

MINUTES OF THE SDBC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD VIA ZOOM ON 13 JAN 2021

Attendance:			
Elected Members: Mr P Betty Mr T Bradford (Chair) Mr B Bryer Mr T Bush Mrs W Welland	Appointed Members Cllr P Clayton Cllr A Gilling Mr P Burden Mr R Keen	Officers: Mr R Burge Mrs M Hammond Mrs C-A Morgan Mr I Sturdy	Public:
Apologies:			
Mr R Coombes Mr J Fear Mr B Gray Mrs P Thorne	Cllr D Durdan Cllr A Hendry		
Non-Attendance:			
	Cllr I Dyer		

Agenda Item:	Detail:	Action:
1. Attendance and Apologies	1.1. Attendance & Apologies as per the above.	
2. Declarations of Interest	2.1. There were no specified Declarations of Interest raised.	
3. Approval of Minutes	3.1. The Minutes of the SDBC Management Committee held on 10 Jul 20 were accepted as a true and accurate reflection of the Meeting.	
4. Matters Arising	4.1. Item 5 Matters Arising Para 4.1: Mr T Bush requested an update of the Water Environment Worker apprentice that does not hold a driving licence. The Clerk acknowledged the critical importance of being able to drive in order to undertake the role of Expenditor and that this criteria was within the Probationary Clauses of his Contract terms. His driving test had unfortunately, once again, been delayed due to Covid-19 and a new target date had been identified as May 21. A Driving Licence was not a firm criteria for an 'Apprentice' due to potential age of any incumbent and the training timescales before being deemed competent to undertake the role but was an expected qualification to exit the probationary period which would allow termination of employment if not achieved. Members were advised that Minehead had a shorter driving	

	<p>test waiting period. The Clerk would investigate options to advance the date.</p> <p>4.2. Review of Actions:</p> <p>Action SDBC/20190729-02 on the Clerk to invite NSLIDB Contractors to complete Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for admittance to the Board’s Approved Supplier List: The Clerk reported that this Action remained ongoing for discussion with the new Contracts Manager and NSLIDB Engineer a part of Strategic Review agreements.</p> <p>Action SDBC/20200710-01 on the Clerk to investigate securing a venue to enable face-to-face Meeting of the Strategic Review T&F Group: The Clerk recommended that this Action was closed due to Government restrictions and Risk preventing all face-to-face gatherings.</p> <p>Action SDBC/20200710-02 on the Clerk to investigate with other IDBs the traversing of crops to undertake Maintenance to enable future discussion and generation of Policy: The Clerk recommended that this Action was closed as the item was fully recognised and being addressed within the new joint Board Watercourse Policy.</p>	<p>Action SDBC/20190729-02: On-going</p> <p>Action: SDBC/20200710-01: Closed.</p> <p>Action: SDBC/20200710-02: Closed.</p>
<p>5. Staffing Update</p>	<p><u>Update on Strategic Review of Plant, Machinery & Manpower:</u></p> <p>5.1. The Clerk reported that, following endorsement of the Strategic Review of Plant, Machinery & Manpower, consultations with Staff individually affected by the Review were in progress. The Salaries Committee had now aligned all Staff Salary Grades across the workforce and new positions were now being subject to review of Contracts and Terms of References.</p> <p>5.2. With the potential removal of in-house machinery, Axe Brue and Parrett maintenance contracts were now being reviewed for full out-sourcing to external contractors.</p>	

	<p>5.3. The Clerk emphasised that the SDBC Budget for FY2021/2022 would recognise the benefits of the Strategic Review. Whilst the Consortium recharge costs would increase due to bringing all Staff (with the exception of the NSLIDB Admin Assistant) into the SDBC, the Clerk stressed the importance of being cognisant that compensatory savings would be evident within individual Board accounts.</p> <p>5.4. With the Strategic Review being implemented in April 21, Staff are already being identified to work closely with the current North Somerset Rhyne Supervisors to understand the complexities of the area and day-to-day management activities in order to provide network resilience. Early transition of information had already commenced between Mr G Oliver and Mr R King, who would be talking on all NSLIDB Operational support as Operations Manager.</p> <p>5.5. Mr M Wall, as Contracts Manager and Mr A Dowden, Upper Brue Area Manager, have commenced information transition of the Axe Brue district to understand the condition of the area and in order to enable contract award for in-house maintenance for the forthcoming year.</p> <p>5.6. The Clerk emphasised that the implementation of the Strategic Review would be a slow transition while all Staff positions and changes were introduced.</p>	
6. Finance Report	<p><u>SDBC Budget 2021/22:</u></p> <p>6.1. The Director of Finance (Dir Fin), Mrs M Hammond, took the Committee line-by-line through the draft SDBC Budget, stating that there were significant increases in many sections of the 2021/2022 Budget due to changes in accordance with the Strategic Review.</p> <p><u>Expenditure Headlines:</u></p> <p>6.2. Dir Fin reported that Staff and Vehicle costs would increase significantly due to the transition from individual Boards, circa £124k and £13k</p>	

	<p>respectively, as would Professional Fees due to increased level of contractors and insurance, circa £51k. Office costs would increase approx. £3k due to installation of an upgraded telephone system, if subsequently agreed at Agenda Item 8.</p> <p><u>Income Headlines:</u></p> <p>6.3. Dir Fin announced that Staff Re-charges (i.e. Engineering, SWADA etc.) had been reviewed and resulted in an anticipated decrease in income of circa £109k. Overall, this resulted in an increase of Administration Charge to the Boards of approx. 30%.</p> <p>6.4. A Task & Finish Group had been set up to review investment opportunities and determine rules for investing Board funds, however due to Covid-19 restrictions the Committee had not yet been convened. The Clerk would seek to reinvigorate the T&F Group to endorse an Investment Policy as a minimum output at this time.</p> <p>T&F Group for Investment of Board Funds Membership was reminded as being:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cllr M Murphy Cllr W Human Mr D Tratt Cllr M Caswell Cllr L Gibson Mr D Vigar Cllr J Cato Cllr A Harley Mr R Mitchell</p> <p>6.5. Dir Fin reported that, although the SDBC Budget had increased significantly, this would have minimal impact on individual Board Penny-Rates due to income from machinery sales and removal of Staff and vehicle costs.</p> <p>6.6. Cllr Gilling requested that the draft Board Budgets were shared with Sedgemoor District Council as an indication of rate increases. Dir Fin confirmed that she had been in close contact with SDC throughout the year.</p>	
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	<p>The Chair complimented Dir Fin on the clarity of reports provided.</p> <p><u>Approval of SDBC Budget:</u></p> <p>6.7. Mr T Bush proposed, seconded by Mr P Betty, that the SDBC Budget for FY2021/2022 as presented, reflecting a 29.06% increase to the Boards, be accepted.</p> <p>All in Favour – None Against</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 1</p>
<p>7. Review of Joint Policy Documents</p>	<p>7.1. The Clerk reported that the aspiration of the Consortium Agreement was to provide commonality between operations of the three Boards. This had been achieved by having the majority of Joint Policies and documents endorsed and signed by the Boards.</p> <p>7.2. The Clerk reported that there were some Policy reviews due in the forthcoming months, including Health & Safety Policy uplift following endorsement of the Strategic review, which would be presented to the H&S Committee in Feb 21 for review.</p> <p><u>Watercourse Management Policy</u></p> <p>7.3. The Clerk reported that currently there was no defined Watercourse Management Policy common to all three Boards. He reported that his intention was that this new Policy would enable a clear and common approach for Staff, Contractors and the public for all watercourse issues. The document would either provide direct information or sign-post to alternative formal documentation.</p> <p>The three Board Chairmen had already perused the document which is now presented in draft format for all Members to review and comment. Initial feedback was requested and that the document was approved at the forthcoming SDBC Annual General Meeting to be held 12 Mar 21.</p> <p>7.4. Mr T Bush expressed concern as NSLIDB had historically not been too prescriptive to Riparian</p>	

	<p>Owners regarding Land Drainage Consent on private watercourses.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that Land Drainage Consent was a Byelaw requirement however, the Boards would only normally act in a proportionate and reasonable manner in accordance with the SDBC's Enforcement Policy. The Watercourse Management Policy would focus on future Policy rather than historic matters.</p> <p>7.5. Mr B Bryer repeated that it would be imperative for Landowners to know the Board Policy prior to the growing season to enable their management decisions, drawing particular attention to new Environmental Land Management Scheme regulations.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter regarding access and traversing of crops would be included with the new financial year Rate Demands once the Policy had been agreed.</p> <p>7.6. Cllr A Gilling requested National Grid (NG) was invited to the AGM in order to enable understanding of the Board position on Land Drainage Consents.</p> <p>Director of Operations, Mr I Sturdy, commented that NG had been in regular discussion with the Boards regarding works around the districts, however most of the consented works were undertaken by sub-contractors on behalf of NG.</p> <p>7.7. Mrs W Welland proposed, seconded by Mr B Bryer, that the draft SDBC Watercourse Policy is disseminated to all Members and for written comments to be submitted to the CEO one week prior to the Annual General Meeting.</p> <p>All in Favour – None Against</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 2</p>
<p>8. SDBC Telephone System</p>	<p>8.1. The Deputy Clerk, Mrs C-A Morgan took Members through the Board Paper on the Recommendation for upgrade and installation of a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system in Bradbury House.</p>	

	<p>8.2. The Chairman commented that it would be prudent for the Boards to upgrade to the new system recognising the constraints of remote working under Business Continuity and future supportability issues.</p> <p>8.3. Mr P Betty proposed, seconded by Cllr A Gilling that the SDBC endorse the provision of a new VOIP telephone service in accordance with the Board Paper and proposal from Alliance Communications.</p> <p>All in Favour – None Against</p>	<p>RESOLUTION 3</p>
<p>9. Drainage Rates Demand Process</p>	<p><u>Procedures for non-compliant/persistent non-paying rate payers</u></p> <p>9.1. The Deputy Clerk reported that the Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA) allowed recovery of outstanding Drainage Rates through Magistrates' Court, however to recover from non-compliant/persistent non-paying rate payers, she recommended to make application to Crown Court (Small Claims) which would hear claims up to £5,000. A barrister was not necessary and the Board may choose to represent itself (i.e. Deputy Clerk).</p> <p>If awarded and not settled, the Court could be asked to enforce judgement, at which time Bailiffs can be instructed to attend the property and seize goods to the value of the debt, or a claim may be put on the land.</p> <p>The cost of a claim would depend on the level of the debt and type of enforcement which would be in the region of a £35 cost to the Board.</p> <p>County Court action would send a message to all rate payers that the Boards would act as necessary to recover outstanding rates.</p> <p>New Action SDBC/20210113-01 on the Deputy Clerk to investigate non-payment processes of other IDBs with ADA Policy & Finance Committee and report back to the SDBC Management Committee.</p>	<p>New Action SDBC/20210113-01: Deputy Clerk</p>

10. AOB	10.1. Cllr A Gilling recommended the Deputy Clerk contact SDC to discuss non-payment processes as he believed that the LA may have similar issues on recovery of outstanding debt from the same rate-payers.	
11. Date Of Next Meeting	<p>10.1. The Date of the next meeting was identified as Fri 13 Mar 21 (SDBC Annual General Meeting) to be held remotely by Zoom at 1030 – 1230.</p> <p>10.2. The Chair thanked all for their attendance and closed the meeting at 1302.</p>	

Annex:

A. SDBC – Table of Outstanding Actions

CHAIRMAN.....DATE

**ANNEX A TO
SDBC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
DATED 13 JAN 21**

SDBC – TABLE OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Action Number:	Action:	Actionee:
SDBC/20190729-02	To invite NSLIDB Contractors to complete Pre-Qualification Questionnaires for admittance to the Boards Approved Supplier List.	Clerk
SDBC/20210113-01	To investigate non-payment processes of other IDBs with ADA Policy & Finance Committee and report back to the SDBC Management Committee.	Deputy Clerk