

BLACK SLUICE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

MINUTES

of the proceedings of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee

held at the offices of the Board on
21st April 2026 at 2pm

Members

Chairperson - * Mr M Leggott

* Mr T Ashton
Mr M Mowbray
* Cllr M Geaney

* Mr V Barker
Cllr Z Lane
Cllr S Welberry

* Member Present

In attendance: Mr D Withnall (Chief Executive)
Mrs A Chamberlain (Finance & Admin Director)
Mr Chris Harris (Internal Auditor Lighthouse UK Consultancy Ltd)
Mr Steve Forsyth (Director Lighthouse UK Consultancy Ltd)

2621 Recording the Meeting - Agenda Item 1

Members were informed that the meeting would be recorded.

2622 Apologies for absence - Agenda Item 2

There were apologies for absence received from Mr M Mowbray, Cllr Z Lane and Cllr S Welberry. The Chairperson welcomed Mr C Harris and Mr S Forsyth to the meeting.

2623 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

Minute 2544 (original minute 2469) Board Watercourses being unable to convey water
Mr V Barker declared an interest.

2624 Minutes of the last meeting - Agenda Item 4

Minutes of the last meeting held on 28th October 2025, copies of which had been circulated, were considered and it was AGREED that they should be signed as a true record.

2625 Matters arising - Agenda Item 5

Minute 2544 (original minute 2469) Board Watercourses being unable to convey water

Mr V Barker declared an interest and would be useful to have a report of the meeting he didn't attend.

The Chairperson confirmed this had already happened.

Minutes 2547 The Catalogue of Board Policies with recommended approval dates

The Chief Executive updated the health & safety review will now be in the October Audit & Risk meeting.

Minutes 2548 Risk 1.1 (b)

The Committee noted an update in relation to Item 2548, concerning the Environment Agency modelling and simulation work. The Chief Executive reminded members that, at the time of the previous meeting, it had been anticipated that the results would be received by the end of the year, as indicated by the Environment Agency. However, he reported that this deadline had not been met. He outlined that subsequent updates had been provided by the Environment Agency at regular intervals.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter would be revisited later in the meeting under the relevant risk analysis discussion. The Chair acknowledged the update and noted that the delay, while disappointing, was not entirely unexpected. He thanked the Chief Executive for the clarification and confirmation of the current position.

2627 A Presentation from the Internal Auditor, Chris Harris, and to receive the following - Agenda Item 6

Steve Forsyth introduced the internal audit report and explained that his firm provides the Board's internal audit function. He noted that, while Chris Harris had previously operated largely on his own, the firm has now strengthened resilience by bringing in three additional experienced and qualified auditors to support the service. This is intended to ensure continuity, reduce reliance on one individual, and support future succession planning. Steve advised that these colleagues will gradually take on more work and may become more visible to the Board over time, with the precise approach to be worked through during the coming year. He concluded by emphasising that the purpose of these changes is to ensure a robust and sustainable internal audit service for the Board in future.

(a) Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Chris Harris thanked the Finance and Admin Director and Chief Executive for their assistance in providing the information needed to complete the audit work. He advised that, where competent staff and stable systems are in place,

significant recommendations are less likely to arise, although new systems would attract closer audit attention. He reported that additional experienced auditors had supported this year's work, particularly in the governance and risk sections, which were therefore more detailed. Chris confirmed that the financial controls had been reviewed to support sign-off of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return once year-end processes were complete. He noted that the report contained only one low-level recommendation, relating to clarification of the tendering process, and confirmed that this had already been addressed through a separate paper being presented later in the meeting.

(b) Audit programme 2026/27

The Internal Auditor presented the audit programme for 2026/27, the programme has been drawn up to comply with the following criteria required for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). There is very little change to this year on year, but should there be any changes the Board want to make, this can be done within reason and will be accommodated in the existing fee. For an exercise that would take considerable time the Chief Executive would be advised it would incur extra charges, however the Internal Auditor is happy to take anything on board.

The Internal Auditor noted everything is covered but each year a different element is covered in more detail. This is rotated so all areas are covered by an in-depth examination.

The Chairperson thanked the Internal Auditor and Director of Lighthouse UK Consultancy Ltd, who stayed for the remainder of the meeting.

2628 To review the follow Board policies - Agenda Item 7

(a) Policy No 01: Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Analysis.

The Committee reviewed the Board's risk management strategy, policy and analysis and noted that the overall methodology remained unchanged, with the risk assessment matrix continuing to underpin decision-making.

1.1 Risk of being unable to Prevent Flooding to Property or Land

(a) Coastal flooding from failure or overtopping of defences

The Chairperson noted the inclusion of lobbying of Greater Lincolnshire Mayor.

All AGREED the potential impact of risk would now be level 3.

The Chairperson noted the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor has a pot of money and questioned how much would be offered to the IDB's.

The Chief Executive responded that none would be available as the Greater Lincolnshire Mayor has highlighted her priorities within flood risk management are flood risk and growth. With the pot of money running

her office and the Mayor will only be a lobbying voice in central government.

Cllr M Geaney highlighted the Mayor has been given more money and more staff. Plus, the Mayor has been given one third of the highways budget to operate some parts of the highways.

The Chairman pointed out that any newcomer to Lincolnshire would be wise to do the due diligence checks before they settled.

(b) Fluvial flooding from failure or overtopping of defences.

Members noted that the previous reference to water coming through the banks at four pumping stations following Storms Babet and Henk had been removed from the consequences section, as remedial work is ongoing. The Committee was advised that wider work is continuing through the Fens 2100 programme, including the recent publication of a baseline “case for change” report, presentations to parliamentarians at Westminster, and ongoing media and stakeholder engagement, with the Chief Executive representing the Lincolnshire branch of ADA on the programme board. It was further noted that the Environment Agency had reduced one bank repair level from 3.05 to 2.95 metres on the basis that raising it further could displace flooding elsewhere, although this provided little reassurance to affected landowners. Discussion also covered the possibility of a landowner constructing an additional bank on private land at their own expense. Having considered the updated position, members agreed that the potential impact of the risk remained high, the likelihood remained medium, and the overall risk score should remain at 6.

(c) Flooding from failure of IDB pumping stations or excessive rainfall

Members considered the risk of flooding arising from failure of IDB pumping stations or excess rainfall and agreed that the current risk rating of 6 should remain appropriate, reflecting the high potential impact and medium likelihood. Particular note was made of the ongoing issues at Swineshead Pumping Station, while it was also reported that structural reviews had identified other pumping stations requiring remedial works.

The Committee noted that a comprehensive refurbishment plan is being developed for all 34 pumping stations, including consideration of fish and eel compliance measures, with works to be prioritised according to need and aimed at extending asset life over the longer term. It was further noted that progress over the coming year would provide a clearer indication of the programme and any funding opportunities, and members agreed that, in the meantime, the risk should remain under close review.

It was AGREED to maintain the risk level of 6.

(d) Flooding from Sewers or riparian watercourses

Members considered the risk of flooding from sewers or riparian watercourses and agreed that the existing risk rating of 2 remained

appropriate, reflecting a medium potential impact and low likelihood. The Committee noted ongoing work with Lincolnshire County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority, to improve coordination during emergency situations so that members of the public are not passed between organisations when reporting flooding issues. It was acknowledged that this had been a particular issue following recent flood events, with reports sometimes being redirected rather than taken forward by the first authority contacted. Members agreed that clearer joint working and ownership of reports by the relevant risk management authorities was needed to improve the public response during such incidents.

All AGREED to the risk level of 2.

(e) Fluvial Flooding from unscheduled Emergency Discharge of the Lincolnshire Reservoir

Members discussed the potential risk arising from any emergency discharge from the proposed reservoir into the South Forty Foot Drain and agreed that this should be treated as a separate risk within the register. It was noted that such a discharge could present a significant threat to the Board's system, particularly during wet periods when the drain may already be near capacity. The Chief Executive advised that a meeting had been secured with the relevant parties and that representations would also be made as part of the stage 2 consultation.

The Committee agreed that a new risk item should be created specifically covering overtopping of the South Forty Foot Drain due to an unscheduled emergency discharge from the reservoir, with an initial risk score of 6, reflecting high impact and medium likelihood, so that it remains under regular review by both the Committee and the Board.

1.2 Risk of loss of reputation or being found negligent due to Emergency Actions

The Board reviewed the risk concerning the potential loss of reputation arising from being found negligent in relation to emergency actions. The Chair noted that amendments had been made to the wording, including deletions and additions, and invited the Chief Executive to explain the rationale. He informed members that he had recently given evidence in a County Court case (Riley v Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board). The judgment clarified that Internal Drainage Boards operate under permissive powers with respect to drainage and flood risk management, rather than a statutory duty under Section 14A of the Land Drainage Act. As a result of this legal precedent, the previously recorded consequence relating to statutory duty had been removed from the risk register. He further advised that this judgment would provide clarity not only for the Board but also for other IDBs and the Environment Agency moving forward.

Members discussed the wider implications of the ruling. The Chief Executive confirmed that he had shared the outcome with local IDBs in Lincolnshire, leaving it to those organisations to disseminate further if

appropriate. Tom Ashton welcomed the outcome, particularly for the Board, but noted that the interpretation also suggested that the Environment Agency similarly operates under permissive powers rather than a statutory obligation when acting under the same legislation. The Chief Executive clarified that this is correct when the Agency is acting under the Land Drainage Act, although it may use other legislative provisions in some circumstances, distinguishing between Section 14 (applicable to the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities) and Section 14A (applicable to IDBs).

Following discussion, the Chair sought agreement from members on whether the revised risk score of four remained appropriate in light of the clarified legal position and amended wording. Members indicated their agreement, and no objections or dissenting views were raised.

1.3 Risk of Loss of Electrical Supply

The Chief Executive noted there had been no experience of blackouts.

The Chief Executive further reassured members that proactive measures were being taken to mitigate this risk. Specifically, the Board is working to improve the resilience of its infrastructure by increasing the height of transformers and electrical switchgear as part of ongoing pumping station refurbishment programmes. This approach was noted as demonstrating the Board's awareness of the risk and its commitment to reducing vulnerability. Members indicated their agreement with the current risk score and the mitigation strategy in place.

All AGREED the risk level to be 3.

1.4 Risk of failure of Boards Pumping Stations

The Board considered Item 1.4, relating to the risk of failure of the Board's pumping stations. The Chair outlined that this risk carries a high potential impact with a medium likelihood, resulting in an overall risk score of six. He highlighted known issues, including specific concerns at Swineshead Pumping Station, as well as the general ageing condition of the Board's assets, some of which also present structural concerns. The Chair emphasised that maintaining the risk score at this level ensures the matter remains a priority for ongoing monitoring and future detailed consideration by the Board. Members confirmed their agreement with retaining the risk score at six.

A discussion then followed regarding long-term approaches to pumping station design and maintenance. It was noted that more modern pumping stations are increasingly constructed with pumps and motors located externally, potentially reducing costs and simplifying maintenance arrangements. The Chief Executive acknowledged this point and advised that such approaches would be considered for any new-build pumping stations going forward. However, he explained that for existing assets that are structurally sound, or can be made so, the current strategy is to maximise the use of existing civil engineering structures and install more

environmentally sensitive pumps, including those that are less harmful to fish and eel populations.

The Chief Executive further clarified that, at present, only the Swineshead Pumping Station is likely to require full replacement, with other sites scheduled for extensive refurbishment works. He confirmed that where future circumstances necessitate complete rebuilds, alternative and potentially more cost-effective designs, such as those incorporating modern pumping technologies, would be fully considered.

Members also reflected on examples of newer installations, including a recently completed pumping station where a more simplified design has improved operational efficiency and ease of maintenance access. While acknowledging the benefits of retaining existing structures in some cases, it was noted that there can be long-term advantages in replacing outdated infrastructure entirely to avoid the ongoing burden of maintaining ageing buildings. The Chief Executive indicated that he did not dispute this viewpoint and agreed it would be considered as part of future decision-making. The discussion concluded with confirmation that the agreed risk score of six remained appropriate.

All AGREED to this risk level.

1.5 Risk of Board Watercourses being unable to Convey Water

The Board reviewed minor amendments to the stated risk management measures. The Chair noted that the Chief Executive had clarified the wording to state that all watercourses are cleared of weed growth once each year where possible. The Chief Executive explained that this wording more accurately reflects operational reality, as there are locations where maintenance cannot be completed, and it is therefore important not to imply full coverage. He advised that detailed records have been compiled, supported by mapped information, identifying which watercourses have and have not been cleared, along with the reasons for any omissions. This approach ensures transparency and helps manage expectations from landowners, reducing the likelihood of misunderstandings or complaints.

The Chair also highlighted an additional clarification that watercourses are de-silted on a regular, prioritised basis. While noting that this activity has historically been undertaken by the Board, he acknowledged that the inclusion of the term “prioritised” better reflects the current, more targeted approach. The Chief Executive explained that, whereas de-silting was previously carried out on a fixed ten-year rotational programme, the Board now uses improved surveying techniques, including GPS-based engineering assessments, to identify actual need within individual drains. This allows resources to be allocated more effectively, with higher priority watercourses addressed more frequently and lower priority ones attended to as required, rather than on a rigid timetable.

The Chair summarised that this approach ensures resources are not wasted and that maintenance is undertaken where it is most needed, rather than simply adhering to historical cycles. Following discussion, members confirmed their agreement that the risk level of four remained appropriate in light of these clarified and improved management arrangements.

1.6 Risk of Operating Machinery to Maintain Watercourses

The Board considered the risk relating to operational hazards, including the potential for machinery to strike overhead or underground electrical services, equipment entering watercourses, and parts of machinery causing injury to operatives, members of the public, or damage to other vehicles. The Chair noted that the management of this risk is primarily addressed through robust health and safety procedures, alongside the regular servicing and maintenance of all machinery.

In outlining the assessment, the Chair advised that the potential impact of the risk is considered medium, while the likelihood is low, resulting in an overall risk score of two. Drawing on his role within the Health and Safety Committee, the Chair provided assurance to members that health and safety remains a primary focus for both operatives and the Board. He confirmed that training is carried out regularly and to a high standard, and that appropriate procedures are consistently followed to minimise risk.

On the basis of these controls and the current operating environment, the Chair expressed his view that the risk score of two is appropriate. Members indicated their agreement with this assessment, and no objections were raised.

1.7 Risk of Claims from Third Parties for Damage to Property or Injury

The Board considered the risk of claims from third parties for damage to property or personal injury. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of such a risk is assessed as medium, while the likelihood is considered low, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He noted that, based on operational experience, staff and operatives are familiar with known risk areas, including locations where work is undertaken in close proximity to electrical infrastructure or private property. He emphasised that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented in line with established health and safety procedures to minimise the likelihood of incidents occurring.

During the discussion, Mr V Barker raised a query regarding liability in circumstances where the Board's machinery causes structural damage while undertaking work on behalf of the Environment Agency. He declared an interest in relation to this point. In response, the Chair suggested that such incidents would likely be covered by the Board's insurance arrangements, given that the Board would be responsible for the works undertaken, although he acknowledged that the specific provisions within agreements with the Environment Agency would need

to be confirmed. The Chief Executive indicated that this matter could be explored further outside the meeting if required.

Following discussion, and noting the mitigation measures in place, members confirmed their agreement that the risk score of two remained appropriate.

1.8 Risk of Third Parties damage to Board Maintained Assets

The Board considered the risk of third-party damage to Board-maintained assets. The Chair outlined that risk management in this area is supported through the maintenance of assets, enforcement of Board byelaws, and appropriate insurance arrangements. He further noted that the majority of pumping stations are now secured with fencing, significantly reducing the likelihood of unauthorised access and potential damage.

In assessing the risk, the Chair advised that the potential impact is considered medium, while the likelihood remains low, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He expressed the view that this score accurately reflects the current level of exposure, given the mitigation measures in place. The Chair invited members to comment on the proposed assessment, and no alternative views were put forward. Members therefore confirmed their agreement that a risk level of two remains appropriate.

1.9 Risk of Unplanned Loss of Senior Staff

The Board considered Item 1.9, relating to the risk of unplanned loss of senior staff. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of such a risk is assessed as medium, while the likelihood is considered low, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He commented positively on the Chief Executive's approach to staff development, noting that there has been a strong emphasis on training and upskilling across the organisation.

The Chair advised that, in the event of the loss of a senior member of staff, the Board would be able to continue operating effectively for a period, as other members of staff possess sufficient competence and training to provide cover and maintain key functions. He further highlighted that formalised arrangements are in place to share staff resources with other Internal Drainage Boards, ensuring additional external support is available where internal capacity may be limited.

The Chair concluded that these measures provide appropriate resilience and continuity planning. Members indicated their agreement with this assessment and confirmed that a risk score of two remains appropriate.

1.10 Insufficient finance to carry out works

The Board considered the risk relating to insufficient finance to carry out required works. The Chair highlighted that this item had been subject to significant amendment, particularly in relation to how the risk is managed. He outlined that the potential impact remains high, with the likelihood previously assessed between medium and low, resulting in a proposed

reduced risk score of three. The Chair drew attention to the strengthened mitigation measures, including the development of a ten-year budget to ensure adequate funding, a commitment to increasing reserves to a level sufficient to cover electricity costs in the event of two consecutive years of wet conditions, and updates to the Board's financial regulations. In addition, the long-term financial planning aims to achieve the general reserve forecast by 2030–31, alongside ongoing liaison with precepting councils.

The Chair noted that the proposed reduction in risk score, from six to three, was a recommendation from the Chief Executive and invited members' views. Tom Ashton commented that, given the Board's strong financial management, a reduction in likelihood could reflect the progress made, provided the current reserve position and financial outlook support that assessment. He emphasised, however, that this position should be kept under review and adjusted if circumstances change, particularly if reserves were eroded in future years.

Margaret Geaney raised concerns regarding the broader economic climate, including pressures on businesses and the agricultural sector, and queried whether there was a risk of reduced income through non-payment of drainage rates. The Chief Executive acknowledged that while this is a risk, it is currently considered very small. He reported that outstanding drainage rates stood at approximately £11,000 against a total of £1.8 million, which remains a relatively low proportion and is expected to be largely recovered. Margaret Geaney further expressed concern about potential future increases in non-payment due to rising costs and ongoing economic uncertainty, suggesting this should be monitored closely.

The Chair, speaking from experience within the agricultural sector, acknowledged the financial pressures faced by landowners, including rising fertiliser and fuel costs, but noted that drainage remains essential to maintaining productive land, and therefore payment of drainage rates is generally prioritised. He did, however, accept that hardship cases may arise and would need to be addressed appropriately.

Tom Ashton then raised a broader concern regarding the potential impact of local government reorganisation on the Board's financial sustainability. He highlighted the risk that, under a reduced number of unitary authorities, council-appointed members could be more easily influenced to constrain Board budgets, potentially affecting income from special levy. Both the Chair and Margaret Geaney supported this concern, noting the uncertainty surrounding local government reform and its potential implications.

In response, the Chief Executive offered an alternative perspective, suggesting that the creation of a single or fewer unitary authorities could, in fact, reduce financial risk by increasing the overall funding base, thereby decreasing the proportional burden of the Board's levies.

However, he identified a separate risk relating to governance, namely a reduced pool of councillors available to serve on boards, which could impact member attendance and engagement.

The Chair acknowledged both perspectives but maintained that, given the current level of uncertainty around local government reform and broader financial pressures, insufficient finance remains a significant strategic risk. Margaret Geaney reiterated her preference for a cautious approach, recommending that the risk level remain at six and be closely monitored over the next 12 months as the situation develops. This view was supported by Tom Ashton.

Following discussion, the Chair concluded that there was a clear majority in favour of retaining the higher risk level. It was therefore agreed that the risk score would remain at six. The Chief Executive also agreed to include an additional item within the risk management framework to monitor the impact of local government reform, specifically the potential for all appointed members to come from a single authority and for competing expenditure priorities to affect funding for drainage and flood risk management.

1.11 Reduction in staff performance

The committee considered the risk relating to a reduction in staff performance. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of this risk is assessed as medium, with a low likelihood, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He expressed confidence in the current management arrangements, noting that there is a strong emphasis on maintaining staff motivation and performance. The Chair advised that any staff experiencing difficulties are able to access support through the Chief Executive and their respective line managers, ensuring that concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately. On this basis, he indicated that the current risk score remained suitable.

The Chief Executive informed members of proposed future work to further strengthen staff wellbeing and performance, specifically through the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme. He explained that this would provide a range of support services, including counselling, mental health support for issues such as anxiety, access to debt advice, legal guidance, a confidential helpline, online GP services, and family care support. The Finance and Admin Director, added that such programmes typically include 24-hour access to services, which enhances their value to employees. The Chief Executive emphasised that the initiative is aimed at improving staff wellbeing, maintaining morale, and reducing potential distractions that could impact performance. He further noted that the provision is relatively low cost and could contribute to reduced sickness absence and improved overall productivity.

The Chair welcomed the proposal, describing staff as one of the Board's greatest assets and supporting measures that make it easier to maintain

their wellbeing and effectiveness. Margaret Geaney raised a query in relation to recent employment legislation and its potential impact on staff management. The Chief Executive clarified the current position, confirming that while certain employment rights apply from day one, the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims has been reduced to six months rather than immediate application. This provided reassurance to members regarding the Board's ability to manage performance issues within the appropriate legal framework.

The Chair concluded that the existing controls, together with the proposed enhancements, provide a strong framework for managing the risk. Members confirmed their agreement that the risk score of two remains appropriate.

1.12 Insufficient Staff Resources

The committee also considered the related risk of insufficient staff resources. The Chair outlined that this carries a medium potential impact but a low likelihood, resulting in a risk score of two. He noted that the Board continues to improve its approach to staff support and development and remains compliant with all relevant employment legislation. Members indicated their agreement with the assessment and confirmed that the risk score of two should be maintained.

2.1 Risk of Prosecution for not Adhering to Environmental Legislation

The Committee considered the objective to conserve and enhance the environment wherever practicable, ensuring no net loss of biodiversity. The Chair referred to earlier updates from the Chief Executive, noting that environmental considerations are incorporated into operational activities, particularly in relation to pumping station refurbishments. He highlighted that works will continue to align with relevant eel and fish legislation wherever possible, supporting the protection of aquatic species.

The Chair also drew attention to the development of a new, personalised and targeted Biodiversity Action Plan, which is scheduled for adoption in 2026. He commented that this demonstrates the organisation's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship. Members noted that a range of practical measures are already being implemented, including the installation of bat boxes, creation of grass snake habitats, and the provision of fish refuges within watercourses. The Chief Executive confirmed that such initiatives are intended to support biodiversity and create more resilient ecosystems.

The Chair expressed his view that the organisation is fulfilling its environmental responsibilities and that biodiversity considerations are appropriately embedded within policies and operational practices. Members indicated their agreement with this assessment and confirmed that a risk score of two remains appropriate.

2.2 Non-Delivery of Objectives

The Committee then considered the risk relating to the non-delivery of environmental objectives, including those set out within the Biodiversity Action Plan. The Chair outlined that this risk is managed through structured project delivery, including the capital programme, annual environmental budgeting, and formal reporting of Biodiversity Action Plan actions to the Environment Committee, where oversight and scrutiny are provided.

On the basis of these controls and the current level of assurance, the Chair proposed that this be considered a very low risk, with a score of one. Members confirmed their agreement with this assessment, and no objections were raised.

3.1 Emergency Plan Inadequate or Not up to Date

The Committee considered Item 3, relating to the provision of a 24-hour, 365-day emergency response for the community. The Chair outlined that the key risk is that emergency planning may be inadequate or not kept up to date. He noted the importance of effective coordination with external bodies, including local authorities, and commented that improved referral arrangements, such as directing enquiries appropriately to the organisation, would support maintaining the current low risk assessment.

The Chief Executive clarified that the focus of this risk is specifically on the adequacy and currency of the emergency plan itself. He advised that the plan is formally reviewed by the Committee on a periodic basis, typically every five years, but is also subject to review following any emergency event in which it is deployed. This allows for practical learning to be incorporated, with any identified shortcomings addressed and effective measures reinforced. He explained that, following an incident, the plan is revisited and updated to reflect what worked well and what improvements may be required, before being reported back to the Board.

The Chief Executive expressed confidence that this iterative approach has strengthened the organisation's emergency planning arrangements over time, contributing to the current low risk rating. The Chair agreed with this assessment and, having invited comments, confirmed that members were satisfied that a risk score of one remains appropriate.

3.2 Insufficient Resources (Staff and Equipment)

The Committee considered Item 3.2, relating to the risk of insufficient resources, including staff and equipment, to deliver emergency response functions. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of this risk is assessed as medium, with a low likelihood, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He advised that the risk is mitigated through the Board's established approach to resource management, including the sharing of staff and equipment with partner organisations, and the ability to hire additional resources when required to ensure operational needs are met.

The Chief Executive highlighted that additional context had been included within the risk assessment, noting workforce commitment and morale as relevant factors influencing resource availability. He further advised that future work in this area includes consideration of the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme, which could support staff wellbeing and help mitigate the impact of factors such as long-term sickness absence. He noted that the current position includes a small number of staff on long-term sick leave, which has the potential to affect resource availability.

The Chair sought clarification as to whether such absences were work-related but acknowledged the Chief Executive's position that specific details could not be discussed in a public meeting. He further observed that operational pressures, such as prolonged pumping periods, could contribute to staff fatigue, although he accepted that this was not necessarily the cause in the current circumstances. The Chair concluded that staff wellbeing is actively monitored and appropriately managed.

On the basis of the mitigation measures in place and the additional considerations outlined, members confirmed their agreement that the risk score of two remains appropriate.

3.3 Risk of Critical Incident Loss of Office

The Committee considered Item 3.3, relating to the risk of a critical incident resulting in the loss of the office. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of such an event would be high, while the likelihood remains low, resulting in an overall risk score of three. He noted that existing mitigation measures include improved data resilience, particularly through the implementation of remote backups to external servers, which has strengthened the organisation's ability to maintain continuity in the event of a disruption.

Vic Barker raised a query regarding the availability of backup power, referring to his own experience of having a generator capable of supporting key operations. He asked whether similar arrangements were in place, or could be considered, for the office and workshop to provide resilience in the event of a power outage.

The Chief Executive advised that this matter has been explored previously, including consideration of both the hire or installation of a generator and the potential use of battery storage linked to existing solar panels as a backup power source. However, it was concluded that the cost of implementing such solutions would outweigh the benefits, given the nature of the operations carried out at the office. He confirmed that Uninterruptible Power Supply systems are already in place for critical telemetry systems, ensuring that these would continue to operate provided there is power at the pumping stations. Beyond this, the Chief Executive indicated that most other functions could continue from alternative locations if necessary and are not solely dependent on the office.

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and concluded that, in light of the mitigation measures and previous considerations, the risk score of three remains appropriate.

4.1 Risk of Injury to Staff and Subsequent Claims and Losses

The Committee considered Item 4, relating to the objective of providing a safe and fulfilling working environment for staff. The Chair noted that there are extensive measures in place to manage this risk, including a comprehensive health and safety framework. He advised that the Health and Safety Committee receives strong engagement from staff and that the organisation maintains a thorough health and safety policy, which is formally reported annually. The risk was assessed as having a medium potential impact and a low likelihood, resulting in a risk score of two. Based on his experience and involvement, the Chair expressed confidence in the current arrangements and confirmed his view that the score remains appropriate. Members indicated their agreement, and the risk score of two was retained..

4.2 Risk of not complying with Health & Safety Legislation

The Committee then considered the risk of non-compliance with health and safety legislation. The Chair highlighted that the potential consequences of such failure could be significant, including enforcement action, cessation of works, delays to operational programmes, and potential prosecution of officers. The risk was assessed as having a high potential impact and a low likelihood, resulting in a risk score of three. He acknowledged that, while robust procedures are in place, there is always a possibility of human error, such as operatives failing to follow training or complete appropriate risk assessments before commencing work.

Vic Barker raised concerns based on personal observations, noting that there had been occasions where he felt operational practices were not as safe as they should be, although he had not intervened directly. The Chair responded by encouraging members to report any such concerns to the Chief Executive, emphasising that issues can then be addressed appropriately through training or toolbox talks without singling out individuals. He supported this approach with an example from his own experience, where a safety concern had been raised and subsequently addressed through a general reminder to all staff, reinforcing safe working practices without attributing blame.

The Chief Executive reinforced the importance of reporting such concerns, noting that both officers and members share a responsibility for maintaining safe working practices. He stressed that, in the event of a serious incident, accountability would extend to those aware of unsafe practices who had not taken action. He emphasised that the organisation is continuing to develop a positive health and safety culture, supported by the Health and Safety Committee and ongoing training. He also identified specific areas where continued vigilance is required, including working near water, use of safety equipment such as life vests and

restraint systems, operation of machinery, and working in confined spaces.

The Chair concluded that maintaining open communication around health and safety concerns is essential to achieving the objective of providing a safe working environment. Members agreed that, in light of the controls in place and the importance of continued vigilance, the risk score of three remains appropriate.

5.1 Risk of Loss of Cash

The Committee considered the risk of loss of cash. The Chair outlined that the potential impact and likelihood of this risk are both assessed as low, resulting in an overall risk score of one. He noted that the organisation does not typically hold significant amounts of cash on the premises, with only limited petty cash retained and occasional cash payments received for drainage rates.

The Finance and Admin Director, confirmed that cash holdings are minimal.

The Chair emphasised that robust financial controls are in place and supported by a strong and effective accountancy function. On this basis, he expressed confidence that the risk is being appropriately managed. Members indicated their agreement, and it was confirmed that the risk score of one remains appropriate.

5.2 Risk of Loss of Money Invested in Building Societies & Banks & Managed Funds.

The Committee considered the risk of loss of money through investments held in building societies, banks, and managed funds. The Chair invited discussion on this item and noted that the Executive Committee regularly reviews the Board's investment portfolio as part of its risk management arrangements, with the next review scheduled for early June.

Vic Barker reflected on previous decisions to pursue higher-return investments and expressed concern about current market conditions, particularly in relation to exposure to North American markets. He noted that he had personally withdrawn funds from investments with significant exposure to the United States due to declining values and broader economic uncertainty, and queried whether similar concerns should be considered in relation to the Board's portfolio.

The Chair acknowledged these concerns and reiterated that the Board's investments are subject to regular oversight. Margaret Geaney sought clarification on whether the Chief Executive has the authority to act quickly in response to changing market conditions. The Chief Executive confirmed that, while formal approval would be required, decisions could be progressed through the Executive Committee within a short timeframe, typically within 24 hours, without needing to wait for a scheduled meeting.

The Chief Executive provided a summary of the current investment allocations, outlining that the Board holds approximately £119,000 in North American equities, £63,000 in overseas bonds, £45,000 in UK bonds, and £56,000 in UK equities. He noted that, while exposure to overseas markets exists, it remains proportionate within the overall investment portfolio and is considered manageable. He further advised that he is scheduled to meet with the Board's investment managers, Brewin Dolphin, for the annual review, and confirmed that any concerns raised during the discussion would be taken forward as part of that process.

The Chair added that a recent review with fund managers had already resulted in a shift from very low-risk investments to a more moderate risk approach in order to achieve improved returns, reflecting a balanced and considered investment strategy. He emphasised that professional advice will continue to guide investment decisions and that the portfolio can be adjusted as required.

Following discussion, the Chair asked members to confirm their agreement with the proposed risk score. Members indicated their satisfaction with the current arrangements and confirmed that a risk level of three remains appropriate.

5.3 Risk of Fraud by Senior Officers

The Committee considered the risk of fraud by senior officers, including the potential consequence of financial loss. The Chair outlined that the risk is mitigated through a number of established financial controls. These include the requirement for all transactions to be authorised by at least two officers, ensuring appropriate oversight and accountability. In addition, all purchase ledger transactions are subject to review by the Board, providing a further layer of scrutiny, and the organisation maintains adequate insurance coverage.

The Chair expressed the view that these arrangements are comprehensive and provide a strong framework for managing the risk. On this basis, he proposed that the risk should be assessed as low, with a risk score of one. Members indicated their agreement, and the risk score of one was confirmed.

5.4 Risk of Inadequacy of Internal Checks

The Committee considered the risk of inadequacy of internal checks leading to incorrect payments being made. The Chair outlined that this risk is managed through a range of established financial controls, including the requirement that all items resulting in payments are checked prior to processing. He further noted that all payments made through the Board's bank accounts must be authorised by two authorised signatories in accordance with the financial regulations, and that additional independent verification checks are carried out with suppliers to mitigate the risk of mandate fraud.

The Chair advised that the potential impact of this risk is assessed as medium, with a low likelihood, resulting in a proposed risk score of two. He commented that, given the strength of the controls in place, there could be an argument for a lower risk score. However, the Chief Executive clarified that the financial thresholds applied to the risk categories support the current assessment, noting that medium impact reflects potential losses in the range of £20,000 to £100,000. He added that, given the Board regularly processes payments within and above this range, including significant electricity costs, the categorisation as medium impact is appropriate.

The Chair acknowledged this explanation and agreed that the current assessment accurately reflects the level of financial exposure. He invited further comment from members, and no alternative views were put forward. Members therefore confirmed that the risk score of two remains appropriate.

5.5 Fraudulent use of Credit Cards

The Committee considered the risk of fraudulent use of credit cards. The Chair outlined that access to Board-issued credit cards is limited to senior officers, and that appropriate safeguards are in place to manage the risk. These include defined card limits, with individual limits set at £5,000, £5,000, £2,500 and £2,500 respectively, alongside the provision of insurance to cover unauthorised use.

The Chair further advised that all card expenditure is subject to monthly reconciliation and is formally certified by both the Chief Executive and the Projects Director, providing an additional layer of financial control and oversight. He assessed both the potential impact and likelihood of this risk as low, resulting in a proposed risk score of one.

The Finance and Admin Director, confirmed that these arrangements accurately reflect current practice and expressed her agreement with the assessment. The Chair invited any further comments from members, and no objections were raised. It was therefore agreed that the risk score of one remains appropriate.

6.1 Risk to Board Members

The Committee considered the objective of ensuring that all actions taken comply with current UK and EU legislation. The Chair outlined that this risk is managed through a combination of appropriate insurance cover, including corporate liability, and reliance on qualified and experienced staff to advise the Board and ensure compliance across all areas of operation.

The Chair also highlighted the significant role of the Chief Executive in maintaining compliance, noting that he has undertaken extensive training, particularly in relation to health and safety and recent employment legislation. He commented that the Chief Executive has a

strong understanding of the evolving regulatory environment and is well positioned to ensure that the organisation remains compliant with applicable legal requirements.

The Chair concluded that the organisation is fully aware of the relevant risks and has appropriate controls in place to manage them effectively. He expressed his satisfaction with the current arrangements and invited comments from members. No concerns were raised, and members indicated their agreement with the assessment.

6.2 Risk of not complying all Employment Regulations and Laws

The Committee then considered the risk of not complying with employment regulations and legislation. The Chair acknowledged that there is an inherent risk in this area, but advised that the potential impact is assessed as medium, with a low likelihood, resulting in a risk score of two. He expressed confidence that the organisation remains up to date with relevant legal requirements, noting that the Chief Executive maintains a strong awareness of legislative changes affecting the Board, including those relating to employment law and wider regulatory frameworks.

The Chief Executive informed members that both he and the Maintenance Director have recently completed ACAS training on the handling of grievances and disciplinary procedures, and that further training is planned for other directors and managers. He also confirmed that he has undertaken training relating to the Employment Rights Act 2025 and will continue to engage with further updates as additional elements of the legislation come into force in stages.

The Chair noted that the introduction of new legislative requirements is being phased over time and acknowledged that the organisation is actively monitoring these developments. On the basis of the controls in place and the ongoing commitment to training and compliance, the Chair confirmed that he was satisfied with the current risk assessment. Members indicated their agreement, and it was confirmed that the risk score of two remains appropriate.

7.1 Risk of Collecting Insufficient Income to Fund Expenditure

The Committee considered the objective of delivering a cost-efficient Internal Drainage Board that provides value for money. The Chair outlined that the primary risk relates to the adequacy and sustainability of funding arrangements, and highlighted that this is currently managed, in part, through engagement with a special interest group of local authorities operating via the Local Government Association. The Chief Executive clarified that this group is actively lobbying central government for reform of the way special levies are calculated and funded, and has already engaged with Members of Parliament on several occasions. He further advised that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is undertaking a review that includes consideration of alternative funding mechanisms.

The Chief Executive noted that, in light of these ongoing developments, there is a greater degree of uncertainty than previously recognised, particularly in relation to the potential outcomes of both the lobbying activity and wider government review. He also confirmed that the implications of local government reorganisation have been incorporated into the assessment, reflecting earlier discussion within the meeting.

The Chair acknowledged that this aligns with concerns previously raised by both Tom Ashton and Margaret Geaney regarding financial uncertainty and structural change. He indicated that, while the likelihood of risk had previously been assessed as low, there is merit in taking a more cautious approach given the evolving external environment. Tom Ashton commented that he remained sceptical regarding the effectiveness of the special interest group, suggesting that it may face challenges in agreeing a unified position or securing outcomes that are beneficial to Internal Drainage Boards, given that it is led by local authority finance representatives rather than those directly involved in drainage operations.

The Chief Executive added that local government reorganisation may ultimately have a more significant impact than the outcomes of the special interest group. The Chair agreed with this view and concluded that, in light of the uncertainties identified, it would be appropriate to increase the risk score. Members indicated their agreement, and it was confirmed that the risk level would be increased from one to two, with the position to be kept under review as further information becomes available.

7.2 IDB abolished or taken over

The Committee considered the risk of the Internal Drainage Board being abolished or taken over. The Chair outlined that both the potential impact and likelihood of this risk are assessed as low, resulting in an overall risk score of one. He expressed a clear view that such an outcome is highly unlikely and does not present a significant concern to the organisation at the present time.

Members indicated their agreement with the assessment, and it was confirmed that the risk score of one remains appropriate.

8.1 Risk of Loss of Telemetry

The Committee considered the risk of loss of telemetry. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of such a failure is assessed as medium, while the likelihood is low, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He noted that, while his own technical knowledge in this area is limited, it is recognised that there is always a possibility of system outages or failures within IT and communications infrastructure, and therefore the risk cannot be regarded as negligible.

The Chief Executive highlighted that measures have been taken to strengthen system resilience, including the introduction of radio backup alongside upgraded 4G and 5G telemetry systems. He emphasised that the organisation has made concerted efforts to ensure continuity of data and operational monitoring through these enhancements.

A member sought clarification regarding the reference to directors being trained in the use of telemetry, the Chief Executive confirmed that this applies to himself and the three operational directors. He explained that, in emergency situations, these individuals form part of a rota system to provide 24-hour monitoring of telemetry data when required, ensuring appropriate oversight during periods of heightened operational demand.

The Chair thanked members for the clarification and confirmed that, in light of the controls and arrangements in place, the risk score of two remains appropriate. Members indicated their agreement, and no objections were raised.

8.2 Risk of loss Telephone Communications

The Committee considered the risk of loss of telephone communications. The Chair outlined that both the potential impact and likelihood of this risk are assessed as low, resulting in an overall risk score of one. He noted that the organisation's resilience in this area is supported by practical arrangements, including the provision of mobile telephones to staff and the use of a separate broadband connection for telephone systems, independent from the main network.

The Chair expressed the view that these measures provide sufficient assurance that communication can be maintained in most circumstances, even in the event of a failure affecting part of the system. On this basis, he confirmed that a risk score of one remains appropriate. Members indicated their agreement, and no objections were raised.

8.3 Risk of loss of internet connections

The Committee considered the risk of loss of internet connectivity. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of this risk is assessed as medium, with a low likelihood, resulting in an overall risk score of two. He noted that, similar to the loss of telemetry, there is always an inherent risk of internet outages which could disrupt operations, and therefore it is appropriate that the risk score remains above the lowest level.

The Chief Executive emphasised the increasing reliance on internet-based systems across the organisation, highlighting that many core functions are now conducted online. He advised that a loss of connectivity would have a significant operational impact, including the ability to process payments and manage financial transactions, which reinforces the assessment of the impact as medium.

The Chair acknowledged this point and reiterated that, given both the likelihood of disruption and the growing dependence on digital systems,

the current risk score of two is justified. Members indicated their agreement, and it was confirmed that the risk score of two remains appropriate.

8.4 Risk of Network Failure

The Committee considered the risk of network failure resulting in all computers and information becoming inaccessible. The Chair outlined that the potential impact of such an event would be high, while the likelihood is assessed as low, resulting in an overall risk score of three. He noted that a loss of network access would significantly disrupt operations, given the organisation's reliance on digital systems.

During discussion, the Chief Executive remarked on the reliance of staff on digital systems for day-to-day operations, reinforcing the extent to which business activities are dependent on network availability. The Chair acknowledged this point and sought confirmation from members that the proposed risk score remained appropriate.

On the basis of the discussion and the existing mitigation measures, the Chair concluded that a risk score of three remains appropriate. Members indicated their agreement, and no objections were raised.

8.5 Risk of Breach in Cyber Security Inc. Risk of Virus being introduced to Network

The Committee considered Item 8.5, relating to the risk of a cyber security breach, including the introduction of viruses or malicious software to the network. The Chair noted that extensive controls are in place, as detailed within the risk register, to mitigate this risk.

The Chief Executive provided a comprehensive update on recent cyber security performance data, explaining that approximately 154 million interactions across the firewall had been monitored, with 15.8 million individual elements scanned. He highlighted that the most significant outcome was that no breaches had occurred, with all attempted intrusions successfully prevented. He further reported that a number of attempted network attacks had originated from overseas sources, including approximately 2,000 from China, 57 from Russia, and 13 from Ukraine. Of nine identified attempts to gain access to the system, all nine were successfully blocked. He explained that many of these attempts are automated or opportunistic in nature, often seeking to exploit systems for financial gain through methods such as encryption and ransom demands.

The Chair emphasised that the absence of successful breaches is a key indicator of the effectiveness of the Board's current cyber security arrangements. He acknowledged that a previous risk score of six had reflected heightened concern following incidents affecting neighbouring organisations, but noted that subsequent system reviews and ongoing improvements have strengthened resilience. These measures include regular system monitoring, external consultancy support, quarterly

proactive security reviews by IT specialists, and the implementation of cyber insurance cover.

Tom Ashton observed that while the evidence presented demonstrates strong system performance, it is important to recognise that no system can be entirely immune from attack, particularly where highly resourced or targeted threats may arise. The Chair agreed, noting that the organisation continues to invest in maintaining and enhancing its cyber defences in line with evolving threats, including consideration of further system upgrades.

The Chief Executive confirmed that staff awareness and training also form an important part of the organisation's defence, with regular updates, online learning, and guidance provided through banking partners, insurers, and IT providers. He advised that cyber security awareness is included within staff induction processes and reinforced periodically throughout employment.

Vic Barker expressed his appreciation for the detailed update and the level of assurance provided, noting that the information presented gave members confidence in the robustness of the organisation's approach to cyber security.

In light of the significant controls in place, the strong performance data, and the ongoing commitment to system improvements, the Chair proposed that the risk score be reduced from six to three, reflecting a high potential impact but a now low likelihood of occurrence. Members indicated their agreement with this revised assessment, and it was confirmed that the risk score of three is appropriate.

8.6 Risk of Network Security Breach

The Committee considered Item 8.6, relating to the risk of a network security breach. The Chair noted that, in light of the detailed discussion under Item 8.5 regarding cyber security risks and the decision to reduce that risk score to three, it would be appropriate and consistent to align the assessment for this closely related risk.

8.7 Risk of Loss of Accounting Records

The Committee considered the risk of loss of accounting records. The Chair outlined that both the potential impact and likelihood of this risk are assessed as low, resulting in an overall risk score of one. He noted that the organisation relies heavily on these records for financial management, but expressed confidence in the controls and systems in place to protect them. The Finance and Admin Director confirmed that the arrangements are sufficient to support the effective management of accounting records. Members indicated their agreement, and it was confirmed that the risk score of one remains appropriate.

8.8 Risk of Loss of Rating Records

The Committee then considered Item 8.8, relating to the risk of loss of rating records. The Chief Executive explained that this area has recently been strengthened following the transition to a new rating management system. He advised that, in accordance with the Land Drainage Act, the Board continues to maintain physical records, including land registers and maps, which are securely stored on-site. In addition, electronic records are now held on a remote drainage management system hosted by an external provider, with access facilitated via a secure connection. This provides enhanced resilience, as the hosting provider maintains appropriate cyber security measures and ensures that system updates are applied centrally.

The Chief Executive further outlined that the remote hosting arrangement allows for ongoing system improvements without additional burden on internal resources. He also noted that, while certain historic paper records are retained, core statutory information could be recreated from the digital systems if required. Margaret Geaney queried whether the physical storage arrangements provided adequate protection, particularly in relation to fire risk. The Chief Executive confirmed that records are stored securely, although he noted that the critical statutory information is now primarily safeguarded through the electronic systems. The Chair acknowledged that the combination of physical record retention and enhanced digital storage provides a robust approach to managing this risk. He noted that, while some historical records may not be fully recoverable if lost, the key legal and operational data could be reproduced if necessary. On this basis, the potential impact was assessed as high, with a low likelihood, resulting in a risk score of three. Members confirmed their agreement that this remains an appropriate assessment.

The Chair concluded the review by thanking members for their input, noting that the Committee had completed a thorough consideration of the risk register. Chris Harris, acting in his capacity as auditor, commented that he was impressed with the thoroughness and level of detail demonstrated during the review. He observed that the Committee's approach compared favourably with other organisations, noting that the depth of scrutiny applied was particularly commendable and refreshing from an audit perspective.

The Chair invited any final observations or identification of any areas that may have been overlooked. Chris Harris confirmed that he was satisfied that all relevant matters had been appropriately considered and advised that he would have intervened had any issues required further attention.

The Chair concluded by reiterating the importance of maintaining a thorough and robust approach to risk management and thanked all members for their contributions to the discussion.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that the Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Analysis Policy (No. 01) be approved at the next Board meeting.

(b) Policy No 04: Procurement Policy.

The Committee considered Policy No. 4, the Procurement Policy. The Chair invited the Chief Executive to introduce the item. The Chief Executive explained that, although the review had originally been prompted by an audit recommendation, the process had developed into a more fundamental revision of the policy. He advised that the previous version had become overly complex, with multiple layers and exceptions, and that the revised document seeks to simplify and streamline the approach, making it more practical and easier for staff to follow.

The Chief Executive highlighted the introduction of a clearer structure, including a visual representation of levels of responsibility within the organisation. He explained that all relevant staff with purchasing authority are now clearly grouped, with management, directors, and senior responsibility levels defined more transparently. The revised document has also been reviewed by staff to ensure clarity and usability, with formatting improvements made to enhance readability.

The Committee discussed specific changes within the policy. The Chief Executive drew attention to the requirement for estimated values to be recorded on orders where precise costs are not known at the outset, such as equipment servicing. This aims to improve financial control and auditability by ensuring that all purchase orders include a defined value, even where this is initially indicative. He also noted a revision to authorisation procedures, whereby invoices will now be approved by a director rather than solely by the Finance and Admin Director, addressing a practical gap where approvals could otherwise be delayed.

Further discussion focused on the restructuring of financial thresholds for procurement. The Chief Executive explained that thresholds had been devised reflecting current costs and inflation. In particular, the revised approach establishes clearer requirements for quotations. For lower-value purchases, flexibility is retained, while for mid-range expenditure a minimum of three quotes is required, and for higher-value purchases, three formal written quotations must be obtained and retained for audit purposes. He confirmed that this approach reflects audit recommendations while remaining practical for operational delivery.

The Chief Executive also explained that supporting data had been analysed to inform the revised thresholds, with examples of recent transactions used to ensure that the new bandings are realistic and proportionate. He noted that unnecessary complexity had been removed, particularly in relation to exceptions, to create a more consistent and understandable framework. The Chair welcomed this, observing that the revised policy provides a clearer and more consistent approach across all procurement activity.

Members considered the structure and clarity of the revised document. Tom Ashton commented that the updated policy demonstrates the effectiveness of the audit process in identifying areas for improvement and supporting the development of more robust and streamlined procedures. Margaret Geaney agreed, noting that the revised format is clear and easy to follow.

The Chair concluded that the revised Procurement Policy represents a significant improvement in clarity and usability. He asked members to confirm whether they were content to recommend the policy for approval by the Board. Members indicated their agreement. The Chair also sought the view of the auditor, Chris Harris, who confirmed that he was satisfied with the revised policy and noted that it would be subject to review as part of future audits.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that the Procurement Policy (No.04) be approved at the next Board meeting.

(c) Policy No 10: Delegation of Authority.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the work undertaken in updating the policy and recorded the Committee's appreciation for the effort involved in its revision.

The Chief Executive advised that this item forms part of the routine review cycle; however, minor amendments had been made to ensure alignment with the previously considered Procurement Policy. He explained that the only changes proposed were to incorporate the updated procurement thresholds and authorisation arrangements into the Delegation of Authority framework, ensuring consistency between the two policies.

The Chair noted that, as the Committee had already reviewed and supported the revised Procurement Policy, it was logical to support the corresponding amendments within the Delegation of Authority. He invited members to comment on whether any further revisions were required.

No additional comments or amendments were proposed.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that the Delegation of Authority Policy (No. 10) be approved at the next Board meeting.

2628 To receive the Risk Register - Agenda Item 8

The Committee received the Risk Register, noting that the version presented reflected the standing summary format and did not yet incorporate the amendments agreed during the course of the detailed review undertaken at the meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed that the document would be updated to reflect all agreed changes prior to submission to the Board.

The Chair reminded members that the Committee's approach includes an annual detailed review of all high-level risks, particularly those previously

scored at level six, and noted that, following the current review, a number of these risks had been reduced. This would result in a smaller number of high-level risks requiring detailed scrutiny at the next annual review.

Members were invited to comment on the register as presented. Chris Harris identified an inconsistency in the scoring of the risk relating to insufficient finance to carry out works, noting that it had not been updated in line with the Committee's earlier decision. This was acknowledged, and it was confirmed that the risk score should reflect the revised assessment of high impact and medium likelihood, resulting in a risk score of six. The Chief Executive confirmed that all such amendments would be thoroughly checked and corrected before the final version is presented to the Board.

The Chair summarised that, subject to the agreed updates being incorporated, the Risk Register accurately reflects the Committee's discussion and risk assessments.

The committee AGREED that the Risk Register be accepted (with the changes to be made as per the Risk Management Strategy).

2629 To receive the Catalogue of Board Policies with recommended approval dates - Agenda Item 9

The Committee considered Item 9, being the review of the Board's catalogue of policies, including the schedule of review frequencies and dates. The Chair noted that this provides oversight of when each policy is due for review and ensures that all governance documents remain current and compliant.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Health and Safety Policy, which had been identified for review, has been deferred to the September meeting. He explained that this will allow it to be presented alongside the Board's byelaws, which are also due for their five-year statutory review. He advised that, while the byelaws will be formally reviewed, they are largely standard documents and any amendments would require approval from the DEFRA Minister rather than the Board, making any changes unlikely.

The Chief Executive further noted that the Health and Safety Policy is a substantial document, approximately 50 pages in length, incorporating a wide range of detailed procedures and requirements. As such, it will require careful and thorough review by members. The Chair acknowledged this and emphasised the importance of allowing sufficient time for proper consideration in advance of the meeting.

In response, the Chief Executive confirmed that the policy documentation would be circulated to members at least two weeks prior to the September meeting, rather than the usual one-week timeframe, to allow adequate time for review. He also reminded members that the policy is available via the Board's website.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the update and noted the Committee's appreciation of the need for extended review time for such a

significant policy. Members indicated their agreement with the proposed approach to the review timetable.

The Committee AGREED that the Catalogue of Board Policies be adopted

2700 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 10

Tom Ashton proposed that the Committee formally record its appreciation for the work of the Chief Executive, the Finance and Admin Director, and the wider team in achieving a strong audit outcome. He noted that the Committee, and the Board more broadly, should take pride in receiving a positive and thorough audit result, describing it as a “clean bill of health.” He further suggested that consideration be given to how this level of diligence and responsible financial management might be communicated more widely, to demonstrate to the public the care taken in managing funds and fulfilling the Board’s responsibilities.

The Chair thanked Tom Ashton for his comments and confirmed that the Committee’s appreciation would be formally recorded. He echoed these sentiments, acknowledging the significant amount of work undertaken behind the scenes to achieve such outcomes.

There being no further formal business, the Chair thanked Chris Harris and Steve Forsyth for their attendance and contributions, acknowledging the detailed nature of the discussions, particularly in relation to the comprehensive review of the risk register. He also thanked all members for their input and participation.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:54