

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board
held at the Lakeside Lodge, Pidley on Thursday 8th June 2023

PRESENT

C Leadbetter Esq (Chairman)	I Johnson Esq
D D Brown Esq (Vice-Chair)	S Johnson Esq
D W England Esq	T E A Noble Esq
M P England Esq	J M Short Esq
S Edgley Esq	R Waters Esq
J German Esq	H W Whittome Esq
M E Heading Esq	

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk to the Board), Mrs Nicola Oldfield (Consulting Engineer) & Mr R Wilmer (District Officer) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Costello, The Lord De Ramsey, L C A Munns and S W Whittome Esq.

B.1857 Inspection

Prior to the meeting of the Board, those members present, with the exception of Messers Edgley, German and Waters held an inspection at Pocket Park, Somersham.

Pocket Park, Somersham

At the request of the chairman, Mr Hill outlined the background to the agreement between the Board and Lafarge Aggregates and the duties/responsibilities on both parties for the agreement.

The Chairman, who declared an interest as land-owner, detailed the current issues with water levels during the winter, when paths through the park become flooded, which causes damage to areas of trees/planting. He further reported that due to the higher water table, it had not been possible to crop some areas and these had been turned over to grass fields.

He informed members that during the winter month, Lafarge would operate a temporary pump to relieve the localised flooding and updated on site visits from the Consulting Engineers who considered the area would gravity drain, a position he challenged.

On the third visit by the Consulting Engineer, levels were taken which the Chairman considered supported his view that gravity drainage would not work effectively.

Mr I Johnson referred to the particulars of sale for the property, which indicated that the future maintenance of any constructed pumping equipment would be the responsibility of the purchaser.

Mr Hill referred to the agreement in place between the Board and Lafarge Aggregates for the construction and future maintenance of a pump house and pumping equipment and that he had not been aware of these details in the particulars of sale.

Mr H Whittome queried if gravity drainage for the area/balancing lake was no longer an option and Mrs Oldfield confirmed that she would need a more detailed survey of the area

and to check against any design levels for the balancing lake before making a decision concerning this.

Mr H Whittome referred to any proposals for the drainage of the area to be with the agreement of Lafarge and Mr Hill referred to the terms of the agreements, which could need varying should alternative methods to be found to be more appropriate.

Mr D Brown referred to the conclusions reached at the February site meeting and the Chairman referred to the findings from this meeting indicating that the level of the balancing lake was 800mm lower than the outfall at Somersham Road.

Members agreed that:

- i) There should be a full topographical survey of the proposed evacuation route, together with details of the hard-bed level of the receiving watercourses.
- ii) That details of the design level of the balancing lake need to be established.

When this information was available, the Engineer would be in a better position to make recommendations concerning the viability of gravity drainage of the area.

The Chairman referred to pumping data from last winter, which he agreed to forward to the Consulting Engineer.

B.1858 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.

The Chairman declared an interest in item 12 on the agenda – Lafarge Restoration/Pumping Agreement.

Messer Heading & Whittome declared interests (as Middle Level Boards Members) in payments made to and any matters concerning Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1859 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 1st December 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1860 Rental Agreement, Puddock Pumping Station Bungalow

Mr Hill reported on the current position the discussions/recommendations of the finance committee.

RESOLVED

That the Middle Level solicitor check that the current agreement was relevant to the current tenant only and that, if necessary, the contractual agreement be updated every six months to ensure it remained a short-term tenancy only.

B.1861 Bank Mandate

Mr Hill requested authorisation to add the Chief Executive to the Barclays bank signatories if necessary.

RESOLVED

That Mr P Burrows be added as an authorised signatory of the Barclays Bank Account, should this be required in the future.

B.1862 Member Training Update

Mr Hill reported on the training undertaken by Members in the past year.

B.1863 Proposed Reconstitution of the Board

Further to Minute B.1801, Mr Hill reported on the proposals put forward by the Clerk and the discussions/recommendations of the finance committee.

Members discussed the matter and the implications of reducing the number of elected members and corresponding number of local authority appointees, viz;

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Proposed Reconstitution

Resolutions Required

The Board are asked to

- i) Confirm if they wish to reduce number of elected members by changing the constitution and reducing the quorum by changing the standing orders.
- ii) Reaffirm their rationale for the proposal
- iii) Assess and advise on how they aim to achieve the reduction in elected members
- iv) Confirm the option they wish to progress from Table 1
- v) Instruct the Clerk to write to Hunts DC and Fenland DC seeking their support to the proposals and if support is received then i) initiate the reconstitution with Defra and the Environment Agency, or ii) if support is not received then review the way forward and options at the Board's next meeting

Supporting Information:

The Board first discussed a potential reconstitution on 3 June 2021 and have had discussions on that theme at subsequent meetings. The last resolution on this topic was on 26 May 2022:

That the Clerk contact Defra about the Board's wish to amend their standing orders to require a quorum of 7 Members rather than carry out a formal reconstitution of the Board.

The previous clerk spoke to colleagues at Defra and the indication was that a quorum of that level would not be considered representative. The Board therefore need to consider options and issue a clear resolution at their meeting on 8 June 2023.

From experiences with previous reconstitutions, a very clear resolution is required preferably accompanied by an indication of support from levy paying Councils, as a reduction in elected members will mean a reduction in appointed members.

Any resolution needs to be clear in the proposal to i) reduce number of elected members by changing the constitution and ii) reducing the quorum by changing the standing orders.

The Board also need to be comfortable in the pathway to reduce elected members, eg are there sufficient members willing to step down to avoid triggering elections, or are elections palatable?

Within any resolution the Board would need to reaffirm the rationale for the proposal. Within the May 2022 minutes was the following statement “...due to the reduction in the number of farms in the area and some of the older Members retiring from farming”

Initial Pathway:

- 1 Resolution by the Board at their June 2023 meeting
If resolved to progress a reconstitution:
- 2 Clerk to write to Hunts DC and Fenland DC asking to support for the proposal
If support is received:
- 3 Clerk to initiate reconstitution with the Environment Agency & Defra

Table 1: Reconstitution options:

Option	Elected Members (Constitution)	Appointed Members*		Total Members	Quorum (Standing Orders)
		HDC	FDC		
Existing	21	2	1	24	12
A	15	1	0	16	8 or 9
B	13	1	0	14	7 or 8
Recommendation^	15	1	0	16	8

^ Recommendation from the Finance Committee

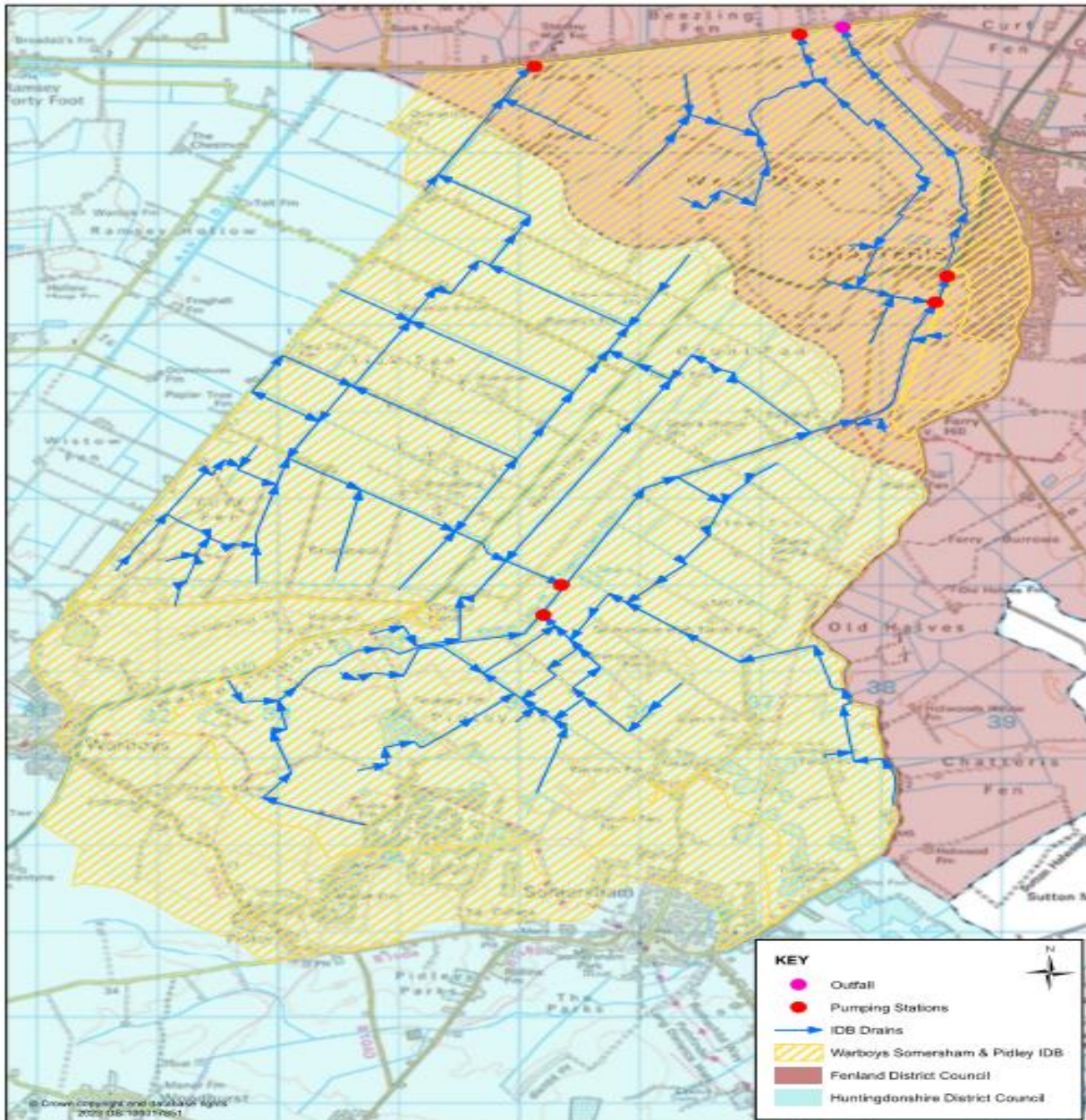
* Appointed members places based on 2022/23 accounts

89.15% agricultural rates

8.09% Hunts DC

2.76% FDC

Paul Burrows, Clerk, June 2023



RESOLVED

That the Clerk be authorised to progress a reconstitution of the Board, following the pathway as detailed in his report, to reduce the number of elected members to 15, together with a corresponding reduction in the number of local authority appointees and for the new Board to have a quorum of 8.

B.1864 Fenton Lode New Cut (Tesco Site)

Further to minute B.1840, Mr Hill reported on the previous discussions at Board meetings and of the discussions of the finance committee (see finance committee minutes) and that subsequent to the finance committee, the Clerk and contacted Persimmon Homes concerning the Byelaw infringements and general issues with the development. He further reported that a response had been received from persimmon Homes which confirmed that they had instructed their contractor (T & W Civils) to remove the drainage that is currently encroaching the Byelaw distance, with the

works scheduled to be completed within 6-8 weeks. This should mean the encroachments should be removed by 14th July 2023. Persimmon Homes confirmed that revised plans for the remainder of the sites interactions with the Byelaw strip were being developed and Mr Hill confirmed that the Clerk had requested that these are seen for comment before the plan were submitted for a planning revision.

Mr Hill confirmed that the plans were received 31st May 2023 and they have taken into account the advice provided at the January 2023 meeting. The initial review was that the revised plans were a good start but there remained areas of concern which would need to be addressed prior to plans being formally submitted and that the Engineer had now responded to Persimmon Homes concerning the proposed revisions.

In response to Mr H Whittome, Mr Hill outlined the possible course for enforcement action should Persimmon Homes fail to follow the course of action they had proposed to remove all encroachments within the Byelaw distance. Member considered the potential for legal costs in resolving these issues should enforcement action become necessary but were resolute that this should not in any way form an obstacle to ensure proper access was maintained along this vitally important watercourse.

RESOLVED

- i) To allow Persimmon Homes until 14th July 2023 to remove all encroachments within the Byelaw distance of Fillenhams Drain (Washways discharge channel) along the length of their development proposals at Womb Farm, Chatteris.
- ii) For Persimmon Homes to take account of the Boards requirements concerning the Byelaws and drainage for their development proposals at Womb Farm, Chatteris and for these to be reflected in any revised planning permission revisions to be submitted to the planning authority.
- iii) For a sub-committee to be formed consisting of the Chairman, Vice-Chair, Mr S Edgley, Mr M Heading and Mr T Noble.
- iv) That the Board authorise enforcement action to resolve any Byelaw encroachments at the Persimmon Homes development, Womb Farm, Chatteris should they fail to meet their commitment to remove all encroachments from the Byelaw distance.
- v) For the sub-committee referenced at iii to be authorised to take any actions they consider necessary in meeting the Boards requirements detailed in this resolution.

B.1865 Outstanding Drainage Rates

Further to minute B.1841, Mr Hill reported that works were progressing to bring the Boards rating records up to date and that the Clerk was looking into additional methods to accelerate the works.

B.1866 Lafarge Restoration/Pumping Agreement

Mr Hill referred to the earlier site inspection at Pocket Park, Somersham and the options discussed by the members.

In response to Mr I Johnson, Mr Hill outlined the basis for the funding arrangement of the Boards agreement with Lafarge Aggregates.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Consulting Engineer be instructed to carry out a full topographical survey of the proposed evacuation route, together with details of the hard-bed level of the receiving watercourses.
- ii) That details of the design level of the balancing lake be established.
- iii) That when all information is available the consulting engineer reports to the Board on the viability of gravity drainage from the site.
- iv) For the Middle Level Solicitor to review agreements between the Board and Lafarge to confirm the responsibilities/liabilities of each party.

B.1867 Review of Easement Agreements – (A Bartlett & Sons Ltd)

Mr Hill reported on the discussions of the finance committee and the Chairman reported that he had met with Toby Bartlett, who had confirmed that he was happy to continue with the arrangements in place for the carting and disposal of spoil from the Fenton Lode upstream of Washways pumping station on the western side of the channel.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk update the Chairman on the agreements in place and for him to arrange a further meeting with Mr Toby Bartlett to review and update the agreements as may be necessary.

B.1868 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported on recent correspondence from Huntingdonshire District Council that advised that Cllr Adela Costello & Cllr Charlotte Lowe had been appointed to the Board until 2026.

B.1869 Finance Committee

The minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023, were noted and approved, viz;

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Meeting of the finance committee – Tuesday 23rd May 2023

Present:

C Leadbetter - Chairman
D Brown
J German
T Noble
H Whittome

P Burrows (Clerk to the Board) and R Hill attended the meeting

Apologies received from:

The Lord de Ramsey
M England
D Fabb

Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023

Mr Hill outlined the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023. Concerning the income during the year, a rate of 22.00p was set, raising £182,784.16 and the calculated balance for the highland water contribution of £19,125.76 due from the Environment Agency had been received in the year.

At last years meeting the Boards District Officer informed the Board of his planned retirement at the end of March 2023 and put in place succession planning with the appointment of Mr Richard Wilmer from July 2022 to work alongside the District Officer to allow for a smoother transfer on the retirement of the post holder.

Although the succession planning was approved by the Board there was no provision or allowances made within the budget and these additional staff costs were unbudgeted.

Although there was an underspend of £9,734 against the drain maintenance budget with other heads of expenditure being around budget provisions there was an overspend of approx. £28,000 for labour costs. It is proposed that this can be off-set by use of capital funds budgeted to be raised, £10,000 for the pump overhaul programme and the provision of £12,461 for future works funding. Expenditure for electricity (pumping) and gas oil was over budget by approx. £3,300, with the majority of this being fuel for the hired excavator.

It was budgeted to replace a pumping unit at Puddock pumping station and for the installation of telemetry at the pumping stations. During the year the Puddock pumping station pump replacement did not happen and the telemetry installations were completed. The telemetry installations were 50% funded by grant-in-aid and the remainder, £13,877.49 has been funded from the capital reserve account.

Mr Hill reported that during the year, the Boards revenue balances, without any transfers for future works to the capital reserve account had decreased by £9,447 to £153,223, and the Board had a balance of £1,388.20 for the annual depreciation of the plant assets.

The Development charges account, after transferring the sum of £606.50 for engineering consultancy fees for further investigations concerning the Low-Level restoration was £358,488.03, the capital reserve fund, after transferring the sum of £13,877.49 for the installation of telemetry was £122,457.37 and the Low-Level Restoration Fund £50,000.00.

The Committee gave consideration to the current balance within the Low-Level Restoration Fund.

Mr Hill reported that following continuing discussions with Lafarge and the land owner concerning the pumping arrangements the Middle Level engineer has drawn up proposals for the future drainage of the application land. Members considered that until further information was available and there had been a commitment to the future drainage arrangements they were not in a position to recommend changes to the funding arrangements. They therefore agreed that no changes could be proposed at this time.

The Committee reviewed the current balance in the Capital Reserve Fund (£122,457.37) and Mr Hill referred to the fund being for future refurbishment of pumping units and pumping stations, with current approximate costs for a pump overhaul were between £15,000 and £20,000 per unit and the Board had thirteen pumping units. Members agreed to retain balances for future works.

The finance committee approved to recommend to the Board:

- i That no transfer to the Capital Reserve Account be made for 2022/2023.:
- ii To retain the sum of £50,000 transferred from the development charges account to the low-level restoration scheme, and for this fund to be reviewed following the review of drainage arrangements for the scheme.
- iii To approve the accounts.

Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023

Mr Hill referred to the current Practitioners' guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements which had recently been updated, and to the additional documentation for Board members to review.

Members reviewed:

Budget monitoring

Internal Controls

Internal Auditor

Mr Hill reported that after tendering Whiting LLP had been appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023.

Risk Management Assessment

- i) Consideration to the Board's Risk management policy
- ii) The insured value of the Boards buildings.

Asset valuation/insurances

Mr Hill reminded members that they had previously approved for the engineer to revalue all pumping stations and when this was completed to then index link the valuations for insurance purposes.

The chairman considered that the valuation for the bungalow was low and should be valued by a qualified agent.

Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill 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.

Payment's year ended 31.03.2023.

Bank Reconciliation – Year ended 31.03.2023.

The finance committee approved the budget monitoring for the 2022/2023 financial year, the internal controls, the appointment of Whiting LLP as Internal auditor for a five-year period, risk management, insured value of properties, bank reconciliation and payments for the year ended 31st March 2023, and to recommend the Board to approve these reviews, to include the valuation of the bungalow by a qualified agent.

Members reviewed the Annual Governance Statement.

The finance committee approved to recommend to the Board that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Statement for 2022/2023 on behalf of the Board.

Determination of annual values

Mr Hill referred to the schedule for determination of annual values for rating purposes.

The finance committee agreed to recommend the Board approved the determination.

Private works

The meeting gave consideration to the current rates charged for private works using the Boards machinery. The Chairman considered there was likely to be little opportunity to carry out these works, but that the Board should have approved rates should any works be completed.

The finance committee approved to recommend to the Board:

i That there should be no changes to the charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work for:

Doosan DX 140W excavator.

Current rates: £60.00 per hour inside the District
£65.00 per hour outside the District.

Flail mower

Current rates: £65.00 per hour inside the District
£70.00 per hour outside the District

Reviews and updates.

Access issues – Womb Farm development (Abbotts Walk, Chatteris)

The chairman updated the meeting on the ongoing issues concerning the development and considered the Board were being let down by Middle Level in dealing with this matter. He considered it was important for the Board to take a firm stance in protecting their access along this vitally important channel.

Mr Brown referred to the meeting at the Middle Level offices in January (2023) at which, the two representatives from Persimmon Home had not visited the site.

The meeting discussed the possible legal costs should it become necessary to take enforcement action.

The clerk referred to capacity issues at the Middle Level offices and the chairman considered that if out-sourcing was required then these costs should be picked up by Middle Level.

Mr Hill out-lined the likely timetable that would need to be followed if enforcement action became necessary. The chairman reported that there had been an agreed course of action from Persimmon Homes following the January meeting and expressed dis-satisfaction that these matters had not been actively pursued by staff at the Middle Level offices.

Approved:

The clerk to contact Persimmon Homes for an update and a firm commitment to meet their obligations as had been agreed at the January 2023 meeting.

That an update be made at the next scheduled Board meeting together with a strategy for the Board to approve to resolve matters through enforcement action should this be considered to be necessary.

Discharge channel new cut – performance deed

Mr Hill out-lined the position concerning the performance deed for the new cut on the Washways discharge channel and that the final payment was scheduled to be made back to the developer December 2023. He reported that the engineer had suggested a site inspection after maintenance works to check that there were no matters that could lead to a claim against the developer.

Resolved:

That the engineer check the detail of the performance deed with regards to time-scales for lodging claims.

The engineer arrange a site inspection with the Chairman and District Officer at an appropriate time to comply with the time-scales for lodging claims and when drain maintenance works offered the clearest view of the works.

Review of Bartletts agreements

Mr Hill referred to the agreements in place with Albert Bartlett and Son for access and services over the Washways pumping station discharge channel and concerning the agreements for the carting and disposal of spoil from the Fenton Lode upstream of Washways pumping station on Bartletts side of the drain and that Mr Toby Bartlett had been in contact concerning these agreements.

Resolved:

That the clerk update the Chairman on the agreements in place and for him to arrange a meeting with Mr Toby Bartlett to review and update the agreements as may be necessary.

Drain maintenance issues

The Chairman did not consider there were any further significant drain maintenance issues and that he would, with the District officer, continue to monitor the District.

Drain maintenance contract

The Chairman reported that the use of a self-drive hired machine had worked very well last year and that in combination with the Boards machine all planned works had been completed.

He informed the meeting that the retired former District officer has been in agreement to return for digger work and that he proposed to use a self-drive hired machine again this year and to engage Mr Robert Wilmer to operate the machine when on hire.

Mr Whittome queried the hourly rate to be paid and considered that it should be the current hourly rate of the Boards employee.

Resolved

To recommend to the Board that the Board use a self-drive hired machine for this year's drain maintenance slubbing works and engage Mr Robert Wilmer to operate the machine.

Puddock bungalow

Members discussed the current position and the Chairman reported that the new District officer did not currently wish to use the premises.

Mr Whittome referred to the importance of making sure that the agreement was in the name of Mrs Kent only and that, if necessary, the contractual agreement was updated at every six months to ensure the agreement remained a short-term tenancy only.

Standing Orders – reduction of elected members

The clerk reported on his findings from the minutes and his proposals for a clear pathway to progress a reconstitution with the Environment Agency and Defra. Members discussed the matter and the implications of reducing the number of elected members and correspondingly numbers of local authority appointees.

The chairman referred to members arriving for the meal provided at the inspection who had not taken part in the inspection and considered refreshment should only be provided for those members who had attended the inspection.

Resolved:

That the committee recommend to the Board that the number of elected members be reduced from 21 to 15 with the quorum reduced to 8

That refreshments only be provided for those members attending the inspection.

Lafarge low level restoration/pumping agreement

Mr Hill outlined the background to the agreement in place and to the consulting engineers supplementary report concerning this matter.

The Chairman declared an interest in this matter as land-owner and the meeting agreed that it was important for him to take part in the discussion to make them aware of the issues, but as land-owner, would not be able to be part of the decision process.

The Chairman reported that there was a land-owner agreement in place with the County Council to provide an area which was used as a “pocket park”, but due to water levels during the winter, paths through the park became flooded and areas of trees/planting experienced damage which had led to complaints from local residents. He further reported that there was a suitable electricity supply and generally, for a short period during the winter Lafarge installed a temporary pump to relieve this localised flooding. He considered that it was necessary to have a pumping facility available. He informed the meeting that the consulting engineer had been out to site on three separate occasions over an eighteen-month period and that he was of the opinion that the area would gravity drain, a position which had been challenged by the Chairman and that on the third visit levels were taken which the Chairman considered supported his view that gravity drainage would not work effectively.

Members considered it was a complex issue and Mr Whittome reported that it had originally been the view of the Board that the area would gravity drain but accepted that over time things can change, which made it vitally important to ensure that any solution agreed now would remain effective in the future.

Mr Noble considered that it was unlikely that gravity drainage would be effective for the area.

The Chairman informed the meeting that as land-owners they had levels taken and had data for all pumping that had taken place which he had made available to the Middle Level engineers but from conversations was of the opinion that this information had not been used.

Members considered that it would be beneficial to carry out an inspection of the site prior to the Board meeting and agreed that the Board should meet at Lakeside Lodge at 16:00 and inspect the site prior to the meeting on Thursday 8th June 2023.

District Officer

Mr Hill outlined the position regarding the District officer's salary and it had been the arrangements for the previous District officer's salary to be increased annually by the Middle Level Commissioners pay award. Mr Whittome gave a brief background on the mechanisms for the formula. The Chairman queried if it would be better for him to discuss and negotiate any increase with the District officer but members considered there to be a benefit to having an agreed process/formula in place. In response to Mr Whittome Mr Hill reported that the Middle Level pay award for 2023 was 7.14%.

Mr Brown referred to conversations with the new District Officer concerning certification for digger work and spraying and for additional tools to carry out his duties, the Officer requiring a new knap-sack sprayer and a strimmer.

Resolved:

That the Chairman organise suitable relevant training courses for the District Officer and the Officer be authorised to purchase new equipment for spraying and strimming.

That the committee recommend to the Board that the District officers' salary be increased by the Middle Level pay award for 2023 and that this indicator be used annually for the District officer salary.

Engineer report - Pumping stations

Mr Hill referred to the Boards pump overhaul policy and that no overhaul had been completed since 2015. A pump motor at High Fen pumping station had been overhauled in

2019/2020 and a pump replaced in 2021. It was reported that the old pump at High Fen pumping station had been retained and was stored in case of future problems. Mr Hill reminded the meeting of the schedule produced by the engineer for last year's meeting detailing the dates of the last overhaul of the pumping units at each pumping station:

Last pumping plant overhaul dates

Acre Fen pumping station

No.1 2012

High Fen pumping station

No.1 2021 - Replaced 2021

No. 2 2009 - pump motor overhauled 2019/20

Weed-screen cleaner and control panel installed 2020/21

Pidley pumping station

No.1 2005

No.2 2006

Control equipment replaced 2016

Puddock pumping station

No.1 2004

No.2 None to-date

Washways pumping station

No.1 2014

No.2 2014

No.3 2014

No.4 2015

Control equipment replaced 2015

Westmoor pumping station

No.1 2007

No.2 2008

Control equipment replaced 2011

Mr Hill reported that this section of the engineer's report was currently in draft form and that there was nothing significant identified at the pumping stations. He informed the meeting that an indicative cost to replace the inlet penstock at Puddock pumping station was likely to be in excess of £40,000 and to dam off and repair the inlet at Washways pumping station was likely to be in excess of £30,000.

Mr Hill considered that if the Board were to consider damming off at Washways pumping station, due to concerns raised in the past as to the condition of the piling on the discharge side of the pumping station it would be beneficial (if practicable) to dam off at the end of the piling, de-water and carry out a full inspection of the piling while works were being carried out.

Members considered that the costs were very high for the benefit provided and they would continue to monitor at both stations. The Chairman suggested getting a dive team in to inspect the piling.

Resolved:

For the consulting engineer to get a quotation for divers to inspect the piling on the discharge side of Washways pumping station and also the inlet structure.

Replacement excavator

The Chairman reported that it had not been possible to find a suitable replacement excavator but he would continue to make enquiries and look out for one.

Mr Whittome reminded members of the previous approval given by the Board for the replacement of the excavator.

Meeting June 2021

B.1747 Replacement Excavator Machine

Further to minute 1725, there was an extended discussion on this item covering the merits of replacing the current machine verses retaining it. Possible changes to the skill base of employees at some point in the future together with the challenges with obtaining a machine within the current £30k budget were noted, as was the up and coming Bartlett sales. In the end it was decided that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should have the flexibility to act should an opportunity arise now or in the future.

RESOLVED

To increase the approved net sum for a change of excavator to £50k and to leave the final decision on when and if to change the machine to the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Capital Improvement programme

Mr Hill reported that the consulting engineer was currently compiling a programme of all IDB projects and looking at the resources needed to deliver them with a view to "packaging" some works together which should aid with grant allocations. To deliver these

packaged projects it is likely that surveys of district systems will be required, however, it is likely that these surveys will be grant funded.

He further reported that the capital programme would be updated with the results of these surveys/applications and for the meantime the programme was a “holding position”.

The finance committee approved to recommend to the Board;

That the revised programme be approved.

Rate budget 2023/2024

Mr Hill reported that he had used standard budget provisions in drafting a budget proposal, using an “average year” for the provision of electricity, which also included a provision for additional standing charges. In response to the Chairman Mr Whittome updated on the position regarding the electricity contract.

In response to Mr Whittome Mr Hill confirmed that the draft figures only allowed for receipt of average highland water claims. The clerk briefly out-lined the position concerning highland water. Mr Whittome considered that the Board should budget for receipt of the full calculated claims.

In response to the chairman Mr Hill confirmed that the draft figures included an allowance of £10,000 for the pump overhaul programme and the equivalent of 1.5p rate for future works (approx. £12,500).

Mr Whittome asked what the figures would look like if the full allowance for highland water was made and the future works funding was removed. He stressed that as this would hopefully be a one-off year due to electricity costs, it could be possible to rate for standard revenue expenditure only with a view to addressing the future works position the following year. He considered the Board were in a healthy position with regards to balances and accepted that the electricity was an estimate for an “average year” so could vary significantly if it was a wet year.

Mr Hill confirmed that the draft figures indicated a rate requirement of just under 30p and if the adjustments suggested were made it would give a figure of just over 26p.

Mr German considered that with the number of pumping stations the Board had it would not be long before the pumps would require either overhauling or replacing. He considered the Board should be wary of reducing future works funding.

Members discussed the proposal to make and were split on making a firm recommendation. In response to Mr Hill the meeting instructed that the budget should be presented without the future works funding but the narrative to clearly show how this was arrived at.

Note – post meeting figures were updated with additional information concerning electricity standing charges and a re-calculation of highland water which gave a revised rate requirement of 27p.

B.1870 Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

Further to minute B.1810, the Board considered the charges for hiring of plant for private work and the recommendations of the Finance Committee. (last reviewed – May 2022).

RESOLVED

That the charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work for the year 2023-2024 remain at:-

(i) Doosan DX 140W Excavator

- £60 per hour in the District) (inclusive of operator's wages)
£65 per hour outside the District)

(ii) Flail Mower

- £65 per hour inside the District) (inclusive of operator's wages)
£70 per hour outside the District)

(NB – Travelling time being charged in addition to working time).

B.1871 Clerk's Report

The Clerk advised: -

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a ninth Chair's Meeting was held on the 13th December 2022.

The meeting covered a wide variety of matters likely to affect IDBs. A summary of the key points and resolutions follows;

David Thomas advised on the planned staffing changes being implemented due to his impending retirements. He stated that his post was being split back into Chief Executive/Clerk and Chief Engineer and that the appointments were:

Paul Burrows – to be the new CEO/Clerk - currently in post with the EA as a national Delivery Assurance Manager, and before that as Flood & Coastal Risk Manager for the East Anglia Area, then Flood Strategy Manager – Paul spearheaded Tactical Plans for the Fens which have secured the possibility of obtaining significant grant allocation on a Board by Board basis over a 15 year period, whilst at the same time defining a pathway to better understand the challenges faced and options worth considering for our lowland catchment as climate change and growth tests our current infrastructure arrangements.

Nicola Oldfield – to be the new Chief Engineer – currently in post with the EA as a Senior Project Manager. She most recently project managed the £30M Middle Level Barrier Bank scheme and had just taken over as project manager of the Cranbrook Counter Drain Strategy. She has, in the past, been employed by an IDB and has worked in close partnership with many IDBs including North Level IDB. Jonathan Brown stated how pleased the MLC Executive had been with these two candidates and how easy the choice had been given their knowledge of the area and experience to date.

An update was given on the role out of telemetry, which was receiving positive feedback from District Officers. A request was made for the login details to be provided to Chairmen as well as District Officers and it was confirmed that this would be arranged.

David Thomas confirmed that all but two Boards had stated their wish to move to the new planning and consenting charging and reporting arrangements and that the Assistant Treasurer was finalizing figures ready for the 2023 IDB/DDC meetings. A request was made for all correspondence which developers and their agents which is copied to Chairman should include the planning application references.

The protection and control of Bylaw strips was discussed at length and it was agreed that a policy document outlining the red-lines Boards should be applying to ensure that their ratepayers do not suffer as a result of development will be prepared for the Boards to consider. It was noted at the meeting that the refusal to issue any consent is subject to a reasonableness test, hence the document cannot preclude consenting everything within the 9m strip and the policy will be for guidance purposes only. It was felt that it should help developers, planning authorities and the Boards by providing some additional clarity. It was also felt that some case history examples to be circulated to members might help them understand the issues which have to be addressed.

Climate Change was discussed and it was noted that the MLC had completed its carbon audit and would now start work on carbon reduction and mitigation initiatives. It was also noted that the M&E engineer was looking at base levels of energy consumption at pumping stations, for example to see if panel heaters are left on permanently. He will be making recommendations to Boards if he identifies scope for reducing power without risking the apparatus.

WRE were mentioned and the Chief Executive stated that he was pleased that the draft water resource plan for the East included extensive reference to agriculture and its need for water to support the growing of food to feed the nation and also of the key role played by IDBs in transferring water to the point needed by abstractors. He also commented upon the newly proposed Cambridgeshire fens reservoir, north of Chatteris and advised that the MLC were responding on the need to get fill supply and draw-down arrangements right, but also that we need to seek to gain capital from the opportunities that the new reservoir will present in terms of bringing money into the area and potentially helping reduce flood risk and assist with water need balancing.

The Chief Executive advised that a decision had been made to move the MLC and IDB's electricity supply contracts from Anglian Farmers to the Green Energy Advice Bureau. This followed several years of extended poor service levels and lack of timely information coming from Anglian Farmers.

The future of IDBs and the value of potential amalgamations was once discussed and this gave rise to questions over small boards being able to secure a quorate for which this had been a particularly poor year. It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda and that any Chairs who felt that the time was right for their Boards to look again and the advantages/disadvantages of amalgamation would contact the Clerk. It was also agreed that it may be useful to undertake an exercise around updating the original Geoff Beal report which had recommended that the number of Boards within the area administered by the MLC could reasonably be reduced to three or four.

The Clerk finally noted that the ADA Great Ouse branch AGM would be held on the 7th March at Prickwillow Hall and would be in the format of workshops in the morning and an

AGM in the afternoon. The workshops theme this year would be; water resources, the new reservoir and climate change.

ii) Association of Drainage Authorities

a) Annual Conference

That the 85th Annual Conference of the Association was held on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at The Hive, Nocton, Lincolnshire.

This year marked another change in the arrangements for the National Conference and AGM, with the AGM being held virtually on 28th September 2022 followed by the national conference held as a hybrid meeting at the Dyson Farming complex in Lincolnshire on 9th November. The choice of venue was to avoid the risk of being impacted by rail strikes and it also represented significant cost savings. The event had limited numbers and was fully subscribed.

Following an introduction by the President of ADA Robert Caudwell who noted the good work being done by ADA but also noted that with COP27 ahead climate change was the single biggest challenge facing everybody and that IDBs would need to play their part in delivering carbon reduction.

The opening address was given by Councillor Matthew Riddle, Chairperson, Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board and Councillor, South Gloucestershire Council who spoke on options which could be pursued to change the way Special Levy is reported and dealt with by the Councils. The challenge at the moment was perceived as the lack of transparency with Special Levy payments not being itemised on rate bills in the same way that police and ambulance services are. There is also the issue that by not disaggregating the Special Levy payments, increases in them can currently (for Councils who pay large Special Levys) trigger a local election under the current rules.

Key note speakers were Hazel Durant Waterway & Flood Water Management Policy Team, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Luzette Kroon Board member: Innovation & International, Dutch Water Authorities, Dykgraaf (chairperson), Wetterskip Fryslân. Hazel spoke of the challenges ahead and noted that it would be foolhardy to expect revenue expenditure to be increased by treasury given the current economic climate. The best we could hope for would be last years' figures to be matched. She praised the work of IDBs and noted the important role they play in delivering flood risk benefits through their direct works and also through PSCAs. Luzette spoke of the similarities and differences between IDBs and their Dutch equivalents and went on to describe the challenges faced arising from climate change.

A panel discussion followed and the MLC Chief Executive was invited to sit on this panel. He took the opportunity to outline the work of WRE but also to express his concerns that currently Land Drainage Act legislation was holding back the full potential of IDBs in terms of water resource management and investment. A review is urgently required and the support of the EA and DEFRA is needed. Hazel agreed that there was a need but hope a way forward could be found that didn't require primary legislation.

The day concluded with a field visit to showcase the Dunston Beck Improvement Project. The improvement project, completed by Dyson Farming with the Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust and other partners, seeks to improve the biodiversity and water quality of the beck with a sensitive mosaic of wetland habitats delivered through

excavations recreating a meandering river system with the retention of water providing ecological and also some modest flood risk benefits.

b) 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](#)

c) 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) National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023

That the National Drainage Show & Floodex 2023 will be held at ExCel, London on the 22nd and 23rd November 2023.

iv) 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 from 1st April 2023.

v) 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.

vi) Delegation of signatory on consents

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 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.

vii) Service Delivery Frameworks

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.

viii) Local Government Support - Special Levies

Thanks to lobbying by the Association of Drainage Authorities and Local Authorities, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities announced an additional financial support package totalling £3m for 2023/24 to support the 15 Local Authorities most impacted by increases in special levies from Internal Drainage Boards driven by unprecedented increases in energy costs. We provided ADA with information to support this case and Fenland District Council have secured £177,281 and King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council £205,451. The Ministerial Statement is available [here](#). Disappointingly it is explicit that this is a one-off exceptional payment and clear that the government will not provide additional grant to Local Authorities to cover special levies on an ongoing basis.

RESOLVED

- i) Electricity contract – the Board approved the actions of the Chairman.
- ii) Delegation of Signatory on consents – the Board noted the scheme of delegation.
- iii) Service delivery Frameworks – The Board approved the Clerk be authorised to enter into these agreements.

B.1872 Consulting Engineer's Report

Mr Hill reported on the Consulting Engineers reports, viz;

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley I.D.B.
Consulting Engineers Report June 23

D264 Somersham Pocket Park

Purpose of this report

For submission to the WSP IDB Finance Committee, May 2023, and Board Meeting, June 2023.

I have undertaken a review of the outstanding issues at Somersham Pocket Park and present my conclusions as follows.

Background

A deed (1988) was drawn up (and later supplemented) between Redland Aggregates Ltd (the company) and the Board, the terms of which were:

- The Board agreed to pump the restored land.
- The company to provide drainage works and provide and install a pumphouse and pumps to the specification and satisfaction of the MLC Engineer.
- The Board received a commuted sum for future pumping/maintenance.
- At no time shall the Board have responsibility for drains in the worked land, application land or future land.
- And also, the Board will not be under obligation to pump if the receiving drainage system cannot receive it i.e., in flood conditions.

The provision at the time was for an electric pump. As far as I can tell, MLC never provided a specification for the pump. The minerals company subsequently installed a wind pump – this was NOT to the satisfaction of the MLC Engineer.

Having reviewed the files on this to date I have determined:

- A consent application was made in or before 2003.
- MLC responded on 18 December 2003 requesting more information about 'matters of detail that are still outstanding.' We requested further details regarding their 'downstream culverting works, ...details of the size and type of pumping facility, the monitoring equipment, etc'.

- In 2008 the Chief Engineer determined the following should be considered in relation to the agreement (is this the 2012 agreement?)
 - Design life 100yrs
 - Agree method of analysis for pumping rates and climate change
 - Design to be to current codes of practice and H&S
 - New station must have telemetry link to MLC system
 - Include costs of construction, ancillary equipment, commissioning of the station and one year of maintenance.
 - There must be a suitable sized mains power supply to the station.
 - The station must meet all current legislative requirements and conform to codes of practice.

The 2012 deed variation captures the above. It is unclear whether Lafarge submitted revised proposals to MLC for consent/approval.

As a fresh pair of eyes, I recommend that the drainage proposal for the site should be reviewed to enable a 'green, gravity-based' solution, considering the following aspects which would not have been considered at the time of the initial proposal in 1988:

1. Capital and maintenance/running costs
2. Capital and maintenance/operating carbon cost
3. Maintenance needs and liabilities
4. Climate change considerations
5. Water resource needs in the district
6. Conserving and enhancing the environment
7. Improving public awareness of flood risk and water resources

Current situation

The current proposal consists of provision of a suitably sized pumping station discharging to a pipe/culvert that outfalls into the existing riparian ditch upstream of Long Drove, although it is assumed the original intention was to discharge to the existing riparian ditch running north then east. I have discussed the proposal with the MLC engineers and taken into consideration the restored site, climate change factors and the current economic climate, to determine what my advice is to move this forward. My aim is to determine if the proposed pumped option remains technically, economically and environmentally feasible and that what is proposed, and ultimately delivered, continues to be in the Board's interest.

My observations are as follows:

1. A pumping station will be costly to build, materials costs are currently high (build costs are likely to be in excess of £500k); has a high carbon footprint (construction and operation); has high running costs (electricity and/or future white diesel and energy costs are extremely volatile at present); gives the Board a future liability (maintenance, operation and future refurbishment and replacement costs for 100 years as required in the 2012 deed variation).
2. This 100-year requirement is not in line with the Great Ouse Fens Tactical Plans. The plans are based on maintaining the current Standard of Service for the area over a 15-year period (2015/16 to 2032/33), acknowledging that some capital investment may be required, until longer term decisions are identified for the most appropriate way of managing flood risk in the Great Ouse Fens over the medium to long term. These recommendations will form part of the Environment Agency's Fens 2100+ outputs.
3. Currently, pump operating costs are likely to be greater than £10k per annum so would exceed the interest earned on reserves (based on £400k); electricity standing charges of £1,100 per month are not unusual at the current time.
4. The publicly accessible site (Pocket Park) brings additional security issues.
5. The downstream discharge pipe/culvert will have little to no fall on it (i.e., very low velocity flow), will not be self-cleansing and will therefore be liable to siltation, possibly requiring frequent jetting (approximately every 3-10 years, requiring access for a 30t jetting vehicle) either by the riparian owner or by the Board *if* the Board chooses to adopt it; has high construction costs and associated carbon footprint; needs to be buried with a minimum cover of 600-900mm to avoid damage from farming operations; will need replacing in the future (100yrs).
6. The downstream receiving ditch needs cleansing and the invert of the pipe under Long Drove is (apparently) currently below ditch bed level.
7. The 300mm diameter pipe under Long Drove will restrict flow, resulting in the proposed pipe needing to be sized to create storage, leading to standing water and potential siltation of the pipe.

In addition, considering the wider receiving system:

- I've been advised that Pidley Pumping Station is not able to accommodate increased flows; MLC doesn't accept increased flows into the Middle Level System.
- Installing a pumping station on the Pocket Park would result in water being pumped 4 times before reaching the sea; water is effectively being pumped downstream.
- The WSP IDB 'reverses' water during the summer months to provide water for irrigation.

Further assessment of the pumped solution is presented in the Appendix.

Conclusion

I strongly recommend that an alternative, 'no regrets' solution be considered. Ideally this would consist of:

1. A passive outfall structure into the existing riparian drain to the north,
2. This riparian drain be surveyed (ecological and topographic), cleansed (pioneering work) and reprofiled to provide adequate capacity and environmental enhancement (say £20k), with a 9m easement for ease of maintenance in the future (annual flailing and gentle desilting every 10 years).
3. There may be an option to receive environmental grants.
4. The Board may be more agreeable to adopting a well-designed, easily accessible open watercourse, if they so wish.
5. This would deliver the developer's and the Board's duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity and contribute new Biodiversity Net Gain targets due to be implemented in November 2023.
6. Reduce maintenance costs and negate the need for future replacement.
7. Allow future adaptation (in 15 years+) to suit recommendations for the medium to long term management of water in the Fens.
8. The existing wind pump could be repaired and retained, and although shouldn't be included in the overall discharge calculation, would provide a small benefit and would be good PR (renewable energy, good feedback from the public who use the park). Agreement would be needed on who retains the maintenance liability for this structure.
9. Water could be retained in the 'upper catchment' for summer irrigation, reducing or removing the need for 'reversing' water in the summer.
10. Some small-scale land re-profiling could be done in the park to locally raise footpaths, or they could be diverted slightly through the clever use of landscaping and grass mowing, (a good example of this is approach Milton Keynes Parks Trust), to manage/divert the public.
11. Information boards could be installed to educate the public on flooding and water resources and role the Pocket Park plays.

Further assessment of a gravity solution is presented in the Appendix.

Discussion

A site meeting was held on 26 January to view the impact of flooding on the Pocket Park and a subsequent meeting was held on 24 April 2023 with Charles Leadbetter, Landowner & IDB Chair (CL) and Michael Charlton, Mineral Estates Manager, Tarmac (MC). Apologies were received from Deborah Jeakins, Business Manager, County Planning, Minerals and Waste, CCC. The purpose of

the meeting was to review the background of the work, to discuss my findings presented above and to confirm a way forward. The following actions were agreed in order to progress a solution:

1. Send a record of the meeting to all (MLC) – Completed.
2. Check the status of the discharge consent application (MLC and Tarmac)
3. Confirm the runoff calculation and provide a pump specification to Tarmac (MLC)
4. Check planning requirements (Tarmac)
5. Prepare a design proposal and submit for approval by the MLC Engineer (Tarmac), and
6. Submit a discharge consent application for approval (Tarmac)
7. Report progress in the Engineer's Report for the June meeting (MLC) – Completed.

This document is the Engineer's Report (item 7).

Recommendation

I recommend that works to manage water levels in the Pocket Park be progressed as soon as possible.

I also recommend that the Board considers the appropriateness of the pumped solution as defined in the Deed of 1988, amended 2012, and confirm to the Chief Engineer that they wish to proceed on this basis.

It should be noted that all and any proposals put forward by Tarmac must meet the satisfaction of the MLC Engineer as required by the Deed and any works under either option may/would require:

- A variation to the existing agreement of 2012.
- A change to the planning approval/new planning permissions.
- A discharge consent.

Nicola Oldfield, Chief Engineer

5 May 2023

Technical considerations

Pumped Solution Pros

The main advantage of a pumped solution is that it would allow levels to be reduced below the level of the receiving IDB drain at Point 103 which is 99m MLD. This in turn will allow the footpath on the west side of the park to be used more reliably during periods of high rainfall and prevent the need for temporary pumps being used to reduce water level.

Pumped Solution Cons

The main disadvantage of a pumped solution is the liability for its ongoing operation and maintenance costs for a minimum of the 100 years design life as stated in the 2012 variation of the deed. There is also the environmental impact of the energy used during the operation and maintenance. The water from this site would be the first Middle Level IDB catchment that needed to be pumped 4 times before reaching the sea. Firstly at this site, then Pidley, Washways and finally St Germans.

Gravity Solution Pros

The main advantage of a gravity solution is that it would have minimal operation and maintenance costs and the associated environmental impact compared with a pumped solution. If water levels could be increased, then there would also be an opportunity for the Board to hold water back in times of high rainfall and then release this water as and when required during summer.

Gravity Solution Cons

The main disadvantage of a gravity solution is that due to the level of the receiving culvert at Point 103, the level in the lake cannot be dropped below 99m MLD. This will require the low points in the footpath to be raised to enable the path to be used reliably during periods of high rainfall. If the lake was going to be used for water storage, then the land points to be raised will be determined by the upper water storage level.

Environmental considerations

Carbon

IDBs have a statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the Environment Act 2021. This could include considering the effect of carbon emissions on the environment and taking opportunities to reduce emissions where possible which include:

- Making the use of gravity drainage wherever possible and minimising powered pumping. This also makes financial sense.
- Reducing the use of high carbon-content material such as concrete and steel and seeking low-carbon options for these wherever possible (including low-carbon concrete).
- Minimising pumping and power usage where possible by adapting pumping schedules and installing variable speed drives. This also makes financial sense.
- The use of renewable energy. This also makes financial sense.
- Supporting approaches which hold water within the system in times of water surplus for use in times of water deficit, such as farm reservoirs, so pumping can be reduced (although care has to be taken that abstraction licence conditions are still met i.e., only taking water between October-February).

IDBs have a duty under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 to make a contribution towards the achievement of sustainable development when exercising their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions.

Defra has issued guidance for RMAs on sustainable development in relation to their FCERM functions, it includes:

- Taking account of the safety and wellbeing of people and the ecosystems upon which they depend,
- Using finite resources efficiently and minimising waste,
- Taking action to avoid exposing current and future generations to increasing risk, and,
- Improving the resilience of communities, the economy and the natural, historic, built and social environment to current and future risks.

Biodiversity

In line with the IDBs statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity through the Environment Act 2021, when considering options for project approaches, it is important to ensure that the option being progressed delivers biodiversity enhancement. Piping water underground to discharge into a nearby open channel is unlikely in some areas to deliver greater biodiversity enhancement than the creation of a new open channel to do the same (unless the habitat lost by the creation of the ditch is of greater value than the open water habitat which is being created which would not usually be the case).

If there are water voles in the nearby area, the IDB should seek opportunities to extend and improve habitat for them and this could be achieved by the creation of a new ditch or enhancement of an existing ditch.

Other

Whatever the solution, the area where a new ditch or pipe is to be laid is likely to require a planning adjustment and ecological surveys and consent for the discharge.

Pumping Stations

The Board is asked to note the Supplementary Report Improving Capital Delivery 2023. As a part of this process, it is recommended that a full catchment study be undertaken prior to any non-urgent works being undertaken. This may mean that some of the works identified below will be assessed as part of the study rather than being delivered separately. This will have the benefit of maximising available Grant in Aid. A Project Brief is currently being prepared by the Chief Engineer and will be shared with the Board in due course.

Other than the matters previously reported or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations appears to be in a mechanically and electrically satisfactory condition.

Energy Use

During routine inspections the panel thermostats have been checked and set to help reduce station baseload. The option of an extra night running only mode would be complex and unnecessary as the current level control system is set up to pump during the night at the cheap rate. The new District Officer can program levels into the controller which gives flexibility to set day and night pumping levels to reflect the seasons and conditions. The settings of Acre Fen levels have been modified to reduce the amount of water that is pumped twice so that more flow is directed to Westmoor and less to Washways to help reduce energy use.

Valuations

The MLC process for these is currently under review and it is going to be more effective if they are completed once the new process is in place.

High Fen

The level controller cable has been replaced to reduce interference from the pump's power cables.

Puddock

Pump 2 continues to operate with the Moisture Ingress Sensor (MIS) unit defeated. Both pumps, which were manufactured in 1992, are operating well but, due to the age of these pumps and the deterioration of the insulation resistance readings, consideration should be given to their replacement. Pump 1 was overhauled in 2004 but there is no record of pump 2 being overhauled. The latest routine inspection shows that the pumps have insulation resistance readings of 24 M Ohm and 48 M Ohm, as new these pumps would have had readings in excess of 200 M Ohm. As the pumps are now over 30 years old they need to be overhauled or replaced to ensure their reliability. Bedford Pumps has previously quoted in the region of £60k for a new pump or £15k for overhaul. Overhaul costs can vary considerably once the unit is removed and assessed, and sometimes be similar to the costs of a new pump.

The replacement of the inlet at Puddock will require extensive work including damming off and road closure and is likely to exceed £40k. This could be considered as part of a wider system study, as described above. **The Board is asked to confirm if the replacement of Puddock inlet is within budget so that more formal quotes can be obtained, or alternatively, to approve its inclusion in a wider assessment of the system and potential pump refurbishment/replacement works.**

Washways

The battery chargers are both smart type chargers and the manufacturer has advised that it is normal for the batteries to require regular topping up. **The Board is asked to approve the battery replacement on pump 1 engine, approximate cost £250.**

To replace the inlet valve under Washways' station, Fenton Lode on the discharge side of the station, will need to be dammed to ensure there is no backflow of water, to dam this safely is likely to cost in excess of £30k. Also, if the section of Fenton Lode from the station to the control structure at the Forty Foot is going to be used for water storage, then the structure should be structurally surveyed, and the implications considered of raising or lowering the levels in this section. **The Board is asked to confirm if this would be in budget so that more formal quotes can be obtained, or alternatively, to approve its inclusion in a wider assessment of the system and potential pump refurbishment/replacement works.**

Diversion of Fenton Lode/Fillenhams Drain, Chatteris (Dents Diversion)

With the exception of the encroachment problems associated with the Persimmon Homes site at Womb Farm (Abbotts Walk), discussed elsewhere in this report, no reports of items requiring remedial works at this time have been received.

The Agreement and Performance Deed associated with the diversion works terminates in 2023 and it is suggested that a detailed inspection of the diverted section is undertaken soon after flail mowing operations can occur.

An inspection in early/mid August would maximise the time available to submit a claim if required.

Planning Matters

In addition to previous planning matters, the following new development related matters have been received and, where appropriate, dealt with since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
1229	F/YR22/1080/RM	Rattlerow Farms Ltd	Agricultural (Dwelling)	First Furlong Drove, Chatteris
1230	F/YR22/1184/F	Mr J Evans	Residence (Extension)	Blackmill Road, Chatteris
1231	F/YR22/1186/FDC	Fenland District Council	Residential (Up to 4 plots)	Gibside Avenue, Chatteris*
1232	F/YR22/1183/RM	Mr Bialoblocki	Residence	Willey Terrace, Doddington Road, Chatteris
1233	F/YR22/1236/O	Mr & Mrs P Guy	Residential (Up to 6 plots)	Doddington Road, Chatteris
1234	F/YR22/0889/F	Floorspan Contracts Ltd	Change of use (Office block and 3 x production sheds)	Fenton Way, Chatteris
1235	F/YR22/1269/F	J A Investments (London) Ltd	Residential (2 plots)	Clare Street, Chatteris
1236	F/YR22/1308/F	Mr & Mrs Newby	Residence (Conversion of garage)	Clare Street, Chatteris
1237	H/22/02355/FUL	Mr D Fabb	Wind turbines (2)	Heath Road, Warboys
1238	H/22/02515/HHFUL	Mr S Clark	Residence (Garage)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1239	H/22/02456/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Wall	Residence (Extension)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1240	H/22/02501/FUL	Mr F Adams	Change of use (Agricultural to caravan holiday park - 18 pitches)	Chatteris Road, Somersham*
1241	H/22/02539/FUL	Mr & Mrs Boys Fuller	Residence (Extension)	Fen Road, Pidley
1242	H/23/00038/FUL	Mrs N Rule	Residence	Heath Road, Warboys
1243	H/23/00207/AGDET	Client of The Planning Partnership	Agricultural (Building)	Warners Drove, Somersham
1244	H/23/00206/AGDET	Client of The Planning Partnership	Agricultural (Building)	Warners Drove, Somersham
1245	H/23/00231/HHFUL	Mr King & Mrs Wall	Residence (Extension)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1246	F/YR23/0116/ENQDIS	Persimmon Homes	Residential	Doddington Road,

		East Midlands	(Up to 248 plots)	Chatteris*
1247	F/YR23/0127/F	DND Ltd	Residential (9 plots)	Doddington Road, Chatteris
1248	F/YR23/0114/RM	Accent Homemade Ltd	Residential (50 plots)	Fairbairn Way, Chatteris*
1249	F/YR23/0155/F	Persimmon Homes East Midlands	Residential (31 plots)	Fenland, Way Chatteris*
1250	F/YR23/0200/F	Mr & Mrs M Smith	Residence	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris
1251	H/23/00468/AGDET	Mr P Wilderspin	Agricultural (Steel frame lean-to)	Warboys Road, Pidley

Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters

Planning application ending 'FDC' relate to Fenland District Council

Planning applications ending 'HHFUL' relate to Householder applications for Full Planning Permission

Planning applications ending 'AGDET' relate to Agricultural Determination

Planning applications ending ENQDIS relate to Enquiry to establish if conditions are discharged

Developments that are known to propose direct discharge are indicated with an asterisk. The remainder propose, where applicable and where known, disposal to soakaways, infiltration devices and/or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The applicants have been notified of the Board's requirements.

The following applicants have chosen to use the Infiltration Device Self-Certification or Checking Service and, in doing so, agreed that if the device was to fail in the future the land owner would be liable for any remedial works to rectify the situation.

- (a) Mr Clark, extension at Parkhall Road, Somersham (MLC Ref No 1226) – Self certification
- (b) Stratton Oakmont Properties, 2 new dwellings at Warboys Road, Pidley (MLC Ref No 1175) – Checking Service
- (c) Mr Clark, garage at Parkhall Road, Somersham (MLC Ref No 1238) – Self certification

Members of the Board will recall that at the last meeting it was decided that specific detailed entries would not be made in future reports unless requested to do so, with the exception of questions raised at the last Board Meeting. In the absence of any instruction no detailed entries have been made.

Chatteris

Development at Womb Farm to the south west of Doddington Road (Fillenham Way and Vermuyden Close), Chatteris - Colliers CRE (MLC Ref No 524), Triman Developments (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref No 528), Client of Haskoning DHV UK Ltd (MLC Ref No 1036), Barmach Ltd (MLC Ref No 1040), Triman Developments (UK) Ltd & Robertson Strategic Asset Management Ltd (MLC Ref No 1066) & Persimmon Homes East Midlands (MLC Ref No 1177, 1246 & 1249)

In early February an application FDC Ref No F/YR23/0116/ENQDIS (MLC Ref No 1246) was submitted to Fenland District Council (FDC) seeking confirmation of compliance in relation to the submission elements of various planning conditions including Condition 11 (Surface Water Drainage).

FDC subsequently decided that the conditions had been complied with. The Case Officer's Report includes the following:

"The comments from the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage Board (IDB) have been noted. Having regard to the site layout, the built form of the development including roadways are set back more than 9m from the edge of the drain and will therefore provide for maintenance access of the drain by the IDB. This area is shown to be planted with shrubs/ hedgerow which may ultimately have to be removed or reduced should the IDB require it. This is not considered to significantly alter the landscape or biodiversity value of the development should it be required to be removed or reduced at a later stage. In this regard, maintenance access is not anticipated to be an issue for the IDB and the matter of future consents is not something that the planning system can consider as this is a separate process under the Land Drainage Act 1991."

This highlights the challenge being faced by this and other Boards.

A planning application was also submitted to FDC in February, FDC Ref No F/YR23/0155/F (MLC Ref No 1249) seeking permission for a revised layout to the south east of the balancing pond, not in close proximity to Dents Diversion. A decision is currently pending but if approved this will increase the total number of properties to 252.

In respect of the encroachment beside Fillenhams Drain, the Commissioners' Planning Engineer has provided guidance and support to both the Board's Clerk and Solicitor and also visited the site with the Chief Engineer.

The topographical survey and suggested solution to resolve the situation requested at the meeting at the Commissioners' office in January has now been received. A response seeking clarification on some points and making suggested improvements was sent to Persimmon Homes.

Pidley

Residential development on land to the west of Richmond Lodge, Fen Road, Pidley - Mr Hopkins (MLC Ref Nos 907, 936, 980 & 1104) & Mrs Bradshaw (MLC Ref No 1060)

Further to item (iv) of Minute B.1844, the Board members were, as requested, provided with the history of the above development but no subsequent instruction has been received.

In the absence of the receipt of any further information the Board may consider it appropriate that the Commissioners' Solicitor writes to the parties concerned and their agents advising of the contravention of the Board's Byelaws.

In order to assist further discussion, the Board is asked to provide instruction on how it would wish us to proceed.

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.

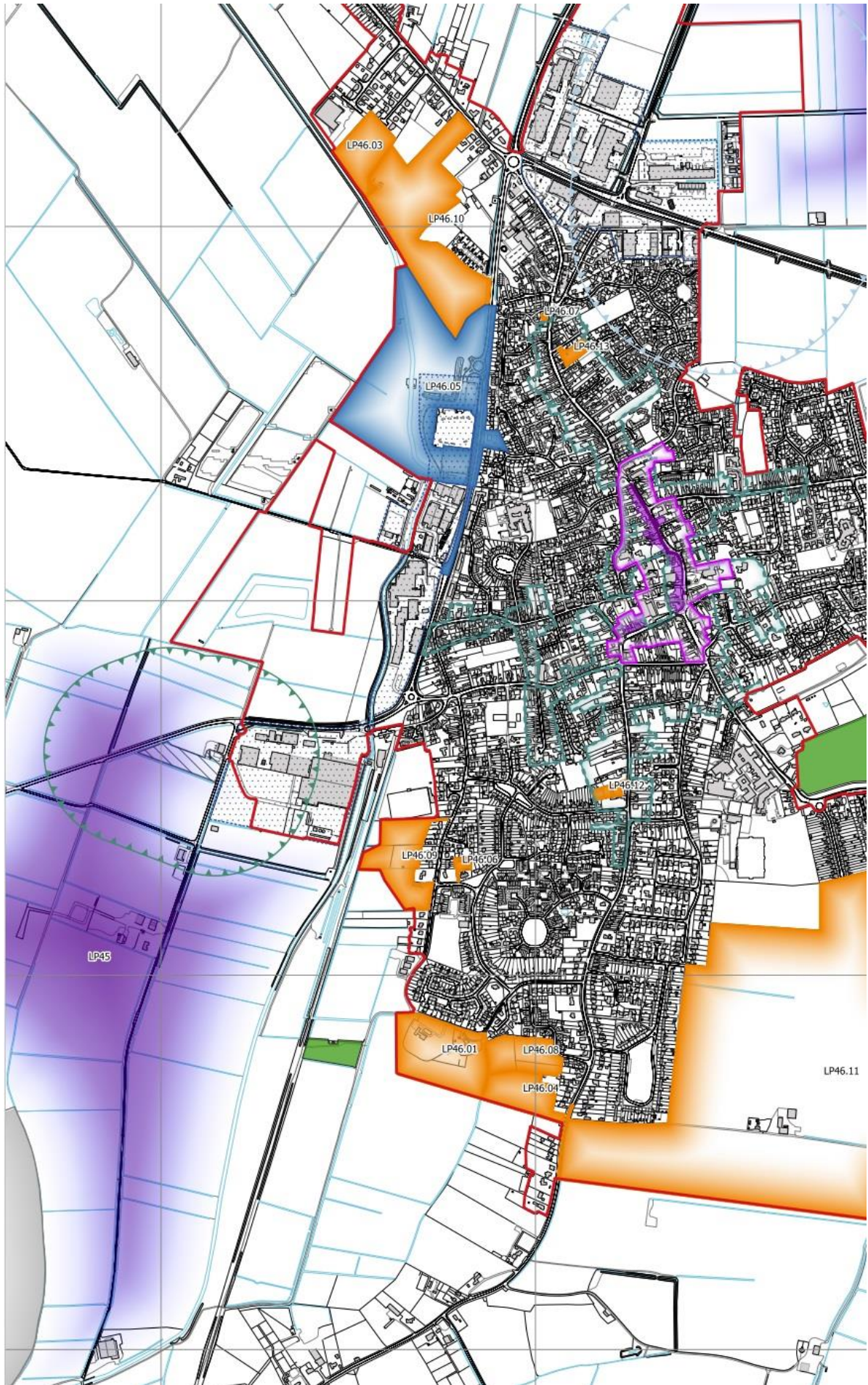
All responses to consultation documents were made on behalf of both the Middle Level Commissioners and its associated Boards.

Emerging Fenland Local Plan

The draft Local Plan which sets out the emerging policies and proposals for growth and regeneration, and the "proposed sites" to deliver this growth, was the subject of a Public Participation Consultation during September and October.

Proposed sites within the Commissioners'/Board's catchment

The "proposed sites", are shown on the following extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Chatteris (Inset 02):



Extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Chatteris (Inset 02) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment

A. Policy Reference LP45.01 (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment [SHELAA] Site reference Not applicable) – South-west of Chatteris, north and south of the A141.

The supporting text advises that Policy LP45 relates to an aspiration to significantly boost employment growth and identifies two Broad Locations for Employment Growth (BLFEG) adjacent to the town:

- South-west of Chatteris, north and south of the A141; and
- North-east of Chatteris and east of the A141

Proposals for major employment development within a BLFEG must be planned and implemented in a co-ordinated way which accords with an agreed overarching Master Plan, and be linked to the timely delivery of key infrastructure.

Prior to any planning permission being granted, appropriate safeguards must be demonstrably in place to prevent 'cherry-picking' of profitable elements of the BLFEG being built first and the provision of appropriate infrastructure either delayed or never materialising.

Amongst other matters the Council will seek the following, unless demonstrably inappropriate or unviable to do so:

- Provide a network of green infrastructure to increase the biodiversity value of the site which, where possible, protects and enhances existing habitats present on-site;
- Incorporate design solutions to maximise water efficiency;
- Provide details of a viable transport strategy to ensure the BLFEG is accessible;
- Incorporate appropriate landscape treatment which minimises the amount of hard landscaping and ensures that the development can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;
- Incorporate an appropriate flood risk management strategy and measures for its implementation; and
- Demonstrate availability and deliverability of the proposed scheme.

B. Policy Reference LP46.01 (SHELAA Site reference 40211) – Land south of Salisbury House, Blackmill Road – 100 dwellings

C. Policy Reference LP46.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40447) – Womb Farm (North-West), Doddington Road – 53 dwellings

This proposed site is to the south west of George Way.

D. Policy Reference LP46.04 (SHELAA Site reference 40499) – Land on the west side of 92 London Road – 52 dwellings

E. Policy Reference LP46.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40288) – Land west side of Fenland Way – 20 dwellings

In the absence of a suitable plan this is presumed to be land between the area occupied by the Tesco Store and the Womb Farm site currently being developed. See specific response later in this response.

F. Policy Reference LP46.06 (SHELAA Site reference 40325) – Land rear of 2-8 Gibside Avenue – 6 dwellings

G. Policy Reference LP46.08 (SHELAA Site reference 40057) – Land west of 15 Fairbairn Way – 50 dwellings

H. Policy Reference LP46.09 (SHELAA Site reference 40072) – Land west and south of 74 West Street – 58 dwellings

I. Policy Reference LP46.11 (SHELAA Site reference 40384) – Land south east of Chatteris, London Road – 1,000 dwellings

This is the Chatteris South – Tithe Barn Farm proposal.

J. Policy Reference LP46.12 (SHELAA Site reference 40505) – Land south east of Chatteris, London Road – 7 dwellings

K. Policy Reference LP47.01 (SHELAA Site reference 40505) – Metalcraft Business Park – 14.60 ha (Employment Classes B & E(g))

L. Policy Reference LP47.02 (SHELAA Site reference 40455) – Honeysome Road – 11.16 ha (Classes B & E (g)).

M. Policy Reference LP47.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40458) – Fenton Way Mandleys – 8.38 ha (Classes B & E(g))

N. Policy Reference LP47.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40403) – Eclipse Scientific Group – 0.74 ha (B1b Research & development)

O. Policy Reference LP47.06 (SHELAA Site reference 40408) – Land west of Fenton Way and East of Iretons Way – 8.86 ha (Other)

P. Policy Reference LP47.07 (SHELAA Site reference 40409) – South west of Doddington Road – 0.15 ha (B1a Office)

Note: There does seem to be some confusion concerning the site description and it is presumed that this allocation relates to an area in the vicinity of the Tesco Store. However, in the absence of a suitable plan the exact location of this site is unknown.

Q. Policy Reference LP47.08 (SHELAA Site reference 40539) – Unit west of Jacks, Fenland Way – 1.06 ha (B8 Storage & distribution)

In the absence of a suitable plan this site is presumed to be land to the west of the Tesco Store, possibly on the western side of Fenton Lode.

Response to the Consultation

A response was submitted to FDC on behalf of both the MLC and the associated Boards with catchments within the Council's area and included comments on:

The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside – Frontage Infill Development

Growth Strategy – Neighbourhood Areas;

Health and Well-being; Renewable Energy – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure

Design and Amenity – Policy LP 7: Design – Nature, Public Spaces, Homes and Buildings +
Policy LP 11: Community Safety

Housing – Policy LP 12: Meeting Housing Needs - Homes for Permanent Caravan Dwellers/Park Homes and Boat Dwellers

Town Centres – Policy LP 17: Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities - Community Facilities

Transport and Infrastructure – Strategic Infrastructure, Transport Infrastructure, Community Infrastructure, Wisbech Rail, Wisbech Access Strategy, Whittlesey Relief Road, Local Projects, Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Natural Environment – Policy LP 24: Natural Environment_- Designated Sites, Local Sites, Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, Biodiversity and Geodiversity in development, Mitigation of Potential Adverse Impacts of Development

Policy LP 25: Biodiversity Net Gain + Policy LP 26: Carbon Sinks and Carbon Sequestration - Trees & Hedgerows + Table 8: Landscape Character Areas + Policy LP 29: Green Infrastructure

Flood and Water Management - Policy LP 32: Flood and Water Management

Specific comments included:

Disappointment was expressed that most of the contents of Part (B) Flood Risk and Drainage of Policy LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland within the current Local Plan have not been included in this policy contained within the draft Local Plan

2021-2040. As a result, it is considered that the new policy is much weaker which is disappointing given the special water level and flood risk management requirements within the Fens.

Concerns were raised about the piecemeal development encountered within the Council's area, for example, along Upwell Road in March or the Bridge Lane area in Wimblington, which is resulting in many small and isolated attenuation systems which will be difficult to maintain and will be a future liability for the parties concerned, the failure of which could potentially increase flood risk. The Council was advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards would prefer more holistic solutions to be utilised such as the pond excavated by Hutchinson's in conjunction with the Hundred of Wisbech IDB which will serve several developments in the area close to the A47/Cromwell Road junction.

Policies for Sites and Settlements

When responding to similar documents it has been noted that having prepared detailed responses to specific site allocations, which has taken a significant amount of officer time and expense, the responses made are ignored.

Therefore, as a result, with a few exceptions detailed responses on individual sites were not prepared but a list of minimum requirements that need to be considered was provided when determining the suitability of a proposed site.

Specific responses

Specific responses were made on the following sites:

Policy LP 6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure – Site Allocations LP06.01
SHELAA Site reference 40468 - 98.79 ha at Coldham Wind Farm, Elm + LP06.02
SHELAA Site reference 40469 174.29 ha at land adjacent to Graysmoor Drove,
Elm.

Policy LP36: Residential site allocations for Wisbech (Page 118) (Map 28 Wisbech (Inset))

Policy LP46: Residential site allocations in Chatteris (Page 137) (Map 02 Chatteris (Inset))

The entry on the draft document included the following:

“Site allocation: Land west side of Fenland Way Site Allocation SHELAA Dwellings Area (Ha)
LP46.05 40288 20 14.16

Development should provide:

- A mix of residential and employment development, to provide approximately 20 dwellings and 8.5 ha of employment land;

- **Through the site design, maximise the benefits of Fenton Lode drain, including through the orientation of buildings, outlook and location of access;**
- **For the construction, access and maintenance of moorings and a turning area on Fenton Lode drain with the location, extent and details to be agreed with the Middle Level Commissioners;**
- Footway/cycleway connections to the existing network, and to The Gault Public Right of Way and Fenland Way;
- Appropriate mitigation of contaminated land;
- Archaeological investigation to determine the need for archaeological mitigation works;
- Extensive avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures to achieve biodiversity net gain, as the site is known to support populations of protected species as well as rare plants and areas of semi-natural grassland habitat.
- An assessment of Flood Risk, which reflects the recommendations of the SFRA Level 2 assessment; and
- Appropriate landscape screening on the southern and western boundaries.”

The response submitted to FDC was as follows:

“Policy LP46: Residential site allocations in Chatteris (Page 137) (Map 02 Chatteris (Inset))
 Site Allocation LP46.05 SHELAA Ref. 40288 20 houses 14.15ha
 Land west side of Fenland Way

Whilst it is acknowledged that Chatteris Town Council has had a long aspiration for a navigation facility to serve the town and note that the proposed development should provide amongst other things “For the construction, access and maintenance of moorings and a turning area on Fenton Lode drain with the location, extent and details to be agreed with the Middle Level Commissioners”.

It should be noted that neither Fillenhams Drain/Dents Diversion are navigable watercourses. This waterway is protected by Warboys, Somersham and Pidley IDB and not the Commissioners. The majority of Fillenhams Drain is owned by the aforementioned Board but Dents Diversion is under separate ownership.

The water levels within the waterway are governed by a water control structure close to the junction with the Forty Foot River. Its main purpose being to prevent flood water from the Commissioners’ system entering the Board’s system during high rainfall/flood events. During normal events the waterway is not deep enough to serve even shallow bottomed craft but depths do rise temporarily when the Board’s pumps at Washways Bridge operate. The subsequent discharge has been described as a “tidal wave” and thus not conducive to boating operations potentially requiring “strong stream” advice.

In engineering terms, it would be possible to raise the water levels to maintain a navigation but this would significantly increase flood risk to the north west of Chatteris which discharges into it. This solution would require the provision of a lock and water control facility at the outfall together with the raising of defences, possibly using sheet piles, both of which would require significant investment. The latter would be difficult to install in the urban area due to the existing constraints.

It is respectfully suggested that the recently announced Fens Reservoir may offer a better solution and this can be included in any discussions with Anglian Water.”

Next Steps

All comments received during the consultation period are being reviewed with any changes arising being made to the draft Local Plan.

A Proposed Submission version is due to be published in summer 2023 for public consultation. This version of the plan will then be submitted together with any responses to the Secretary of State who will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to carry out a public examination into the document.

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. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation

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 be 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. Call for Sites

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 response has been received despite a request to do so.

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 Boards "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).

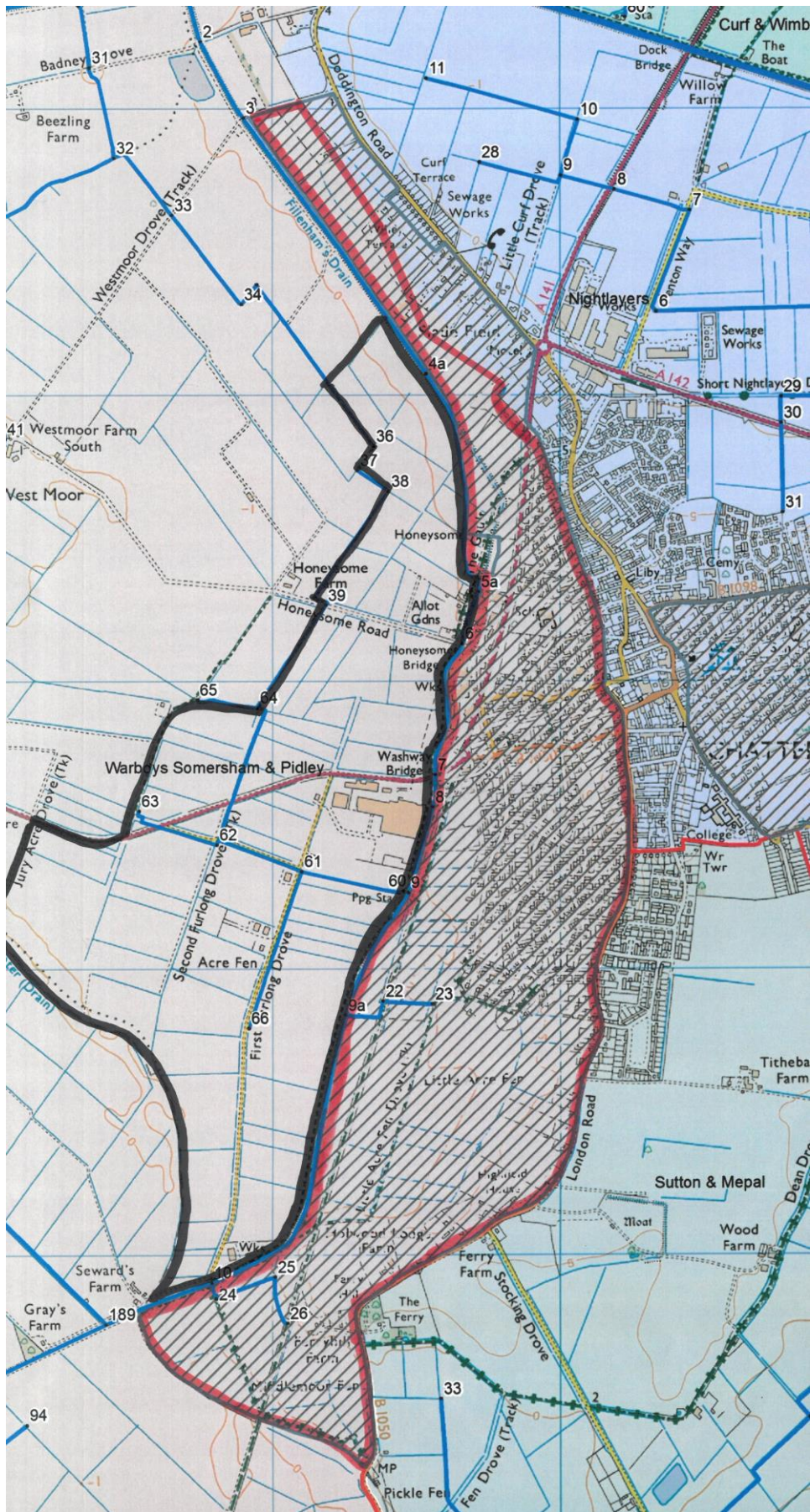
Neither items B nor C are the same as a "critical drainage area" which has a specific meaning in flood risk terms i.e., "A Critical Drainage Area (CDA) is an area that has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority as such by the Environment Agency in line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

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern", edged in red, and/or "Acute drainage areas", edged in black, within the Board's catchment has been undertaken and are shown on the following extracts.

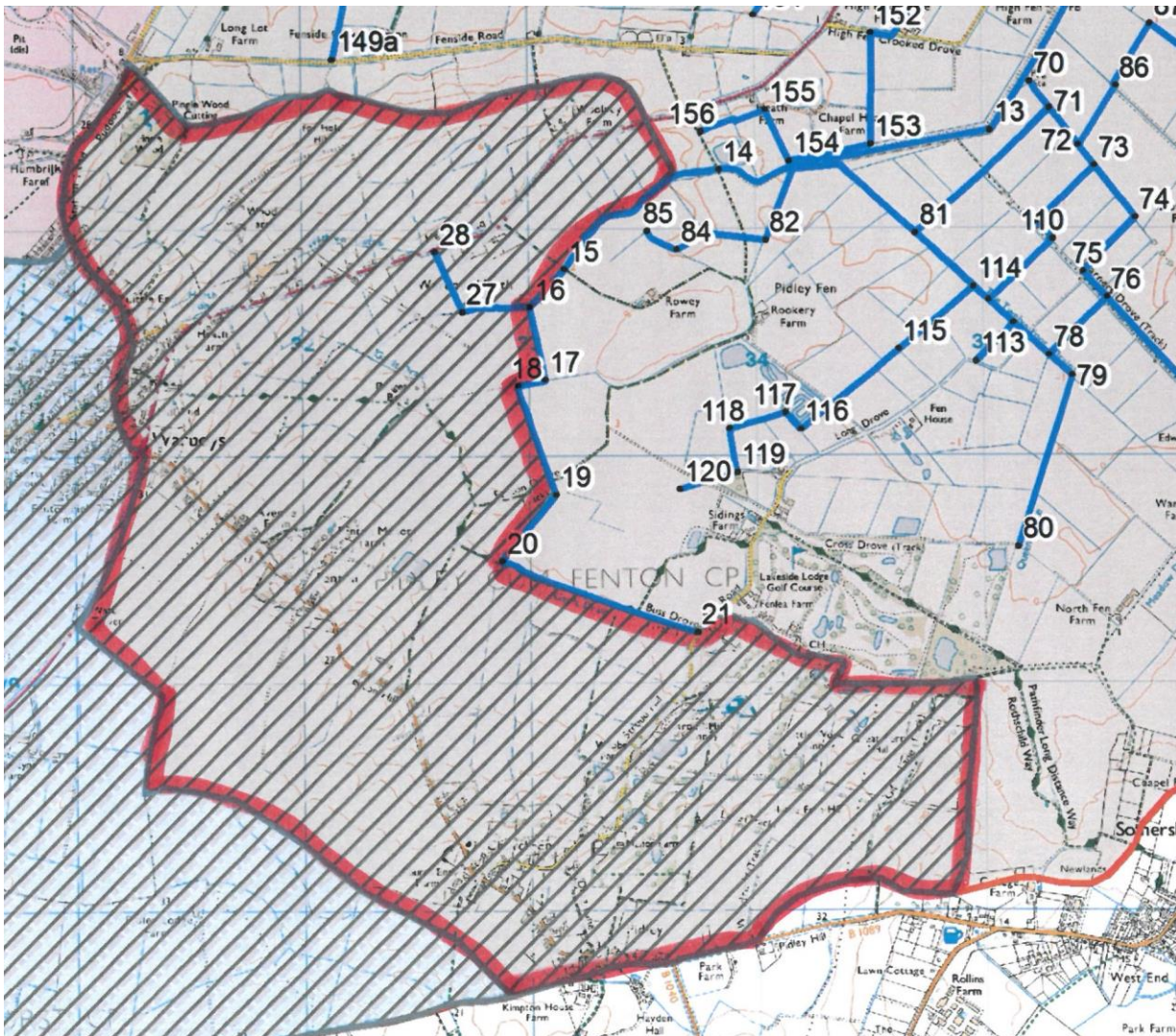
Please note that involvement in the Environment Agency's Cranbrook and Counter Drain (CCD) Strategy has raised a question concerning the extent of the Board's highland catchment in the Pidley and Somersham area which is currently being reviewed.

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.



Plan extract showing the extent of the area of concern and confirmed acute drainage area at Chatteris



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:

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

Strategic Drainage and Wastewater consultation and issues

A. The Right to Connect

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.

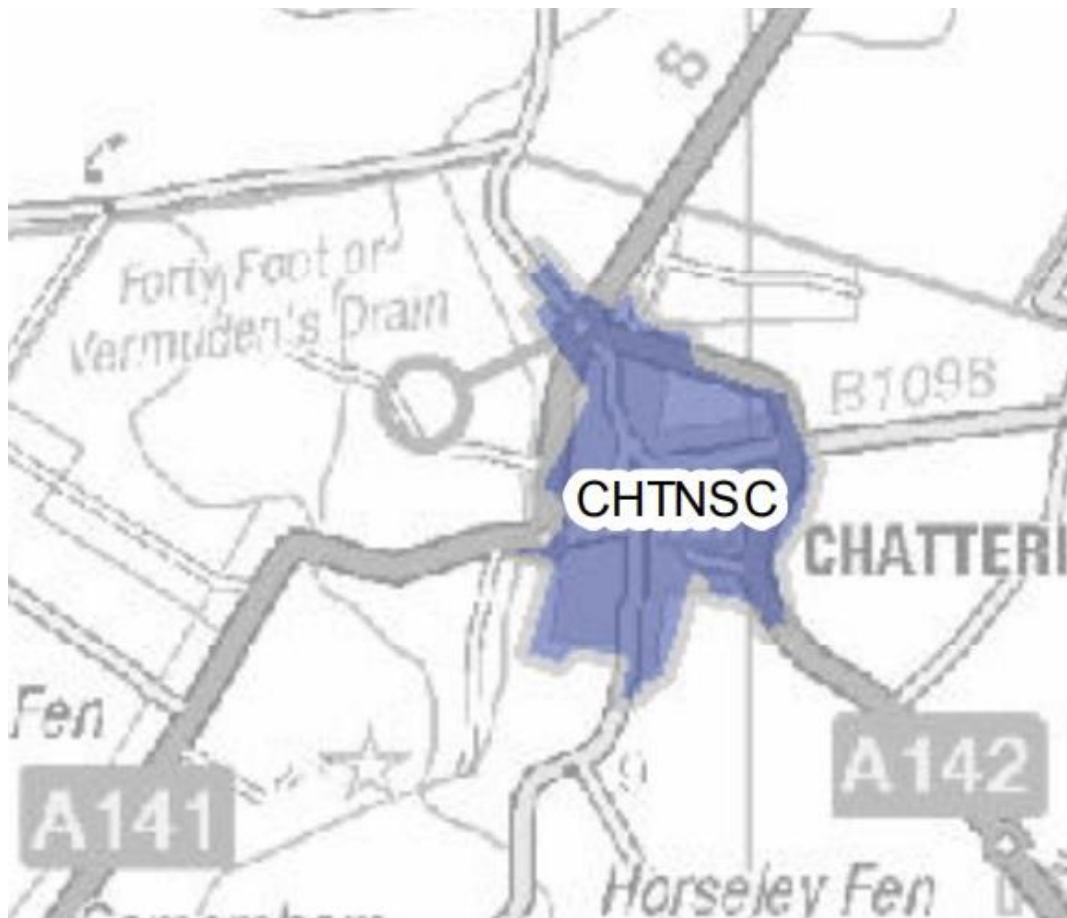
Partnership Working

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

Chatteris



Extract from Anglian Water's Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map showing the extent of the catchment served by Chatteris – Nightlayers Fen WRC

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
CHATTERIS - NIGHTLAYER FEN	11235	12687	13506	Yes	0

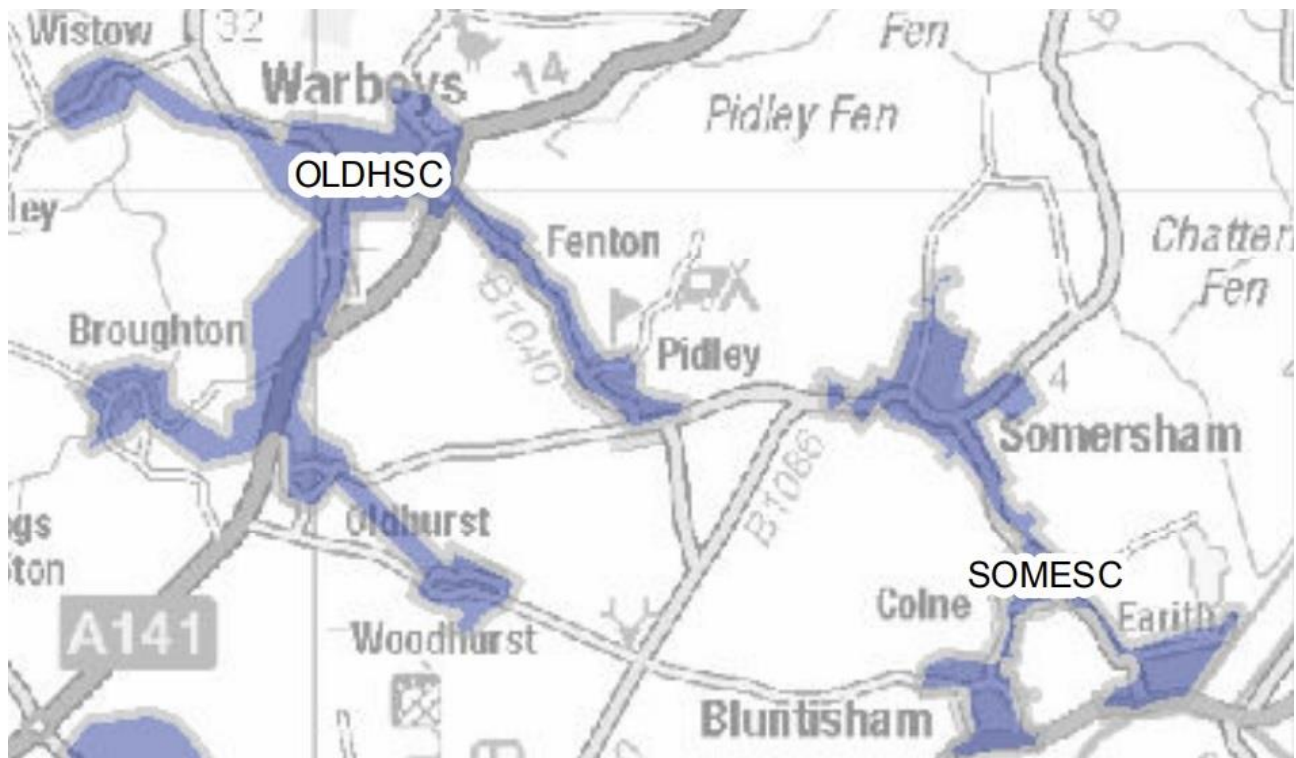
Extracts from Anglian Water's draft Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan showing the results and proposed plans for Chatteris – Nightlayers Fen WRC

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy	Partnership opportunities identified
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	-	No risk identified.	Wait and see.	-

Nightlayers Fen WRC

This WRC serves the town of Chatteris but discharges into the neighbouring Nightlayers' IDB system. The WRC currently serves a population of 11,235 with an increase of 2,271 (20%) allowed for in the process.

Despite a number of combined sewers in the WRC catchment area no risk was identified in the medium term with a wait and see strategy in the longer term.



Extract from Anglian Water's Risk Based Catchment Screening (RBCS) Map showing the extent of the catchments served by the Oldhurst and Somersham WRC's

Oldhurst WRC

The villages of Fenton and Pidley and part of Warboys that are within the Board's surface water catchment, discharge foul water to Oldhurst WRC which is outside of the Board's District and discharges into the Environment Agency's Bury Brook.

The WRC currently serves a population of 5105 with an increase to 5139 allowed for in the process. The reasoning behind this small increase is being questioned with AWSL.

No risk was identified in the medium term with a wait and see strategy in the longer term.

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
OLDHURST	5105	4900	5139	Yes	1

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

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy	Partnership opportunities identified
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications. River can see low flows and also have flash floods.	No risk identified.	Wait and see.	-

Somersham WRC

The northern part of Somersham is within the Board's surface water catchment but treated foul water effluent from this WRC discharges out of the Board's catchment into the Environment Agency's Cranbrook Drain and into the Ouse Washes system.

Infiltration removal has been identified in the medium term with a wait and see strategy in the longer term.

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
SOMERSHAM (CAMBS)	7754	7496	7863	Yes	1

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

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy	Partnership opportunities identified
WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	River can have low flows.	Infiltration removal.	Wait and see.	-

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:

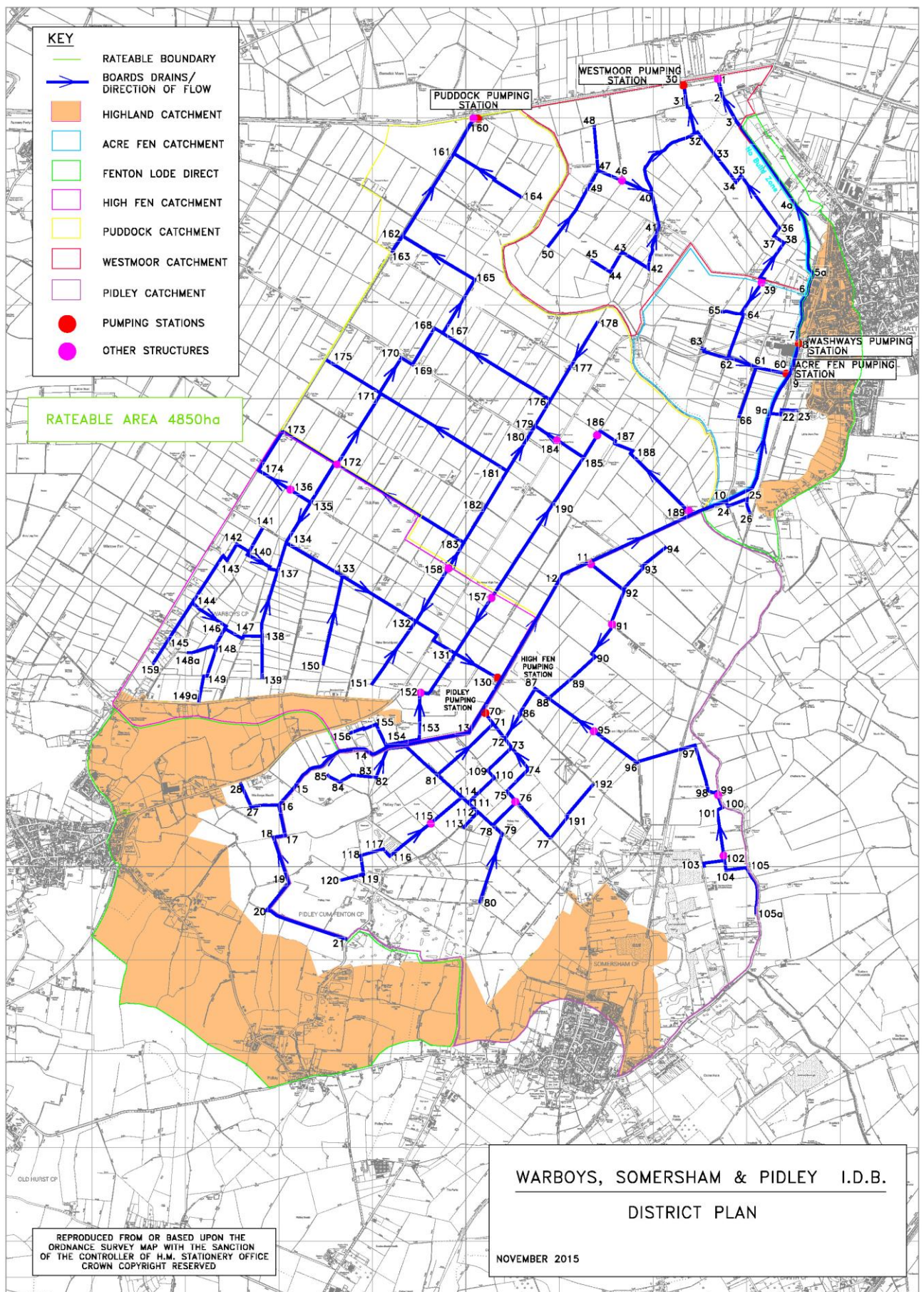
- (a) Further to the last meeting of the Board the builder/developer of the old Puddock Pumping Station is investigating a number of options to resolve the surface water and treated water discharge. MLC have been informed that a new water main was installed to the new development.



Consulting Engineer

5 June 2023

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley (333)\Reports\June 23



Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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 its 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 wholesale 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

With regards to the pumping units at Puddock pumping station, the District Officer reported that the pumps were currently operating satisfactorily.

Mr Hill informed members of the Engineers estimate to dam off and replace the inlet at Puddock pumping station and the district Officer confirmed that when fully closed, there was only a minimal amount of seepage which did not cause any issues for the Board.

Mr Hill reported on the Engineers assessment to dam off, inspect and repair/replace the inlet valve under Washways station and suggested, that if the Board were going to consider damming off downstream of the pumping station, they should also consider damming off at the downstream end of the piling to then allow a full inspection on the condition of the piles. He further reported that when this was discussed by the finance committee, the Chairman had suggested getting divers in to carry out a preliminary assessment of the condition of the piles and of the inlet valve.

With regards to the agreement and performance deed associated with the diversion works on Fillenhams Drain, Chatteris (Dents Diversion) Mr Hill reported that the Engineer had confirmed

that the final date for the Board to submit a claim to rectify faults is 18th August 2023 and that there should be an inspection prior to this to allow a claim to be submitted should it be necessary.

RESOLVED

- i) That the reports (Consulting Engineer & supplementary) be approved
- ii) That the condition of the pumping units at Puddock pumping station continue to be monitored.
- iii) That no action be taken concerning the refurbishment/replacement of the inlet at Puddock pumping station and that its condition continues to be monitored.
- iv) That the Board instruct the Consulting Engineer to arrange the replacement of the battery on pump no 1 at Washways pumping station.
- v) That the Engineer arrange for quotations for divers to inspect the condition of the piling and inlet valve downstream of Washways pumping station and on receipt of the quotations, the Chairman be authorised to take any further action as he considered appropriate.
- vi) That the Planning Engineer arrange site inspection of the diversion of Fillenhams Drain, Chatteris (Dents Diversion) prior to the 18th August 223 to allow for a claim to be submitted should this be necessary.
- vii) Residential Development on land west of Richmond Lodge, Fen Road, Pidley - MLC 907,936,980,1104 & 1060 – that the Middle Level solicitor write to the parties concerned with a clear instruction that any and all outstanding matters concerning the contravention of the Boards byelaws require resolving immediately otherwise the board will be required to consider enforcement action to rectify the contraventions.

B.1873 Capital Improvement Programme

Mr Hill reported that the programme would be updated fully following the conclusion of the full system study being instigated by the Consulting Engineer, viz;

Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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
Acre Fen 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	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	252.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	356.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	90.0
	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	20.0	20.0
	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
High Fen 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	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	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	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	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	0.0
Pidley 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	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	49.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	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	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

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2023/2024)

Puddock 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	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	25.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	150.0	0.0	0.0	194.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	90.0
	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
Westmoor 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	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
	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	10.0	10.0
	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
Washways p/s	Refurbishment of pumping station	0.0	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 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 pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0
	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	30.0	30.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Plant	Toyota Hi-Lux - AJ11 BND	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Doosan DX140W Excavator - AU09 FEW	0	0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Property	Puddock pumping station bungalow	0	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	Washways discharge channel piling replacement													
		0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	75.0
		27.6	252.0	100	50	0	0	10	185	0	225	180	95	1,125

Identified on PAFS 2020 submission

updated from engineers asset appraisal

ammended for 2020/2021 following finance committee recommendations

Acre Fen and Puddock p/s weed-screen cleaners move to year 10

Pump overhaul/replacement policy ammended 2021 - figures left for guidance

Doosan excavator replacement put back a further year - to review 2023

December 2022 - approved telemetry at all 6 stations - £4,500 per station less 50% grant aid

Programme to be further developed following engineers review/system studies for possible grant aid packaged applications

RESOLVED

That the programme be approved in principle.

B.1874 District Officer's Report

The District Officer reported that he was settling in working on his own and adapting to the requirements of the job. He informed members that he was keeping daily records of water levels/pumping, which he was finding useful to know how different parts of the system interacts with others and that in conjunction with the Middle Level mechanical & electrical engineer, was keeping monthly records of pumps, electricity reading, diesel stock which over time will help build up a useful database concerning the operation of the district system.

He confirmed that although 6 years old, there were currently no major issues with the works truck, which he found reliable and that it was due for service/MOT next week.

He informed members that this years maintenance programme was the Acre Fen and Westmoor Districts, which should be completed with the Board machine, which although currently operating without any major issues, he considered, due to the workload this coming season, the Board should consider a full service prior to the commencement of the works programme.

With regards to the pumping stations, he had managed to attend to the leaking vents at Pidley pumping station, and although secure, considered security measures could be improved to the lock at Acre Fen pumping station.

He reported that the tenant had contacted him concerning the condition of the gas fire at the Boards bungalow and that he had raised these concerns with the Middle Level solicitor, but was unsure of the current position.

Mr J German considered that it was important to build up a database of pumping/water levels and was very happy that the District Officer had taken this on.

Mr H Whittome reminded members that the Board had previously nominated 'representatives' to be available to look after pumps in the absence of the District Officer and enquired if this was still in place. Members confirmed that they were still available but agreed it would be beneficial if they arranged a 'refresher' with the District Officer.

Members discussed the implications of lone working and further training that may be appropriate.

RESOLVED

- i) That the report of the District Officer be approved and the District Officer thanked for his work during the preceding year.
- ii) Th District Officer arrange a service of the Boards wheeled excavator by Merlyn Lambert Ltd.
- iii) The Engineer to arrange for a metal security shroud to be fixed over the padlock at Acre Fen pumping station.
- iv) That the Middle Level solicitor confirm the current position concerning the condition of the gas fire at the Boards bungalow at Puddock pumping station and if not already in hand, arrange for repairs/service by a suitably qualified engineer.
- v) That the Chairman organise suitable relevant training for the District Officer and the officer be authorised to purchase new equipment for spraying and strimming.

- vi) The Consulting Engineer look into the possibility of adding the District Officer to the Middle level 'ok alone' system.

B.1875 Environment Officer's Report

Members considered and approved the Environment Officers report, viz;

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

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MARCH
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
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Sofi Lloyd
Environment Officer

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Environmental Update – April 2023

Introduction

As I took up post in mid-October, unfortunately I am not in a position to provide a full biodiversity action plan update yet, but have compiled the following update of environmental activities and key points relevant to the Board, which I hope you find useful.

I have been familiarising myself with the IDB area, its approaches and plans as well as I can, over winter, but from now onwards I would like to plan some further visits to the IDB area to develop a much better understanding of the area and your priorities, so will be in touch to do organise this. I note that there are a number of valuable provisions for wildlife across the area, including a number of designated sites and boards' drains are generally very supportive of thriving populations of water vole. I look forward to working with you to enhance any areas that we agree would be beneficial and feasible to do so.

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. Process and Compliance Review

I am well into a thorough process and compliance review of all our environmental approaches across all boards. This will help to ensure that IDBs are operating in line with all new legislative and regulatory requirements, updated guidance and best practice, and are better prepared for any changes we expect to be introduced in the next year. This will include the impacts and opportunities brought forward by the Environment Act 2021, including biodiversity net gain and delivering biodiversity enhancement. The outcomes of this review will feed into the BAP refresh for each IDB.

I also plan to review the currently-available pre-application environmental advice for consents and standard responses with the planning office.

4. GIS System Development

To support the activities mentioned above, an improved environmental GIS system is being developed and work is well underway to digitise all available environmental data. Lots of data exists due to all the good work already undertaken by IDBs but it exists in different states in different places. There is also a great deal of information held by the Local Environmental Records Centres, for which I am pleased to say, we now have a contract in place to receive regularly. This will be a vital data source that we must consult when planning our work to help us identify any protected and priority species which may be impacted or enhanced by our work. We are merging all these data sets to develop a more complete picture of what we have, in order to define and preserve the baseline from which to progress. This, more complete picture is also necessary to enable us to identify opportunities for environmental enhancement. Developing the GIS system this way will deliver efficiencies in environmental data collection, analysis and reporting, allowing more time to undertake practical conservation work on the ground. It will also enable us to share our data more easily with the local environmental records centres, contributing to the understanding of the local and national status of many species and help to raise the profile of the IDB and the valuable work they do to support biodiversity. You can see an example of how some of the digitised data is coming together in the attached IDB map.

5. 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 adaptations 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.

6. 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

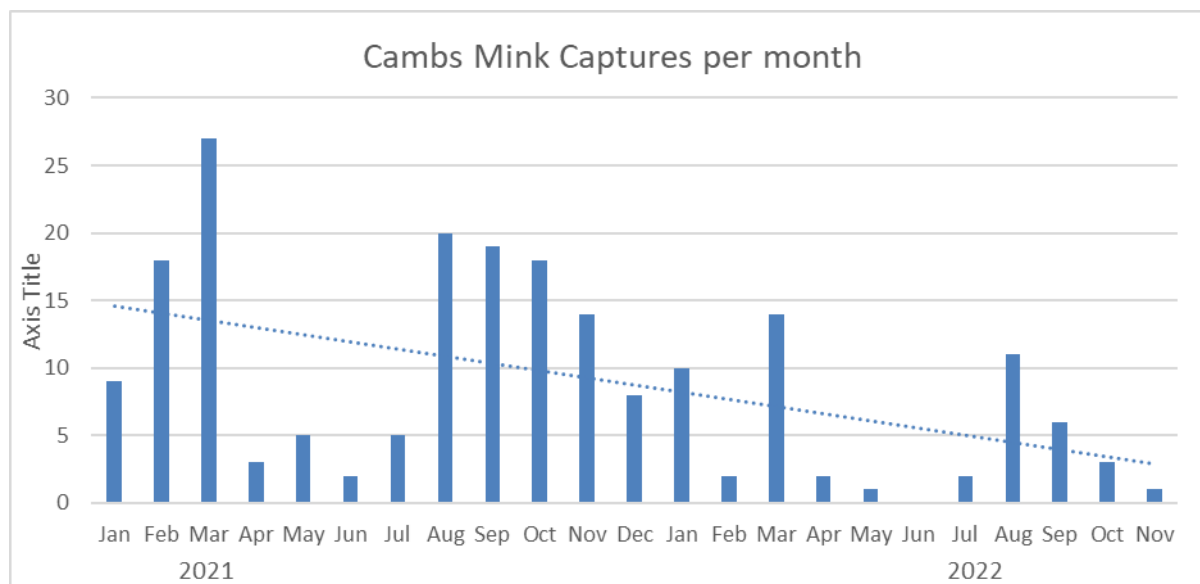
i. Avian Flu

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.

d) Mink & Water Voles

I am now part of the co-ordination team for the mink control strategy for the MLC area. The mink control project has been hugely successful so the vision of full eradication of mink is becoming much closer to being realised than was ever thought possible. A strategy refresh meeting took place on the 9th January where we reviewed the data to date to help us devise an updated trapping regime for the coming months. The key outcomes of which are that we are very much in **need of further volunteers** to respond to mink raft activation alerts in the area. Any activation would need to be attended promptly within a few hours but the need to respond is likely to be very occasional. Please let me know of any interest.

The following chart shows the number of mink caught each month, suggesting a declining population. However **there have been a number of mink caught in recent weeks in the district**, probably due to the breeding season being underway and their increased travel to find a mate, so trapping is still very valuable and reporting any sightings is key to ensure that traps are ideally placed.



The following table shows the number of Mink caught in 2022 and their locations, compared to 62 mink captures or kills in 2021.

Middle Level mink 2022_List

List of mink captures around the Middle Level in 2022

	Animal Code	Station/Location	Date	Sex
1	WRE/0761	Upwell & Outwell: Laddus Drove holt	09 Jan 2022	Male
2	WRE/0789		11 Jan 2022	Unrecorded
3	WRE/0917	Stonea Bridge	24 Jan 2022	Female
4	WRE/0786	Ramsey: PS Ramsey Hollow	24 Jan 2022	Female
5	WRE/0924	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	10 Mar 2022	Male
6	WRE/0950	Conington Fen Bridge	13 Mar 2022	Female
7	WRE/0944	Ransonmoor: Staffurth's Bridge PS outfall, Old ...	16 Mar 2022	Male
8	WRE/0946	Ramsey Saint Mary's: Speed the Plough Bridge	17 Mar 2022	Male
9	WRE/0951	Twenty Foot, Coldham Bank	22 Mar 2022	Male
10	WRE/0957	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	05 Apr 2022	Female
11	WRE/0966	Crooked Drain, Sutton Gault	26 Apr 2022	Female
12	WRE/1046	Great Fen: Charterhouse Farm Bridge	16 Sep 2022	Female
13	WRE/1047	Woodwalton Fen: south	18 Sep 2022	Male
14	WRE/1081	Pingles Pit, Mepal B	21 Oct 2022	Female
15	WRE/1140	Welches Dam PS bridge SW side	27 Nov 2022	Unrecorded

This progress with mink control will positively impact on the abundance of water voles in the area. Previous water vole survey data will be reviewed over winter and added to the GIS system and further surveys will be planned to take place in spring and summer.

7. 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) *Floating Pennywort*

Floating Pennywort continues to be an issue in other watercourses just outside the area, so we urge you to remain vigilant, refresh your identification skills and act promptly by notifying us if you think you may have spotted any in the districts drains. Strong adherence to biosecurity procedures is vital as per the boards policy (available from the website).

There has been good progress in trialling the use of an imported weevil to control the plant so we hope that if the success continues, it may be made available nationally at some point in the future.

b) *Azolla*

Previously reported as common across the IDB area. Please record and notify us as above of any instance. There may be an opportunity to use an approved weevil to control badly affected stretches so please advise if there are any particular areas of concern as there are only limited stocks of the weevils nationally so I will have to apply early to be in with a chance of some of the stock.

c) *Chinese Mitten Crabs*

Chinese mitten crabs and their apparent rapidly increasing population continue to be a concern. There are reports of some banks in some areas being damaged by their extensive burrowing but it is always difficult to pin this on the crabs alone with there being so many other factors which affect the stability of banks.

We liaise closely with the EA and follow their lead with the management of this species and many others to ensure that nothing we do contradicts their approach, regulation or legislation. Defra has no intention currently of developing policy which would allow the crabs to be caught and removed for commercial or conservation reasons. In particular there was some concern that they were found to carry a gill fluke in other counties which had the potential of being transmitted to humans if they were to be consumed. As Defra isn't planning to change their stance, the EA's approach remains that any crabs which are caught as by-catch must be killed on-site and not removed. The fishing for the crabs specifically is not lawful. There is no recommended or authorised approach to deal with rising populations unfortunately. A commonly held view is that removing mature individuals from the population creates a vacuum that immature individuals then tussle to fill, driving greater movement within the local population and perhaps increased burrowing as a result.

We will continue to monitor the recommended approaches and will adapt ours promptly to follow when necessary.

d) *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>

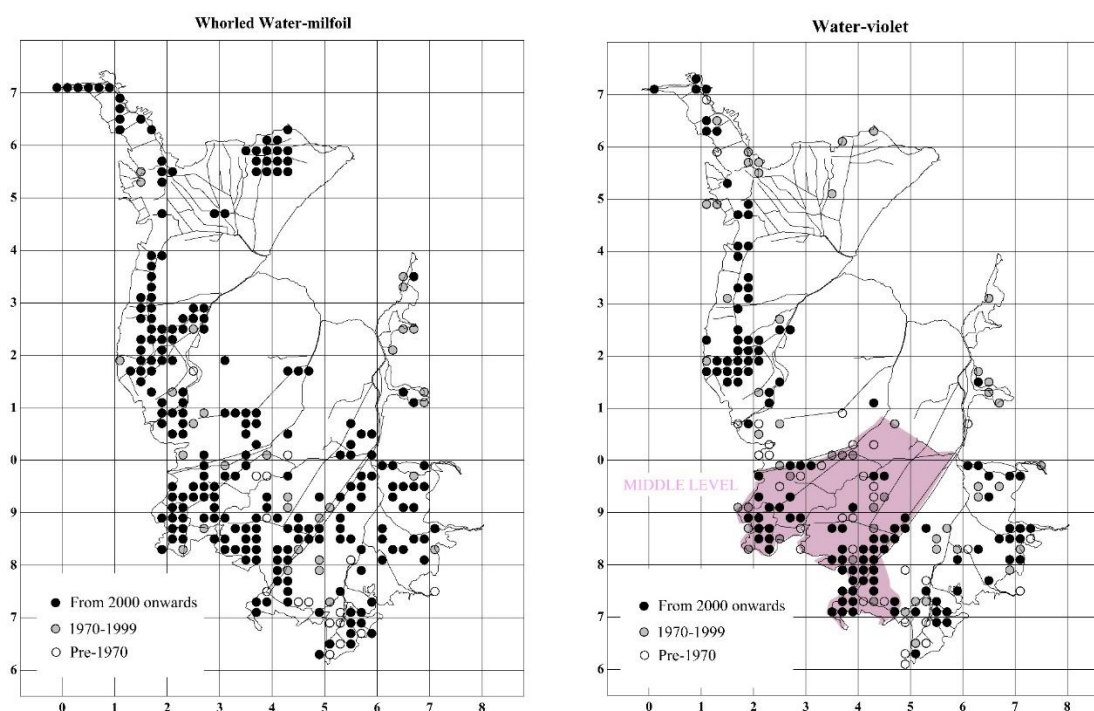
8. Fenland Flora Project

The long-running fenland flora project, headed up by botanist Jonathan Graham, to identify and record the presence of rare, threatened and notable aquatic plants in the fens, is nearing completion. The results highlight:

- There are lots of nationally significant aquatic plants in fens, many of which are only found in IDB drains and are present because of the way the drain is being managed.
- Water quality is important for many aquatic plants and a good proportion of IDB drains have good water quality.

- A summer-maintained water level is good for many plants.
- Non-IDB field drains are important too so where possible, aim to always hold some water and cut periodically.

The diagrams below show how the presence of 2 England red data plants that are frequent in local drains.



The plant location data will be added to the GIS system and made available so it can be reviewed ahead of any planned works, and will be added to BAPs. The data will also be useful in identifying any opportunities to enhance these valuable plant populations.

9. Environmental Stewardship.

You will most likely be aware that environmental stewardship schemes and farming subsidies are changing. If you would like to discuss existing stewardship provisions within the district, or you or another rate payer is thinking of applying for a stewardship agreement or establishing new stewardship measures, please do get in touch.

10. Carbon & Climate

There are increasingly a number of low-carbon, sustainable alternatives available for many of the common materials and equipment used in flood risk management, such as low-carbon concrete and steel, solar powered mechanical and electrical equipment and coir roll for bank stabilisation. Please get in touch to discuss any projects which involve these or similar materials or equipment to understand if any are suitable for you to consider.

Last year ADA published a Carbon Accounting Guide for IDBs, which is available from their website. The process of calculating carbon emissions does not have to be as complicated as some may think. If you have reviewed the guide and would like some help to progress with calculating your carbon emissions, please get in touch.

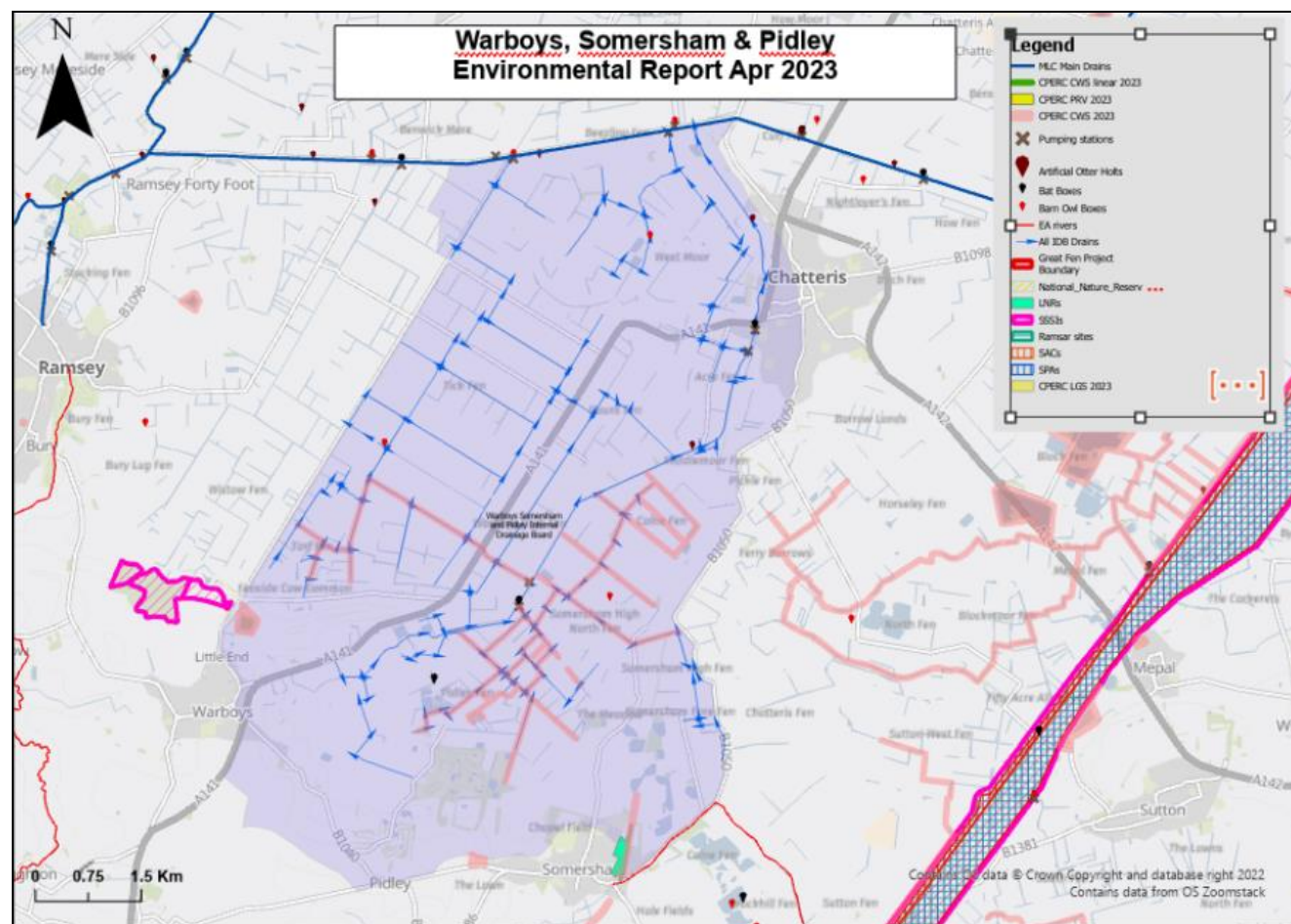
11. Paludiculture

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 CO₂ 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.

12. Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs

I have a copy of the above guide, published by ADA last September, for each Chairman and District Officer which I can hand to you when I visit if you don't have a copy already. Until then, an on-line version is available from [here](#) and you can also request copies from ADA directly admin@ada.org.uk.



B.1876 Clerk's fee

Mr Hill reported that there had not been an increase in fees for the previous 6 years, there would be an increase of approx. 5% for 2023/2024

RESOLVED

That the proposed increased rate for 2023/2024 be approved as detailed.

B.1877 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 proposals be formulated at the present time but that this remains under review.

B.1878 District Labour - District Officer's Salary

Mr Hill reported on the discussions of the finance committee and their recommendation to align the District Officers salary to the pay award of the Middle Level Commissioners from the anniversary of the commencement of his employment.

Mr H Whittome outlined the basis of the calculation of this years award and in response to Mr M Heading, Mr Hill confirmed that the Middle Level Commissioners pay award for 2023 was 7.14%.

RESOLVED

To align the District Officers salary to the pay award of the Middle Level Commissioners from the anniversary of the commencement of his employment with the Board (each July).

B.1879 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 £22,314.

B.1880 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Mr Hill reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £6,478.75 (£18,300.92 less £11,822.17 received on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2021/2022 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £13,015.31 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023.

B.1881 Determination of annual value(s) for rate purposes

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

- i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board.
- ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.

B.1882 Rate arrears

RESOLVED

That the rate arrears be written off.

B.1883 Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1848, the Chairman referred to the report from Cope Safety Management after their visit on 18th January 2023, The District Officer reported that generally things were in order although concerns had been raised concerning the lack of fencing at Acre Fen pumping station and along the boundary at Puddock pumping station. He reported that it had been considered appropriate to carry a suitable fire extinguisher in the truck and members considered it important to have all fire extinguishers regularly checked, viz;



Site Safety Inspection Record

Warboys Somersham and Pidley WSP

Complete

Name of organisation:	Warboys Somersham and Pidley WSP
Date of site visit	18.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Washways pumping Station PE16 6EG
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	18.01.2023 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Warboys Somersham and Pidley WSP

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Bob Wilmer/Richard Wilmer

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

Washways pumping station was visited and it was pleasing to note that an additional barrier has been fitted to prevent access to the weed screen cleaner.

Housekeeping was noted to be very good at all pumping stations visited.



Photo 1

2

Fire extinguishers were discussed, it was noted that some do not have evidence of having been inspected in the last two years.

It is recommended that fire extinguishers are inspected periodically, where dry powder extinguishers are present these should be replaced in due course with Co2 extinguishers and as discussed it is recommended that consideration is given to an additional extinguisher being carried in the vehicle.



Photo 2

3

It was understood that the building at Acre Fen has recently had some remedial repairs as a result of vandalism. It is recommended that consideration is given to erecting security fencing at Acre Fen to discourage a reoccurrence of vandalism attacks.

4

Pidley pumping station was visited and it was pleasing to note the the floor has now been repaired effectively.

Private & confidential

2/6



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

5

The new weed screen cleaner at High Fen was discussed and no operating issues have arisen since it was installed.



Photo 6



Photo 7

6

The pumping station at West Moore was visited and as discussed requires some additional signage to indicate that high voltage is present and also that automated machinery may operate without warning. (As is displayed at other pump stations.)



Photo 8

7

It was understood that the old buildings at Puddock Bridge pumping station have been sold off and are being redeveloped into private dwellings. At the time of this visit these were not yet completed and therefore public access to the pumping station is not likely.

The gate and fencing at the pumping station do not yet extend around the pumping station and this will be required before any occupation of the private dwellings.

It was also understood that some issues are extant with drainage from the private dwellings which may impact pumping station operations.

It is recommended that the developer is informed of the requirement to keep the pumping station separate from the general public and this should include any services such as drainage that may require maintenance.



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

Photographic Risk Assessment

Signature of person informed

Signature of person informed 1

Signature of person informed



Signed on behalf of Bob Wilmer by advisor
18.01.2023 13:31 GMT

Advisor's signature



Martin Clark
18.01.2023 13:31 GMT

Departure time

18.01.2023 13:31 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

Nil

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0
From 0 to 99

Appendix



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

Mr H Whittome queried if each pumping station had got the correct signage.

RESOLVED

- i) The District Officer to arrange regular testing of the Boards fire extinguishers and be authorised to renew/replace as required.
- ii) The District Officer to check and ensure correct signage is in place at each of the Boards pumping stations.

B.1884 Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of Internal Controls.

B.1885 Risk Management Assessment

RESOLVED

- a) Members considered and approved the Board's Risk Management policy.
- b) i) Mr Hill reported that the engineer was currently reviewing the valuation process and will complete the valuation once this process is completed, viz;

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB

INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS & BUNGALOW

	As at 1st April 2023
Puddock Pumping Station	770,000.00
Pidley Pumping Station	900,000.00
High Fen Pumping Station	734,000.00
Acre Fen Pumping Station	460,000.00
Washways Pumping Station	1,700,000.00
Westmoor Pumping Station	775,000.00
	5,339,000.00
Puddock Bungalow	126,291.00
	5,465,291.00

- ii) That the clerk obtains quotes for the valuation for insurance purposes of the Boards bungalow and on receipt the Chairman be authorised to take any further actions he considers appropriate.

B.1886 Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill 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.1887 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2023, viz;

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY 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" means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
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

ENTER PUB. WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK PAGE ADDRESS

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.1888 Payments

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £239,155.69 which had been made during the financial year 2022/2023, viz;

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

GENERAL ACCOUNT

Middle Level Commissioners - Test level controller for fault	128.72
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	672.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Health & safety contract	12,731.35
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply padlocks for pumping station, service and repair brakes AU17 MWW	1,075.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Fit new handrail to end of automatic weedscreen cleaner and set winter levels	259.45
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,638.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	260.10
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	110.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv and supply of gas oil	5,160.03
Cambridgeshire County Council - Right of way (Warners Drove, Somersham)	30.00
Environment Agency - Precept	11,157.19
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	452.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	282.74
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2022	1,050.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	170.64
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv, pipe and coupling	1,167.67
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Flexi jubilee driver, 2 long screw drivers, tube red hermitite, disposable gloves, blow gun, air hose with chuck and probe, 50 litre compressor, tube of Draper PTFE and 3 air Q/R probes	424.83
Cole & Day - MOT and service of Isuzu D-Max AO17 WMW	714.67
Cole & Day - Puncture repair	24.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,587.84
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Roundup	62.18
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	524.02
Barrie Coulson Plumbing & Heating - Replacement of immersion heater and repairs to overflowing toilet at bungalow	197.00
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Repairs to excavator AU09 FEW	822.58
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 5 litres of battery water, 1 box of grease cartridges, disposable gloves and a pack of black stretch gloves	123.12
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv, supply of gas oil, puncture repair and purchase of mobile telephone	7,437.96
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Roll of handpaper, hand wipes, 5 litres of screen wash, 5 litres of distilled water, face masks, hydraulic cap, filters, 25 litres of SAE 90 gear oil, 25 litres of hydraulic 46 oil, 25 litres of Eurofleet oil, WD40, safety glasses, mole grips, pump pliers, magnetic base beacon, repairs to excavator and bucket	1,906.53
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	429.25
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Repairs to excavator AU09 FEW	1,657.46
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	3,976.65
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 50 litres of hydraulic oil, 25 litres of Eurofleet oil, tractor funnel, grease gun, combination spanner, hand wipes and a H/d 1/2" drive sealey breaker bar	442.67
Barrie Coulson Plumbing & Heating - Call out and repair overflowing header tank at bungalow	75.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2021-2022 accounts)	720.00
WM Plant Hire Ltd - Hire of long reach excavator with slubbing bucket and transport to site - Self drive	8,010.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	672.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges,	11,022.67
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2021-2022 accounts)	1,506.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv and supply of gas oil	6,438.36

Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Repairs to excavator AU09 FEW	327.30
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	110.00
WM Plant Hire Ltd - Hire of long reach excavator with slubbing bucket and transport to site - Self drive	3,330.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	424.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,163.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	901.04
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Tractor funnel, 200 litres of fuel station, hydraulic hose with elbows attached, core cable, croc clips, filter straps and 25 litres of hydraulic oil	1,053.67
Environment Agency - Precept	11,157.18
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Pidley pumping station	749.66
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply road tax - AU09 FEW	165.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply road tax - AO17 WMW	290.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply business cards for R. Wilmer and C. Leadbetter, spare number plate and padlock	100.08
Youngs Agricultural Services Ltd - Supply and fit battery to excavator	729.02
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,593.41
Middle Level Commissioners - Fee (Discharge consent application)	54.93
WM Plant Hire Ltd - Post hire inspection and replacement door lock following vandalism	90.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv and supply of gas oil	7,149.40
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Handpaper, grease cartridges, grease gun, steel spade and repairs to excavator	1,310.54
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	407.00
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2021-2022	30.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 5 litres of battery water, compact elbow, hydraulic probe, washer and fit new flails to mower	577.89
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv and supply of gas oil	385.63
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	390.18
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply water transfer licence	115.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	397.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,587.84
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with energy survey, planning and development applications)	1,164.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Land Registry searches (Account from Land Registry)	18.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	399.53
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	441.96
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Data Collection Charges (Westmoor pumping station)	131.98
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Data Collection Charges (High Fen pumping station)	131.98
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Data Collection Charges (Pidley pumping station)	146.84
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Data Collection Charges (Puddock pumping station)	146.84
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Data Collection Charges (Washways pumping station)	146.84
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Westmoor pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (High Fen pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Pidley pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Puddock pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Washways pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Acre Fen pumping station)	133.49
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Acre Fen pumping station)	5,696.34
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (High Fen pumping station)	4,196.08
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Pidley pumping station)	10,244.80
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Puddock pumping station)	7,083.52
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Westmoor pumping station)	3,502.37
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Washways pumping station)	22,612.17
District Labour	62,157.23
	<u>239,155.69</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

(NB) – Messers Heading & Whittome declared interests (as members of MLC board) in payments made Middle Level Commissioners.

B.1889 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 as required in the Audit Regulations, viz;

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

GENERAL FUND

2023			2022		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	168,703.51
	Precept	22,314.37	2023		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	4,615.66	Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	182,784.16
	Repairs & Renewals	17,121.71		Landowners consent (Washways)	0.00
	Fuel	68,791.80		Consents	100.00
	Drainworks	16,266.65		Rent	6,600.00
	District Labour	65,746.67		Highland Water Contributions	19,125.76
	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	23,974.71		Vehicle Contribution	500.04
		196,517.20		Private works	300.00
	<u>Improvement works</u>				
	Low Level Restoration - consultancy fee	606.50		<u>Grant-in-aid</u>	
	Installation of telemetry	27,754.98		Installation of telemetry	13,877.49
		28,361.48			
	<u>Transfers to Capital Reserve Fund:</u>			<u>Capital Reserve Account</u>	
	Rates Raised 2022/2023	0.00		Installation of telemetry	13,877.49
	Pump overhaul provision	0.00			
		0.00		<u>Development Fund</u>	
	Depreciation charge	4,645.59		Low Level Restoration - consultancy fees	606.50
	Balance carried forward	154,636.31			
		406,474.95			
					406,474.95

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities

Capital Provisions	5,139,791.00	
	5,139,791.00	

Assets

Bungalow, Puddock Pumping Station	126,291.00	
Pumping Stations	5,013,500.00	
Plant Assets	1,388.20	
Stock	7,545.68	5,148,724.88

Revenue Section

General Fund

Revenue	153,248.11	
Capital	1,388.20	154,636.31
Development Charges Account	358,488.03	
Grant in Aid	164,011.21	
Sundry Creditors	58,582.70	
Capital Reserve Fund	122,457.37	
Low Level Restoration Fund	50,000.00	
	6,047,966.62	

Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	25,672.07	
Sundry Debtors	820.00	
Value Added Tax	11,396.93	
Balance in hand -		
Treasurer's Account	861,352.74	
Labour Account	0.00	861,352.74
		6,047,966.62

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023
DEVELOPMENT CHARGES ACCOUNT

2023			2022		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	358,682.57
	Middle Level Charges	45.77	2023		
	Transfer to General Fund		Mar-31	Receipts during the year	457.73
	Low Level restoration - consultancy fees	606.50			
	Balance carried forward	358,488.03			
		<u>359,140.30</u>			<u>359,140.30</u>

CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT

2023			2022		
Mar-31			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	136,334.86
	<u>General Fund</u>		2023		
	Installation of telemetry	27,754.98			
	Less grant-in-aid (50%)	<u>-13,877.49</u>	Mar-31	Rates Raised 2022/2023	0.00
		13,877.49		Pump overhaul provision	0.00
	Balance carried forward	122,457.37			
		<u>136,334.86</u>			<u>136,334.86</u>

Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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		866,133.69	Payments made during the year	239,155.69	
31st March 2023			To Transfer to Labour Account	<u>0.00</u>	239,155.69
Receipts during the year					
Clerk's collection account	234,374.74				
Interest on deposit accounts	<u>0.00</u>	234,374.74	Balance carried forward		861,352.74
		<u>1,100,508.43</u>			<u>1,100,508.43</u>

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	861,352.74
Less unpresented cheques:	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements:	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>861,352.74</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account	861,352.74
<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>861,352.74</u>

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2023****Per Annual
Return**

Line 1	Balances brought forward		
	General Fund	199,568.43	
	Development charges account	358,682.57	
	Capital reserve account	99,436.15	
	Low level restoration fund	50,000.00	
		707,687.15	707,687
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies		
	Agricultural rates	162,938.16	
	Special Levies	19,821.00	
	Penalty	0.00	
	Costs	25.00	
	Write-off	0.00	
		182,784.16	182,784
Line 3	Total other receipts		
	Interest		
	General fund	0.00	
	Development charges account	0.00	
	Capital reserve account	0.00	
	Consent applications	100.00	
	Rent	6,600.00	
	Vehicle Contribution	500.04	
	Highland Water	19,125.76	
	Grant in Aid	13,877.49	
	Discharge contributions	457.73	
	Land owners consent	0.00	
	Private Works	300.00	
	Write back of provisions	0.00	
		40,961.02	40,961
Line 4	Staff costs		
	Wages/salaries	58,228.03	
	National insurance contributions	6,523.07	
	Pension costs	995.57	
	Travelling expenses	0.00	
		65,746.67	65,746
Line 5	Loan repayments		
	PWLB - Principal	0.00	
	PWLB - Interest	0.00	
		0.00	0

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2023****Per Annual
Return**

Line 6	All other payments		
	Precept	22,314.37	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	4,615.66	
	Repairs and renewals	17,121.71	
	Fuel	68,791.80	
	Drainworks	16,266.65	
	Administration	23,974.71	
	Development charges fees	45.77	
	Bad Debt Provision	0.00	
	Write back of provisions	0.00	
	High Fen p/s Pump Overhaul	0.00	
	High Fen p/s Weedscreen Cleaner	0.00	
	Improvements	0.00	
	Telemetry	27,754.98	
	Pocket Park Improvements : Low Level restoration	606.50	
		181,492.15	181,492

Line 7	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	190,146.82	
	Development charges account	358,488.03	
	Capital reserve account	85,558.66	
	Low level restoration fund	50,000.00	
		684,193.51	684,194

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 684,193.51

Reconciliation to Accounts

Balances carried forward per Annual Return - As above 684,193.51

Rounding adj previous year

Add Back:-

Restatement of Assets 6,033.79

Depreciation -4,645.59

Assets acquired in year 0.00

Assets disposed of in year 0.00

Profit on disposal 0.00

1,388.20

Balances carried forward per Accounts

General Fund 154,636.31

Development charges account 358,488.03

Capital reserve account 122,457.37

Low level restoration fund 50,000.00

685,581.71

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	751,869	707,687	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	175,442	182,784	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	28,372	40,961	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	36,089	65,746	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	211,907	181,492	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	707,687	684,194	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	866,134	861,353	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	5,226,826	5,226,826	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

29th APRIL 2023

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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 Annual Return, on behalf of the Board, for the financial year ending 31st March 2023.

B.1890 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 2023/2024 and were informed by the Clerk 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 89.15% and 10.85%, viz;

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BUDGET PROPOSAL 2023/2024

	<u>Actual</u> <u>2018/2019</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2019/2020</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2020/2021</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2021/2022</u>	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Actual</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Proposed budget</u> <u>2023/2024</u> £
1 District labour (including District Officer's salary)	33,057	34,055	35,077	36,089	37,750	65,747 ^A	41,500 ^{AA}
2 Rates, insurances and telephones	4,495	4,622	4,430	4,452	5,000	4,616 ^B	6,000 ^B
3 Repairs and renewals	16,539	27,260	16,700	19,401	26,000 ^C	17,122 ^C	17,000 ^C
4 Drainworks	19,291	21,813	26,894	83,345	26,000 ^D	16,267 ^D	20,000 ^{D/E}
Piling works							
5 Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	33,109	48,319	61,477	48,545	65,500 ^F	68,792	125,000 ^F
6 Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	26,589	26,570	23,218	23,516	24,500	23,975	25,250 ^G
7 Environment Agency - Precept	20,327	21,343	21,877	21,877	22,315	22,314	22,984
8 Re-alignment of Fenton Lode	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 Capital Reserve Fund	22,533	17,532	22,532	12,532	12,461 ^H	0 ^H	0 ^H
	175,940	201,514	212,205	249,757	219,526	218,832	257,734
Bad debt provision	5,813	0	0	0		0	
Improvement works	2,411	48,181	99,562	10,632	67,000 ^I	28,361 ^I	0 ^I
Washways improvement scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LESS Interest on Deposit Accounts, private works, Highland water contributions, contributions from Development Charges Account etc	24,977	85,880	122,844	72,719	103,767 ^J	54,987 ^J	33,448 ^J
Net Expenditure	159,187	163,815	188,923	187,669	182,759	192,206	224,286
Rate Requirement					182,759		0.2700 ^p
Rate set	20.00p	20.00p	20.00p	21.00p	22.00 ^p	22.00 ^p	

<u>General Fund</u>			
Opening balance	162,670	162,670	153,248
Rate income	182,759	182,784	224,286
Write back of provisions		0	
Net expenditure	182,759	192,206	224,286
use of balances	-12,167	0	0
Closing balance	150,503	153,248	153,248

Budget 2023/2024

<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Budget 2022/2023</u>	<u>Actual 2022/2023</u>	<u>Budget 2023/2024</u>
A - Includes unbudgeted succession planning costs for April 2023 retirement of District Officer.			
AA - Includes provision for increase at July 2023			
B - Includes provision for increased insurances, telephones			
C - <u>Includes provisions for:</u>			
Pump overhaul provision	10,000	0	0
Excavator repairs (Doosan)	0	4,827	0
	0	0	0
	<u>10,000</u>	<u>4,827</u>	<u>0</u>
Pump overhaul provision 2022/23 not raised			
D - <u>Includes contractors accounts:-</u>			
Flail Mowing	4,000	0	0
Slubbing (machine hire)	12,000	10,132	10,000
Chemical weed control	500	52	250
	<u>16,500</u>	<u>10,184</u>	<u>10,250</u>
E - <u>Provision for proposed drain maintenance programme 2023/2024:</u>			
F - Provision based on average	65,500	68,792	125,000
Includes provision for new increased contract rates			
G - Increase in administration charge from previous year			
Includes for new Health & Safety arrangements			
H - <u>Capital Reserve fund</u>			
Provision at 1.50p	12,461	0	0
Pump overhaul provision	0	0	0
	<u>12,461</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
I - <u>Improvement works:</u>			
Replacement pump - Puddock pumping station	40,000	0	0
Telemetry installation at pumping stations	27,000	27,755	0
Consultancy fees - Low Level restoration drainage	0	606	0
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	<u>67,000</u>	<u>28,361</u>	<u>0</u>

J - Includes:

Transfer from Development account

High Fen p/s refurbishment works	0	0	0
Washways weed-screen cleaner gearbox	0	0	0
Piling - Fenton Lode	0	0	0
Piling - Pidley catchment	0	0	0

Capital Reserve Fund

Replacement pump - Puddock pumping station	40,000	0	0
Telemetry installation at pumping stations	13,500	13,877	0
Consultancy fees - Low Level restoration drainage	0	606	0
Puddock outfall flap valves	0	0	0
Piling - Pidley catchment	0	0	0
	<u>53,500</u>	<u>14,483</u>	<u>0</u>

aa Development charges account

Opening balance at 01.04.2023	358,683	358,683	358,488
Receipts in year	0	412	0
Expenditure in year	0	-607	0
Estimated closing balance -	<u>358,683</u>	<u>358,488</u>	<u>358,488</u>

ab Capital reserve Fund

Opening balance at 01.04.2023	136,335	136,335	122,457
Raised - Provision at 1.50p	12,461	0	0
Rates raised - Pump overhaul provision	0	0	0
Income in year	0	0	0
Replacement pump - Puddock pumping station	-40,000	0	0
Telemetry installation at pumping stations	-13,500	-13,877	0
High Fen p/s pump replacement	0	0	0
Puddock outfall flap valves	0	0	0
Piling - Pidley catchment	0	0	0
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Estimated closing balance -	<u>95,296</u>	<u>122,457</u>	<u>122,457</u>

Members should note that the actual out-turn will be dependent on pumping costs. The forecast indicates that general fund balances could be reduced to the level that they will only service the following years normal revenue cash flow requirements prior to the major collection of rates during October.

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

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	61,477	
Indicative current day costs	182,874	
Provision included for 2023/2024	<u>114,000</u>	- adj. for additional standing charges
Potential shortfall on budget	68,874	
<u>balances as at 31st March 2023</u>		
General Fund	153,248	
Development account	358,488	
Capital account	122,457	
Other	<u>50,000</u>	
	684,193	
Potential shortfall as % of balances	10.07%	

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

Warboys Somersham & Pidley 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 Board must be borne for 2023/2024 is:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector - 89.15%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to Councils:-
 - Huntingdonshire District Council - 8.09%
 - Fenland District Council - 2.76% 10.85%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £7,406.

In 2023/2024 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levies would raise £8,307.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2023 - £153,248.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2023/2024 is £249,207 and equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 30.00p
- b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £6,887 and
- c) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £20,152

If adjustments are made to remove improvement works funding from the budget for 2023/2024 (pump overhaul £10,000 and future capital funding 12,461) and other reductions, the net expenditure becomes:

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 27.00p
- b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £6,198 and
- d) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £18,136

In 2022/2023 a rate of 22.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £5,043 on Fenland District Council and a Special levy of £14,778 on Huntingdonshire District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk of the Board

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £224,286 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 £199,952 and £24,334 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 27.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v)
 - a) That a Special levy of £18,136 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
 - b) That a Special levy of £6,198 be made and issued to Fenland 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 levies referred to in resolution (v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levies by such statutory powers as may be available.

B.1891 Date of next Meeting

That the next Meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 30th November 2023 at Lakeside Lodge, Pidley which would include an inspection of the District commencing at 9.30am.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date