



Representing Drainage Water Level & Flood Risk Management Authorities

TECHNICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

31 January 2024

Venue: V114, First Floor, Westminster Kingsway College, Victoria Centre,
76 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PD

1030 - 1300

Also online via Microsoft Teams

APPROVED

Invited					
Name	Role and organisation	Present	Name	Role and organisation	Present
Chris Manning (CM)	Environmental Officer, Water Management Consortium and Doncaster East IDB	Y	Emily Paterson (EP)	Natural England (guest)	Y
Iain Sturdy (IS)	Chief Executive, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium	Apol.	Mat Jackson (MJ)	West Sussex County Council	Y
Diana Ward (DW)	Ecologist for Ely and Bedford Groups of IDBs	Apol.	Mark Phillips (MP)	Natural England	Online
Catherine Weighman (CW)	Natural England	Y	Dan Martin (DM)	Yorkshire & Humber Drainage Boards	Y
James Yarham (JY)	FCRM Senior Advisor, Environment Agency	Online	Charles Mills (CMS)	Committee Chair	Y
Robert Caudwell (RC)	Chai, ADA	Y (part)	Ian Moodie (IM)	Technical Manager, ADA	Y
Phil Camamile (PC)	Chief Executive, Water Management Alliance	Apol.	Tim Farr (TF)	Chairperson, ADA P&F Committee	Apol.
Dan Martin (DM)	Asset Manager, Yorkshire & Humber Drainage Boards	Y	Innes Thomson (IT)	Chief Executive, ADA	Y
Ed Johnson (EJ)	Deputy Committee Chair + Chief Engineer, Witham Fourth District IDB	Y	Peter Bateson (PB)	Company Secretary, ADA / Chief Executive, Witham Fourth District IDB	Apol.
Oliver Pantry (OP)	Clerk, Upper Medway IDB	Apol.			

Ref	Minutes
	Formalities, Regular Topics & Updates
1713	Apologies received. RC joined the meeting during item 1719 having attended an earlier Defra event in London on ADA's behalf.
1714	Declarations of Interest None noted.
1715	Approval of Minutes Minutes of the Committee's previous meeting held on 12 September 2023 were

	approved.
1716	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Topic 1701: access for statutory undertaking on buffer strips</p> <p>The Committee had a productive discussion regarding stewardship buffer strips and the ability for operating authorities to be able to track equipment, mow embankments, and deposit silt and arisings on these margins. Present lack of clarity of exemptions and permissions were reducing the desire by landowners to place such strips adjacent to IDB maintained channels, in the fear of penalties being applied. This was effectively blocking land managers from introducing better stewardship options on thousands of kilometres of lowland watercourses. Defra, Environment Agency and Natural England had all been made aware of the issue by ADA, and understand the need to clarify the frequency and timing of works, the scale of impact from these, and what measures could be taken to improve the situation. ADA will promote buffer strips more widely only when adequate clarification has been established through written guidance.</p>
1717	<p>Health, Safety & Welfare</p> <p>Committee asked regarding survey of IDBs. IM reported that this was important, but other matters, including those as a result of winter storms were taking precedence.</p>
1718	<p>New Committee Structure</p> <p>IM presented the draft Terms of Reference for both of ADA's new committees, which would be put before ADA's Board of Directors at their next meeting. A Policy Committee focused on members' work and interests and an Advisory Committee focusing on ADA's business and finances. The Committee supported the proposal being tabled at the next Board meeting for their approval.</p>
1719	<p>Winter storms impact upon flood and water management infrastructure</p> <p>The Committee had an extended discussion regarding the impact of heavy rainfall and flooding in lowland areas as a result of a series of winter storms. The Committee highlighted a number of critical issues, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely repair of known problems/damage to FCERM assets • Building back better and more resilient • Integrated catchment approach to river systems, such as the 'Room for the River' programme in the Netherlands • Funding to encourage strategic flood storage on agricultural land by land managers, and IDBs to create and maintain necessary infrastructure. • Repair and recovery funding for IDBs. • Recording of the extent duration and impact of flooding on agricultural land. • The concerning capacity and condition of several of our embanked lowland main rivers. • Reappraisal if high medium low consequence assets, especially regarding embanked lowland main rivers, following multiple breaches this winter. <p>Action: IM to draft and circulate for comment a summary of the strategic lessons learnt from this winter's storm events ahead of IT/RC meeting with the Minister of State.</p>
1720	<p>Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP)</p> <p>IM reported that £3.8 million of grant funding had been awarded to 21 pilot projects being delivered by IDBs to better control water levels to conserve lowland peat soils within their districts. Measures included over 40 tilting weirs and penstocks, 3 wind and solar pumps, telemetry and automation for water control assets, NFM measures, floodplain reconnection, and peat soil monitoring. The projects were set to complete by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>ADA was set to hold a workshop for participants in the pilot projects on 08 February</p>

	<p>2024. Defra project executive Jordan Champ was to present at the ADA Environment Day on 02 February 2024.</p> <p>There was discussion regarding those IDBs with pilot projects that had experienced flooding during this winter's storms. IM reported that two IDBs severely impacted by this winter's storms both had two pilot projects each.</p>
1721	<p>Eels Regulations</p> <p>CM presented a report from a recent meeting with Environment Agency fisheries colleagues regarding the eel regulations, and exemptions granted to IDB pumping stations and water control assets. The following key points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EA continue to expect IDBs to deliver eel measures alongside capital programs. • The loss of the “Defra steer” and the target of all high priority pumping stations to be compliant by 2030 could create tension and may require IDBs to undertake design work in advance of capital work. This design work will need financing and may be surpassed before the capital works are delivered. • The extension of exemptions to all pumping stations is disappointing and an increased burden on both parties, however, it is a consequence of poorly written legislation. • The burden in perpetuity of exemptions for fish friendly pumps and/or eel bypass pumps is unwelcome. A change in the law might impact other sectors and so EA fisheries have highlighted that it may be problematic to implement. • The joint desire to make the exemption process simpler and more efficient is welcome. If deliverable it could reduce the burden for both parties, while delivering the legislative requirements and the objectives of the legislation. • Eel ingress provision is lagging behind the installation of fish friendly pumps. • The Guidance “Safe passage for eels: Dredging Operations” means exemptions are required for Pump-suction dredging, this goes against anecdotal IDB experience. This is disappointing when such operations present a potentially lower impact approach to channel capacity maintenance works in lowland watercourses. <p><i>Action: CM/IT to discuss CM future assistance to ADA on environmental matters, including eels regulations.</i></p> <p>This was CM's last committee meeting before retirement and the Chair thanked CM on behalf of the Committee, ADA and wider membership for his dedicated contribution to ADA business over many years. All wished CM well for the future.</p>
1722	<p>Updates</p> <p>Environment Agency - JY</p> <p>EA reported that they were preparing a bid to Defra for funding to assist recovery in the wake of the winter storms to the tune of between £100 and £150m. This recovery bid is separate from any bids being made to Defra as part of the spring budget submissions.</p> <p>EA is still working with Defra on the T's and C's of the possible Asset Replacement Allowance (ARA) funding for IDBs.</p> <p>Natural England – MP</p> <p>NE reported that they are working with stretched resources and that the ELMS work was presenting a heavy workload for NE.</p>

	<p>NE highlighted the new landscape scale recovery initiative designed to look at opportunities on a catchment scale and IDBs were invited to contribute any potential ideas/opportunities in their districts.</p> <p>Consultations – IM updated committee.</p>
1723	AOB
	<p>Future meeting dates Dates for the new ADA Policy Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 May 2024 • 11 September 2024
	Close of meeting