RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Old Nene Golf and Country Club, March on Thursday 11th May 2023

PRESENT

A C Roberts Esq (Chairman)	J I Edwards Esq
R Blackhurst Esq (Vice Chairman)	A Lensen Esq
S Cornwell Esq	A Wagstaffe Esq

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Leo Butler (District Officer) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from S Bedford Esq, A Butler Esq, T Bedford Esq, Cllr J Clarke and C Wilkinson Esq.

Prior to the meeting. Those members present, plus S Bedford Esq with the exception of J Edwards Esq, A Lensen Esq and A Wagstaff Esq carried out an inspection of the District.

B.1376 Inspection of District

1. New Fen Pumping Station

   The Board inspected the Pumping Station & surrounding area.

   The District Officer started Pump No1 and members noted that the pump was not running smoothly with a slight noise. Which the District Officer considered could be a bearing. Members instructed Robert Hill to inform the Middle Level Mechanical and Electrical Engineer.

   The Chairman referred to the ongoing subsidence monitoring at the station and members noted the current position, The Chairman informed members that there has been a further movement of 2mm.

   The Chairman informed members that the District Officer had removed the trees and shrubs from the side of the Pumping Station Compound.

   The pump was refurbished in 2021.

2. Catchwater Drain

   Points 3 to 4

   The District Officer informed members that it was planned to flail this section from the roadside this year to remove the build up of small shrubs that had started to grow along this section.
   Members looked at the culverts and bridges along this section.

Points 4 to 6

Members viewed this section of the watercourse and was informed by the District Officer that the whole section needed to be routinely flail mowed as part of the annual maintenance programme.

3. Upwood Common – Points 81 to 88

   The Chairman referred to the heaps of soil/spoil which had been deposited on the side of the watercourse. The District Officer confirmed that this section was due to be machine cleansed as part of this year's programme of works and access would be required along the bankside for the machine. Members agreed that a letter should be sent to the owner of the property instructing him to remove the soil/spoil from the 9m Byelaw strip within 28 days or the Board would carry out the works at his expense.

4. Roadway to Upwood Common Pumping Station (Points 81 to 88)

   The District Officer informed members that the Board owned the roadway from 4m from the brink of the watercourse. The Chairman said that the trees on the right-hand side (Mr Ayres) would need to be cut back to allow access for large vehicles to get to the Pumping Station. The District officer informed members that later in the year it would be difficult to drive a tractor along the drove due to the growth of Mr Ayres trees. The Chairman commented it would also be helpful if the trees along the brink of the watercourse were removed. Members requested that the Clerk investigate who would be responsible for the removal of the trees from this section of the watercourse.

5. Upwood Common Pumping Station

   The District Officer stated and members also noticed a 'knocking' on the pump. The District Officer stated the noise had only started recently. The District Officer requested that Robert Hill notify the Middle Level Mechanical and Electrical Engineer of the problem.

   Members agreed that a letter should be sent to Mr Ayres instructing him to trim the willow trees within the 9m Byelaw distance along the pump drain.

6. Green Dyke Pumping Station

   The Chairman reminded members that the Pumping Station was nearing the end of its working life and members noted the condition of the piles. The Chairman also referred to the sump level which would probably need lowering as part of any refurbishment or replacement sump

B.1377 Declarations of Interest

Mr Hill reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

B.1378 Confirmation of Minutes

Mr Hill reported that the total of £4573.92 referenced in minute B.1343 was incorrect and should be £3635.00.

RESOLVED

> That the sum referred to in minute B.1343 be changed and that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 5th January 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1379 Matters Arising

No Matters Arising recorded

B.1380 Appointment of Clerk

RESOLVED

> That the Middle Level Commissioners be appointed Clerk to the Board for the ensuing year.
>
> N.B: A Lensen Esq declared an interest as a Middle Level Board Member.

B.1381 Clerk's fee

The Board gave consideration to the Clerk's fee for 2023/2024.

Mr Hill reported that there would be a small increase in the Clerk's fee for this year of between 4.5% - 5%.

RESOLVED

> The Board approved the increase in the Clerk's Fee for 2023/2024
>
> N.B: A Lensen Esq declared an interest as a Middle Level Board Member.

B.1382 Appointment of District Officer

RESOLVED

> That L Butler Esq be appointed District Officer to the Board during the ensuing year.

B.1383 Election of Board Members

Mr Hill reported that the term of Office of the elected Members of the Board would expire on the 31st October 2023 and submitted the proposed Register of Electors applicable to the 2023 election.

RESOLVED

That the Register be approved.

B.1384 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

The Clerk reported that is necessary to update the signatories after April 2023.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk to be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate when future changes are made.

That the Clerk to investigate other banking arrangements to help protect the Board's balances and then the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to open new banking accounts if they feel appropriate to do so.

B.1385 Member Training Update

The Clerk reported on the training undertaken by Members in the past year.

RESOLVED

That the link be resent to all members.

B.1386 Abbey Farm

Further to minute B.1358, Mr Hill reported that due to the confidential nature of the issues relating to the matter, it was necessary to pass a formal resolution to exclude the public.

RESOLVED

That in pursuance of Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960. The Public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Supplementary Schedule

Mr Hill reported that the Middle Level Solicitor had been notified of the sale of the property and that she was currently in the process of dealing with this matter. In response to the Chairman Mr Hill confirmed that if specified in the original order interest would be payable on the outstanding debt.
In response to A Lensen Esq, Mr Hill detailed the background of this matter.

B.1387 Damage to Bank close to Point 54

Further to minute B.1304, the District Officer agreed to inspect the section with the Chairman and to notify the Clerk if there were any further problems in this location.

B.1388 Use of Drove Claimed by the Board

Further to minute B.1360, the Chairman reported that he had not received any further request but the position the Board had previously taken could be relayed should there be any in the future.
The District Officer reported that the roadway to Green Dyke Pumping Station would require attention when major works were started to allow access for lorries and heavy vehicles.

B.1389 Drain Adjacent to Tesco's at Point 28

Mr Hill reported that the Middle Level Solicitor recently been contacted by Tesco following receipt of a letter confirming court action to be taken and it was hoped that this line of communication would enable the matter to be resolved.

In respect to R Blackhurst Esq, Mr Hill considered that by the time of the next Board meeting it would be either reported that the outstanding payment had been received or that court action was proceeding as the Board had already authorised court action to resolve the matter.

B.1390 Development at Ramsey Business Park, St Mary’s Road, Ramsey (MLC Ref Nos. MLC 225, 278, 354, 357 & 359)

Mr Hill reported that this matter was reported in the Engineers Report and that the developer had agreed for further discussions to proceed as part of a paid Post-Application Consultation Process.

The Chairman reported that he had been receiving correspondence concerning the development and that there was a meeting scheduled to move the matter forward. He further reported that other parties associated with the process considered there had been delays to the progress resulting from slow responses from Middle Level concerning enquiries/requests.

B.1391 Meeting to discuss issues with rubbish and sewage discharge along Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights

The Chairman reported that he did not recall receiving the map as requested and Mr Hill agreed to have it resent to both himself and the District Officer.

The Chairman further reported that although there had been meetings there had been no further progress in dealing with the matter. In response to the Chairman, the District Officer confirmed that the area would be in the maintenance programme for this year. Members further discussed the issues surrounding these problems, the pollution caused and the fly-tipped rubbish in the area.

The Clerk to arrange a further meeting with all parties to progress the matter.

B.1392 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised:-

i) Annual Flood & Water Conference 2023

Invitation to ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023

Tuesday 21 November 2023 | 11:00 – 17:00 | One Great George Street, London, SW1P 3AA

ADA is delighted to invite you to join them for the ADA Flood & Water Conference on Tuesday 21 November 2023, as the conference returns to the magnificent venue of One Great George Street, Westminster, London. ADA will bring together a leading line-up of prominent political, policy, and technical speakers from across the United Kingdom to discuss key policy topics of the moment during the main conference session.

Following feedback from members, the format of this year's Conference has been developed to:

- maximise the time available for networking between delegates and suppliers to the sector,
- invite a greater variety of guest speakers, and
- provide more convenient timing for those travelling to and from London.

The Conference will open at 11.00 for networking with delegates and an expanded Exhibition of ADA's Associate Members in the Great Hall. A buffet lunch will be served from 12.00 before the conference presentations commence at 13.20 in the Thomas Telford Theatre. The Conference will close at 17.00.

Discussion forum

A discussion forum will form part of the day where delegates will be able to pose topical questions to the speakers/panellists via the conference chair. ADA wish to receive delegates questions in advance, which can be submitted as part of the ticket booking process on Eventbrite. Their aim is to consolidating key subjects for discussion and questioning and to maximise the value of this session.

Book your place

ADA has launched bookings for this year's conference early to give everyone plenty of advance notice of the revised date of Tuesday 21 November 2023 to make travel arrangements. They invite you to secure your place now via Eventbrite, via the link below. Tickets are non-refundable but can be transferred.

ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023 Tickets, Tue 21 Nov 2023 at 11:00 | Eventbrite

ii) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

The Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse ADA Branch was held on Tuesday 7th March 2023

Morning workshops were re-introduced for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak and members who attended took part in an excellent discussion focussed on three topic areas; Fens2100; Water Resources East and Climate Change. Steven Trewhella (consultant to the EA on Fens2100) and Daniel Johns (Chief Exec, WRE) took away a wide range of ideas centred around how the two topics were connected by the work of IDBs.

Within the AGM, Marc Heading was re-appointed as Chairman and Doug McMurdo as Vice Chair with approval that the secretariat of the branch be transitioned from the Middle Level Commissioners to the Bedford Group of IDBs over the coming months. Ian Moodie (Technical Manager, ADA) gave an overview of ADA's activities, including their important inputs on behalf of IDBs into the long-awaited implementation of schedule 3 of the Floods & Water Management Act. Tom Pickover introduced himself ahead of starting as Operations Manager at the Environment Agency (covering the lower Great Ouse catchment) and was joined by Darren Trumper who between them gave an overview of Environment Agency flood management activities and budgets.

iii) Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts

The Clerk reported that Boards have encountered problems with the operation of the electricity contract by Anglia Farmers over the years. Following various meetings with them it appeared some of these problems were being addressed and the service appeared to be improving this, however, was short lived. Over the past 2 years there has again been a significant deterioration in both the quality of service and lack of account management received from Anglia Farmers.

During the summer the Middle Level Commissioners were approached by Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), one of the UK's leading energy companies and buying group, whose portfolio includes numerous companies with over 200 million kwh tendered per annum. They have experience working with an estimated 60 Internal Drainage Boards, which include locally the Ely Group of Internal Drainage Boards and Downham Market Group of Internal Drainage Boards. We accordingly contacted Jean Heading of the Ely Group of Internal Drainage to enquire of the service provided by GEAB and she has confirmed she is far happier with the service received from them compared to that from Anglia Farmers and since has signed a 5-year fixed rate contract with GEAB from 1st April 2022.

A report was presented to the Middle Level Commissioners at their Board meeting on 3rd November 2022 and due to the ongoing poor performance of Anglia Farmers, together with the positive feedback given by Jean Heading of the Ely Group, the Commissioners' resolved to consider moving to alternative arrangements. The Executive Committee were delegated the final decision and having considered a report on the options and subsequently confirmed their agreement that a move would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The Clerk reported this was considered a positive move and recommended the Board/ also move to this alternative arrangement.

The Clerk reported that this Board's Chairman had subsequently agreed for the Board to serve notice to Anglia Farmers and for Green Energy Advice Bureau to handle the energy procurement process and management of the electricity contract.

The Clerk advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and its administered Boards have entered into a fixed rate energy supply with Corona Energy for an 18-month period from1st April 2023.

iv) Insurance

Historically the number of insurance companies willing to quote for the insurance requirements of the Middle Level Commissioners and administered Boards is limited.

Our insurance portfolio is complex and includes a range of policies that includes Commercial Combined (largest component), Motor Fleet, Engineering & Construction, Terrorism, Management Liability, Marine Craft and Professional Indemnity.
The overall cost of our insurance portfolio for 2023/24 will be £192,275 (£152,373 in 2022/23) a 26% increase, although increases will differ Board by Board depending on

their individual insurance needs.

Key factors and changes are highlighted below:

- For Commercial Combined insurance, 2022/23 was the last year in our previous five-year agreement with AXA which included a 7% price reduction woven into the deal. For 2023/24 Towergate, our brokers, approached several companies and all bar AXA were not willing to quote given the size and complexity of our portfolio. Independently we also approached the NFU who declined to quote for the same reason.
- There has been an increase in fleet, property and marine assets included within our cover.
- In view of rising inflation most Boards agreed to index link their insured sums from 1st April 2023. AXA have increased insured sums by 15%, which has resulted in an increase within the overall premium.
- AXA have offered a 2-year stability deal, where any premium increases, subject to claims not exceeding 50% of the written premium, will be capped for 2024/25 at 2.5%. This excludes any increases in sums insured.
- AXA will not extend the stability deal as they plan a review of their whole IDB scheme in 2025.
- Commercial combined policy excess has increased from £350 to £2,500. None of our four 2022/23 claim values were above this new excess.
- Excesses are dictated by AXA's overall scheme for all IDBs and this is apparently now standard and has been imposed due to the number of lower value claims across the whole IDB industry. As other IDB/IDB Groups come out of their previous agreement with AXA the above will apply.

For future years Boards ought to consider index linking their valuations of properties and pumping stations every 3-5 years rather than annually, to mitigate annual premium increases and balancing having suitable cover without being over-insured.

It should also be noted that personal accident and sickness cover only covers employees or members up to 80 years of age. Boards may need to consider the implications of this.

v) <u>Delegation of signatory on consents</u>

The Board was asked to note that under the Board's scheme of delegation, the Chief Executive has delegated the authority to sign consent on behalf of the Board to the Chief Engineer. As well as the Chief Engineer being better placed to technically assure individual consents, this will enable the them to effectively take ownership over the whole planning and consenting service. This also creates a mechanism for escalation in case of any issues or complaints.

vi) <u>Service Delivery Frameworks</u>

The Board were asked to resolve that the Clerk, on their behalf, be authorised to enter into user and/or access agreements for public sector delivery frameworks (For example, Environment Agency Delivery Frameworks and SCAPE). This will open up access to the fees, terms and conditions of these Frameworks so our Consulting Engineers can compare and choose the most suitable procurement route for delivery of the Boards future needs. This does not tie the Board to using any Framework they then have a user/access agreement with, and Frameworks are not the only procurement route for delivery that will be considered. Having this resolution from all the Boards we administer is key if we are to package work across Boards to exploit economies of scale and become more efficient and effective in the delivery of services.

RESOLVED

Electricity Contract - The Board approved the Chairmans actions regarding the Electricity contract.

Insurance – the Board noted personal accident and sickness cover.

Delegation – the Board noted the scheme of delegation to the Chief Executive.

Service delivery frameworks – the Board approved the Clerk to act on their behalf.

B.1393 Consulting Engineers’ Report, including planning and consenting matters

The Board considered the Report of the Consulting Engineers Reports, viz;

Ramsey, Upwood & Great Raveley I.D.B.

Consulting Engineers Report – May 2023

Pumping Stations

Other than the matters reported at previous meetings or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out.

Green Dyke Pumping Station

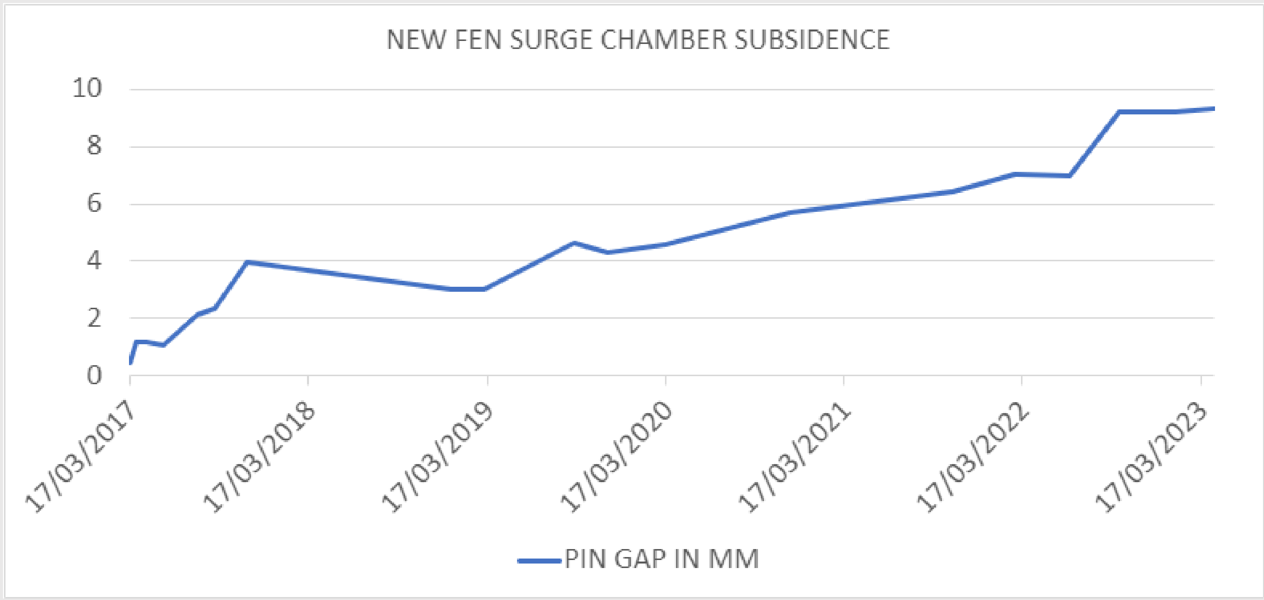
As previously reported, for all schemes over £500k, the EA needs the whole catchment to be considered rather than just the asset seeking the grant as part of the project appraisal. Although it is still hoped some of this can be done in-house and the EA had confirmed previously that it could be progressed without the need for hydraulic modelling, the Chief Engineer is currently reviewing all pumping station projects and it may be more efficient to deliver the catchment study/business cases as a package using an external consultant. It is hoped by considering the catchment as a whole in this way, that a greater percentage of the project may be able to be grant-aided, as more of the benefits can be apportioned towards Green Dyke Pumping Station and indeed the same may be possible for New Fen Pumping Station, which is also in the EA programme for replacement in the next few years. A business case is programmed for development in 2023, funded via FDGiA. At the time of writing, a meeting to be held with the EA is imminent to discuss progressing these priority projects and it is hoped the details of this can be reported at the Board meeting.

The pump main contactors failed during February and had to be replaced.

The new steel shutter door has now been fitted.

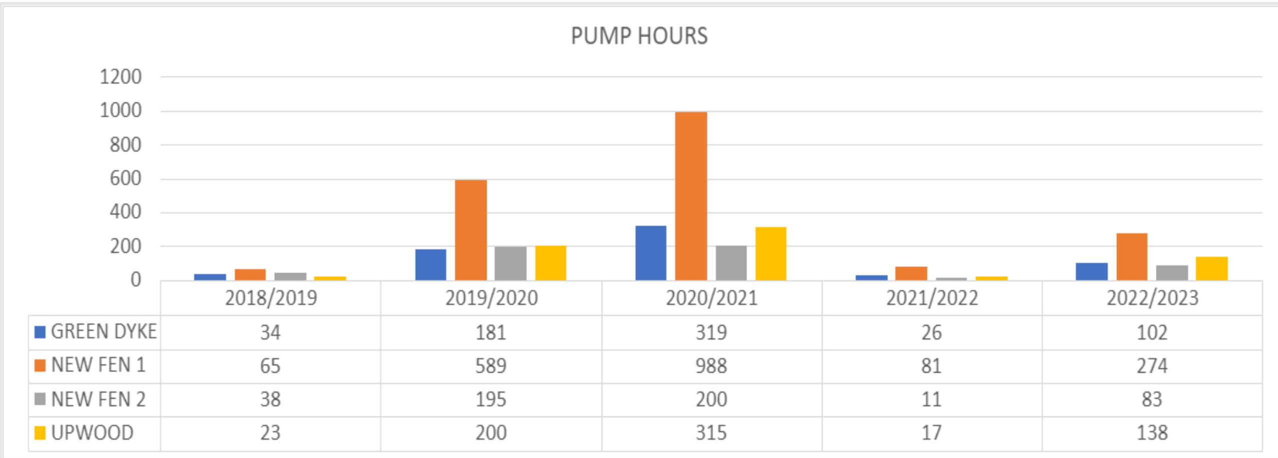
Subsidence at New Fen Pumping Station

The surge chamber continues to show movement, the pipe clamps were loosened then retightened to relieve the stress in the pipework. This can be seen on the following graph with the jump from 7 to 9 mm which shows that the pipework is likely to be supporting the chamber which could be causing damage to the pipework and pump.



Upwood Common

The pump selector switch and timeclock have been replaced as they were faulty and preventing the pump starting in auto reliably.



Planning Applications

In addition to matters concerning previous applications, the following new development related matter has been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	***Council Ref.***	***Applicant***	***Type of Development***	***Location***
409	H/22/01950/FUL	Messrs A, T & T Knowles	Residence	Ugg Mere Court Road, Ramsey St Mary

From the information provided it is understood that the above development proposes to discharge surface water to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or other Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicant has been notified of the Board's requirements.

No applications for Infiltration Device Self Certification or the Checking Service have been received since the last meeting report.

In the absence of any instruction no detailed entries have been made although updates have been provided to issues raised in Matters Arising.

Ramsey

Erection of a food-store, petrol filling station, residential development, community facilities and associated highways and infrastructure works – Tesco Stores Ltd & Abbey Properties Cambridge Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 114, 133 & 168); *Lord De Ramsey's 1963 Settlement* (MLC Ref No 244); *Abbey Properties (Cambs) Ltd & Lord de Ramsey* (MLC Ref No 248) & *Accent Group* (MLC Ref No 363)

Tesco Stores Ltd site

The Clerk to report.

Mixed Use development on land opposite Viscount Garage, St Mary's Road – *Abbey Properties Cambridge Ltd* (MLC Ref No 210, 225 & 278); *Client of Amazi Consulting Ltd* (MLC Ref No 300); MJS Construction (March) Ltd (MLC Ref No 359) & *Greystoke Land* (MLC Ref Nos 278, 300, 354, 357,359,402 & 403)

Further to the last Board Meeting Report, the developer has agreed that further discussion can occur as part of a paid Post-Application Consultation process.

A meeting to discuss the relevant issues is currently being organised.

Planning Updates & Consultations

Please note that this document, which was prepared for the previous reporting period, is no longer available on the website; an update is currently being prepared and will hopefully be available shortly.

All responses to consultation documents were made on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and its associated Boards.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

A. Local Plan Update

On 24th January the District Council agreed to the preparation of a full update to the adopted Local Plan which will set out a plan for how the district will grow over future decades.

B. <u>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation</u>

The SCI will set out how the District Council will engage with the community on planning matters and is an important part of the planning system as it enables residents and businesses to help shape their communities, the future of their district and provide input into proposed development in their area. Input from local communities helps the Council to understand the needs and aspirations of the district whilst also balancing the communities' needs with evidence, research, Government requirements and legislation. This helps the Council to make decisions in the most informed way possible to create sustainable communities.

The SCI will approach consultation and engagement through the principles:

- **Representative** – Ensuring that there are opportunities for local residents, partners and businesses to get involved in consultation and engagement.
- **Inclusive** – Recognising that successful involvement cannot happen without a good understanding of the make-up, needs and interests of different people and their capacity to engage. An inclusive approach will enable different groups to have the opportunity to participate and help the Council to fulfil its duties under the Equality Act.
- **Effective** – Effective consultation and engagement means ensuring people's views are used to inform and shape the delivery of services and the Council is clear about how views have been taken into account.

and will cover the following planning matters:

- Involving the community in the production of planning policy documents;
- Neighbourhood planning;
- Involving the community in the planning application process;
- Brownfield Land Registers; and
- Monitoring and Review.

A response to the consultation, which opened at the end of March and ends on 7th June, included the following comments/requests:

Section 3 – Involving the community in production of planning documents

a) Every effort needs to be taken, as is reasonably and economically possible to publicise planning applications and associated matters particularly in this "age of communication". However, it is appreciated that people are generally not interested in such matters until it affects them directly which is often too late.

b) It is important for the Council to acknowledge and accommodate the changes in information technology that may better assist in engaging with the difficult to reach people, for example, using social media accounts, issuing advisories and updates for press releases to be used on mobile phone news feeds, podcasts, etc.

c) Whilst encouraging the use of IT, as discussed above, including the use of the Council's webpages, it needs to be acknowledged that there are still members of the public who are unfamiliar with such technology and this can deter many people from making responses.

   It is noted that many local Government webpages do not include simple contact details such as departmental phone numbers or e-mail addresses, including these may increase responses to consultations.

d) The Council may have to give consideration to the proposed implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. It primarily relates to the requirement for the inclusion of suitable drainage systems (SuDS) including the establishment of SuDS Approval Boards (SAB).

   It may be prudent to include a suitably worded entry in the SCI to cover this matter.

e) Habitat Regulations Assessment
   It is considered that both the District Council and the applicant should make significant efforts to go beyond the simple requirement to consult with Natural England in respect of designated sites. There are many other protected sites within The Fens which are not SSSI, Ramsar, SPA or SACs but, nonetheless, are of local importance. Therefore, discussions should also be held with other relevant bodies with environmental interests including the County Council's Ecology team, the RSPB, The Wildlife Trust etc. Development may be delayed because of the relevant parties' failure to consult with all the relevant bodies.

Section 5 – Involving the community in the Planning Application Process

a) Planning applications
   Would it be possible to refer to the need to consult and where necessary seek the approval/consents of other RMA involved?

b) Pre-Application – Page 19
   The Commissioners and associated Boards offer the use of Pre-Application consultation as best practice and, therefore, encourage its use. Both paid and unpaid services are available dependent upon the size, type and location of the development concerned.

The Commissioners and associated Boards also offer a paid Post-Application process.

The Commissioners and associated Boards would be pleased if your Council would encourage the use of these procedures. Guidance on development proposals that are of interest and where consultation is likely to be beneficial can be provided.

c) Decision Making

A previous comment made by a member of the Planning Committee, for an adjacent authority, is that Statutory Consultees do not attend Planning Committees particularly when they are opposing the application. This may be because of their limited resources, it is often not viable for them to sacrifice several hours simply to have their "five minutes". Whilst it is appreciated that there are certain guidelines to follow, the use of "hybrid" and "blended" meetings would permit officers to "attend" more easily and this should be encouraged.

d) Developer Contributions and Monitoring

The contributions required by your Council may be in addition to those required by other RMA, for example, when seeking a discharge consent from either the Commissioners or one of the associated Boards.

e) Planning Enforcement

Whilst it is appreciated that any planning enforcement refers to enforcement in respect of the Town & Country Planning (T & C P) Act, it may beneficial if other stakeholders are aware of the Council's processes in such circumstances, particularly if enforcement requires a "joint" approach with other stakeholders.

In addition, some generic items on planning related matters:

a) It is noted that for several reasons, perhaps including the COVID-19 Pandemic, the result of changing working practices and the inability to recruit suitably qualified replacement staff, it has been noted that the method of consultation with the relevant parties has changed with individual, isolated and often ineffectual discussions occurring rather than integrated discussions with the relevant parties undertaken "around the table".

As a result of this the names of the relevant officers dealing with planning applications is often unknown and/or they can be difficult to contact thus contributing to the delay in the relevant processes.

The Commissioners and associated Boards encourage the return of integrated discussion where all the RMAs can work together more closely to align the process of responding to relevant issues. A quick Teams Meeting, or similar, may be all that is required.

b) Your Council is aware that the Commissioners and associated Boards continue to review, and comment upon strategic planning documents, for example, the Local Plans and supporting documents and, in this respect, wish to continue to be consulted on such public consultations.

   However, the Commissioners and associated Boards are not statutory consultees in respect of planning applications and, therefore, do not actually have to provide a response to the planning authority and receive no external funding to do so. As a result, bespoke responses are no longer provided to your Council on planning applications unless we are requested to do so by the relevant RMA, the applicant has asked us to do so as part of a paid Pre-/Post-Application process or it is otherwise considered appropriate to do so.

   Several RMA have complained and expressed concerns to the Commissioners about the lack of consultation and involvement by your Council when dealing with larger "strategic" sites including the retail and business park to the north west of the Tesco Store off St Marys Road, Ramsey; Oakwood Business Park, Old Great North Road, Sawtry and Eagle Business Park, Yaxley. Concerns have also been raised about your Council's failure to consider, as a competent authority under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (the Habitats Regulations), the adverse impacts in respect of "Nutrient Neutrality" created by development.

c) It is considered that it would be beneficial to the Commissioners and associated Boards if a Drainage Advisory Notice could be included on relevant Decision Notices. This has been of great benefit and assistance in the Fenland District Council area where such a notice is included.

In response the District Council has recently advised as follows:

> "Thank you for your comments in relation to the Statement of Community Involvement. I have passed your comments on to our Development Management Team for consideration where they fall outside of the Statement of Community Involvement, but are relevant to signposting the work of external organisations such as yourselves. "

C. <u>Call for Sites</u>

This is an opportunity to provide details of sites that might be suitable for allocation in the next Local Plan. The sites should have potential for:

- Residential use (such as housing, specialist homes, moorings, care homes etc.)
- Commercial use (such as retail, leisure, industrial, logistics etc.)
- Infrastructure (such as health uses, community facilities, renewable energy etc.)

- Open Space use (such as sports & recreation, allotments, biodiversity net gain, flooding safeguarding etc.)

A request has been issued to all the associated IDB Chairs within the District Council area enquiring whether the Board has any land that it would like to put forward. The consultation ends on the 7th June and to date no responses have been received.

High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

When attending meetings of the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Flood and Water (FloW) Partnership, the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has raised concerns about the issues experienced within Cambridgeshire during or following high rainfall and/or exceptional circumstance type events and has enquired of other partners whether given the time that has elapsed any progress is being made to resolve some of the issues. To date the response has been limited.

In view of the above it is considered appropriate to advise the appropriate RMA, where relevant, on areas which experience problems, particularly within the urban environment, and requires protection, intervention and/or investment.

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

A. Business as usual - Areas where there are no known problems with the local water level and flood risk management systems that cannot be solved through the Board's "day-to-day activities".

B. Areas of concern - An area served by a water level and flood risk management system that can approach capacity during rainfall events which has been the subject of or is at an increased risk of flooding that is unlikely to be solved through the Board's "day-to-day activities" and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

C. Acute drainage areas – A geographical area with multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk where there is a need for a higher standard of water level and flood risk management than normal to ensure that any new development will not increase flood risk that affects people, properties and local infrastructure and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

Neither items B nor C are the same as a "critical drainage area" which has a specific meaning in flood risk terms i.e., "A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is an area that has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority as such by the Environment Agency in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)."

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern" and/or "Acute drainage areas" within the Commissioners' catchment has been undertaken and a plan showing the extent of the previous and revised critical areas will be provided at the meeting.

The intention is to highlight this area to the relevant RMA e.g., planning authorities, LLFA, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency etc., as an area which requires more involved management and will assist in protecting the local flood and water management systems including the Board's system.

As a result, apart from in the most exceptional circumstances, an initial request is that all water discharges within this area must be attenuated to current volumes and/or greenfield rates of run off, where practicable.

Following discussions, colleagues within the Middle Level Commissioners' Works Department advise that following the December 2020 event the MLC system took up to ten days, and IDB systems up to five days, to return to normal.

It is also considered that current surface water design practices do not allow for the weather conditions experienced prior to the December 2020 event or the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens. Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

1. Incorporate a higher Standard of Protection (SoP), possibly up to 0.5% AEP (1 in 200 year) event
2. Include a greater allowance for Climate Change, in excess of 40%, and
3. Be able to "store" water on site for several days until the peak flows have passed.

<u>Strategic Drainage and Wastewater consultation and issues</u>

A. <u>The Right to Connect</u>

Members will recall that during the passage of the Environment Act through the House of Lords an amendment was sought which aimed to minimise the impact of new housing development on levels of local flood risk and the likelihood of storm discharges of untreated sewerage effluent into the water environment. It aimed to ensure housing developers design systems according to a hierarchy of drainage options that seek to reduce to a minimum the volume of rainwater entering combined sewerage systems removing the current "right to connect" to public sewers.

On the basis that the various RMA involved could have been asked to consider taking the opportunity to write to the government and voice their concerns over the right to connect for new developments the views of the Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners were sought.

The amendment was not moved and the House of Lords were not invited to take a decision on it. The Environment Act received Royal Assent in November 2021.

However, the results of the Boards who provided a positive response is as follows:

For the removal of the Right To Connect	54%
Against the removal of the Right To Connect	23%
Neither for or against the Right To Connect	18%
Not an issue for the Board	5%

The discharge from sewers can cause several challenges including increased flood risk, pollution and water quality issues, the solution to which is often at the rate payers' expense. Unsurprisingly the majority, but not all, of the Boards supporting the removal of the right either served or were detrimentally affected by areas of urban development.

Of those Boards against the removal some only served small urban areas with a limited number of sewers. Others served urban areas but only one received significant "benefit".

The Board that neither opposes nor supports the removal served a significant urban area but the remainder served a limited number of, or have no, adopted sewers within their catchments.

Other comments received expressed:

A. Concerns about the lack of investment and the need for improvement to the existing adopted infrastructure and;

B. Suggested that the permission to connect should be on an approval basis so that it can be controlled and any impacts managed and;

C. Required the Clerk to promote and lobby the Board's position.

Some Boards are more rural whilst others feature a larger urban area. Similarly, a larger individual Board may be predominantly rural but include a sub-catchment(s) which is largely, and increasingly, an urban environment which has to accommodate the resultant flows.

Therefore, it is considered that it would be difficult to have a simple yes/no solution within a complex system such as The Fens.

B. Anglian Water Drainage & Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)

Draft DWMP

A more detailed review of the DWMP will be included in the updated version of the Strategic Planning Consultation Responses document currently being prepared. However, it is considered appropriate to include specific entries for the relevant WRCs of interest in the local area.

1. Draft DWMP Consultation

The draft DWMP document has been the subject of a consultation which provided an opportunity to comment on the document and included the following specific points:

Groundwater infiltration & surface water removal

The problems associated with groundwater infiltration and surface water within the sewer system, particularly within combined systems, are known and are a problem for all RMAs involved. Particularly when the water table is high and/or during the winter months.

The removal of groundwater infiltration and surface water from the sewerage system, to reduce the number of flood events, pollutions and storm overflow spills is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The question that will need to be resolved in these situations is where will the surface water go instead? Most other surface water systems are approaching their finite capacity and will require the installation of significant infrastructure to deal with the flows. Who will pay and be responsible for this? Care will also need to be taken to ensure that flood risk is not being increased elsewhere within the WRCs catchment for another RMA to deal with as a result.

As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved MUST be undertaken and agreed BEFORE work commences.

(NB: In respect of this document, infiltration refers to groundwater entering the sewer system which **increases hydraulic loadings and threatens wastewater treatment efficiency**.)

Water level Management Solutions

The use of SuDS, wetlands and other green structures is considered to be an appropriate option in the correct circumstances and location.

The management of SuDS and other water level management systems is an ongoing challenge for many RMAs. Without suitable arrangements being imposed these could simply become potential liabilities for the various rate/bill payers. Therefore, adequate arrangements MUST be made to ensure that the long-term ownership funding, management and maintenance for the upkeep of any green infrastructure, whether on or off site, in perpetuity is achieved.

Consideration also needs to be given to any restrictions upon maintenance of the drainage “facility” due to the presence of protected habitats and species.

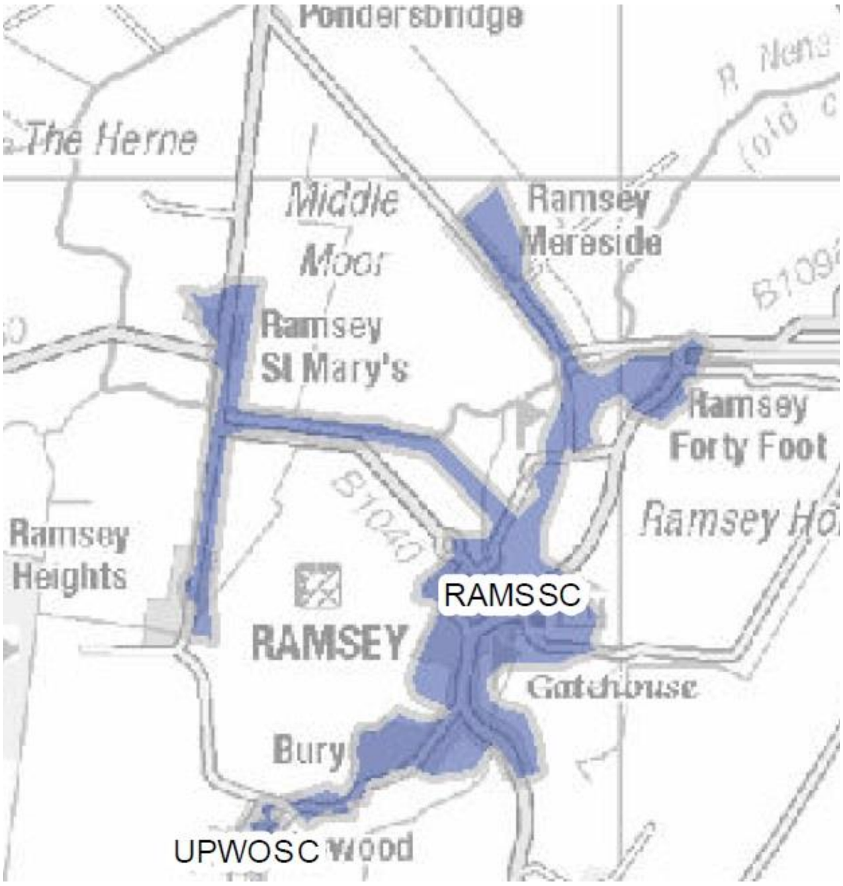
As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved MUST be undertaken and agreed BEFORE work commences.

Partnership Working

The Commissioners and associated Boards are prepared to work in partnership with the local community, private and public partners to contribute to and deliver schemes for conservation, navigation, water resources, water level & flood risk management where there is a mutual benefit to the partners concerned.

However, to what extent they are prepared to contribute would be the subject of a decision for the respective authority and this may vary dependent upon their views.

2. Programme outputs



Extract from Anglian Water’s Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map showing the extent of the catchment served by Ramsey WRC

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
RAMSEY	10233	12118	12602	Yes	1

Extracts from Anglian Water's draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan showing the results and proposed plans for Ramsey WRC

Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications.	Network - Mixed strategies with main solution of SuDs	25% surface water removal.	-

Ramsey WRC

This WRC currently serves a population of 10233 and in addition to the town of Ramsey also serves Ramsey Heights, Ramsey St Mary, Ramsey Mereside and Bury. An increase in population across the catchment of 2369 (23%) by 2050 was used in the BRAVA/RBCS process. Several concerns were raised during the process and a mixed strategy has been proposed for the medium term. This is likely to involve the removal of surface water from the system network, which has been the cause of significant flooding during recent events, by utilising SuDS facilities. However, it is not certain where these will be located given the dense urban environment, particularly within Ramsey, or who will be responsible for these. The longer term strategy is to remove 25% of surface water by 2050.

WRC Compliance

The quality of the discharge does not appear to be a cause for concern. However, members will be aware of Natural England's concerns about nutrients affecting the aquatic environment.

3. Storm Overflow Consultation

A consultation exercise on Storm Overflow Discharges was held during February. In view of the concerns discussed above it was considered appropriate to consult all the administered Boards even though many would not be directly affected.

The main means of providing a response was to provide answers to five specific questions and, whilst responses were provided, in view of the nature of the matter; the responses received from the Boards consulted and given that the issue is rising up the political agenda it was considered that a more detailed and focused response was required.

The following are the headlines or a brief resume of the response:

A. **Existing sewer systems and problems**

1. The Right to Connect – As discussed elsewhere in this Report
2. Other issues – On going pollution problems, the surcharging of or high discharges during or following high rainfall events, the lack of capacity within WRCs.

B. **General**

It is considered that all the current targets are too vague and will take too long to achieve any meaningful results and that the consultation was not open and transparent as the locations of the points of discharge are not readily identified within the document, therefore making it difficult to provide a meaningful comment.

Advice was given that:

Most of our systems are pumped often remaining stationary for extended periods thus dilution may not occur as expected; water is abstracted for various purposes – see High Priority Sites – Public Health below; the adverse impact on areas of interest including designated environmental sites; and that no “compensation” is provided for having to receive, transfer and dispose of the discharges from the overflows.

C. **Storm Flow Technical Overview**

High Priority Sites

1. Ecology

a. *Environment targets*

It is considered that these targets should apply to **all** sites not just high priority ones, with solutions implemented much sooner than identified if the Government’s target of halting biodiversity decline is to be achieved and the goals of the Water Framework Directive and the 25 year environment plan are to be achieved.

b. Sensitive Inland Water

Reference was made to the proximity of trigger points.

2. Public Health

The document refers to Designated Shellfish Water and Designated Bathing Water as trigger points which is understood, but it is not appreciated that vast quantities of water are abstracted from Fenland water level management systems for agricultural use, whether this is washing or irrigating crops for consumption within the food chain.

It was suggested that it would be prudent for the trigger points to be reviewed to include those other items which could affect public health on a wider scale.

Potable Water

Reference was made concerning the use of excess water from both the Commissioners' and surrounding systems to fill the proposed Fens Reservoir and the potential benefits of improving water quality from the discharges into these watercourses.

3. Amenity

   Emphasis is given to bathing waters but no reference is made to other wider but perhaps smaller benefits on the Commissioners' largely navigable systems and the disposal of sewage into these watercourses may have an adverse impact on wider issues, for example, tourism, angling etc or if these wider "costs" are considered when assessing the adverse impacts of overflows on the local area.

4. Assessing spill frequency

   Event data Monitors

   a. From a closer review it was identified that some of the discharges of interest including Doddington, Nightlayers and Ramsey WRCs are not fitted with Event Data Monitors. Therefore, it is not known how the number of spills can be fully assessed.

      Event Duration Monitors will be installed on all of Anglian Water's overflows during Asset Management Plan (AMP) period 7 (2020-2025) and this will, hopefully, reduce the level of uncertainty during AMP 8 (2025-2030) and AMP 9 (2030-2035) by producing "real" data.

   b. Rainfall target: Storm overflows will not be permitted to discharge above an average of 10 rainfall events per year by 2050 but this target should be more defined including restriction on the duration of spills and the volume discharged. This may be difficult to achieve. The Standard of Protection (SoP) provided, the use of "typical" rather than excessive rainfall events and modelling of the various systems to identify potential problem overflows rather than actual data – the number of spills, duration of the spills etc was questioned.

Growth

The growth that has occurred in the last fifty years has contributed to the increased number and length of spills and this will only become more severe as further growth continues unless adequate steps are taken now to resolve these as a matter of urgency.

Climate Change

It would be appropriate for all RMAs to prepare for the worst-case scenario and there is an aspiration to achieve this but this could be expensive, may prove unnecessary and wasteful leading to criticism. It was suggested that the most economic and environmentally acceptable standard should be achieved.

Screening
It would be beneficial to know where these initial overflows are located.

D. **Storm Overflow Consultation**

Performance Guide
It appears that priority is given to the number of spills rather than the length of time of the discharge, the volume of flow being discharged or the cumulative effects of the overflows due to their close proximity to each other.

Preferred Plan
It would be beneficial if the "headlines" from assessments and guidance on suggested solutions could be provided to identify and instigate any early engagement with the parties concerned, for example, land owners, developers etc.

Customer Support
Reference was made in the document to continual engagement with customers but there appears to be limited engagement with those RMA who have to receive the flows from the storm overflows.

It was suggested that such engagement commences and both the Commissioners and associated Boards look forward to continual engagement and transparency on storm overflows and networks in the future.

E. **Consultation Questionnaire**
The answers to the questionnaire were generally included in the response, but in reply to the question *How confident are you that this strategy aligns with our Purpose?* A very low confidence comment was provided adding that some of the systems cannot be managed without significant investment and improvement works being required on several networks.

F. **Summary**
Whilst it pleasing that the issue of sewage overflows is being progressed this appears to be primarily due to political pressure rather than at the instigation of the water industry.

There are concerns that priority will be given to resolving issues associated with storm overflows rather than those existing problems associated with WRCs and associated systems.

Greater transparency, early engagement and further discussions should be undertaken to any issues related to adoptable sewer systems and storm overflows if the current problems are to be resolved.

The final DWMP document is currently being prepared and is due to be published this spring.

C. Review for implementation of Schedule 3 to The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (F&WMA)

The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) details the provision of comprehensive flood management to protect people, homes, and businesses. It is written to protect water supplies to the consumer and helps safeguard community groups from unaffordable rises in surface water drainage charges. The Act introduces into law the concept of flood risk management as the preferred approach rather than reliance on flood defences (existing or proposed) for protection of sites.

1. Schedule 3

   Schedule 3 of the FWMA was introduced to establish a SuDS approving body (SAB) at the county/unitary level for the regulation of new development and compliance with The Act. It was intended that this Schedule would be introduced into law around 2015/2016, following the original Act that achieved royal ascent in 2010 but this did not happen and Schedule 3 did not achieve approval due to concerns that it would restrict housing delivery and growth.

   Instead, the government made amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to stipulate those decisions on planning applications relating to major developments (over 10 dwellings, or equivalent non-residential developments) should ensure that SuDS are put in place, unless demonstrated to be inappropriate. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) in consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) currently need to approve drainage schemes and ensure they are appropriately maintained.

   Currently the maintenance of a development typically falls under the responsibility of a Private Maintenance Company (PMC) which is usually paid for using service charge agreements with the owners of the new properties and often selling residential properties as leasehold rather than freehold.

2. Review

   In early December industry experts sent an open letter to the Prime Minister which “strongly urged” the implementation of Schedule 3.

Following a review, DEFRA announced in January 2023, the government's decision to implement Schedule 3 which will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of high quality SuDS and is expected to occur at a yet to be determined date in 2024. As a result, the Government is giving consideration to how this will be implemented subject to final decisions on scope, threshold and process whilst being mindful of the cumulative impact of new regulatory burdens on the development sector and water industry. Defra recently undertook a consultation survey with LPAs and LLFAs but not with IDBs and other relevant parties. However, there are several issues and challenges that require resolution before progressing further.

3. Changes to existing laws

The implementation of Schedule 3 will introduce some small changes to three existing laws.

a) Building Act 1984

Section 59 which gives local authorities the power to request that sustainable drainage systems in an unsatisfactory condition be renewed, repaired or cleansed is to be amended.

Section 84 which stipulates that local authorities withhold the right to request that impermeable surfaces around a building which do not allow for the satisfactory drainage of its surface or subsoil be remedied requires amendment to specify that surfaces need to remove water in a satisfactory manner.

b) New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

Section 63 will include a small change should Schedule 3 be enacted.

c) Water Industry Act 1991

Section 106 to remove the right to connect. Following Schedule 3's commencement, a person may only exercise this right if their drainage system was approved by an SAB before construction and if a proposal for their drainage system to communicate with a sewer was included in their application for approval.

The NPPF and the associated PPG will require amending to reflect any changes.

4. Implementation

Whilst there will be some changes to current procedures it is considered that there are several potential benefits including better working practices, better integration with other RMA, the removal of the automatic right to connect, potential revenue streams etc but there are several potential problems that need to be resolved including funding mechanisms; potential increased costs on the rate payer; lack of resources, skills and capabilities; the need for more timely responses possibly taking staff members from other work.

The proposal is the subject of on-going discussions and a meeting with the LLFAs and other partners has been requested to discuss the issues in order to maximise any opportunities and minimise any adverse impacts on both the Middle Level Commissioners and the Boards to whom it provides a planning consultancy service.

These discussions will include, as a minimum:

a) The suggested change in surface water design practice, as discussed elsewhere in this report.

b) Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for long term ownership funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of any water level and flood risk management system, whether on or off site, in perpetuity including details of the works to be carried out by the occupier/land owner, adopting authority, the Management Company or other responsible person/authority, together with the costs attached, are included in the "Homeowners Pack" and the Deed of Sale.

c) The right to connect needs to be on an approval basis to ensure that it can be controlled and any adverse impacts managed.

d) That any incurred costs on the rate payer are kept to a minimum.

General Advice

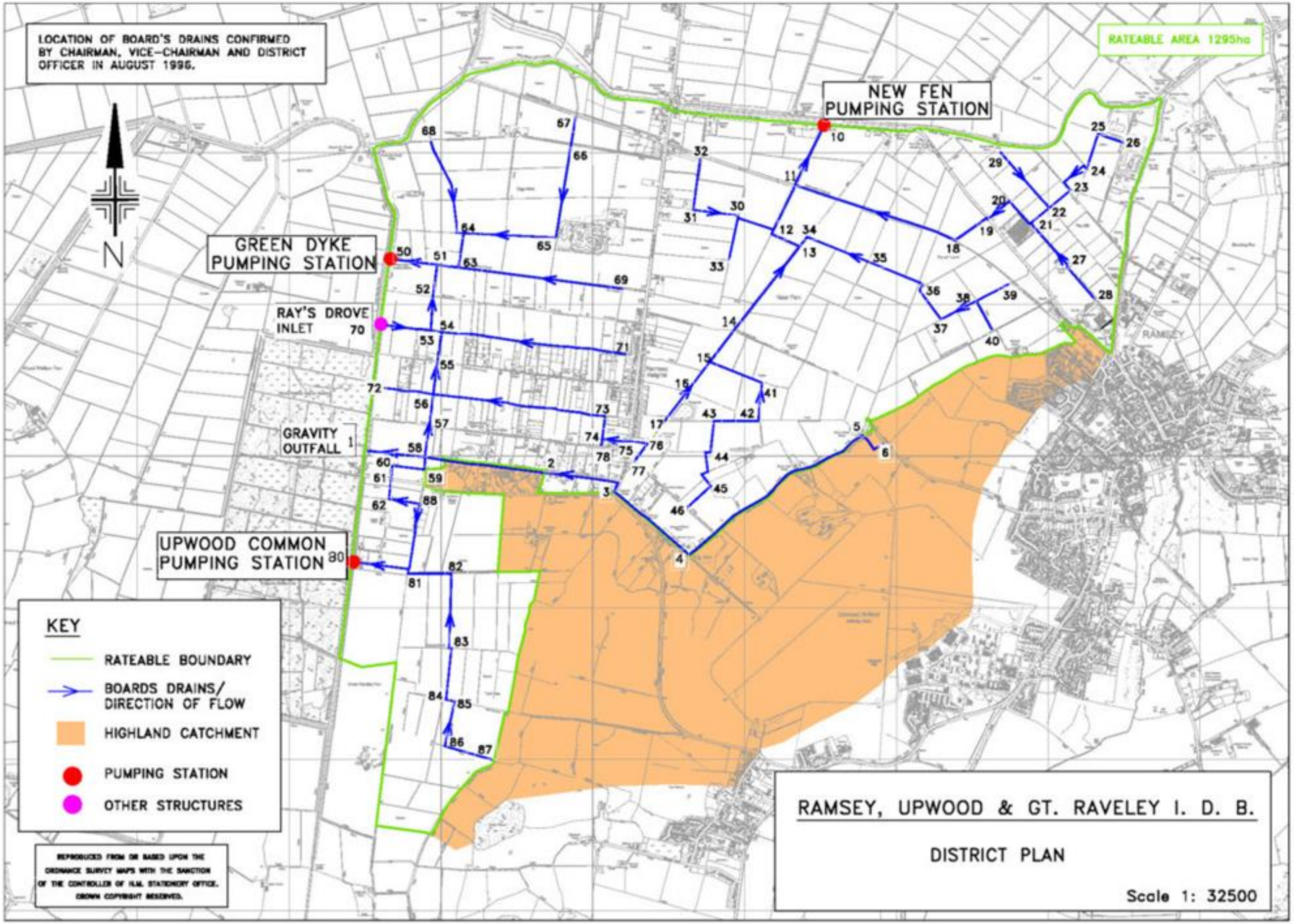
Assistance has been given, on the Board's behalf, in respect of the following:

(a) An enquiry has been made by Gigaclear regarding the provision to provide ultra-fast broadband within the Board's area using existing BT Openreach infrastructure. The company was informed that any new infrastructure would require the Board's consent if within 9 metres of a Board's district watercourse.

Consulting Engineer

5 May 2023

RUGtR(328)\Reports\May 2023


LOCATION OF BOARD'S DRAINS CONFIRMED BY CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND DISTRICT OFFICER IN AUGUST 1996.
RATEABLE AREA 1295ha
NEW FEN PUMPING STATION
GREEN DYKE PUMPING STATION
RAY'S DROVE INLET
GRAVITY OUTFALL
UPWOOD COMMON PUMPING STATION
N
RAMSEY
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATION
OTHER STRUCTURES
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE. CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.
RAMSEY, UPWOOD & GT. RAVELEY I. D. B.
DISTRICT PLAN
Scale 1: 32500

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB

Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023

Improving Capital Delivery

Introduction

Since being in post I have been getting to grips with a number of things in the Engineering/Technical Services Department. I've made a number of observations: officers are knowledgeable, dedicated and committed to delivering a service to the Commissioners and IDBs; working in partnership with the Environment Agency and local planning authorities/LLFAs is clearly evident; the operations team do an excellent job managing water resources in an extremely complex system; our capital delivery programme is growing as assets come to the end of design life; we have some significant changes and challenges ahead (biodiversity net gain requirements, the climate emergency and Fens Reservoir amongst others) which need careful planning and resourcing if we are to properly represent members and local communities and secure the best outcomes for the catchment.

We have an increasing capital delivery programme, with a number of ongoing projects and many identified for future delivery. I have identified areas where improvements are needed to deliver these projects better and to improve communications between the consulting engineer and the Boards.

Resources

Staff in MLC's Technical Services are currently stretched in terms of capacity and capability. There is a significant lack of suitable people across the engineering and project delivery profession generally, which impacts not only MLC's ability to recruit, but also the availability of consultant and contractor resources.

As well as our services to IDBs, and the Bank Raising Scheme over the next 4-5 years, and delivery of the pumping station refurbishment programme, there is an immediate need to provide resources to support MLC input to developing plans for Anglian Water's Fens Reservoir. This will have a significant and profound impact on water management in the catchment, and MLC officers need to ensure we secure the very best outcomes for our Board members, ratepayers, customers and the environment. We will be working very hard over the next 6 months to achieve this before the project passes is next 'gate'.

Now that MLC receives revenue through navigation licences, we have to ensure that we deliver on the requirements set out in the Navigation Byelaws 2020. This is a work in progress, but again sets additional demands on our internal resources and our ability to be proactive.

MLC were unsuccessful in recruiting a new planning engineer in 2022 and the existing team is under continued pressure to resolve ongoing and new applications, let alone adequately accommodate new demands. We are now looking at alternative resource solutions to support the wider engineering department.

IDB Projects

I am already aware of a number of projects that have been in progress for some time. There is lack of a clear programme of delivery and/project management discipline for these; there are no specific timescales and other agreed tolerances with the IDB as 'client', and this makes it difficult to plan and prioritise resources and workloads.

I am compiling a programme of all the projects being delivered by MLC and determining the resources needed to complete them. I will work with the Boards in question to progress delivery as quickly and efficiently as possible.

For new project requests, I am implementing a simple process with a 'Project Initiation Form' to capture key information and undertake an initial assessment of the project. I will prioritise work requested based on urgency and availability of resources. Unless otherwise instructed by an IDB, our default approach will be to seek to maximise FCRM Grant in Aid funding for eligible projects. I will implement a process of reporting progress regularly to the Boards/key contacts. As part of this process, I'll be asking each Board to agree how they delegate decision making, as projects can't be effectively delivered when governed through annual meetings, and how we manage better, more frequent, communications between the Boards' delegates and officers in Technical Services.

I am looking at the possibility of 'packaging' some works together for delivery by consultants, e.g. Pumping Station Refurbishment Projects rather than delivering each one individually. This has the advantage of securing a team of suitable resources who can focus on the work and deliver it as efficiently as possible (economies of scale). This will be a change of approach for individual IDBs and will need further work to determine how we manage this approach practically when each Board is its own individual entity with maybe a once per annum meeting. I hope to provide you with more detail about this, and the benefits it will give the Boards, in the coming months.

It may take some time to deliver the backlog of projects, which in turn might delay the start of new projects. However, I'm hopeful my approach will eventually lead to a more effective and efficient delivery process.

MLC Bank Raising Scheme

This is currently the largest IDB led project in the national flood investment programme and gives us the opportunity to develop capacity and capability in the organisation and share best practice across all our work. The scheme will be under the spot-light and have a focus from the Environment Agency in terms of grant assurance.

Works are progressing on a number of fronts but were lacking leadership and direction and there was no delivery programme. I have implemented some standard project management tools to control, manage and deliver the project: An 'exception report' was raised to the Project Board/MLC Executive Board outlining the existing situation and mitigation measures being put in place; A project plan and outline programme is now in place; Clear project governance has been identified; A data management plan is being drafted; Risks and issues are being identified; Project and delivery manager resources have been appointed and they will start in April.

Most of the project work was being carried out by MLC staff putting a strain on their already stretched ability to delivery other commitments, especially to the IDBs. The Technical Services team does not currently have the capacity or capability to deliver major projects.

There was a lack of clarity around environmental impact and risk assessments for activities which are considerably more than 'business as usual.'

Resources are in place/are being identified to complete environmental impact assessment required before wholescale desilting works can be undertaken, including significant input from the MLC Environment Officer.

The Independent Technical Advisor has prepared a scope for tender to secure a consultant to develop outline design and prepare Full Business Case (for MLC Project Board approval). The consultant will provide all technical input needed for developing and planning the project and ensuring consents and approvals are identified and in place. MLC staff will continue to act in a lead client capacity, providing their specific technical expertise and knowledge of the catchment as necessary. I will lead the project as Project Executive, working closely with the Project and Delivery Managers and providing regular updates to the Project Sponsor (Chief Executive) and MLC Executive Committee.

MLC's H&S advisor, Cope, visited and assessed the provisions in place and provided advice on additional requirements. Risk assessments/methods statements are being developed for physical work activities alongside a full review of the MLC H&S policies.

A Communications & Engagement team is in place and is planning engagement in parallel with Chief Executive's proposed MLC engagement and branding improvements.

A robust forecast of project costs needs developing. It is likely that the total project costs will exceed the current approval limit of £23million from the Outline Business Case. There are also some risks to the delivery programme that need to be investigated further and mitigated as necessary. All of these will be considered in more detail over the next 6 months, appraised and included in the Full Business Case, before the end of the financial year 2023/24.

Contractors are currently being identified for the various work phases: desilting; material import; bank raising works and hard defences (including detailed design).

Consulting Engineer

5 April 2023

RESOLVED

> That the Board noted and approved the Consulting Engineers Report, the main items of which had discussed on the Inspection or earlier in the meeting.

B.1394 Capital Improvement Programme

In response to A Lensen Esq, Mr Hill reported that although Green Dyke Pumping Station was being shown in the programme this was not a direct allocation of funding but that a business case would need producing along with a formal application and he referred to the Consulting Engineers comments concerning capital delivery in the supplementary report. The Chairman expressed disappointment in that the replacement of Green Dyke Pumping Station was first raised six years ago and he did not consider the Board were any further forward than at that point. A Lensen Esq queried what the cause of the delay was and in response Mr Hill accepted that the Middle Level project delivery team had not previously dealt with matters in a timely manner but considered that the proposals of the new Chief Engineer would help and speed up the delivery of projects.

Mr Hill reported that the Boards improvement programme would be developed further in line with the Middle Level Chief Engineer development of the capital delivery grant-in-aid programmes, viz;

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2023/2024)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Green Dyke p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	1,007.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1007.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
New Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	750.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	750.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Upwood Common p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	700.0	700.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.4	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels	Upwood Common/Green Dyke catchment	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
		0	**1,007**	**0**	**20**	**5**	**750**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**700**	**2,487**

Updated to engineers asset appraisal report

Does not include for possible subsidence works at New Fen pumping station

Identified on PAFS submission - 2020

RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved in principle and kept under review.

B.1395 District Officer's Report

R Blackhurst referred to slubbing work required on the catchwater drain as was viewed at the inspection earlier in the day and that these works should be included in the routine maintenance programme.
The Chairman referred to the inspection and works required along section 3-4 and Members agreed that these works should be carried out later in the year, which would give opportunity to liaise with all relevant parties and for the District Officer to get further quotations.

The Chairman referred to works required along the Catchwater Drain and that these could hopefully be broken down into sections and included in the annual programme on a three-year rotation. Members agreed that the prepared slubbing from the gravity outfall to Point 3 should be included as part of this year's works.

RESOLVED

That the report and actions be approved.

That the District Officer to obtain further quotations for the maintenance works required at section 3-4.

That the Chairman liaise with relevant parties concerning proposals for this years maintenance works.

B.1396 Environment Officer's Report

The Board to considered the Environment Officer's Report, viz;

MIDDLE LEVEL
COMMISSIONERS

Telephone: **01354 602965**
07977 068864
Email: **sofi.lloyd@middlelevel.gov.uk**
Website: **www.middlelevel.gov.uk**

MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICES
85 WHITTLESEY ROAD
MARCH
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
PE15 0AH

Sofi Lloyd
Environment Officer

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Environmental Update – April 2023

1. Bank Raising Project

You will have been made aware of the Bank Raising Project and the work that is planned on the MLC channels and banks within the district. The ecological considerations of the project are being dealt with separately, outside of this report, along with the project update. However, should you have any questions about the projects' ecological considerations then do contact me directly and I will be happy to help.

2. Biodiversity Action Plan Review

The Biodiversity Action Plan has traditionally been the key document which sets out the IDBs' planned contributions towards conserving and enhancing biodiversity. Although the BAP remains vital, the objectives are unlikely to be reached unless there is a process in place to ensure that the incremental steps that need to be taken to achieve the BAP objectives are incorporated into regular operations and are reviewed regularly. Otherwise, the BAP simply becomes a document that is reviewed once or twice a year. It is the review of this vital process that I will be focussing on, rather than reviewing the objectives in the BAP, because the objectives themselves still remain valid.

3. Work Package Ecological Screening Document

We have developed the template named above for IDBs to complete when planning any ad hoc/non-routine works that will "break ground" on the any of the banks. The information is needed in order to evidence that we have correctly considered the ecological impacts of the work, and to identify opportunities for enhancement, as we are mandated to do, by law. Activities for which the form would be relevant include bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling, filling in a ditch, moving an access culvert etc.

Only the first page needs completing by the IDB (not a lot of info needed) and the rest by me. I undertake the assessment as far as possible, and then return the second part of the document to the IDB, setting out what surveys etc. will be needed, if any. I may be able to undertake some of the practical surveys but in some cases, an ecological consultant with a specialist licence may be needed. In some cases, there may not be a need for any surveys and the recommendations will be that the work can proceed with some adaptions to the proposed approach, such as altered timings or establishment of "no-work" buffers around sensitive areas.

When all desk and fieldwork is complete, the form is "signed off" from an ecological perspective, and returned to the IDB with recommendations for the approaches to be taken. This means the IDB and the operatives undertaking the work have full sight of the ecological constraints, mitigations and approaches required to remain compliant. It is recommended that this form is completed and sent as early as possible to prevent delays, even up to 1 year in advance of the proposed works. The form is available by emailing sofi.lloyd@middlelevel.gov.uk and is also available from the MLC website.

4. Protected Species

a) Water Vole

As always, any work that plans to "break ground" on the any of the banks, so bank reformation, mooring construction, culverting, head walls, piling etc, **OR the removal of any marginal vegetation, please let me know ASAP by completing the above ecological screening document** so we can plan the appropriate surveys and mitigations in plenty of time, to avoid any delays and ensure compliance with wildlife legislation. This is particularly relevant for water voles. We know that there are some known, valuable water-vole ditches in the district, and some which could be enhanced to better support the local population, but the accepted approach is to always assume water voles are present in all ditches, and plan work around their assumed presence, in order to avoid committing an offence in terms of wildlife legislation. There is a lot of good, pragmatic and practical guidance on how to properly consider water voles during IDB works contained in the Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs.

b) Badgers

A reminder that badgers and their setts are protected by law and care must be taken not to disturb setts during routine channel management. Sett interference requires a licence under all circumstances. Please contact us should you have any queries regarding activities taking place around any known badger sett. Please also let me know asap if there are any setts which are presenting a flood risk due to any burrowing which is destabilising banks etc. More detailed information and refresher training on approaches to be taken around badger setts will be organised in the coming months. In the meantime, please refer to the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) for more detailed information on badgers.

c) Birds

Please be reminded of the legislation around the disturbance of breeding birds, particularly when cutting vegetation or bank-side trees, between March and September and where kingfishers are known to hunt. Please see the relevant chapter in the Environmental Good Governance Guide (available on the ADA website) to refresh your understanding of mitigation and survey requirements and get in touch should you have any questions.

i. Barn owls

I have met with our barn owl conservation delivery partners and we had defined a schedule of checking and refreshing barn owl boxes over winter but have unfortunately been unable to commence due to the restrictions imposed by BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) due to avian flu. We continue to monitor the guidance and act accordingly and have been able to commence some box checking by following strict biosecurity measures. Please do let us know therefore if there are any boxes that you feel need some maintenance ASAP so we can plan to visit them before the start of the breeding season. It is even more important during these times that you please help us with the following:

- Tell us if you spot a box needing repair
- Tell us if you see a box being regularly visited in nesting season
- Tell us if you'd like a barn owl box
- Establish and maintain un-cropped field margins for foraging

ii. Avian Flu

Avian Flu is now thankfully less of a risk now that temperatures are increasing and there are less avian arrivals from overseas. However, please ensure that you are familiar with, **and promote the knowledge of** the DEFRA guidelines on avian flu, in particular those for reporting suspected cases: Bird flu (avian influenza): latest situation in England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). If any dead birds are spotted, please do let us know and either we can come and collect and dispose of them in a safe manner to minimise the risk of the disease spreading to other wildlife, or we can arrange for the collection.

5. Invasive species

When any non-native species (particularly the following) are spotted, please record the location using the what3words app (what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location) if possible (if not postcode or grid ref) and inform us ASAP. Useful identification guides and information can be found online at ID sheets » NNSS (nonnativespecies.org)

- Floating Pennywort
- Mink

- Himalayan Balsam
- Parrot's feather
- New Zealand pigmyweed (Australian swamp stonecrop - Crassula)

a) Turkish Crayfish

We have received reliable reports of the presence of Turkish crayfish in some MLC drains. Turkish Crayfish are a schedule 9 listed species listed in the Wildlife & Countryside Act meaning that it is an offence to release them or allow them to escape into the wild. Their impact is not widely understood but it is said that that they are known to reside alongside Signal Crayfish, rather than displace them or be displaced by them. Where populations of our native and protected white-clawed crayfish are still present, they are likely to outcompete them but they do not carry crayfish plague which does impact native crayfish. There is no evidence that Turkish crayfish burrow so it is unlikely that they would cause extensive damage to riverbanks but they could reduce fishery profits by competing with fish for food, stealing baits or causing declines in fish recruitment through loss of macrophyte habitat, according to the non-native species secretariat. Please be vigilant and report sightings of the species and maintain strong biosecurity procedures. They can be distinguished from other crayfish species by their long narrow claws, as shown in the pictures below.

Turkish Crayfish

Claws: claws normally same colour as body but underside lightly coloured. Fingers long, straight and narrow

White-clawed crayfish

Claws: are noticeably granular and are whitish to light pink on the underside, never red.

American Signal Crayfish

Claws white or turquoise patch at junction between fixed and moveable finger. Underside of claws are red.

If it is necessary to dispatch a Turkish crayfish, American signal crayfish, or any other non-native crayfish, because it has been removed from the channel accidentally, please ensure that you are familiar with its distinguishing features and can confidently tell it apart from particularly white clawed crayfish. This will ensure no offence against a protected species occurs. There are very few records of the native white-clawed crayfish remaining in the MLC area but care should still be taken and no assumption made. More information can be found at: https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/view/381

6. Paludiculture

I attended a workshop in Cambridge to discuss the progress of knowledge acquisition and trials around growing commercial crops, associated with wetlands in lowland areas, where the water level has been raised to reduce or eliminate CO_2 emissions from degraded peat. This is known as paludiculture. This includes the potential for receiving an income for carbon sequestration from such approaches. As you would expect, there is a focus on the Cambridgeshire fens as a key area for development of this approach along with Somerset, Lancashire and the Lincs fens. If you would like to know more about how this topic is progressing, would like to get involved in some trials or would like to have a go at growing a paludiculture crop such as Typha latifolia (Bullrush or cattail) or Sphagnum moss yourself commercially, then please do get in touch.

RESOLVED

That the Board Members approved the most recent report.

B.1397 District Officer's Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED

That the Board agreed that an increase of 5% should be added to the fee and the total for the District Officers fee would be £3,817.00 for 2023/2024.

B.1398 State-aided Schemes

Consideration was given to the desirability of undertaking further State-aided Schemes in the District and whether any future proposals should be included in the capital forecasts provided to the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED

That no further proposals be formulated at the present time.

B.1399 Environment Agency – Precept

Mr Hill reported that at the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that there were exceptional circumstances to consider on the agreed 2% increase on the precepts on Internal Drainage Boards. The Committee voted for an additional 1% increase (reflecting exceptional circumstances) above the agreed 2% for the year ending 31st March 2024 – total of a 3% increase on the level of precept on Internal Drainage Boards for the year ending 31st March 2024.

The precept for 2022/2023 was £5,333.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That the increased precept be approved

<u>B.1400 Health and Safety</u>

The Chairman reported on the recent inspection by Cope Safety Management and that there were no matters of concern apart from a high voltage warning sign for New Fen Pumping Station, viz;

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley IDB

Complete

Name of organisation:	Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley IDB
Date of site visit	15.02.2023 08:53 GMT
Address of inspected premises	St Marys Road Ramsey Huntingdonshire PE26 2SN
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	15.02.2023 08:53 GMT
Audit Name	Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley IDB

Private & confidential

1/4

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Andrew Roberts

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?	No

None recorded

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?	No

None recorded

1

New Fen pumping station was visited and as discussed it is recommended that signage is placed at the gate to warn persons of the presence of high voltage electrical installations.

It was pleasing to note that housekeeping was observed to be good and no significant issues were raised. \

Photo 1

Photo 2

2

Green Dyke pumping station was visited and it was pleasing to note that a. Wooden ladder previously reported has now been removed and appropriate signage has been provided.

3

Upwood pumping station was visited and it was pleasing to note that the steps have been improved since the previous visit and a barrier has been installed at the water outflow, The relevant photographic risk assessment will be closed accordingly.

Photo 3

Photo 4

4

In addition to the above general issues were discussed, including lone working, provision of fire fighting equipment and fly tipping.

No significant issues or concerns. were raised on any of the above subjects.

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed

Signed By Andrew Roberts
15.02.2023 11:47 GMT

Advisor's signature

Martin Clark
15.02.2023 22:07 GMT

Departure time 15.02.2023 11:51 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

19.11.19. 4.

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments 0
From 0 to 99

Appendix

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY IDB
SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

No Outstanding PRAs

SSI 15 02 23

RESOLVED

That the District Officer attend to the replacement of the high voltage warning sign at New Fen Pumping Station.

B.1401 Appointment of Internal Auditor

The clerk to reported that following the conclusion of tendering Whitings LLP have been appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28), viz;

middle level commissioners

Internal Audit Tender Proposal to

Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners

November 2022

Whitings Chartered Accountants LLP

Index

Executive Summary

Whitings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers, based in 11 locations throughout East Anglia.

The firm has broad range of experience in dealing with internal and external audits, serving a range of local organisations operating with the private and public sector.

On review of your invitation to tender we understand that the following requirements need to be met:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

We have had the pleasure as serving as your internal auditors for several years and have demonstrated our ability to meet the statutory deadlines set. We will strive to deliver this whilst also providing the following benefits:

- Ensuring staff continuity from year to year
- Quoting and sticking to an agreed fee for the duration of the five year appointment
- Providing a comprehensive and personable service, building on the strong working relationships that we already have with your organisation
- Pro-active in our approach to the engagement, seeking out ways to streamline the internal audit process to ensure minimal disruption to your day-to-day operations

Our fees for the first year ended 31 March 2024, excluding VAT, will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners, a detailed breakdown of our fee structure for the five year appointment can be found on page 10 of this document.

Our clients rightly demand a service that provides high quality, specialist expertise, timeliness and cost effectiveness combined with local knowledge, an appreciation of local Fenland circumstances and district needs. Whitings LLP, having been established in the local area since 1928, have a proven track record of being able to meet these demands and continue to review and develop its business practices to ensure that this remains the case for many years to come.

Your Requirements

You have asked us to quote for providing the following services for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners:

- Subject the financial statements to internal audit in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Upon conclusion of the internal audit prepare of a management letter to the board detailing any deficiencies in the internal systems, recommending improvements in addition to communicating whether in our opinion the organisation are ensuring value for money is being achieved.
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

In order to obtain best value from our service, it is essential that our audit work is directed towards areas of greatest risk. You have indicated that you will maintain the accounting records, presenting our firm with accurate completed financial statements together with relevant and supporting schedules and reconciliations as required in a timely fashion.

The first accounts to be internally audited shall be for the year ended 31 March 2024. We will be able to carry out our work on these in accordance with your completion timetable which we provisionally understand to be 30 June 2024.

Our Audit Approach

Before the boards' year end, we would anticipate a pre-planning meeting between the audit team and members of the Middle Level Commissioners' finance team. At this meeting various formalities such as the timing of our procedures will be agreed, together with the identification of key audit areas. We would also at this stage confirm our understanding of the company's accounting systems and structure of internal controls.

This enables us to adopt an efficient and structured approach to risk assessment, analytical appraisal of results and the tailoring of audit testing to ensure that your accounts comply with all relevant legislation and regulations. The below internal audit strategy has been designed to be a high level statement of how our audit approach will be delivered and developed during the proposed engagement period.

Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and pro-active consulting services designed to add value and improve the Board's operations. It provides an independent and objective opinion to the Board on the control environment that comprises risk management, control and governance.

All internal audit work will be undertaken with due regard to the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations having cognition of the Practitioners Guide.

It covers aspects of all financial systems annually, rather than just on a strict 3 year cyclical basis which is a fairly common alternative for Internal Audit functions. The plan is for minimal 'systems review' days as the financial systems are undertaken on a common basis due to the administration of the boards by the Middle Level Commissioners, so using a risk based audit approach these only require to be audited on a sample basis across the IDBs on an annual basis. The normal level of both System confirmation and Transaction testing is set to ensure that some transactions of all individual boards within the Middle Level Commissioners' administered area are covered each year such as will be appropriate to the Board's level of activity and/or strength of assessed internal controls; nonetheless all Boards will be covered in all areas across a 3 year period.

Even so, where issues are identified , major internal control systems/personnel changes occur , or problems are encountered in conduct or results of the internal audit then the scheduled rota may be amended on year by year basis.

In addition, substantial work is carried each year on every Board on certain areas to ensure compliance and correctness of the Annual Return form.

The following list summarises the main work done and frequency, taking into account the objectives set out in the Annual Internal Audit Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return:

A -Return, Accounts & Completion (Annually)

- Ensure IDB/DDC cashbook kept up to date
- Ensure that monthly bank reconciliations are carried out
- Check that verification of bank reconciliations has been carried out
- Ensure that the annual return and accounting record opening and comparative figures agree to prior years records
- Ensure that figures stated on the annual return agree to underlying accounting records
- Checking casting and arithmetic of schedules
- Review variance report and investigate reasons excessive variances
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit
- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with the publication requirements as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

B - Purchases (Cyclically)

- Ensure that the IDB/DDC has complied with its financial regulations and these are reviewed with sufficient regularity by the board
- Check proper purchase authority is recorded by the board in relation to IDB/DDC payments
- Carry out walkthrough testing in relation to IDB/DDC purchase system
- Agreement of purchase ledger balances to trial balance
- Ensuring payment of principal and interest in respect of loans is in accordance with agreed terms
- Confirm list of payments issued agrees to minutes
- Ensure that individual purchases are authorised by a relevant person

C - Minutes, Value for Money, Risk Management, Ethical Standard and Sustainability (Annually)

Minutes

- Review of minutes to check that risks relating to the boards are discussed
- Ensure that a formal risk assessment is carried out by the board
- Review the budget setting process
- Review minutes for unusual or extraordinary activities
- Check insurance review

Value for Money

- Ensure that value for money principles are being observed
- Obtain relevant tenders for capital purchases to ensure VFM principles are being considered.

Risk Management

- Ensure that the boards risk register is kept up to date and adequately covers potential areas of risk facing the board.
- Ensure that risk factors are taken into account in the board's decision making and implementation processes

Ethical Standards and Sustainability

- Ensure that decisions are made in an ethical manner by the board, bearing in mind environmental and other socioeconomic circumstances/responsibilities within the local community.
- Ensure that ethics is taken into account within the boards defined policies
- Ensure that long term sustainability is being taken into account in operational decisions.

D - Budget and Variance Analysis (Cyclically)

- Review variance analysis issued by the board
- Check that progress against budgets are regularly monitored
- Check that budgets are used for determining rates for the following year
- Review accruals for reasonableness and completeness

E - Sales (Cyclically)

- Perform walkthrough testing on the IDB/DDC rates system, including the treatment of special levies
- Review any rates write offs and ensure received board approval
- Perform walkthrough testing of other sales made by IDB/DDCs
- Review minutes to ensure all expected other income has been received and banked

F - Petty Cash (Cyclically)

- Not applicable at present, no petty cash function for any IDB/DDCs currently administered.

G - Wages (Cyclically)

- Performance of wages walkthrough
- Ensure that authorisation granted for overtime paid
- Review of P11Ds (where applicable)
- Ensure that non-pay rolled staff have been correctly taxed
- Confirm contractor expenses to invoices and that pay rates and payments are authorised within the minutes by the board

H - Assets (Cyclically)

- Vouch additions and review sales of fixed assets in the year
- Ensure assets are adequately covered by IDB/DDC insurance policies
- Ensure that asset movements in the year are reasonable and consistent with prior years
- Review fixed assets for indicators or impairment, both through physical review and by reference to the minutes

I - Bank (Annually)

- Ensure that regular reconciliations have occurred in the year and that these are reviewed by a senior individual within the finance department
- Recalculation of interim and year end bank reconciliations, ensuring clearance of any outstanding payments or lodgements following the reconciliation date
- Ensure that cashbook entries are based on transactions as made rather than in order of appearance on the bank statements
- Consideration of treasury management, including returns where significant bank balances are held by IDB/DDCs

J - Trial Balance & Nominal (Cyclically)

- Ensure Opera trial balance transferred to the accounts correctly
- Scrutinise creditors, accruals, debtors and prepayments
- Identify any transactions that are held within the audited figures that relate to prior or future periods
- Review and scrutiny of adjustment journals posting during the year and as part of the year end accounts process

All financial systems are to be documented and reviewed on an annual basis to provide the required level of assurance. Where appropriate probity audit work will be undertaken and the propriety, accuracy and recording of transactions sample tested.

In addition to the main work carried out on each board, the below areas are also considered to be valuable components in delivering a high quality and well-rounded internal audit service.

Consultancy and Advice

Internal Audit will be available to assist the Board with control or operational issues. During the year there might be emerging risks or issues that need an independent view or review. In addition, internal audit will be pro-active with suggestions and advice to management from information gained through experience, other organisations and networking groups.

Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption

Internal Audit will be pro-active in counter fraud work. Although it is not a function of Internal Audit to detect fraud, bribery and corruption (this is a responsibility of management and good system control) work will be undertaken to help ensure there are adequate systems and procedures to highlight potential instances.

Value for Money (VFM), Risk Management, Ethical Standards and Sustainability

As a part of the internal audit review, systems and controls established by management to secure VFM, risk management, ethical standards and sustainability will be examined and evaluated. Matters of an overall nature are also addressed within the annual work programme. Auditors may initiate, conduct or participate additionally in special reviews in these areas where need arises.

The above covers Boards administered throughout the year by MLC but where a new Board is added to the group administration facility, a special additional / fuller review will occur in the first year of involvement.

At the completion of each audit a report will be produced and released to the Middle Level Commissioners for distribution to the Boards. This report details the terms of reference and scope of the audit, findings, recommendations and a management action plan. An executive summary that includes an audit opinion on controls will also be included.

An annual internal audit report shall be produced to the Board to provide an overall opinion on controls and detail the audit work for the year.

About Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP are a regional firm of Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers. At the time of writing, the firm has 12 partners and 7 associates who are supported by approximately 165 staff. The firm operates from 11 offices within the East Anglia counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We are registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales to undertake audit work.

Due to the size of the firm we are able to offer our clients with a comprehensive range of services whilst also providing specific insights into industry sectors which represent the key sectors that our client base operates within, these are detailed below:

Service Offerings

- Audit and Assurance
- Business Support
- Business Tax
- General Practice
- IT Services
- Payroll
- Private Client Tax
- Probate and Estate Administration
- Start Ups
- Tax Enquiry and Investigation Service
- Wealth Management

Sector Specialisms

- Agriculture and related industries
- Construction
- Contractors
- Creative Industries
- Manufacturing
- Not for Profit
- Property
- Retail
- Road Haulage
- Technology

More comprehensive information on the firm, its services, specialisms and culture can be found on the website www.whitingsllp.co.uk

Our Fees

We believe the fee scales we propose for this assignment are competitive and reflective of the work required to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations. We do not compromise on quality by issuing tenders for audit assignments that are clearly uneconomic.

Our fees for the year ended 31 March 2024 will be £21,250 (exc. VAT) for the Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners administered by the Middle Level Commissioners.

With regard to fees for future years, we would expect, on the assumption that the level of activities and quality of accounting records do not alter significantly that our fees would rise by no more than in line with our wage rate inflation, assumed to be 5% per annum. If, through efficiencies that we can introduce, we can provide the same services at a lower guide fee, then we shall pass on this discount to you.

On this premise, we quote the following four years' fees, excluding VAT, as: -

2024-25	£22,300
2025-26	£23,400
2026-27	£24,600
2027-28	£25,800

For normal ongoing continuous supply services, the initial payment request issued will not be a tax invoice for VAT purposes but will include a notional amount for VAT. On receipt of your payment a tax invoice will be issued to enable you to recover input tax where applicable. However, please note that a VAT invoice will be issued in certain rare circumstances for exceptional "non-continuous" work only.

You will be billed at appropriate intervals during the course of the year. We would expect most of the fees to be billed in a single fee note raised soon after the completion of the Internal Audit Report and issue of our management letter to the board. We would also propose to raise fee notes for any further specially agreed work on a quarterly basis. Payment of fees will be due within 30 days of the date of the payment request.

Key Personnel and Career Summaries

Our philosophy is to provide each client with a dedicated team responsible for their affairs, thus ensuring that we can provide both expertise and continuity of service.

All our audit staff are either qualified or studying for professional qualifications in either AAT, ACCA, or ACA. Our partners, associates and staff undertake a vigorous ongoing programme of continuing professional development, to maintain high technical standards.

Over many years we have experienced extremely high levels of staff retention, enabling us to staff audits with the same individual's year on year. This allows us to accumulate high levels of background understanding of your organisation and these mature relationships with clients makes two way communication both easy and friendly.

The proposed core audit team will be:

Your Audit Principle
It is intended that the audit principle responsible for this assignment will be Ben Beech, an Associate of the firm who is based at our March office. Ben began working for Whitings in 2011, qualifying as a Chartered Accountant in 2016. He is in charge of the firm's audit and assurance offering within the Fenland and surrounding areas, dealing with many of the firm's larger clients operating in a range of sectors. He is also involved in the monitoring and development of the firm's professional standards and compliance procedures.

Your Relationship Manager
Your designated relationship manager for this assignment will be Aston Hinson who is also based at our March office. Aston has worked with Ben for many years supporting him in the provision of high quality audits to some of the firm's largest clients. Aston is also part of the firms Not for Profit team, assisting these organisations with their accounting and tax requirements.

Your Audit Team
The audit team will include a range of staff appropriate to the varying tasks involved ranging from qualified accountants to junior accounts technicians.

Appendix A - Internal Audit Plan - Year Ending 31 March 2024

The below is an indication of the number of working days required to carry out the internal audit of the 29 Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners. As a result, and taking into account the engagement timeframe, we are confident that we will be able to meet the deadlines set.

Audit Areas	Planned Days
Planning - discussions, clarification, summarising, AGAR requirement review	4
Systems - review and confirmation work	20
Transactions - testing and verification	20
Completion - collation of issues and recommendations, enquiries of management, reporting via the AGAR and management letter	6
TOTAL	**50**

Appendix B - List of Administered Boards

Benwick Internal Drainage Board
Bluntisham Internal Drainage Board
Churchfield and Plawfield Internal Drainage Board
Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board
Curf and Wimblington Combined Internal Drainage Board
Euximoor Internal Drainage Board
Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
Hundred Foot Washes Internal Drainage Board
Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board
Manea and Welney District Drainage Commissioners
March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board
March East Internal Drainage Board
March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners
March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners
March Third District Drainage Commissioners
Needham and Laddus Internal Drainage Board
Nightlayers Internal Drainage Board
Nordelph Internal Drainage Board
Over and Willingham IDB
Ramsey First (Hollow) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Fourth (Middlemoor) Internal Drainage Board
Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board
Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners
Sawtry Internal Drainage Board
Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
Upwell Internal Drainage Board
Waldersey Internal Drainage Board
Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board

RESOLVED

> That the Board approve the appointment of Whiting & Partners as Internal Auditor for a five-year contract.

B.1402 Review of Internal Controls

The Board have considered and approved the system of Internal Controls and appointment of Internal Auditor.

B.1403 Risk Management Assessment

a) The Board considered and approved the Board's Risk Management Policy.

b) The Board considered and approved the insured value of the Board's buildings and to index-link their values going forward, viz;

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB
INSURED VALUES OF PUMPING STATIONS

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2023
New Fen Pumping Station	800,000.00
Upwood Common Pumping Station	500,000.00
Green Dyke Pumping Station	620,000.00
	1,920,000.00

B.1404 Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual Return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and right to inspect the Annual Return.

B.1405 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

The Board reviewed the Annual Governance Statement, viz;

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed Yes	Agreed No*		'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✔			prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✔			made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✔			has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✔			during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✔			considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✔			arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✔			responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✔			disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.

B.1406 Payments 2022/2023

The Clerk reported on payments made during the financial year 2022/2023, viz;

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments 2022/2023 (1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023)

Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	661.32
Middle Level Commissioners - Court fees	4.00
Environment Agency - Precept	2,666.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	154.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	532.68
Middle Level Commissioners - Attend site and take meter reading	61.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,181.54
Middle Level Commissioners - Temporary repairs to station door at Green Dyke pumping station	500.56
Middle Level Commissioners - Electrical condition report at Green Dyke pumping station	168.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Electrical condition report at New Fen pumping station	168.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace pump bolts at Upwood Common pumping station	485.57
Middle Level Commissioners - Electrical condition report at Upwood Common pumping station	156.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2021-2022 accounts)	360.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2021-2022 accounts)	558.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	3,005.41
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	400.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	3,261.06
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	532.68
Environment Agency - Precept	2,666.54
L C Butler - District Officer's fee (1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022)	2,301.00
E M Butler - Flail mowing	4,968.00
M J S Acquisitions (March) Ltd - Refund of drainage rates	89.04
Masons Landscaping & Agricultural Contracting - Tree shear out of dyke, chip all material and blast back onto Dyke brink	1,584.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Measure up for new doors at Green Dyke pumping station	102.31
Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry searches - Mrs V Johns	15.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Inspection of works to prevent erosion, monitoring of work undertaken by Cadent Gas, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	1,601.18
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022-2023	6.00
E M Butler - Flail mowing	270.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2023	716.40
Lattenbury Services Limited - Drain maintenance	14,400.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Check noise on pump at New Fen pumping station	120.43
Middle Level Commissioners - 50% deposit for supply and fit steel door at Green Dyke pumping station (Account from Stanair)	1,323.00
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Find fault on pump controls at Upwood Common pumping station	122.02
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	2,836.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	366.84
L C Butler - District Officer's fee (October 2022 to March 2023)	2,421.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	16.76
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Green Dyke pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Upwood Common pumping station)	209.71
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (New Fen pumping station)	0.00
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Green Dyke pumping station)	131.98
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Upwood Common pumping station)	131.97
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Green Dyke pumping station)	4,976.30
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (New Fen pumping station)	5,420.21
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply - (Upwood Common pumping station)	2,449.16
	64,352.43

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

RESOLVED

The Board approved payments made during the financial year 2022/2023.

N.B: A Lensen Esq declared an interest in the payments made to Middle Level Commissioners as an Middle Level Board Member.

B.1407 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2023 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations, viz;

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2022
GENERAL FUND

2022				2021			
Mar-31	Payments made during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		175,427.51
	Precept		5,228.51	2022			
	Rates and Insurances	1,189.08		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	68,601.51	
	Repairs & Renewals	6,401.93			Interest on Deposit Accounts	8.71	
	Fuel	6,379.07			Development charges account	195.00	
	Drainworks	13,580.69			Highland Water contributions	6,424.99	
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Wayleave rental	101.91	
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	7,769.95	35,320.72		Consents	100.00	75,432.12
	Improveemnt works:				Future Works Account:		
	New Fen p/s pump overhaul		30,295.00		New Fen p/s pump overhaul		30,295.00
	Transfer to Future Works Account						
	Surplus 2021/2022		34,882.89				
	Balance carried forward		175,427.51				
			281,154.63				281,154.63

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	1,770,000.00	New Fen Pumping Station & Store	745,000.00	
		Upwood Common Pumping Station	455,000.00	
		Green Dyke Pumping Station	570,000.00	
	1,770,000.00			1,770,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	175,427.51	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	3,115.29
Sundry Creditors	5,431.32	Value added tax - Refunds due	1,450.29
Development Charges Account	3,678.85	Sundry Debtors	11,858.43
Future Works Account	71,761.67	Balance in hand -	
		Treasurer's Account	239,875.34
	2,026,299.35		2,026,299.35

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023
GENERAL FUND

2023				2022			
Mar-31	Payments made during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		175,427.51
	Precept		5,333.08	2023			
	Rates and Insurances	1,171.09		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	72,458.66	
	Repairs & Renewals	9,204.95			Development charges account	184.00	
	Fuel	10,040.04			Highland Water contributions	8,348.41	
	Drainworks	25,379.20			Wayleave rental	101.91	
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Consents	50.00	
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	7,708.51	53,503.79		Insurance claim	2,567.66	83,710.64
	Transfer to Future Works Account				Future Works Account:		
	Surplus 2022/2023		25,278.41		Upwood Common pump bolts		404.64
	Balance carried forward		175,427.51				
			259,542.79				259,542.79

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	1,770,000.00	New Fen Pumping Station & Store	745,000.00	
		Upwood Common Pumping Station	455,000.00	
		Green Dyke Pumping Station	570,000.00	
	1,770,000.00			1,770,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	175,427.51	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	4,085.30
Sundry Creditors	32,573.25	Value added tax - Refunds due	1,961.73
Development Charges Account	3,494.85	Sundry Debtors	37,175.61
Future Works Account	96,635.44	Balance in hand -	
		Treasurer's Account	264,908.41
	2,078,131.05		2,078,131.05

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Treasurers Account 2022/2023

1st April 2022			31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward		239,875.34	Payments made during the year	64,377.67
31st March 2023				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	89,410.74			
Interest on deposit accounts	0.00			
		89,410.74	Balance carried forward	264,908.41
		329,286.08		**329,286.08**

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023			264,833.91
Less unpresented cheques			0.00
O/S lodgement	28/03/2023	Kyte	74.50
Balance per Trial Balance			**264,908.41**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLc

Clients Premium Account	**264,908.41**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**264,908.41**

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	246,472	250,868	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	68,602	72,459	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	6,639	11,068	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	70,845	58,837	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	250,868	275,558	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	239,875	264,908	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,770,000	1,770,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				*The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 3rd May 2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

RESOLVED

> That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.

B.1408 Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2023/2024

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2022/2023 and were informed by Mr Hill that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 50.45% and 49.55%, viz;

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2023/2024

		Approved budget 2022/2023 £	Actual 2022/2023 £	Budget 2023/2024 £
1	Rates and Insurances	1,400	1,171	1,775 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	10,300 [B]	9,205 [C]	5,700
3	Fuel	10,000	10,040 [D]	20,500 [E]
4	Drainworks (including District Officer's fee)	18,100	25,379 [F]	26,600 [G]
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	8,300	7,709	8,450
6	Environment Agency Precept	5,333	5,333	5,493
7	Plant refurbishment funding	30,189 [H]	25,278 [H]	18,139 [H]
		83,622	84,115	86,657
	LESS Government grant, Deposit Accounts interest etc	11,688	11,657 [I]	8,184
		71,934	72,459	78,473

Estimated General Fund

Open balance	175,428	175,428	175,428
Rates raised	71,934	72,459	78,473
Net expenditure	71,934	72,459	78,473
transfer of surplus		0	
Close balance	175,428	175,428	175,428

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Includes for:

Replace Upwood Common wet well bolts	5,000

C - Includes for:

Inspection/monitoring - New Fen p/s	1,025
Replace Upwood Common wet well bolts	405
Replace door - Green Dyke pumping station	2,918

D - Usage to end of year estimated from meter reads

E - Provision based on 5 year average and increased for new contract rates & standing charges - see separate note

F - Includes for :-

Flail mowing & tree cutting	5,685
Slubbing	12,000
	17,685

Includes for :-

G -

Slubbing	12,000
Flail mowing	4,500
Tree clearance - Catchwater	3,600
	20,100

H - Future works at pumping stations

I - Includes for:

Full highland water claim receipt	
Future works fund - Upwood Common works	405
Insurance claim - Green Dyke p/s door	2,568

<u>Does not include provision for replacement of Green Dyke pumping station</u>

<u>Does not include for possible subsidence works at New Fen pumping station</u>

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB

Budget allocations 2023/2024 - electricity

There will be a new electricity contract commencing 1st April 2023 with significantly higher unit rates. For 2022/2023 the contract through Anglia Farmers was a "flex" contract, meaning the unit rates were changed monthly based on the wholesale price; also from October 2022 these charges were off-set by the Government price capping mechanism - this was based on the wholesale price with an adjustment made in addition to the monthly charges.
For 2023/2024 this capping has been significantly reduced, although ADA are lobbying Central Government to have Drainage Boards recognised as high users which could, if approved get the higher rate of capping.

We had previously started to base the electricity provision on a 5 year average, to take account of the impact of climate change and the provision suggested is based on an "average". It has not been policy to provide for possible extremes but members should be aware that, due to the increased unit rates, the direct pumping costs for an event will be significantly higher.
As an indicator, the indicative possible current-day costs for the 2020/2021 expenditure would be :-

Expenditure 2020/2021	11,203	
Indicative current day costs		39,200
Provision included for 2023/2024		18,000
Potential shortfall on budget		21,200

balances as at 31st March 2023

General Fund	175,428
Development account	3,495
Capital account	96,635
Other	0
	275,558

Potential shortfall as % of balances	7.69%

Members are asked to note the position when considering the rate requirement for 2023/2024.

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Commissioners must be borne for 2023/2024 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 50.45%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Huntingdon District Council – 49.55%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £1,650.

In 2023/2024 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £3,270.

Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2023 - £175,428

The estimated net expenditure of £78,473, which does not include provision for refurbishment works at pumping stations, in 2023/2024 is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 24.00p and

b) a Special levy on Huntingdon District Council of £38,885

In 2022/2023 a rate of 22.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £35,644 on Huntingdon District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

April 2023

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £78,473 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £39,589 and £38,884 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 24.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £38,884 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution (v).

vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1409 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meetings of the Board be held on Thursday 4th January 2024 at 2pm at the Old Nene Golf and Country Club, Ramsey.