SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Administered by:

Contact: Polly Tombleson, Senior Business Support Officer

Email: enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk

Telephone: DD (01354) 699377

24th January 2024

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Tuesday 6th February 2024

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Memorial Hall, Swavesey, CB24 4QL at 2.30pm on Tuesday 6th February 2024.

As you'll be aware, we administer thirty Boards that mostly all meet within similar date ranges. Thank you to the majority of Members who already confirm their attendance proactively.

Please help us manage your Board effectively by **proactively letting Polly know as soon as possible, by telephone or email, if you can attend the meeting, or not, or if you're uncertain.** This results in less abortive time and cost to the running of all Boards.

It is important that we have early confirmation whether or not the Board will be quorate.

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Tuesday 6th February – 2.30pm

The Memorial Hall, Swavesey CB24 4QL

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meetings and matters arising	Pages 3 - 17	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Election • Attendance • Vacancies & appointments • Composition and amalgamations • Training	Pages 18 - 20	Clerk
5	Governance • Internal Controls & Banking • Risk Assessment & Appointment of Auditor • IDB1 • Exercise of Public Rights • Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities	Pages 21 - 32	Clerk
6	Clerk's Report	Pages 33 - 37	Clerk
7	Environment Officer's Report	Verbal	Clerk
8	Chairman's items	Verbal	Chair
9	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 38 - 49	Clerk or Engineer
10	Health & Safety	Pages 50 - 53	Chair
11	District Officer's Report	verbal	DO
12	Finance Report: looking back • Finance Officer's Review • Payments for 2023 • Annual Account & Annual return for 2022/23 • Internal Auditors Report 2022/23 • Highland Water Contributions from the Environment Agency	Pages 54 - 71	Clerk
13	Finance Report: looking forward • Finance Officer's summary • Fees, remuneration and subscriptions • Precept to the Environment Agency • Estimates for 2024/25 • Rate requirements for 2024/25	Pages 72 - 75	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
15	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

<u>SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD</u>

At a Meeting of the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
Held at The Memorial Hall, Swavesey on Tuesday 7th February 2023

PRESENT

K Wilderspin (Chairman)
J E Dodson Esq (Vice Chairman)
J S Burgess Esq
Mrs S Dodson
Cllr W Handley Esq
Mrs A C Hemington
N K Stroude Esq

Miss Lorna McShane (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

Iain Smith (Former Chief Executive, Solicitor and Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners) was also in attendance.

The Chairman introduced Paul Burrows as new Chief Executive and Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners.

Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Miss H Parish.

B.1104 Declarations of Interest

Miss McShane 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 the Superintendent's Fee and payments and state that he would leave the room when this item on the agenda was discussed.

B.1105 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 8th February 2022 and 22nd June 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1106 Matter Arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

B.1107 Election of Board Members

Miss McShane reported that the term of office of the Members of the Board will expire on the 31st October 2023 and will submit the proposed register of electors which is applicable to the 2023 election.

B.1108 Member Training Update

Miss McShane referred to the ADA videos 1 & 2 on Governance Accountability which members of the Board had viewed last year.

Further videos on relevant subjects would be available during the forthcoming year for members to view.

A record is kept of training undertaken by members and it is recorded on the IDB1 and submitted to Defra.

B.1109 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

Miss McShane reported that it would be necessary to update the signatories on these accounts with effect from 1st April 2023 following from David Thomas' retirement at the end of March.

RESOLVED

That Paul Burrows be the replacement signatory for these accounts.

B.1110 Main River Issues

Further to minute B.1076, the Chairman advised that there was very little update on the Main River apart from a site meeting held on 4th January 2023 and a follow up meeting held on 28th January, attended by LLFA, EA and South Cambridgeshire District Council representatives. Anglian Water did not attend the meeting; however, it had been useful to outline the concerns to the LLFA.

A further meeting had been arranged for the 3rd February attended by the EA, Parish Council and Sue with two representatives from Anglian Water.

A new storm tank for the sewage treatment works is to be installed but this will not resolve all of the issues.

Iain Smith advised that modelling had been carried out at Uttons Drove and actual discharge is greater than had been expected.

The matter had been raised at the Cabinet Meeting of South Cambridgeshire Council and a reply would be set to the Swavesey Parish Clerk.

B.1111 Proposed Northstowe Development and other developments draining to Uttons Drove STW Northstowe and Effluent Discharge to Swavesey Drain

Further to minute B.1077, The Chairman reported that there were no further updates on the Northstowe Development.

B1112 Outstanding Drainage Rates

Further to minute B.1078, Miss McShane reported that the Board still had an old debt which related to rates for 2012 for the sum of £1,770.25. A Court Order had been obtained for the debt from the Magistrates Court, but bailiffs had attended the properly on a number of occasions, but there had been no goods at the property on which to levy distress.

As advised at the last meeting, the premises were no longer subject to agricultural rates so there were no further arrears accruing.

RESOLVED

That as the Board had a Liability Order in place, they did not wish to write off the outstanding rate arrears.

B.1113 Defra Consultation on the Rating System

Further to minute B.1079, Miss McShane reported that Defra were currently working on secondary legislation and as yet there had been no consultation on the new legislation.

B.1114 Clerk’s Report

Miss McShane reported;

Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

That a nineth 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 contract 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) <u>Annual Conference</u>

That the Annual Conference of the Association of Drainage Authorities for 2023 is yet to be announced.

c) <u>Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch</u>

That the Annual Conference of the River Great Ouse branch of the Association was held on Tuesday the 1st March 2022.

This was the first face to face meeting held since the COVID-19 outbreak but the format was restricted to the AGM only. It is planned however to reintroduce the popular and useful morning workshops for 2023.

Marc Heading was reappointed as chair with Councillor Doug McMurdo as vice chair. Topics covered included unsurprisingly red diesel, and water resources/the work of WRE.

Sofi Lloyd announced that Brian Stewart and Ian Hodge from the EA had recently joined the ADA Board and that DEFRA had asked ADA to liaise with them on the implementation of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. She was also pleased to be able to report that ADA had been instrumental in initiating an all-party parliamentary group with a remit to discuss and consider Sustainable Flood and Drainage Management.

Phil Hulme and Amanda Macloughlan spoke on behalf of the EA covering the challenging associated with significant staff changes at the EA and noted that with the capital program for this six-year cycle being double that of the previous one this would be generating considerable additional work load.

It was advised that this coming years revenue (maintenance) budget was £5.3M which was more than the previous year but what could be delivered within this budget could be impacted by inflation.

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 7th March 2023.

iii) Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts

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

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

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

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

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

iv) 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.

v) Water Resources East (WRE)

Further to minute B.1080 (vii), the Clerk will report that the requested contribution from this Board for 2023/2024 financial year is expected to once again be £125. Contributions from drainage boards within the East of England secure a direct stake in WRE and help to ensure their needs and opinions are taken into account.

vi) Planning and Consenting Fees

Proposed changes to planning and consenting service supply charging

Two changes are proposed. The current arrangements and the proposed changes are outlined below.

1. The current arrangements for charging for Technical Services advice and support, for planning and consenting matters, is based upon a direct cost recovery arrangement. To achieve this all time spent on every item of work undertaken has to be logged and recorded in detail. This information is then pulled together and invoices prepared and checked before being passed to the Board Chairs for sign-off. This requires a considerable amount of time and effort and this time is of course included in the eventual fees paid. It is considered that a more efficient model would be to mirror the one used for charging for Clerking services which is based upon a lump sum annual fee. This has a number of advantages. It reduces internal workload which in turn releases time to carry out productive work. It also allows Boards to budget for the fees knowing at the time of rate setting what the annual fees will be.
   To ensure that a fair assessment is made it is suggested that the last five years of fees are looked at and an average taken. If there is clearly one or two years where one or two planning matters have impacted heavily upon the figures then an appropriate adjustment will be made. The final fee will be converted into a fraction of the costs of overall cost of supplying planning and consenting services for all Boards including the MLC and this percentage will become fixed until such time that a review is called for.

   In addition, we will still actively encourage developers and their agents to enter into Pre/Post application contracts. This will help keep the overall planning costs to a minimum. We will also be looking to move more and more to lump sum charges for developers for the same reasons outlined above, ie to reduce internal administration work and costs where possible.

   It is not proposed that this change will extend to other Technical Services work, such as surveys, catchment analysis, and refurbishment/replacement/improvement scheme work or associated advice which will continue to be logged and charged on a "hours spent" basis.

2. Many members have noted that the reporting in relation to planning application comments and responses is comprehensive. Again, it often takes many hours to produce such detailed reports for which the Board is charged. This time could be spent in dealing with and taking action on planning and consenting matters. There is also the issue of the potential time lapse between any planning/byelaw issue raising its head and the meeting of the Board. It is of course normally advantageous to take action as soon as possible after any issue had become apparent. It is therefore proposed that going forward the Board nominate who they wish to be copied in on all planning correspondence, for example the Chair and Vice-Chair. They will then be able to liaise with the Planning Engineer if they wish to and will be conversant with discussions being undertaken. The Board may also wish to delegate decision making for initial actions for bylaw infringements to the Board nominee/s.

   To ensure that the Board is consulted on the most important matters it is proposed that when it is wished for a matter to be raised within the Board report then a request from the Chair can be made and a detailed report would follow. This would normally be the case where significant costs might be associated with enforcement, including perhaps incurring legal fees or where an unusually large or significant development is proposed.

   Should the above change be agreed to, then going forward the Engineer's report will provide a list of all planning applications of interest to the Board and consents applied for/approved but unless requested by the Chair no detail will be provided.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) The Board approved the Chairmans decision to serve notice on Anglian Farmers and for Green Energy Advice Bureau to handle procurement and management of the electricity contract and noted that a fixed rate energy supply contract with Corona Energy had been entered into for an 18-month period from 1st April 2023.

ii) WRE – The Board did not approve the payment of £125 to Water Resources East. David Thomas was the current ADA representative on WRE, but following his retirement, a new appointment would be made to WRE.

iii) Planning & Consenting – The Board approved the changes to the planning and consenting fees and planning information by the Board, and the cost of Planning & Consenting would be reported to a future meeting of the Board.

B.1115 Consulting Engineers' Report, including Planning and Consenting Matters

Swavesey Pumping Station

Paul Burrows advised it may be possible to secure grant aid for future works to the pumping station. A business case would need to be prepared and there was a cost to this and it was necessary to consider what was protected by the pumping station. The study/business case could also be financed by grant aid, but this needs to be proportionate in cost to the likely value of future works.

One important consideration was that the eel regulations would likely be triggered and this would be an issue for the Board.

Paul Burrows reported that there is currently insufficient capacity within the Consulting Engineering department to undertake a study and the Board were comfortable that there was no immediate urgency.

RESOLVED

> That Middle Level Technical Services team propose what approach to developing a study would be suitable (eg FCRM7) and likely timescales given team capacity.

Planning Applications

The Board noted the new planning applications dealt with by the Engineer since the last meeting.

Developments at Swavesey Village College etc, The Board noted the position with the rate of discharge being twice the equivalent greenfield rate but resolved that no further action be taken by the Engineer on this matter.

B.1116 Capital Improvement Programme

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the Capital Improvement Programme.

B.1117 District Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent reported that it had been a relatively good year, with just flail mowing and maintenance of the main drain required.

There was an issue with the headwall ay John Dobson’s land and this would need some attention and some repairs to the weedscreen may be needed.
Keith Wilderspin advised that there were several trailer loads of wrack to be removed from the pumping station and transported to land fill.

Councillor Handley offered to get charges from the council for removing the vegetation from the pumping station and said he would contact Mike Parsons, the operations manager at South Cambridgeshire District Council.

B.1118 Environment Officer’s Newsletter and BAP Report

Miss McShane referred to the Environment Officers newsletter, previously circulated to members.

Members considered and approved the most recent BAP report.

B.1119 District Superintendent

a) Record of hours worked

Miss McShane reported that Keith Wilderspin had worked 80 hours as District Superintendent between February 2022 and January 2023.

b) Fee

The Board gave consideration to the District Superintendent’s fee for 2023/2024.

c) Telephone expenses

The Board gave consideration to the appropriate reimbursement of telephone expenses incurred on the Board’s behalf.

d) Casual Labour

The Board gave consideration to the use of casual labour that may be required during the year.

RESOLVED

a) The Board approved the hours worked.

b) That the Board agree that 5% be added to last years fee of £1784 for the year 2023/2024.

c) That the Board agree that the sum of up to £80 be allowed for telephone expenses incurred on behalf of the Board by K Wilderspin.

d) That The Chairman & Vice-Chairman be authorised to engage such casual labour as they consider appropriate up to a limit of £500.

NB Mr Wilderspin declared an interest in all items, save (d) and left the room when these items were discussed.

That the Board's thanks to the District Superintendent for his work over the last 12 months be recorded.

B.1120 State-aided Schemes

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

B.1121 Environment Agency Precept

Miss McShane reported that at the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee 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.

B.1122 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss McShane reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £309.33 (£4,266.31 less £3,956.98 paid 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 £4,036.58 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023.

B.1123 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

The Clerk will report that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023 from £571 to £597.

RESOLVED

That the increased subscription for 2023 be paid.

B.1124 Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1055, The Chairman reported that Cope Safety Management visit to the District will be on 9th February 2023 and will be reported at the next meeting.

B.1125 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2021/2022

a) Miss McShane reported that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations all members received a copy of the Annual Accounts for the year ended the 31st March 2022 before the 30th June of that year and approved the Accounts for the purposes of the Regulations.

b) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2022

c) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended on the 31st March 2022.

B.1126 Appointment of Internal Auditor

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

B.1127 Annual Accounts of the Board - 2022/2023

Miss McShane reported that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations Internal Drainage Boards' accounts are required to be approved by resolution on or before the 30th June of that year.

B.1128 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss McShane referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2021/2022 which was noted & approved by the Board.

B.1129 Review of Internal Controls

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

B.1130 Risk Management Assessment

a) The Board considered and approved their current Risk Management Policy.

b) The Board considered the insured value of the Board's buildings and agreed to index-link their values going forward.

B.1131 Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

Miss McShane reported that as resolved at its' last meeting, the Board will continue with a limited assurance review and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

B.1132 Exercise of Public Rights

Miss McShane 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.1133 Payments

Miss McShane reported on payments made;

a) 2021/2022 (1st February 2022 – 31st March 2022)

b) 2022/2023 (1st April 2022 – 31st January 2023)

RESOLVED

That Board considered and approved payments amounting to £13,722.74 for 1st February 22 – 31st March 22 and £20,613.83 for 1st April 2022 – 31st January 2023.

B.1134 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 Miss McShane 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;

	Drainage rates	Special levy
AREA 1	62.42%	37.58%
AREA 2	70.25%	29.75%
AREA 3	100%	-

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £23,267 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 £15,709 and £7,558 respectively.

iv) That drainage rates in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District as follows;

AREA 1	-	84.0p
AREA 2	-	36.0p
AREA 3	-	12.0p

v) That a Special levy of £7,558 be made and issued to South Cambridgeshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1135 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 at 2.30pm at Swavesey Village Hall.

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Members of the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March on Friday 23rd June 2023

PRESENT

K Wilderspin (Chairman)	Cllr W Handley Esq
J E Dodson Esq (Vice Chairman)	Mrs A C Hemington
J S Burgess Esq	N K Stroude Esq
Mrs S Dodson	

Miss Lorna McShane (representing the Clerk to the Board) was in attendance.

Iain Smith (Former Chief Executive, Solicitor and Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners) was also in attendance.

Apology for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Miss H Parish.

B.1136 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

Members considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2023.

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.1137 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2022/2023

Members considered and approved the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2023 as required in the Audit Regulations,

RESOLVED

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

B.1138 Date of next Meeting

That the next Meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 at Swavesey Village Hall.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Tuesday 6th February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Election
The Clerk will report that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (seven), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2023:

J Burgess, J Dodson, S Dodson, A Hemington, H Parish, N Stroude, K Wilderspin

B. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
D. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
E. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

1.1 The table below outline the current composition of the Board and the quorum as detailed in the standing orders.

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	7	N/A		4
Actual	7	2 SCDC	9	
Vacancies	0		0	

1.2 The table below details the current elected members of the Board

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	J Burgess	Ratepayer	
2	J Dodson	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
3	S Dodson	Ratepayer	
4	A Hemington	Ratepayer	
5	H Parish	Ratepayer	
6	N Stroude	Ratepayer	
7	K Wilderspin	Ratepayer	Chairman

1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.

1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board's district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.

1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, eg major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	H Batchelor	SCDC	Councillor
2	S Ellington	SCDC	Councillor

1.6 All Members are reminded that have equal status to each-other around the Board table and are here to serve the interests of the Board.

2. Attendance

2.1 The table below outlines the attendance record for the last four meetings of the Board.

Elected Members

No	Name	7/2/2023	8/2/2022	9/2/2021	18/2/2020
1	J Burgess	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
2	J Dodson	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
3	S Dodson	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
4	A Hemington	Attended	Attended	Attended	
5	H Parish	Apologies	Attended	Attended	Apologies
6	N Stroude	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended
7	K Wilderspin	Attended	Attended	Attended	Attended

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	K Wilderspin		Attended	Attended	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	7/2/2023	8/2/2022	9/2/2021	18/2/2020
1	H Batchelor	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	S Ellington	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To consider the appointments of the Chair & Vice-Chair.

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s).

4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

5. Training

5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/

5.2 To date 0 of 9 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 4 of 9 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.

5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.

5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Tuesday 6th February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the system of Internal Controls that are in place and the appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
B. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy, Policy and/or Assessment that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
C. Advise on any changes they wish to make to insured values.
D. Note the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
E. Continue with a limited assurance review approach.

1. Internal Controls and Appointment of Internal Auditor

1.1 Within the operations at the Middle Level offices there are a series of controls in place to ensure the segregation of duties, so as far as practical within a small workforce, that no one person has control of a single operation from start to finish. The Internal Controls are available IDB-Internal-Controls-11122023.pdf (middlelevel.wpenginepowered.com)

1.2 Note the Financial Code for the Board is shown on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

1.2 The Board are reminded that Whitings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28).

2. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

2.1 The Board's Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Assessment is available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk and is due for formal review and update in 2024.

2.2 The insured values for the Board's assets are detailed below:

- High Causeway Pumping Station — £ 621,801.00
  To be index linked from 1st April 2024

3. IDB1

3.1 The Board's IDB1 return to Defra for the year 2022/23 is included as Appendix 1

4. Exercise of Public Rights

4.1 The Clerk will refer 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.

5. Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

5.1 In previous years the Board has continued with a limited assurance review approach and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 **IDB1** 2022/23

Internal Drainage Boards in England

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Annual Report for the year ended
31 March 2023

The Law – the following annual report is provided in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to the Land Drainage Act 1991.

No later than 31 October 2023 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Ground Floor, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- Engineering & Standards - Policy Manager, Asset Management and Engineering, **Environment Agency**, Goldcrest House, Alice Holt Lodge, Farnham, Surrey. GU10 4LH via james.addicott@environment-agency.gov.uk
- The Chief Executives of:
  - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
  - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

Please complete the form electronically. If you are unable to complete the form electronically, please complete in BLOCK LETTERS using **black ink**.

Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2023-24

Information requested below is essential in calculating future formula spending share. It is not covered elsewhere on this form or by the external auditor's certificate.

Special levies information for financial year 2023-24 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	**2023-24 forecast £**
1. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	7,558
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**7,558**

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2023

All Internal Drainage Boards must ensure that the Income and Expenditure information provided below is consistent with the Board's annual accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with proper practices found in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements March 2017*

	Notes	Year ending 31 March 2023 £
INCOME		
1. Drainage Rates		14,400
2. Special Levies		6,927
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		4,040
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		
5. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		
6. PSCAs from EA and other RMAs		
7. Loans		
8. Rechargeable Works		
9. Interest and Investment Income		
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		
11. Other Income		3,268
Total income		**28,635**
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		1,832
14. Watercourse maintenance		7,969
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		6,049
16. Administration		5,864
17. PSCAs		
18. Rechargeable Works		
19. Finance Charges		
20. SSSIs		
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		673
22. Other Expenditure		192
Total expenditure		**22,579**

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**6,056**
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		34,852
25. Grant income not applied in year		

Notes:

11. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

12. State the gross cost of undertaking minor capital works that have not been capitalised and the annual depreciation charges of all major schemes that have been capitalised. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the schemes.

13. State the total precept demanded for the year as properly issued by the Environment Agency, in accordance with section 141 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Providing that the precept has been properly issued as before stated it should always be included here, even when the Board has appealed against the amount of contribution, in accordance with section 140 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Where the Board knows with certainty the outcome of any such appeal, it should also include the appropriate accrual/prepayment.

14. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme.

15. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures.

16. Include the cost of non-technical staff only, office accommodation, annual depreciation of office equipment that has been capitalised, minor office equipment that has not been capitalised, postages, telecoms', stationery, printing, advertising, auditing of accounts, general insurances and all other costs associated with supporting the organisation. Please note that this does not include support costs, which are directly associated with the delivery of front line services.

17. State all costs associated with the PSCA

18. State all costs associated with undertaking work for third parties. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with undertaking the rechargeable work.

19. Include the cost of servicing any borrowing, in terms of bank/loan/hire purchase Interest payable.

20. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – specifically for helping to achieve favourable condition on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). In most cases, these costs will be incurred in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans.

21. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help conserve biodiversity (other than works on SSSIs). These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions on non-designated sites.

22. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts).

23. For the disposal of assets, state the difference between any proceeds from the sale/disposal of the asset and the cost of the asset less accumulated depreciation.

24. Total balance of developer fund year end.

25. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B –IDB Reporting

Policy Delivery Statement

Boards are required to produce a publicly available policy statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aims and objectives. It is recommended that these statements be published on Boards' websites where they have them and reviewed every three years.

Is an up to date statement in place and copy (or weblink) provided to Defra, and EA?..Yes ☒ No ☐

Biodiversity

Please indicate whether your Board has a Biodiversity Action Plan ....Yes ☒ No ☐

If "yes" is the Biodiversity Action Plan available on your website?..Yes ☒ No ☐

What year was your Biodiversity Action Plan last updated?)........................ 2022

Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your web site?........................Yes ☐ No ☒

When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?........................ 08/02/2022

Do you have a biosecurity process?..Yes ☒ No ☐

SSSI water level management plans

Please indicate whether your Board is responsible for any SSSI water level management plans?..Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, which ones:

Area of SSSI with IDB water level management plans........................

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?

Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are required to achieve recovering or favourable condition?

Access to environmental expertise

Does your IDB have access to environmental expertise? If so please tick all those options below through which environmental expertise is regularly provided to your IDB:

Appropriately skilled Board Members (e.g. Board member from an Environmental Body/Authority)	☐
Co-opted members	☐
Directly employed staff	☒
Contracted persons or consultants	☐
Environmental Partners/NGOs	☐
Other (please describe)	☐

Asset Management

What system/database does your Board use to manage the assets it is responsible for?

ADIS	☐
Paper Records	☒
Other Electronic System	☒

Has your Board continued to undertake visual inspections and update asset databases on an annual basis? Yes ☒ No ☐

What is the cumulative total of identified watercourse (in km) that the Board periodically maintains?

8.2

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

1

What is the cumulative design capacity of the Board's pumping station(s) (enter zero if no stations are operated)?

0.68 cumecs

Health and Safety

Does the Board have a current Health and Safety policy in place?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Does the Board have a responsible officer for Health and Safety?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Have there been any reportable incidents in the past year?	Yes ☐	No ☒

If so, please summarise in the box below:

Guidance and Best Practice

Has your IDB adopted a formal Scheme of Delegation? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your IDB provided training for board members in the last year in the any of the following areas?

- Governance ☒
- Finance ☒
- Environment ☒
- Health, safety and welfare ☐
- Communications and engagement ☐
- Other (please describe) ☐

Is your Board's website information current for this financial year? (Board membership, audited accounts, programmes of works, WLMPS, etc)............Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your IDB adopted computerised accounting and rating systems?............Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your board published all minutes of meetings on the website?............Yes ☒ No ☐

Does the Board publish information on its website on its approach to maintenance works and provide contact details to allow for and encourage public engagement? Yes ☒ No ☐

When planning maintenance and capital works are environmental impacts taken into account and wherever possible best practice applied? Yes ☒ No ☐

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents?

Standing Orders ....Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Standing Orders been approved by Ministers ....Yes ☒ No ☐

Byelaws ....Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have Byelaws, have you adopted the latest model byelaws published in 2012............ Yes ☒ No ☐

Have the Byelaws been approved by Ministers............Yes ☒ No ☐

Code of Conduct for Board Members............Yes ☒ No ☐

Financial Regulations............Yes ☒ No ☐

Register of Member's Interests............Yes ☒ No ☐

Anti-fraud and corruption policy............ Yes ☒ No ☐

Board membership and attendance

How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?	8
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	2
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	7
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	2
Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	7
Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	1

Have you held elections within the last three years?...Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Did elections comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938?......................... Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Complaints procedure

Is the procedure for a member of the public to make a complaint about the IDB accessible from the front page of its website?...Yes ☒ No ☐

Number of complaints received in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?	0
Number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman?	0
Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

Set out what your Board has done in this financial year to engage with the public (tick relevant box(es) below):

Press releases	☐
Newsletters	☐
Web site	☒
Meetings	☒
Shows/events (including open days/inspections)	☐
Consultations	☐
Notices	☒

Percentage (in value) of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0%

Section B: NOTES

Guidance and Best Practice

Has your Board published **all** minutes of meetings on the web site? In answering this question, this should apply to all the main Board meetings held in the year and any appropriate meetings the Board has held with external stakeholders.

Board membership and attendance

When referring to **elected members** of the Board, this relates to the number of landowners/drainage rate payers that are elected to the Board.

When referring to **appointed members** of the Board, this relates to the number of members appointed by the local authorities to represent the local council taxpayers.

When referring to mean average number of elected and appointed members in attendance at meetings at each board meeting – **this should be expressed as a number of attendees** and not as a percentage attendance.

With regard to elections, under Schedule 1 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, elected members should hold office for three years, at which point a further election is held. When elections are held, they should comply with the requirements under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938 – to advertise and notify local stakeholders accordingly.

Section C – Declaration

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

I confirm that the information provided in sections A-C or with this form is correct.

Signature	
Date	17/10/2023
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**6**
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**	
Date:	**Tuesday 6th February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
B. Support the proposed approach to determining the next electricity contract.
C. In determining their valuations for insurance purposes, recognise the limitations associated with their current valuations and the risks they hold of being underinsured.

1. MLC Services available for IDBs

1.1 There has been significant incremental change over the last 10-20 years in terms of IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health & safety, environmental legislation and capital works delivery, along with a significant increase in the scale and nature of planning and partnership work.

1.2 However, what limited agreements and fee arrangements there are in place with IDBs about the MLC Services offered and received pre-date much of this evolution and as such there is significant ambiguity.

1.3 As an example of this, the current 'Clerkship agreements' with Boards was agreed in 2014 however there are many services provided by the MLC that all parties would consider as core 'clerkship' services that are not specified within the current agreement, including managing elections, arranging meeting, taking minutes, reviewing policies and publications.

1.4 The scale and nature of change ahead of us may well be more significant than that which has been experienced in the last decade. The services provided by the MLC to local IDBs require a review and refresh such that they become fit for the future.

1.5 The intent is to develop a service catalogue over the next 12-18 months that will clarify the full range of services that are offered by MLC staff, along with associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements.

1.6 Boards will be offered opportunity to engage in the development of the catalogue, such that if there are capacity and capability gaps between the services Boards want and what capacity and capability MLC staffing has to deliver, then the MLC Board can consider if and how they address this within a final service offer.

2. IDB Key Health Indicators

2.1 At the MLC and IDB Chairs session on 6th October 2023, Paul Burrows shared the observations from his first suite of IDB meetings and outlined the viability concerns of Conington & Holme IDB that have been escalated to Defra. Observations include that some Boards:

1. struggle for membership and attendance.
2. want to amalgamate but with no one willing to amalgamate with
3. have with no clear succession for critical roles

4. are underwritten by the hands-on inputs of a few (with costs not always passed on within rates)
5. where there's limited involvement from all members around the table
6. with limited financial reserves
7. with aging assets and limited capital reserves
8. will potentially struggle to afford to deliver their ever-increasing statutory duties, powers & governance standards

2.2 The Chairs explored the following question;
Beneath the surface, how healthy is your Board today, for tomorrow and for the next generation?
- What worries you?
- Do we have a good picture of the relative strengths and weaknesses of our Boards?
- How do we ensure risks and issues are tackled proactively?
- How can we better share success, learning and support across Boards?

2.3 The intent is to develop a suite of 'Key Health Indicators' (KHIs) and comparison metrics for the Middle Level Commissioners and administered IDBs. These will help Boards better understand and proactively address their key risks and understand their relative health. KHIs will also help the Middle Level Commissioners assure and focus their service provision for IDBs.

2.4 The picture created will provide an evidence base to inform a business case for change in terms of the IDB landscape within the Middle Level, as the Chairs reflected back to work undertaken by Geoff Beal a number of years ago. Chairs were supportive of the need to develop future options, assess costs:benefits and identify a preferred option proactively locally, rather than risk a national instruction to change. Any business case for change will need to be properly planned and resourced, with considerable engagement included within any scope. This will need to be scoped in due course.

3. Association of Drainage Authorities - Summary

3.1 ADA continues to work effectively on behalf of IDBs and following their role in influencing the additional payments to Councils to help off-set the energy cost impacts on special levies, they have been in negotiation with Defra to secure the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP) fund for IDBs. This marks a considerable departure with a new role within government funding administration.

3.2 Flood & Water Live retuned to the ADA calendar and was held in Lincolnshire during July 2023 and the annual conference returns to the Institution of Civil Engineers on 21st November 2023 with a different approach to the day. The AGM aspects has now taken place virtually, so the morning is focussed on stalls and networking, then a buffet lunch ahead of conference session with keynote attendees.

3.3 At the AGM it was confirmed that there would be 6.5% increase in fees for 2024/25 with and in principle same increase for the following two years.

3.4 Locally, Marc Heading continues to Chair the Great Ouse branch and the clerking role of the branch is being transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners to Phil Camamile at the Water Management Alliance on behalf of the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards. John Heading's term as the Gt Ouse branch's Director on the ADA Board ended in June with a replacement still to be confirmed.

3.5 IDBs locally continue to fund an ADA Directorship place on the Board of Water Resources East. With his retirement from the Middle Level Commissioners, David Thomas vacated this role and has been replaced by Giles Bloomfield of the Water Management Alliance.

4. Fens 2100+

4.1 The Environment Agency launched Fens 2100+ with an introductory session for IDB representatives in June 2023. This programme of activity is crucial in informing the medium to long term flood management decision making across the whole Fens as well as framing and driving more tactical and short-term investments.

4.2 The governance for the programme is currently being finalised. Paul Burrows will Chair the 'Asset Managers Steering Group' and through this have a seat on the Programme Board.

4.3 Projects in Fens 2100+

Fens-wide investment framework

- Give the justification to taking a catchment-scale investment approach.
- Explains how the asset managers (and wider partners) will work together across the landscape to determine what investment is needed when.
- In contract with suppliers and scope agreed.
- Underpinning evidence being developed along with communications and engagement plan.

Catchment-scale asset investment plans

- Applies the framework set out above to each catchment to determine the likely investment requirements over the next 30 years.
- Confirms the immediate (2027-2023) asset (and other) investment requirements across each catchment.
- Planning to scope and get suppliers on board in 2024

Catchment-baseline reports

- Provides an overview of each catchment and the current FCRM operational situation and current and future flood risk.
- Explains future asset investment funding challenges.
- Currently scoping contracts with suppliers, aiming to contract in early 2024.

5. Electricity and Insurance

5.1 The contract for the Middle Level Commissioners and our administrated IDBs' electricity portfolio ends in September 2024. We have been impressed by the brokers of our current service (Green Energy Advice Bureau) however we and the brokers have complaints logged about the standard of service provide by our suppliers Corona Energy.

5.2 We need to plan for our next contract given that there is a notice period. The proposed approach is to bring a small group of the IDB Chairs together with our Assistant Treasurer early in 2024 to start to review options, identify a preferred option and ultimately decide on the next contract.

5.3 To clarify questions raised by Members and IDBs in response to our 2023/24 insurance renewal and personal accident cover for members over 80 years old.

5.4 With the current insurer, the age limit is 75 years of age to benefit from all the personal accident cover:

- Death - £100,000
- Permanent total disability - £100,000
- Permanent Disabling Injuries - £100,000
- Temporary Total Disablement – Weekly amount £200 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)
- Temporary Partial Disablement – Weekly amount £100 for 104 weeks (Deferment period 34 weeks)

5.5 The benefits, as above, will apply to persons above the age of 75 years with the exception of the temporary weekly benefits. This is no way affects the liability cover of the Board, as with all employees & board members, if they are injured as a result of the Board’s negligence, then a claim can be considered by them under the main AXA liability insurance.

5.6 In previous years, the personal accident cover only applied to persons up to 75 years of age. For 2023-2024 we requested the policy be extended to persons over 80 years of age. Although we were unable to do this for all benefits, we were able to increase the age for the benefits as mentioned above. The personal accident cover has only been in place since 2017/2018 as it is part of the AXA insurance policy. It was not included in any of the previous insurers’ policies.

5.7 Over the last round of board meetings a number of IDBs have asked for re-assessments of their pumping stations for insurance purposes. Having taken stock on these requests, this is not a service we are currently able to offer at the Middle Level Commissioners without procuring what would likely be considerable supplier experience that would then be an additional cost to Boards.

5.8 Appendix 1 explains the rationale with the recommendation that Boards, in determining their valuations for insurance purposes, recognise the limitations associated with their current valuations and the risks they hold of being underinsured.

6. Rating

6.1 On 7th September 2023 we were advised that South Holland IDB and the Water Management Alliance will no longer be supporting DRS operating on local area networks after 31 March 2025. This rating and election management software has been in place for 25 years. DRS is owned by South Holland IDB and was originally developed by this Board around the year 2000, primarily for its own use.

6.2 Since that time, most other IDBs have decided to use DRS under licence and it is therefore their view today that the next rating system should be controlled and developed by ADA, for use by its IDB membership should they want to, given that all but 3 IDBs and 1 IDD in England and Wales now use DRS. ADA have confirmed that they are in positive discussions on this matter.

6.3 This presents a significant risk to the Middle Level Commissioners as well as to the clerking service we provide to our administered IDBs which all rely on this system. However, it also presents an opportunity for an improved systems as we are currently unable to efficiently and optimally use the full capabilities of the system, as it doesn’t cater well for dual rated areas and penalties. We have asked to be part of any team scoping any future system and/or system support.

7. Lowland Agricultural Peat

7.1 Led by Robert Caudwell, the Lowland Agricultural Task Force’s report was published by Defra in June 2023. The report has a strong focus on the role Internal Drainage Boards could play in supporting and enabling landowners and land-managers. In particular, recommendation three includes:

- Government assessing the legal implications of asking responsible bodies to raise water levels in the interests of preserving peat soil carbon.
- Government considers giving IDBs new powers.

7.2 The Government's response to the Caudwell report recommendation three:
Recommendation 3: Legal protection and powers for managing water for carbon

We agree with recommendation 3 that authorities responsible for water management must have the legal protection and powers to manage water differently to play their part in peat preservation. We will undertake an assessment of the legal implications of asking responsible authorities to raise water levels in the interests of preserving peat soil carbon as we implement the Plan for Water action to streamline our water policy and legal framework. This will inform relevant new powers and any required legislation.

7.3 In response to the report Defra have set up two pilots funds, namely the Lowland Agricultural Peat Small Infrastructure Pilot (LAPSIP) specifically for IDBs and being administered by ADA and the Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Pilot (LAPWDP) available to IDBs and administered by the Environment Agency.

7.4 The bidding windows for these was in October 2023 with key criteria being project delivery within 2024. The timescales and criteria have made it very challenging for Boards to identify and submit deliverable bids. This alongside capacity constraints within the Middle Level Commissioners have meant we have unfortunately been unable to offer services to IDBs to make the most of this opportunity.

7.5 Fenland SOIL is a not for profit members organisation that aims to inform and develop 'whole farm' land use policies, aimed at achieving climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement in the Fens, and to help establish an agreed set of numbers for GHG emissions for deep, shallow and wasted peat soils. They have a small, dedicated team with farmers at its core to tackle climate issues relating to agriculture and peat in the Fens. They have recently undertaken opportunity mapping assessments across Manea & Welney district and have just started similar covering Upwell district.

7.6 Fenland SOIL currently offer Growers/Farmers and Corporate Membership and are keen to develop an affordable membership offer for IDB Groups. We are working with them to agree a Middle Level Commissioners and administered IDB group membership. Not only is this important to help Boards with their environmental enhancement duties, but it will be crucial if we are to maximise future funding and partnership working opportunities.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD</td><td>Subject:</td><td>CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Tuesday 6 February 2024</td><td>Officer Responsible:</td><td>Nicola Oldfield</td></tr>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Approve up to £500 for a lighting upgrade onsite at the pumping station, to include emergency lighting.**
B. **Confirm how it wishes to proceed with the replacement of the hardwood deck boards on the weedscreen dump area which are showing signs of deterioration.**
C. **Review and approve its Capital Programme taking account of the advice in Section 4**.
D. **Nominate two representatives to work with the Consulting Engineer to prepare a project brief in due course.**

1. Overview of services provided to the Board

1.1 The Middle Level Commissioners currently act as Consulting Engineers to the Board providing the following services. These are provided for set fees, hourly rates and/or at cost by the in-house team (capped within our limited capacity and capability) and are supplemented by consultants, contractors and specialist services where necessary.

- Mechanical & Electrical (M&E): Providing general advice, routine maintenance, minor works and inspections. Supporting development of capital works programme.
- Capital works: Advising the Board and undertaking client, project and contract management roles.
- Operational services: Maintenance works for the Board and for the Environment Agency under a PSCA
- GIS & Survey
- Strategic Planning: Inputs on behalf of the Board to relevant spatial plans (eg Local Plans), flood & water strategies and plans (eg Drainage & Wastewater Management Plans, Fens 2100+)
- Planning and consenting: Responding to Planning Applications and related matters on behalf of the Board and advising on and issuing byelaw consents. A list of the planning, consent and Infiltration Device applications responded to since the last report are provided as Appendix 2.

1.2 Please note that our planning and consenting services currently only have the capacity to be reactive and there is no proactive enforcement service defined and resourced with no allowance made in the Board's budget for such action.

1.3 A Strategic Spatial Planning report will be compiled and published periodically on www.middlelevel.gov.uk and cover the interests of the Middle Level Commissioners and all its administered Boards.

1.4 In order to reduce the cost to the Board and focus limited resources on delivery rather than reporting, the Board has previously resolved to not have a detailed planning report as part of the Consulting Engineer's report. However, this may have governance related implications and does place a burden on the Board's Officers and/or the Clerk's Representative attending the Board Meeting.

1.5 The Middle Level Commissioners intend to refresh the services provided to IDBs by developing a service catalogue that will clarify the full range of services that are offered, along with associated terms and conditions and fee arrangements. This is expected to be developed over the next 12-18 months. Boards will be offered the opportunity to engage in this process to help define the final service offer.

2. **Chief Engineer's summary**

2.1 The new process for delivering grant-aided schemes is now in progress. As more grant-aided projects come online, the MLC engineers' workload will need to be balanced with additional resources. We are using a number of different external consultants and will be monitoring their performance, using this to inform our future delivery model.

2.2 Recent storms (Babet and Henk) may have provided a good opportunity to collect additional data about how the catchment responds to rainfall, however resources are always stretched during an event. We will be able to use telemetry data where it exists, but we encourage the Board members to gather evidence in the form of photos or water level marks (where it is safe to do so), and any other information about the system during an event, to feed into the System Study.

2.3 Fen's Reservoir

Anglian Water's Fens Reservoir development work is moving fast. The Middle Level System has a significant role to play in enabling its delivery, with benefits to all parties; there are potentially significant improvements and financial benefit opportunities to secure. It is imperative that MLC staff continue to be closely involved in consultation with Anglian Water's various design and assessment teams to ensure that the reservoir does not have any adverse impacts on the Middle Level System and our ability to continue to manage water for the IDB districts. Therefore, it is likely that MLC staff may be required to join meetings with the Anglian Water team at short notice and this may briefly affect work we are delivering for the Boards. In this event, we will make any necessary arrangements to limit the impacts this may have.

3. Technical Services

3.1 High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

Further to the last meeting report the Middle Level Commissioners' Planning Engineer has continued to raise concerns about the issues experienced within Cambridgeshire during or following high rainfall and/or exceptional circumstance type events and the apparent lack of action being taken and has enquired of other partners whether given the time that has elapsed any progress is being made to resolve some of the issues.

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

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

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

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

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

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

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern" and/or "Acute drainage areas" has been undertaken and it is considered that the Board's catchment is designated as an "Area of Concern" with the larger Swavesey Drain catchment designated as an "Acute Drainage Area".

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

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

Following discussions, colleagues within the Middle Level Commissioners' Works Department advised 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.

3.2 <u>Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme</u>

The County Council's Flood and Water team are currently in the process of developing a programme of flood risk schemes/works across sixteen locations in Cambridgeshire, including Swavesey, which are identified in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as key areas requiring further investigation. To undertake this piece of work the Council has commissioned AtkinsRéalis (SNC-Lavalin Atkins), a multi-disciplinary consultant that provides the County Council's Highways Management Services, who are currently working on the first phase which includes:

- A review of existing information at each of the locations
- Site walkovers
- Gap analysis
- Survey scoping
- Stakeholder analysis
- Concept solution identification

As key partners, the Commissioners' Planning Engineer, together with representatives from other RMAs, including the Board's Chair, South Cambs Principal Operations Manager (Environment) and representatives from the EA, recently attended a workshop to identify and discuss any ongoing flood management projects that are being progressed, aspirations and needs for each area, opportunities for partnership working, option constraints, relevant data and general receptiveness to solutions within the areas.

As a result of the discussion the challenges facing Swavesey were recognised and the formation of a specific sub-group to try and resolve some of the issues was suggested.

3.3 Summary of Key Planning Issues

New developments and the use of SuDS
As discussed in the last Meeting Report it is considered that there is sufficient evidence that current surface water design practices do not allow for exceptional weather conditions, such as that experienced prior to the December 2020 event which are similar to those being experienced now, Storm Babet (October 2023), or the complex network of water level and flood risk management systems within the Fens. Therefore, consideration is being given to requiring designs to:

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

The introduction of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act may assist particularly if the Commissioners represent the Board on the SuDS Approval Board (SAB) when they are implemented.

4. Capital Programme

4.1 The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

4.2 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GIA) from the Environment Agency, the Consulting Engineer will submit a bid for a funding allocation to carry out a System Study to support works needed at High Causeway Pumping Station, identify any other improvements needed within the system and maximise available grant to deliver works. The study will be fully funded by GIA. It will include channel surveys, structural condition assessment of all assets including the pumping station, hydraulic modelling, economic and environmental assessments, and development of recommendations/solutions to be delivered.

4.3 In order to progress this, a Project Initiation Form (PIF) has been drafted for approval of the Board, included as Appendix 3. This briefly describes the perceived problem, aims and objectives of the study and will be used to provide a scope of work for appointing consultants. I will contact the Chair to arrange a meeting to review and finalise the PIF ahead of appointing consultants to work on the Study. I hope that the Board representatives will work closely with the appointed project team to undertake a meaningful assessment of the district and, ultimately, provide suitable recommendations for future management.

The Board is asked to nominate two representatives to work with the Consulting Engineer to prepare a project brief in due course.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting
Appendix 3: Project Initiation Form (PIF)
Appendix 4: Operational Services Report
Appendix 5: Mechanical & Electrical Report

Appendix 1

Swavesey 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
Long Causeway 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	750.0	750.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	40.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	0	0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	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	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Drainage Channels														
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	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**	**40**	**5**	**50**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**750**	**845**

Jan-22 Updated to engineer's asset appraisal

Appendix 2

The following planning applications have been responded to since the last meeting:

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
420	S/22/04871/FUL	Mrs N Barratt	Residence	Greenside, Swavesey
421	S/20/4286/CONDA	Mr J Garner	Residence	Middle Watch, Swavesey
422	S/23/00004/FUL	Sarah Denley	Residential (2 dwellings)	Taylors Lane, Swavesey
423	S/23/00172/HFUL	Mr & Mrs Tracey	Residence (Extensions)	Moat Way, Swavesey
424	S/23/00557/PRIOR	Mr B Feld	Change of use (Commercial to Residential - 2 dwellings)	Station Road, Swavesey
425	S/23/01118/FUL	The Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund	Retirement living development (6 flats)	Middle Watch, Swavesey
426	S/23/01106/FUL	Mr D Monks	Change of use (Annex to separate dwelling)	Boxworth End, Swavesey
427	S/23/01494/PRIOR	Mr B Feld	Change of use (Commercial to Residential – 2 dwellings)	Station Road, Swavesey
428	S/23/01521/HFUL	J & A Thompson	Outbuilding	Boxworth End, Swavesey
429	S/23/02161/S73	Mr A Cassidy & Mr D Norman	Residential (Extensions to existing dwelling and new dwelling)	Middle Watch, Swavesey
430	S/02321/HFUL	Mr B Heneker	Residence (Extension)	Moat Way, Swavesey
431	Discharge Consent application	Sylvia Newman Garden Design Ltd	Office building	Over Road, Longstanton
432	S/23/01118/CONDB	The Gospel Standard Bethesda Fund	Retirement living development (6 flats)	Middle Watch, Swavesey

No applications for Byelaw Consent (either to undertake works in and around watercourses or to discharge to a watercourse) have been granted since the last meeting:

The following Infiltration Device applications have been acknowledged since the last meeting:

Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)	Location	Date acknowledged
Option 1	Moat Way, Swavesey	10/3/23
Option 1	Boxworth End, Swavesey	22/6/23
Option 1	Middle Watch, Swavesey	25/7/23 Refused Option 2 received but not yet processed

Project Initiation Form

Board name	Swavesey IDB
Project name	System Study
Project no.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Doc Ref.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Report/MA reference	Minutes of meeting 7 February 2023

Description of requirements

Project details			
Description of the problem			
The pumps are in good working order and the electrical insulation readings are good, but as they are now over 35 years old consideration should be given to their overhaul or replacement.			
Timescales/Priority	Study start 2026		
Dependencies			
Replacement pumps would need to be fish friendly pumps which cost in the region of £200,000.			
Constraints			
The pumps to be replaced with fish friendly pumps.			
Governance and key contacts			
Delegated Board Member	[Who the Board has delegated decision making to and who is the Board's key contact]		
Date of delegation	[Date/meeting]		
MLC Engineer			
Reporting requirements			
Frequency of reports	[e.g. monthly update to the Chairman]		
Process	[e.g. By phone/email/Highlight Report]		
Tolerances	[e.g. notify key contact if cost increases by 20%/delay of 6 months]		
Benefits and funding [To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]			
Budget estimate	Study: £50k; Works arising: estimated £1,500,000		
Anticipated Outcome Measures (OM2)	TBC	Potential GiA (%)	[From PF calc (revision)]
Funding source	FCERM GiA		

Approvals

No work is to proceed until the Chief Engineer has confirmed availability of resources/proposed timescales and Board approvals have been received below:

Name	Title	Signature	Date
	Chief Engineer		
	Delegated Board Member		

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	9
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**
Date:	**6 February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Morgan Lakey**

1. Environment Agency/Swavesey IDB/Middle Level Commissioners' PSCA (Public Sector Co-operation Agreement) Works Delivery - 2022 Season

Following successful completion of works in the previous four seasons, Swavesey IDB and the Middle Level Commissioners were jointly tasked by the Environment Agency (EA) with delivery of a similar maintenance arrangement again in 2023.

For their part last season, the Middle Level Commissioners provided plant, machinery and labour to undertake an herbicide application to the EA controlled watercourses plus flail mowing services.

The Swavesey IDB District Superintendent provided a smaller flail mowing unit to undertake flail mowing requirements where the larger MLC machine was unable to access tight and restricted areas.

Last season was the first year under the current 3-year PSCA arrangement between Swavesey IDB, MLC and the EA, which expires in December 2025.

2. Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

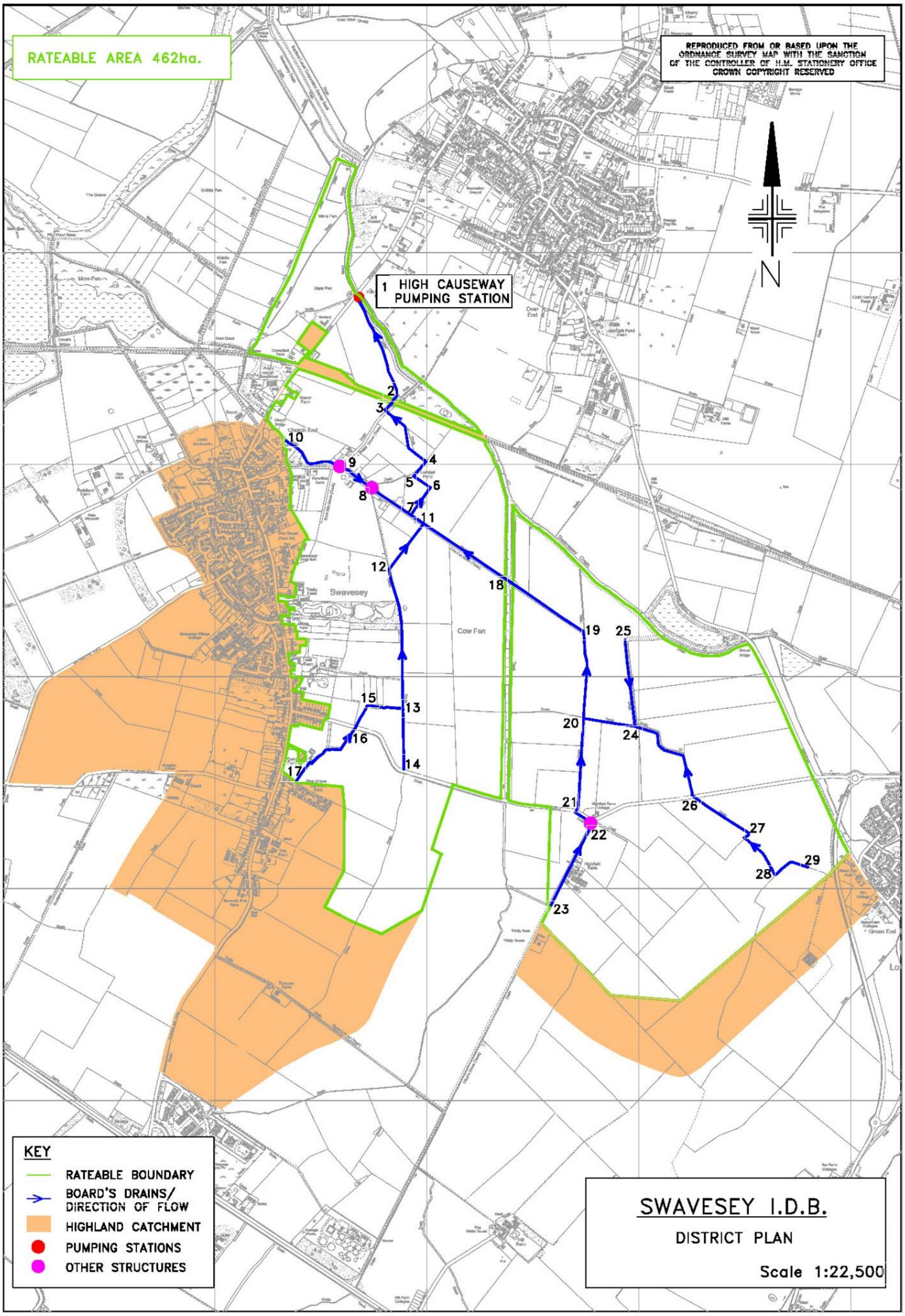
The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Board at its last Annual Meeting.

Following a dry start to the summer, there was little evidence of aquatic vegetation growth within the Board's drains and following several inspections and in agreement with the Chairman, the herbicide treatments for the year were cancelled and will be considered early spring this year if required. A sum has been included within the estimated costs to undertake herbicide applications throughout the district again this year.

The Board's flail mowing requirements were undertaken by Lattenbury Services Ltd and, at the Chairman's/District Superintendent's request, Lattenbury will be approached to undertake the flail mowing of Board's drains again this year. A sum has been included within the estimated costs to cover this work.

As with previous years many of the Board's drain beds dried out during the summer and the watercourses were deemed to have retained their general good condition and no machine cleansing was required in the dry drains. With the Chairman's/District Superintendent's approval, a late spring/early summer joint inspection of the Board's drains will be undertaken again this year. The inspection should highlight herbicide application requirements and give an opportunity to forward plan any other works required to maintain the Board's drains to a satisfactory standard.

Provisional sums based on previous year's machine cleansing expenditure and culvert cleansing/piling works, have been allocated within this report.


RATEABLE AREA 462ha.
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED
N
1 HIGH CAUSEWAY PUMPING STATION
Swavesey
Cow Fen
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARD'S DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
SWAVESEY I.D.B.
DISTRICT PLAN
Scale 1:22,500

3. Estimated Costs of Anticipated Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme

The estimated cost of this year's anticipated drain maintenance and weed control programme is as follows (see previous plan for locations):

			£
1)	Roundup applications to control emergent aquatic vegetation in District drains	Item Sum	1500.00
2)	**Provisional Item** Allow sum for machine cleansing work to Board's drains as required	Item Sum	2500.00
3)	**Provisional Item** Allow sum for emergency works including bank piling or culvert headwall repair works	Item Sum	1000.00
4)	Allow sum for flail mowing of District drains and hedge cutting	Item Sum	4500.00
5)	Fees for preparation and submission of report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works.	Item Sum	750.00
		TOTAL	£10,250.00

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatment.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Assistant Operations Engineer

Appendix 5

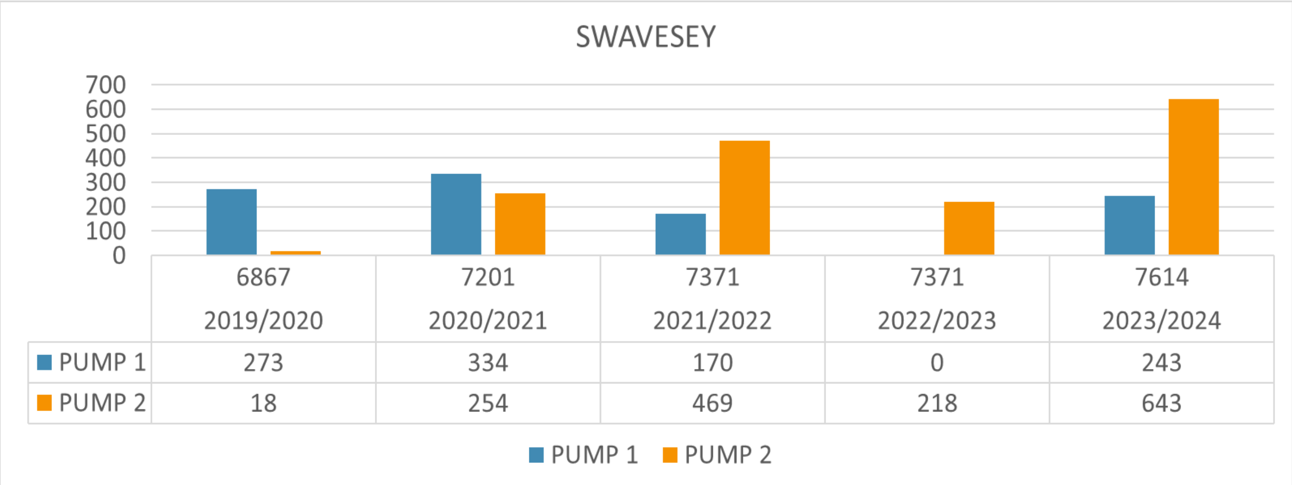
Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**9**
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Tuesday 5 February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

1.1 Other than the matters described below or previously reported, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition.

1.2 Timed operation of pumps and weed screen will be investigated on next service visit as requested.

2. Pumping summary



PUMP 1 HISTORY		
DATE	HOURS	
1985	0	NEW
1995	2800	PUMP MAJOR OVERHAUL
2004	5271	PUMP REMOVED AS BLOCKED - SEALS REPLACED
2010	5806	PUMP MAJOR OVERHAUL BY BEDFORD PUMPS
2023	7371	RUN HOURS AT JAN 2023
2024	7614	RUN HOURS AT JAN 2024

PUMP 2 HISTORY		
DATE	HOURS	
1985	0	NEW
1996	1785	PUMP MAJOR OVERHAUL
2001	2857	PUMP REMOVED AS BLOCKED - SEALS REPLACED

2011	5162	PUMP MAJOR OVERHAUL BY BEDFORD PUMPS
2023	8427	RUN HOURS AT JAN 2023
2024	9070	RUN HOURS AT JAN 2024

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during September 2023.

3.2 ElCR Test and Due dates as below. Retest will be booked in the new year. This is a good opportunity to upgrade the lighting onsite to LED.

Board	EICR Pass Date	EICR Due
Swavesey	26-Mar-2019	26-Mar-2024

Please approve up to £500 for lighting upgrade onsite, to include emergency lighting.

3.3 It has been noted by the Chairman several of the hardwood deck boards on the weedscreen dump area are showing signs of deterioration and will require replacing in the near future. An estimated cost for supply and installation of suitable replacements would be in the region of £2000-3000.

The Board may wish to take this time to discuss and confirm how they wish to proceed with the matter going forward.

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Site Safety Inspection Record

Swavesy Pumping Station

Complete

Name of organisation:	Swavesy Pumping Station
Date of site visit	19.01.2024 12:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Swavesey Pumping Station Over Road Swavesey CB 24 4QZ
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	19.01.2024 12:00 GMT
Audit Name	Swavesy Pumping Station

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Hannah Parish

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

No significant changes or issues were noted, it was pleasing to note that site housekeeping and security were observed to be at a good standard.


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3

2

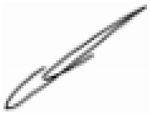
Signage. Previous recommendations had been made regarding the replacement of faded or illegible hazard warning signage at the pumping station sites, e.g. electrical hazard and automated machinery operating without warning.

Most of the sites have been provided with replacement signage for automatic machinery.
In order to provide a consistent standard of signage at each of the pumping station sites, it is recommended that signage is displayed on the site access gate(s) or perimeter fencing where provided, or pumping station building that has the following information:
- Pumping Station Name.
- IDB Name.
- Location details. eg. Grid ref, 'What Three Words'
- Contact details for emergency (e.g. name, phone number, email).
- Hazard warning pictograms relevant to the site, e.g electric shock, automatic machinery deep water or fall from edge, no unauthorised entry, etc.

It was suggested that Middle Level Commissioners are contacted to facilitate this

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature



Martin Clark
21.01.2024 22:32 GMT

Departure time	19.01.2024 12:53 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

Nil

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	0 From 0 to 99

Media summary

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**SWAVESEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Tuesday 6th February 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the payments for 2023.
B. Consider and approve the comments of the Auditor on the Annual Return for 2022/23.
C. Consider and approve the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for 2022/23.
D. Note the budget comparison and the Highland Water Contributions.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

The Clerk to report.

1. Payments for 2023

1.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

2. Annual Accounts and Annual Return for 2022/23

2.1 The Annual Accounts and Annual Return is included as Appendix 2.

2.2 The Audit report of the Internal Auditor is included as Appendix 3.

3. **Highland Water Contributions from the Environment Agency**

3.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board can make a claim for funding to the Environment Agency for the additional costs of the onward management of water from the district's highland. It is at the Environment Agency's discretion if they pay the contribution and it is accounted for within the local team's annual maintenance budget.

3.3 Following the submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £1,449.13 (£5,485.71 less £4,036.58 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2022/2023 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £4,601.48 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2023/2024.

Author Name: Robert Hill/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 **Payments for 2023**
Appendix 2 **Annual Accounts and Annual Return for 2022/23**
Appendix 3 **Internal Auditor Report for 2022/23**

Appendix 1

Swavesey Internal Drainage Board

Payments made 2022/2023 (1st February 2023 - 31st March 2023)

Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	271.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District drains	872.16
K & P J Wilderspin - Supervisors fee (2022/2023)	2,236.80
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Electricity supply to High Causeway pumping station	1,254.79
	4,635.55

Payments made 2023/2024 (1st April 2023 - 31st December 2023)

Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & safety Re-charge 2022-2023	213.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and Travelling	3,150.71
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	271.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of board, planning and development applications)	1,187.70
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of highland water claims	366.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	(2,635.20)
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2023	716.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply floodlight	22.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2022/2023, production of board report, planning and development applications)	2,042.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges (Account from Andrew Arnold)	64.58
Environment Agency - Precept	943.65
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	282.60
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2022/2023 accounts)	252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whitings LLP 2022/2023 accounts)	588.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	2,257.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of board, planning and development applications)	556.80
Sylvia Newman Garden Design Ltd - Refund of discharge consent fee not due	583.46
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	709.07
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Environment Agency - Precept	943.64
Lattenbury Services Ltd - Flail mowing	5,160.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	135.90
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Electricity supply to High Causeway pumping station	1,496.32
Corona Energy - Electricity supply to High Causeway pumping station	1,764.74
	21,115.11

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Swavesey Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2023

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 /234)

1 The Audit of accounts for the Swavesey Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2023 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Swavesey Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
Swavesey Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), when any local elector may make copies of the Annual Return.

3 Copies will be provided to any local elector on payment of £2.40 for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 8th September 2023

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 12/06/2023 19/06/2023 27/06/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: WHITINGS LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: P.BEECH – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 27/06/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

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

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

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

26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

B.1137

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

Chairman

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	89,015	89,311	*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	19,389	21,327	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	5,459	7,308	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	24,552	22,579	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	89,311	95,367	*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	92,477	96,521	*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	513,000	513,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

Date 12th June 2023

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

26/06/2023

as recorded in minute reference:

B. 1138

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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of **Swavesey Internal Drainage Board – DB0108**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None.

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Date	01/09/2023

Appendix 3

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
Fenland House, 15 B Hostmoor Avenue
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

BB/MM053
30 June 2023

Messrs. P Burrows, R Hill and S Ablett
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs.
PE15 0AH

Dear Messrs. P Burrows, R. Hill, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2022-2023

Having completed the internal audit work for the various Internal Drainage Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners officers for the year ended 31 March 2023, we are pleased to provide you with the following recommendations to be considered for implementation. We have included some general points and some points which are related to specific boards.

<u>General points</u>

1. **Asset Valuations and Insurances – mainly for residential properties**

   It is noted that, whilst a large proportion of boards took the option to revalue for insurance purposes their pumping station and residential assets during recent years, there are still some boards that have not followed suit. We have seen elsewhere that such revaluations have sometimes resulted in significant uplifts in value, and as such we would suggest that any remaining boards that have yet to carry out such an exercise do so at the earliest convenience. It should be noted that this is largely in relation to residential property. Should a complete rebuild following an unforeseen catastrophic event be required, current valuations may no longer be appropriate given today's prices which may lead to a shortfall in funds which would have to be drawn out of surplus funds if other financial arrangements were not available.

We would recommend that in the absence of specific information to the contrary suggesting need for earlier review, that a revaluation exercise be performed for insurance purposes at least every 5 years on all major board assets. This is especially important given the significant increase in material and labour costs seen in recent times as a result of rising inflation and global material shortages. However, we are pleased to note that boards are being asked whether they wish for insurance to be index linked going forward and would strong suggest that all boards agree to this proposal.

Client comment:

While we have put it to Boards to review pumping station valuations for insurance purposes, as separate statutory authorities it is up to each Board to review and approve what they consider to be an appropriate valuation and your point concerning possible under-insured amounts having to be funded directly by the Board following an event has been highlighted previously. We are recommending that Boards should look to index link valuations and we will be asking all Boards again to consider this at subsequent meetings, along with consideration of current valuations. Valuation of residential property is an area we have focussed on for the 2023 meetings.

A number of Boards have recognised the potential impact of increased costs on valuations and have taking steps to re-value, however, the consulting engineer is currently reviewing the methodology for valuation of pumping stations, to ensure there is a robust process, which will be then used going forward.

This is an area already programmed to be reviewed every five years and hopefully with indexing we may not require such individual valuations going forward.

2. Employee Benefits

In 2020 a high-level tax case was brought by HM Revenue & Customs against Coca-Cola European Partners Great Britain Limited relating to vehicles provided to employees of Coca Cola and whether these 'dual purpose' vehicles should be classed as a van or a car for benefit in-kind (BIK) and other taxation purposes. Typical example of such a vehicle being a double cab pickup as operated by some boards. The Court of Appeal ruled in favour of HMRC and, as a result HMRC are now reminding employers of the importance to ensure that they have classified their vehicles correctly and as a result we would advise that this matter is kept under review both now and into the future to mitigate the risk of an unexpected tax bill arising. We would advise that this is considered across all boards going forward if this is not being taken into account already.

With regards to other employee benefits, we note that where applicable these are being recognised as benefits in kind and disclosed on the P11d, we would encourage the value of these benefits to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that these are reflective of what the employee receives, especially where some boards providing the living accommodation to their employees.

Client comment:

We are aware of the case and potential implications to employees of classification of vehicles. Generally, we do not make changes concerning additional passenger/load capabilities to that of the original manufacturer's specification, which are relied upon alongside the HMRC guidance when designating vehicles for taxation/benefits in kind.

The benefit charge for living accommodation is calculated in accordance with HMRC recommended valuations. We are looking at payrolling any standard benefits but are currently unable to do this for accommodation and use of vehicles.

3. **Provisions**

We are pleased to note that, in the main; provisions for amounts owing to and owed from applicable boards, are being monitored and written back should the underlying potential asset/liability be extinguished. There are still odd cases where provisions are "brought forward and carried forward" that relate in excess of the standard life of debt, being 6 years. On review in some cases whilst the underlying rationale of these balances are reasonable, we would question whether payments could still be enforced if chased, aside from in relation to development contributions. As such we would encourage continued review of provisions as a whole, with special consideration being made to aged provisions that have existed for a number of years and ideally the rationale being documented in the accounts pack provided to us as part of the internal audit.

We would also recommend that any such old debts or provisions (apart from development contribution provisions), say over 3 years old, be presented at the board meeting annually and approved.

Client comment:
As part of the year end accounting procedures, provisions/balances are looked at on an individual basis and decisions made on relevance as to retain or to write back.

4. **Budget figures**

We note that budget figures are prepared annually in advance, but we note these are not updated in the late Autumn even when notable variances may have occurred for various factors. Whilst not necessary to do so for all boards, we suggest that Chairperson of each individual board be given the opportunity to request updated budgets after the half year point for the remainder of the year and distribute to board members if they feel it appropriate in light of any unforeseen significant variances arising.

The budgets that have been set for 2023/24 year may need to be increased throughout the year due to the significant cost increases that are largely as a result of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Client comment:

As part of the finance regulations, we are required to carry out a budget monitoring exercise during the course of the year. For those Boards that have a relevant meeting, this is reviewed by the Board at their autumn/winter meeting. For all other Boards the monitoring exercise is completed as at the end of the calendar year, at this point the majority of the drain maintenance works have been completed, as would be any planned maintenance works at pumping stations. The expenditure to-date is then forecast to the end of the financial year and compared to the budget and initially sent to the chairman for review. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring exercise depends on whether it is considered appropriate to hold an emergency meeting. However, it is likely that if there were an extraordinary event the Board would be aware "in real time" and appropriate action taken at that point. It is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure but to use these as comparative to analyse variances of actual expenditure against.

5. Surplus Funds

It is noted a number of IDB's hold significant cash reserves, with inflation having peaked at a 40 year high within the last 12 months, all IDB's need to consider investing their surplus funds, in order to achieve greater return on public funds and to ensure value for money principles are observed and cash asset values are not eroded overtime. We appreciate that in recent years interest rates would have made such an exercise unfruitful when taking into account the associated admin cost involved in such an undertaking. We note that some of IDBs decided to switch from the business premium bank account to business current bank account, these accounts no longer earn interest but are free from bank charges and fees. However, with the Bank of England now increasing interest rates to combat rising inflation in the UK, we would advise that this is now an opportune time to conduct such an exercise.

Client comment:

A brief summary of treasury management:

There are 30 separate authorities administered through the Middle Level offices, all of which are required to maintain their own banking arrangements, we do look at bulk/group arrangements to do this and it is a requirement that all boards are treated the same. In the past it was found that there was a lot of staff time being spent in investment transfers and following discussions with the bank it was decided that for ease of operation all balances would be treated the same and the bank would offer a competitive interest rate and free banking. To do this all boards had a "client premium" account. This is the type of account operated by businesses looking after clients' money (solicitors etc). They are generally specific accounts in the name of the business but it is for "third party monies."

Our arrangement worked fine until the (first) crash around 2008 – at this time interest rates plummeted below our arrangement rate – specifically, under the terms of the arrangement we could have been required to pay the bank for looking after our money. The arrangement was changed to retain free banking, but as with all accounts interest was minimal.

During last financial year our bankers started taking more of an interest in the number of client premium accounts they had across the country and were surprised with the number held in March. The use of such accounts is for very specific purposes which we as an organisation do not qualify and alarm bells were ringing with the bank that they were operating outside of all banking standards/regulations. We were notified that as a result of this the accounts would need to be closed and other accounts opened. This would involve a basic current account and an interest bearing second account – transfers to be made between the two for cash flow purposes. We made the bank aware of our concerns about transferring accounts with regards to the payment of direct debits and the collection of rates by direct debit, payment by ratepayers etc for which our account details were with many suppliers/customers and we did not want to go down the route of having payments/receipts rejected and details having to be re-registered with all parties.

While this was being put in place we had a general increase in interest rates but as previously advised we now have started to rationalise the arrangements – there will be some fine tuning required but currently the process is a standard current account for normal payments/receipts and an interest-bearing account. Additionally, balances can be transferred for deposit/investment.

We are currently making treasury deposits for individual Boards but need to manage this with specific cash flow requirements while also making consideration to having balances available for potential event situations requiring immediate cash. We will be monitoring additional staff time required to manage this while discussing matters further with our bankers.

6. Rental of Land

It was previously noted that some IDB's were renting out land to tenants for less than market value and that this should be reviewed to ensure value for money principles were being applied.

We are happy to note that some IDB's have increased the rental values of land to market rates, although there are still some IDB's where the rental value is significantly below market value and we advise that the market values are increased for these boards to ensure value for money principles are applied going forwards.

Client comment:
Boards which have land holding for rent generally review rents in accordance with tenancy agreements and use local land agents for guidance. A number of Boards have small holdings of land which are let at reasonable rates with a view to keep the land tidy and in good order as they are not necessarily commercially viable. A number of Boards have slamp land, which cannot be considered the same as general agricultural land for rental purposes. All Boards look to get the best rents available, but these are relevant to the size and type of land being let.

7. Financial Regulations

We noted that the last update and approve of Financial Regulations for all boards was in 2013 with the next review in 2023. However due the recent retirement of Chief Executive and the joint of new Chief Executive/Clerk in February 2023, the review of Financial Regulations has not been completed by the financial year under review. We have been informed that the new Chief Executive and Treasurer are aware of these requirements and the Financial Regulations are due to be updated by the end of this year, we look forward to reviewing this in due course.

Client comments:
There is a full review of the provision of clerking services and will be, as has been mentioned looking at reviewing these regulations towards the end of 2023 with a view to then having them updated by the Boards.

Specific Points

Conington & Holme IDB

We note that the pumping station owned by the board is insured at less than the latest revaluation amount, see below;

Insured value	610,000
Latest revaluation	685,630
Underinsured	**75,630**

We understand that the board took the conscious decision not to uplift the insurance value in line with the revaluation figure suggested by the engineer. As already highlighted above, should any significant event occur, such as a major fire, resulting in the need to reinstate the asset in full, the board run the risk of the shortfall which would require the use of surplus balances to cover the resulting deficit in funds. We would therefore strongly recommend that the board consider increasing the insured value to the revaluation figure.

Client comment:
For the 2023 meeting the Board approved an insured value of £701,500 and for this to be index linked.

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement

As in previous years it is noted that there is a discrepancy between debtor held in Waldersey IDB and the creditor held in Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

Waldersey IDB – Debtor	£52,324.26
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£52,436.95
Difference	**£112.69**

We are pleased to note that this difference is insignificant for the current year. The difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, leading to a provision being required in the former's books in the absence of more accurate information being available. The difference is adjusted in the following year's Accounts for Hundred of Wisbech.

We note that there have been discussions to potentially amalgamate the two boards, this would eradicate the anomaly. However, in the absence of this, we suggest that meetings and account preparation periods be brought into line, if possible, to eradicate this issue.

Client comment:

These costs relate to the contribution for the costs of the shared pumping facility and at the time of production of the year end accounting statements discussions were taking place concerning potential changes to the contribution as a result of changes in land use. A new proposal had been put forward which was broadly approved by both Boards.

There are no current plans to change meeting dates so as one set of accounts is finalised before the other there is likely to remain creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now that all older balances have been cleared, any in-year balance should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

March East IDB

During our review it was noted that the onsite pumping station attendant's payments were not authorised during the year, the amounts charged by the attendant are similar to the rental costs charged to the individual for occupying residential property owned by the district. We understand that this arrangement has been agreed at board level to ensure that the individual is not financially penalised in carrying out their duties for the board. However, this treatment appears to be at odds with the amount charged being disproportionate when compared to other IDB's that we have audited. We would advise that these amounts most certainly should be authorised to ensure adequate controls are maintained over the purchase function and we would also question how HMRC would interpret the arrangement should they carry out any follow up review in the future.

Client comment:
Following a review in the previous financial year residential property rent was re-assessed in line with current guidance from HMRC. At the same time the value of the attendant's services was re-appraised. These reviews were approved by the Board. There were no changes proposed for 2022 so the original resolution remained unchanged. However, we agree with your comments and both areas will be considered annually as separate agenda items.

Hundred of Wisbech

During the course of our audit, we noted that the 2021/22 accounts and payment list had not been published on the website, we are pleased to note that following notification of this fact the accounts and payment list were promptly uploaded. We are satisfied that this is an isolated incident but would remind all boards of their obligation to comply with the requirements in this area and to ensure that all relevant documents are published in a timely manner.

We also notice that the statement of NS & I accounts shows the name and the address of old Chief Executive who is retired in February 2023. We understand that this matter will be brought to the attention of the board on the next general meeting to approve the changes in signatory.

Client comment:
Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations.

Your comment is noted and procedures are being amended concerning this for the future.

Ramsey First (Hollow) IDB

During our review it was noted that the actual wages increase of the employee during the year has exceeded the increase authorised by the board during the meeting. We understand that it was an isolated error and understand that this matter will be brought to the attention of the board during the next general meeting. The overall error is equal to 0.50% of the total expenditures and will be adjusted next year. We understand that the internal process is being reviewed and address to ensure that this scenario doesn't arise again in the future.

Client comment:
This administration error was reviewed by the Board at their 2023 meeting and the relevant adjustment is being made through the 2023 payroll process. We have looked at our internal processes and made appropriate adjustments to mitigate future risk.

March 3rd IDB

Whilst the board are using the budget setting process to determine the rates set on an annual basis, we note that the rates had been the same for the last 5 years. In a view of the capital improvement program – the plans for the pumping station replacement in 2026/27, the current rate of inflation and the fact that rates have been increased across other boards under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners, we would recommend that the rates raised be reviewed and uplifted as necessary to take account of the factors outlined above.

Client comment:
The points raised are made to the Commissioners when setting the rate but there it is the appointed members who have been against rate increases, indicating that the council will address any shortfall in the following year should this be the case. This is a situation that has occurred on other Boards for the setting of the 2023/2024 rates and levies.

We take this opportunity to thank your staff involved in our audit for their assistance and cooperation in achieving substantial completion by the stated target deadlines. We trust that the engagement team have not caused significant disruption during the execution of their procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Whitings LLP

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td colspan="2">13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>SWAVESEY IDB</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Tuesday 6th February 2024</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Robert Hill/Sam Ablett</td></tr>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. District Superintendents fees.
B. Renew its subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities and reaffirm its contribution towards an IDB Board Member role within Water Resources East.
C. Approve the determination of land values for rating and note the receipt of developer contributions.
D. Agree what action to take with regards to any rate arrears.
E. Consider the Finance Officer's summary and key messages and approve a budget estimate for 2024/25.
F. Set the rate requirements for 2024/25.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The Clerk to report.

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 District Superintendent – Hours worked, Fee, Expenses & consider the use of casual labour.

1.2 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6%, from £597 to £636. The Board is also asked to consider and reaffirm its contribution estimated to be £150 towards the Board Member role representing local IDBs within Water Resources East (WRE).

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

2.1 Internal Drainage Boards are required to pay a Precept (IDB Precept) to the Environment Agency for their expenses managing water passing into main rivers. Predominantly, the Precept funds additional maintenance downstream of and/or benefitting IDB districts.

2.2 The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 3% for 2024.

2.3 The precept for 2022/2023 was £1832.00.

3. Estimates for 2024/25

3.1 The estimated budget for 2024/25 is shown in Appendix 1.

3.2 The Board are reminded that it is standard practice to budget for an average year in terms of rainfall and associated pumping requirements.

4. Rate Requirements for 2024/25

4.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.

4.2 Board Members are welcome to propose alternative rate requirements and invite these for consideration by the Board along with their supporting rationale and proposed mechanism for catering within the budget estimate and/or the Board's investment strategy.

Author Name: Robert Hill/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2024/25
Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2024/25

Appendix 1

SWAVESEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2024/2025

		Estimated 2023/2024 £	Probable Actual 2023/2024 £	Budget proposal 2024/2025 £
1	Insurances	625	670	725
2	Repairs and renewals	2,000	2,000	5,500 [A]
3	Fuel	3,300	12,000	4,000 [B]
4	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	13,500	8,000 [C]	13,500 [D]
5	Planning applications	1,800	1,800	1,800
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	6,700	6,650	6,900
7	Environment Agency - Precept	1,890	1,887	1,944
8	Improvement works	0	0	1,000 [E]
		29,815	33,007	35,369
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Highland Water contributions etc	4,125	6,131 [F]	9,679 [G]
		25,690	26,876	25,690 [H]

	Estimated 2023/2024	Probable Actual 2023/2024	Budget proposal 2024/2025	
Estimated General Fund Opening Balance	48,734	48,734	45,125	Rate
Rates Raised	23,267	23,267	25,690	£0.927
Net Expenditure	25,690	26,876	25,690	
Use of balances	0	0		
Closing Balance	46,311	45,125	45,125	

Remarks

A - Includes for:
Refurbish weed-screen deck 3,000
replace lighting in p/s 500

B - Estuimated - new contract rates from Sept '24 for estimated increase in 5 year average

C - Includes:
Flail mowing 4,300
Slubbing 0

D - Includes engineers items 10,250

E - Provision for engineer fees for review of EA embankment data

F - Includes receipt of :
Full highland water contributions 5,736

G - Includes:
- average highland water contributions based on probable out-turn. Balance of 23/24 payment to off-set balance reduction
Future works fund for works at p/s 3,500

H - Does not include provision for writing off rate arrears
Does not include for capital improvement funding
Does not include provision for pump overhaul

Works for EA carried out under MLC PSCA and re-charged by MLC.

Swavesey Internal Drainage Board **Appendix 2**

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 2024/2025 is:-

AREA 1

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 62.42%
b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to South Cambridgeshire District Council – 37.58%.

The product of a rate of £1 in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £10,953.

AREA 2

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 70.25%
b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to South Cambridgeshire District Council – 29.75%

The product of a rate of £1 in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £5,676.

AREA 3

All of the net expenditure must be borne by the Agricultural Sector.

The product of a rate of £1 in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £2,072.

The product of a rate of £1 in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £18,701.

A rate of £1 together with corresponding Special levy will raise £27,698.

EXPENDITURE

Estimated revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2024 £45,000.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2024/2025 is £25,690, is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 92.75p and

b) a Special levy on South Cambridgeshire District Council of £8,345.

The full rate raised in 2023/2024 was 84.00p in the £ and a Special levy of £7,558 was issued to South Cambridgeshire District Council to raise £23,267 against estimated expenditure of £25,690.

P BURROWS
Clerk to the Board

January 2024