meeting in November. The Corporate Services Manager reported that a number of members were unable to attend and meeting electronically meant they were more likely to be able to do so. She further reported that a form had been sent to members to allow those not attending to register any comments or concerns.

RECEIVED

4. RESOURCES

The Chief Executive stated that Officers had completed an extensive review of resources to ensure that existing resources were being efficiently utilised prior to the meeting. Options for delivery including use of contractors and inhouse staff had been considered. A meeting of the Consortium Committee was held in August at which the matter of additional resources to deliver the planned £36 million six year asset refurbishment programme was considered, the Committee had recommended creation of six additional positions.

Officers highlighted the considerable work involved in delivery of these projects for which the Boards had been successful in gaining additional grant funding. Lindsey Marsh in particular had a number of Pumping Stations which required refurbishment. The Engineer highlighted that the process of securing grant funding was itself lengthy with the business case for Saltfleet Pumping Station taking in the region of 200 hours to complete. Trent RFCC were challenging the lengthy process to gain funds for IDB's and other local authorities.

The use of consultants to deliver projects on time was estimated to cost around £370,000 per year and would require considerable support from the Engineering team. The review identified that the six additional roles at a cost to the Boards of £230,000 would allow the projects to be delivered in house. Of this £185,200 was expected to be funded from project delivery and £42,800 funded by the Boards. Based on the Consortium recharge rates this would be an additional £7,062 for Isle of Axholme, £9,416 for Trent Valley, £5136 for Doncaster East and £21,186 for Lindsey Marsh.

Officers proposed that the Engineering team be restructured to allow staff to concentrate on either project delivery or design and that the following new positions be introduced:

- (a) Civils Senior Engineer, approximate salary of £38,500
- (b) Graduate Engineer, approximate salary of £28,000
- (c) Technician/Draftsman, approximate salary of £28,000
- (d) Resident Engineer, approximate salary of £38,500
- (e) Two Admin Assistant positions, approximate salary of £18,000 each.

Failure to procure additional resources would result in changes to the delivery of the existing programme and failure to deliver on the current timescales; cause loss of funding which Officers highlighted that the Board should look to exploit whilst it was available; additional repair costs for the stations; the risk of pumping station failure and reducing the Board's ability to react in flood events. The Engineer also highlighted that the use of consultants would require a lot of time to transfer industry knowledge to obtain the required outputs as well as result in the loss of knowledge of IDB staff meaning the Board would become beholden to consultants.

Temporary and part time staff as well as a consultant were being used to assist the team, the need to rely on these would be reduced following creation of the new roles. However, use of consultants would be required for the peak of work expected through to 2023.

The costal stations built in the 1950s were nearing the end of their lives and required refitting as well as installation of fish friendly pumps, the programme would bring all stations up to date and give an expected future life of 30-60 years.

Mr R.A.D. Unsworth commented that there was a lot of work in the 6 year programme querying if the positions would be for a fixed term and if the skilled staff were available. The Engineer confirmed that the current programme was 6 years however ongoing work would require 3 stations a year to be refurbished across the Consortium and that there would be enough work for the additional staff past the 6 year period. He acknowledged that recruitment may be a challenge however options to work from other offices were being considered.

Cllr D. McNally queried if funding would realistically be available after the 6 year period stating that whilst we may still have the need for the staff the funding to pay for schemes may not be available and further queried what the impact would be if grant funds were not available. The Chief Executive stated that removal of funding would result in significant

increases in rates/special levy to meet the refurbishment costs and would severely affect the Board's ability to function. Whilst there was no guarantee it was unlikely there would be no funding available.

Cllr E. Mossop supported the proposal stating the justification was the programme falling behind so the Board needed to act. He queried how the priorities were allocated across the Consortium. The Chief Executive stated that Officers looked at each Board's needs and projects were prioritised individually with the high priority schemes worked on simultaneously. Cllr A. Howard stated that he was particularly interested in the consultants fees and Officers warning about loss of expertise which could not have a value placed on it. He queried if there would be any additional pressure on other teams such as accounts from the additional staff, the Chief Executive confirmed accounts were well staffed and the main pressure on the organisation, at the moment, was caused by projects and planning and byelaws with the engineering team thinly spread over multiple areas.

Mr R.H. Needham stated that additional staff would allow the work to be under the Board's control and that the Board should look to take advantage of funding when available. Cllr T. Aldridge agreed.

The Chairman stated that there was a lot of work involved to get the funding in place. Messrs S.W. Eyre and W. Cooper supported the proposal.

Mr P.W. Pridgeon whilst keen that the work be completed raised concerns about the Board's liability as all would be employed by Lindsey Marsh. The Chief Executive confirmed that the costs would be met either from schemes or shared as part of consortium recharges. Should any redundancies be occur in the future the costs would also be shared by all consortium Boards. If one of the other Boards left the Consortium TUPE could be applied and all Boards would take the cost not just Lindsey Marsh.

Mr T. H. Heys was concerned about the amount of work needed to be undertaken and if the plan could be met. The Engineer confirmed that the programme presented had been produced with the additional staffing in mind and was provisional on approval of the roles. External factors may also cause delays, for example the new roof at Theddlethorpe pumping station was delayed by six months due to Covid-19, which in turn delayed additional work on the building, however the work required to meet the grant criteria had been completed.

Mr R.A.D. Unsworth commented that the pandemic may still cause additional delays. Following a brief discussion on project costs the Engineer confirmed that projects had contingencies built in, however, the estimated costs were at current prices. When business cases were prepared they would be based on the costs at that time and once tenders were returned and contracts issued the prices were locked at that time.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve the six new positions detailed above at a total cost of £230,000 to the Board.

5. COSTAL PUMPING STATIONS REFURBISHMENT

Tenders had been sought from three suppliers of fish friendly pumps. Suspended bowl pumps had a higher initial purchase cost but were more reliable than submersible pump and, had a realistic life of 60 years rather than the 30 years offered by a submersible pump; they also used two thirds less energy than a submersible pump. Whilst the initial capital cost of submersible pumps was lower, on a whole life basis of cost evaluation, suspended bowl pumps were cheaper and therefore commercially more attractive. The existing pumps at Saltfleet, Trusthorpe and two out of three pumps at Ingoldmells were suspended bowl type. One of those invited was unable to tender for either type of pump to the requested

specification at Saltfleet Pumping Station without a rebuild or location change at the pumping station.

Tenders were presented for members consideration at the meeting. A whole life comparison was undertaken by Officers based on Trusthorpe pumping station over a 40 year period and showed that as well as the cheapest quotes for suspended bowl pumps Bosman Watermanagement's tender had the cheapest whole life cost of those submitted, the tender included two years warranty and there would be an additional cost for extended 10 year warranty of £1,950 per station per year after that which included an annual inspection. Officers highlighted that there may be adjustments to the tender prices resulting from material cost changes and currency fluctuations.

Although a new supplier to the Board, Officers were satisfied that they would provide a good standard of service and products. They therefore recommended that the contracts be awarded to Bosman Watermanagement.

Mr R.A.D. Unsworth commented that if the engineering efficiency was acceptable the tender should be awarded to the new supplier.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Board award the tender for fish friendly suspended bowl pump replacements and 12 year warranty at Trusthorpe Pumping Station at a cost of £696,185 and Saltfleet pumping station at a cost of £1,126,285 be awarded to Bosman Watermanagement.
- (b) That a letter of intent be issued to Bosman Watermanagement for the provision of the fish friendly suspended bowl pumps and 12 year warranty at Anderby Pumping station at a cost of £647,875 and Ingoldmells Pumping Station at a cost of £606,495 pending completion of the outline business case.

6. BYELAW APPLICATION - OLD SUTTON MAIN DRAIN BRANCH

An application had been received to erect a replacement dwelling within nine metres but no closer than five metres of the Board maintained Old Sutton Main Drain Branch Culvert and to erect a 1.8m high fence within nine metres and crossing of the same watercourse in the parish of Sutton-on-Sea. The original dwelling was located approximately one to two metres from the culvert and had since been demolished.

The fence would be set back approximately three metres from the culvert and where it crossed the culvert, the manhole would remain outside of the site boundary. An existing hedge located along the rear boundary of the property prevented the Boards access to the culvert. The operations and engineering teams had no objections to the proposed fence provided access to the manhole was maintained at all times.

Officers recommended that consent be granted for the replacement dwelling no closer than five metres from the Old Sutton Main Drain Branch culvert and for the fence along the rear boundary to be erected three metres from the culvert subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That the Board's culvert was exposed on site prior to construction of the proposed dwelling and the Board was notified for inspection.
- (b) That the fence be of a demountable nature to ensure that access can be achieved by the Board in order to carry out any future maintenance/repairs to the culvert.
- (c) That the manhole remained outside the boundary of the proposed fence.

- (d) That the householder indemnified the Board against any damages arising from future work undertaken on the culvert.
- (e) That the route of the culvert be delineated on the deeds to the property to ensure future owners are aware of access requirements.

RESOLVED

That the Board grant consent for the erection of a replacement dwelling within nine metres but no closer than five metres, a 1.8m high demountable fence within three metres and crossing the Board maintained Old Sutton Main Drain Branch culvert.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

Mr G.A. Crust left the meeting and Mr S.W. Eyre took over as Chairman.

Officers reported that the Board could pay reasonable expenses incurred by members and officers in attending meetings etc which were paid mainly to reimburse travelling costs. Mileage, if claimed, was paid at the Inland Revenue rate. The Land Drainage Act 1991, also allowed for payment of an allowance to the Chairman in respect of duties undertaken.

The role of Chairman had increased considerably over recent years and they took an active role in the running of the Board. There was no consistent approach to the payment of an allowance in the industry. Officers therefore asked that to ensure transparency, members review the amount payable to the Chairman, the current amount was £2,500 a year less deductions.

The Chief Executive reported that the amount had remained the same for the last 10 years. In response to members the Corporate Services Manager confirmed that the amounts paid varied from Board to Board and that other than occasional mileage which was not always claimed no other expenses were paid.

Mr E. Mossop commented that he thought it was right that the Board review the payment and that the Chairman was more active than previously and it was also hard to find someone to take on the role. The amount was not much and he suggested an increase to £3,000 as a starting point. But that the amount be reviewed again taking into account the time spent on the role as it was far in excess of meetings and suggested an annual review. Cllr A. Howard supported this.

The Chief Executive informed members that any changes approved by the Board would require an application to the Secretary of state for approval and suggested that because of the work involved in this a three yearly review would be preferable. The Corporate Services Manager suggested tying the review in with the Board Elections.

Cllr D. McNally agreed that a three year review would be sufficient.

Members queried if it would be possible to look at the values paid by East Lindsey District Council to their Chairman.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Chairman's allowance be increased to £3,000 per year and that the Board apply to the secretary of state for approval.
- (b) That the Chairman's allowance be reviewed at the November AGM of an Election year.

Mr G.A Crust re-joined the meeting.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

CHAIRMAN