

# Doncaster East Internal Drainage Board

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Board held via Microsoft Teams on Friday, 10th September 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Mr M. Brooke     | * Mr C. Crowe                 |
| Mr P.A.M. Cornish  | * Mr L. Garrett               |
| * Mr I. Dixon      | * Mr J. Hoare                 |
| * Mr R. Durdy      | * Mr P. Horne (Vice-Chairman) |
| Mr G.C. Parker     | * Mr M. Houlbrook             |
| * Mr W.G.S. Platt  | * Mr C. McGuinness (Chairman) |
| * Mr N.V. Williams | Ms H. Norford                 |
|                    | * Mr M. Oldknow               |

\* *Present*

- \* Mr A. McGill (Chief Executive)
- \* Mr N. Kemble (Engineer)
- Mrs C. Davies (Corporate Services Manager)

\* *In attendance*

## 2021.59 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs P. Cornish, G. Parker and Mrs H. Norford.

## 2021.60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr L. Garrett declared an interest in the Byelaw Application on Rake Drain due to being a member of the Bawtry Golf Club.

## 2021.61 NOTIFICATIONS OF ITEMS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

## 2021.62 BYELAW APPLICATION – RAKE DRAIN (DED590600)

*Mr L. Garrett left the meeting.*

Officers reported that an application had been received to culvert a 75 metre section of the Board maintained Rake Drain to facilitate an entrance road to the proposed development of Bawtry Golf Club and Driving Range. The new culvert would be constructed using 750mm diameter pipes. A commuted maintenance fee of £29,241.44 would be payable to the Board and the Board would not be responsible for the structural integrity of the culvert which would remain the responsibility of the developer.

### RESOLVED

That consent be granted to culvert 75 metres of the Board maintained Rake Drain at Austerfield.

*Mr L. Garrett re-joined the meeting.*

2021.63 RESOURCES

The Consortium Committee met on 12th August 2021 to consider the resources required to deliver the Boards' £36 million planned six-year asset refurbishment programme which included two new builds and 12 schemes in excess of £1 million each. The Committee had recommended that the Boards appoint an additional six members of staff to deliver the programme.

The Engineer reported that many of the assets across the Consortium were now at the end of their life with maintenance costs increasing considerably and a number of asset failures following the excessive rainfall during the previous year. Many assets were due for routine renewals and additional grant-in-aid and local levy funding applications had been made to fund this essential work and to capitalise on the available funds.

The Chairman stated that the only problem with the additional resources would be employing and retaining engineers, however, if additional resources were sought it would be a more efficient solution than using external consultants.

The Engineer reported that due to additional tasks such as consenting, operational support, emergencies and smaller schemes, main project delivery was not being met with the current number of staff. It was also noted that with more in-house staff, management of external contractors would be reduced, the end product would be significantly better and knowledge would be retained. Mr C. Crowe and Mr L. Garrett were supportive of this approach as growing experience and knowledge in-house would be more efficient than using external contractors.

It was also noted that all projects required Outline Business Cases (OBCs) to secure grant in aid and which required a considerable amount of staff time. The OBC for Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board's Saltfleet Pumping Station took one member of staff 280 hours to prepare fully.

Should additional staff appointments be made, the Engineering team would be split into two groups, one focusing on design and the other on response and delivery on-site. The appointments of two administrative staff, one for consenting and planning and one for general engineering administration would also relieve staff of administrative duties to ensure they could fulfil their job roles to full capacity and focus on delivering projects.

Mr M. Houlbrook reported that currently, there was a lack of flood engineers, however, investment in staff and training for new staff would be beneficial and would give flexibility for shortfalls when needed.

In response to Mr M. Oldknow, the Engineer reported that six new members of staff would be sufficient; this had been calculated on workload, funding, and level of effort required to deliver schemes. An additional four technical staff and two administrative staff would give the boards the correct level of resource for the upcoming programme of works.

*Mr I. Dixon joined the meeting.*

Mr P. Horne questioned whether a permanent expansion of the engineering team would be justified in the long term or whether fixed-term contracts would be worth considering. The Chief Executive confirmed that the expansion would fulfil

the Board's requirements and that fixed-term contracts may not be so efficient as the output from fixed-term staff may be lower due to the temporary nature of the position. It was also noted that long serving staff with extensive specialist knowledge would eventually leave the Board so the recruitment of permanent staff would help with succession planning and ensure that knowledge was retained.

Mr L. Garrett stated that it would not be an easy process due to recruitment becoming increasingly difficult, however, it would be beneficial. In response to Mr L. Garrett, the Engineer confirmed that recharges would be reduced as more productive staff time would be charged to projects.

The appointment of six new members of staff would cost £230,000 per annum across the Consortium. A large amount of this cost had already been factored into project costs, so the main extra cost to the boards would be £42,000. Using the Consortium recharge ratios, this would leave £21,186 to be funded by Lindsey Marsh, £7,062 by the Isle of Axholme, £9,416 by Trent Valley and £4,136 by Doncaster East. It was also noted that the costs of delivering projects would be significantly higher (estimate £370,000) should consultants be employed.

Mr N. Williams and Mr M. Houlbrook suggested that increasing the salary for the new vacancies may be something that required to be considered should there be difficulties recruiting as the work undertaken by internal drainage boards was quite a specialist area. Mr M. Houlbrook also suggested that attending more job fairs in schools would be beneficial to promote specialised jobs.

#### RESOLVED

That the appointment of six new members of staff to the engineering team to deliver the six-year asset renewal and refurbishment programme be approved at an additional cost to Doncaster East of £4,136.

#### 2021.64 CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

*Mr C. McGuinness left the meeting.*

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) could pay any reasonable expenses incurred by members and officers in attending meetings. The majority of claims made related to reimbursement of travelling costs. The Land Drainage Act 1991 allowed for the payment of an allowance to the Chairman in respect of duties undertaken. Members acknowledged that the role of Chairmen had increased considerably over the years and that he took a very active role within the Board. Officers reported that across the Consortium the allowance varied between £2,000 and £2,500 per annum. Should members consider an allowance for the Chairman, an application would need to be made to the Secretary of State for approval. The Chief Executive recommended that the allowance be reviewed at least after each election or on an annual basis.

Mr M. Oldknow acknowledged the amount of work the Chairman had put into the Board and stated that this should be recognised to which Mr L. Garrett and Mr M. Houlbrook agreed. Mr P. Horne agreed, suggesting that the Board review any allowance annually.

RESOLVED

That an application to the Secretary of State for an Order to be made for a Chairman's allowance of £2,500 per annum, and that such allowance be reviewed annually by the Board.

2021.65 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to Mr M. Brooke, the Engineer confirmed that in terms of PSCA work, the Board was still awaiting the list from the Environment Agency.

Mr M. Houlbrook questioned whether members completed a declaration of interest forms to which the Corporate Services Manager confirmed that declaration of interest forms were sent out annually to all members for completion.

Mr P. Horne questioned whether the next Board meeting would be held via Microsoft Teams or face to face. The Chief Executive confirmed that it was hoped that a face-to-face meeting would be held, and that the option for members to join remotely would remain.

RECEIVED

CHAIRMAN