

WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Board at a Meeting held at 47 North Street
on Wednesday 22 March 2023

Present - Members:

T. Ashton	A. Hall
Mr. P. Ashleigh-Morris	C. Hardy
B. Austin	A. Harrison
P. Bealson	P. Robinson (Chairman)
B. Bowler	A. Goss
C. Coughlin	R. Goss
Miss Chapman	J. Ward
J. Grant	J. Woods

1. **APPROVALS**

Apologies had been received from P. Hall Jones

2. **DISCUSSION AND DECISION ON STRATEGIC OPTIONS PAPER**

The Chairman made an opening statement about the paper that had been circulated to all Board Members, outlining several possible options. He stressed that the meeting was arranged to discuss whether the Board should go down the shared services route with a neighbouring consortium, or to remain fully independent and make changes to the senior management team, what the current Chief Executive refers to.

He explained that the shared services model would only be for office based staff with accounting, engineering, and technical services expertise and as such, this would only account for around 10% of the Board's current annual budget.

A question arose regarding the attendance of the Board's Officers at the meeting and after discussion it was agreed that both the Chief Executive and the Chief Engineer should remain in the meeting.

2.1 **Board discussions**

The Chief Executive went through the options paper with Board Members to ensure they were familiar with the paper and the appendices. The Chairman then asked Members for their comments.

- A. Goss - asked if the Chief Engineer would be interested in being considered for the Chief Executive role in the future and he confirmed that this was always his ambition.
- J. Woods - believed that with the challenging capital programme ahead of us and a new Engineering Manager joining soon, the Board were currently in the right place to deliver this as an independent Board.
- J. Grant - questioned the benefits that shared services would deliver as he was concerned about the loss of focus in a shared services model. The Chief Engineer said it was about having better resilience through a larger pool of staff, operating in the tasks we need.
- C. Hardy - asked if there could be any staff redundancies under shared services? The Chief Executive said not, as there were a number of vacancies across the Board currently in the shared services model, this would actually present opportunities for our staff, rather than presenting a risk.
- B. Austin - gave the comparison of the shared services model currently operated by the Essex District Councils in South Essex, which he said was working well and a bigger team was proving invaluable.