

**GREAT FEN PROJECT PARTNERSHIP  
(Report by Director of Operational Services)**

**1. BACKGROUND**



- 1.1 At its meeting of 20 July 2007 Cabinet resolved that The Director of Operational Services be delegated to sign a revised Memorandum of Understanding between the four partners of the Great Fen Project. Together with the Council the partners are: The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, The Environment Agency and Natural England. In view of the importance of hydrology. The Middle Level Commissioners, (the responsible drainage authority for the whole area of the project), have been observers at the Project Steering Group from the inception of the project. The Middle Level Commissioners have now requested to become full partners in the project.
- 1.2 This is a project of very great significance, not only for ecological reasons but also because as a landscape restoration project on a landscape scale it matches the high levels of population growth in the Cambridge to Peterborough part of the Government's growth area, by providing important strategic open space. It is also anticipated that it will provide an economic stimulus to this District and beyond. A further spin-off is the potential for the area to provide vital flood storage, protecting the surrounding valuable agricultural land in a way that can be managed so as to also enhance the biodiversity of the area. It is for this reason that the full participation of the Middle Level Commissioners is particularly welcome.
- 1.3 This request is especially timely given the recent unprecedented award of £8.9M to the project from The Heritage Lottery Fund. The will enable the project to capitalise on recent opportunities for major land purchase and advance land restoration earlier than originally envisaged.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

1. that the request by the Middle Level Commissioners to become full partners of the Great Fen Project be welcomed and that the Director of Operational Services be authorised to sign the resulting revised Memorandum of Agreement

2. that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy, Environment & Transport, be authorised to sign any future changes to the Memorandum of Agreement, which accord with Council Policy and do not prejudice the fundamental objectives of the Project.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

-  Email from Sarah Fendley, Area Manager (Four Counties), Natural England dated 17 August 2007.
-  Memorandum of Understanding

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