

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS



Piped Discharges into the Middle Level River System

The river system directly maintained by the Middle Level Commissioners consists of 120 miles (192km) of arterial watercourse, the majority of which are embanked, with the land adjoining such channels at a lower level.

Within the Middle Level are a number of internal drainage boards who convey excess flows into the Middle Level system through pumped or gravity outfalls maintained by those boards. Like the Commissioners, these boards are statutory bodies and operate under the statutory framework facilitating flood defence operations.

The Commissioners are very concerned that if private pipes and other discharge facilities are placed through their channel embankments, this could compromise the flood bank and if, the discharge facility was not properly maintained, supervised and operated, effectively circumvent the protection given by those embankments.

The Commissioners consider that direct discharge into the Middle Level system is generally not appropriate, where the route of such discharge facility would be through a raised embankment. The existence of the lower level internal drainage board systems also means that, in the large majority of cases, an appropriate, viable alternative discharge route exists, which will enter the Middle Level system at an outfall under the control of a statutory body.

As a matter of general principle, therefore, permission (which is required under the Commissioners' byelaws) to install a new private discharge facility will not be given, where the facility would pass through a raised flood bank, unless no other appropriate drainage system which could be used exists. This principle will also apply to public sewers or outfalls from sewage disposal works unless otherwise agreed, in a particular case, with the sewerage undertaker. The grant of planning permission authorising such a facility or such sewers/works does not confer any right to install such infrastructure without the specific approval of the Commissioners.

Applications to install such facilities in areas where the Middle Level watercourses are not embanked and where therefore, the flood risk attaching to such structures is lower, will not be opposed in principle but will be considered on their merits.