

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the March East Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday 1st June 2023

PRESENT

C E Martin Esq (Chairman)	Cllr C Boden
C W Albutt Esq (Vice Chairman)	J E Heading Esq
R D Gladwin Esq.	Ms A Morris
A Dunham Esq	P M Tegerdine Esq
Cllr Mrs J French	G Dunham Esq
Cllr J F Clark	D J Henson Esq
Cllr A Miscandlon	Cllr P Hicks

Miss Samantha Ablett (representing the Clerk to the Board) and Mr Morgan Lakey (representing the Consulting Engineers) were in attendance.

The Chairman enquired whether ALL Board members were happy for the meeting to be recorded. All Members were in agreement.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs M Davis, A J N Gee Esq, P Hayes Esq and D S Morris Esq.

B.1406 Declarations of Interest

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

B.1407 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 9th June 2022 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1408 Election of Board Members

Miss Ablett reported that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (15), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2022,

ALBUTT	Charles W	HEADING	John E
AVELING	Will	HENSON	David J
DUNHAM	Andrew	MARTIN	Clive E
DUNHAM	Graham C	MORRIS	Alison
GEE	Adrian J N	MORRIS	Donald S
GLADWIN	Roger D	TEGERDINE	Peter M
HAYES	Paul G		

B.1409 Vacancy in Membership

The Board considered the filling of the 2 vacancies in the membership of the Board caused by the resignation A Coulson Esq and P Fisher Esq.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk to write to Tobias Martin and Sam Murphy inviting them to join the Board.

B.1410 Bank Mandate and National Savings & Investments

Miss Ablett reported that it is necessary to update the signatories after April 2023.

RESOLVED

- i) That Mr P Burrows be added as an authorised signatory of the Barclays Bank Account, should this be required in the future.
- ii) That Mr P Burrows, as Clerk to the Board and Mr C Martin, as Chairman, be the authorised signatories of the National Savings Investment Account and that the account of March East Internal Drainage Board with National Savings and Investments be changed accordingly.

B.1411 Member Training Update

Miss Ablett reported on the training undertaken by Members in the past year.

B.1412 Amalgamation with Euximoor IDB

Further to minute B.1378, Miss Ablett reported the Assistant Clerk had advised she had recently spoken with Carol Tidmarsh of Defra who had advised the department now had the capacity to deal with the Board's amalgamation. She added the Assistant Clerk had obtained updated calculations and would submit these with other relevant current information to Carol Tidmarsh and would try and obtain a timeline from her of when the amalgamation may be concluded.

RESOLVED

That an estimated timeline for the amalgamation be obtained from Defra and sent to the Chairman.

B.1413 Drain Maintenance – Point 177 – Grounds Avenue

Further to minute B.1379, Miss Ablett reported the Consulting Engineer had confirmed that a quote for improvement works had been sent to Anglian Water, but a response had not yet been received.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineer contact Anglian Water regarding the improvement works and quote previously supplied.

B.1414 Infilling of drainage ditch at land south east of Orchard Lodge, Jobs Lane, March

Further to minute B.1380, Miss Ablett reported that some information had been received from the applicant since the last meeting and the consent application had been passed to the previous Clerk for approval. She advised the Clerk had requested further information from the applicant, which had not yet been received.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting Engineer contacts the applicant advising that a consent application must be made and approved before consent can be granted.

B.1415 Clerk's Report

Miss Ablett advised:-

i) Middle Level Commissioners and Administered Boards Chairs Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The future of IDBs and the value of potential amalgamations was once discussed and this gave rise to questions over small boards being able to secure a quorate for which this had been a particularly poor year. It was agreed that this item should remain on the agenda and that any Chairs who felt that the time was right for their Boards to look again and the advantages/disadvantages of amalgamation would 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) Annual Flood & Water Conference 2023

Invitation to ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023

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

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

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

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

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

Discussion forum

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

Book your place

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

[ADA Flood & Water Conference 2023 Tickets, Tue 21 Nov 2023 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

c) Meeting of the River Great Ouse Branch

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

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

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

Ouse catchment) and was joined by Darren Trumper who between them gave an overview of Environment Agency flood management activities and budgets.

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) Changes to Electricity Supply Contracts

Miss Ablett 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.

Miss Ablett reported this was considered a positive move and recommended the Board also move to this alternative arrangement.

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

Miss Ablett advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and its administered Boards have entered into a fixed rate energy supply with Corona Energy for an 18-month period from 1st April 2023.

vi) Insurance

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

Our insurance portfolio is complex and includes a range of policies that includes Commercial Combined (largest component), Motor Fleet, Engineering & Construction, Terrorism, Management Liability, Marine Craft and Professional Indemnity.

The overall cost of our insurance portfolio for 2023/24 will be £192,275 (£152,373 in 2022/23) a 26% increase, although increases will differ Board by Board depending on their individual insurance needs.

Key factors and changes are highlighted below:

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

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

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

Councillor Boden enquired whether the Clerk wished to comment as the Board had to be aware of the danger of having Members who were uninsured when there was a risk to the Board in terms of liability. Miss Ablett advised that the personal accident cover related to Members should they be injured whilst on Board duties, and she gave attendance at an inspection of the District as an example and as long as the Board had not been negligent there should be no liability to the Board.

Councillor Miscandlon advised there were insurance companies that insured people over 80 years of age and the Clerk should look at those companies on an individual basis for Members, who at times may put themselves at risk. He added that COPE Safety Management should be contacted and asked for their advice.

Miss Ablett explained that due to the nature of operations undertaken by IDBs there were a limited number of insurance companies that would consider insuring the Boards and she referred to the NFU not being willing to quote.

vii) Delegation of signatory on consents

The Board was asked to note that under the Board's scheme of delegation, the Chief Executive has delegated the authority to sign consent on behalf of the Board to the Chief Engineer. As

well as the Chief Engineer being better placed to technically assure individual consents, this will enable them to effectively take ownership over the whole planning and consenting service. This also creates a mechanism for escalation in case of any issues or complaints.

viii) Service Delivery Frameworks

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

ix) Local Government Support - Special Levies

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

Councillor Boden expressed his disappointment that the payment was only a one off, as the £177,281, which Fenland District Council had been allocated and for which the Council was very grateful, did not match the amount of increases there had been this year in terms of the cost of the 22 Internal Drainage Boards in which Fenland District Council had an interest. He added that the sum received was not sufficient.

Ms Morris stated the Councils were fortunate to have received some financial assistance as no such payment was available to agricultural landowners/occupiers who also had to pay land drainage rates, when their costs were also ever increasing.

RESOLVED

- a) Electricity Contract – that the Chairman's actions be approved.
- b) Delegation of signatories – that the Board approved delegation.
- c) Service Delivery Frameworks - that Miss Ablett is authorised to enter into user and/or access agreements.

B.1416 Refurbishment of Latches Fen Pumping Station.

Further to minute B.1382, Miss Ablett reported the business case for the replacement of the pumping and control equipment had been included in the EA's Project Application and Funding System.

She advised the Chief Engineer was proposing that a system study of both this Board's and Euximoor IDB's districts be undertaken, in anticipation of conclusion of the amalgamation, to then prioritise and understand what assets required work and when that work needed doing. She added the study would enable the Chief Engineer to draw up a programme of refurbishment in future years and confirmed the study would be grant aided. She added this would help to determine what works were required and maximise how much Grant in Aid funding may be received.

Miss Ablett reported the Chief Engineer was reviewing all IDB pumping station refurbishment projects and their prioritisation. She added that as there were a number of similar projects it may be more efficient to deliver the business cases as a package using an external consultant and a scope was being developed and options for delivery being considered. She advised this would also assist with the preparation of future capital improvement programmes.

Miss Ablett enquired whether the Board would consider delegating project decision making to a couple of Members to include the Chairman who would act as the Board's contact with the Consulting Engineer for capital projects. She added that this would assist in keeping the process moving in between annual Board meetings.

Members agreed both the Chairman and Vice Chairman should be the points of contact for capital projects.

B.1417 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters

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

March East I.D.B.
Consulting Engineers Report – May 2023

Weed Control and Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the phased maintenance programme approved by the Board in 2008.

Provisional notices for the 2023 phased programmed machine cleansing works were issued last year. The extent of this year's works is shown on the following site plan.

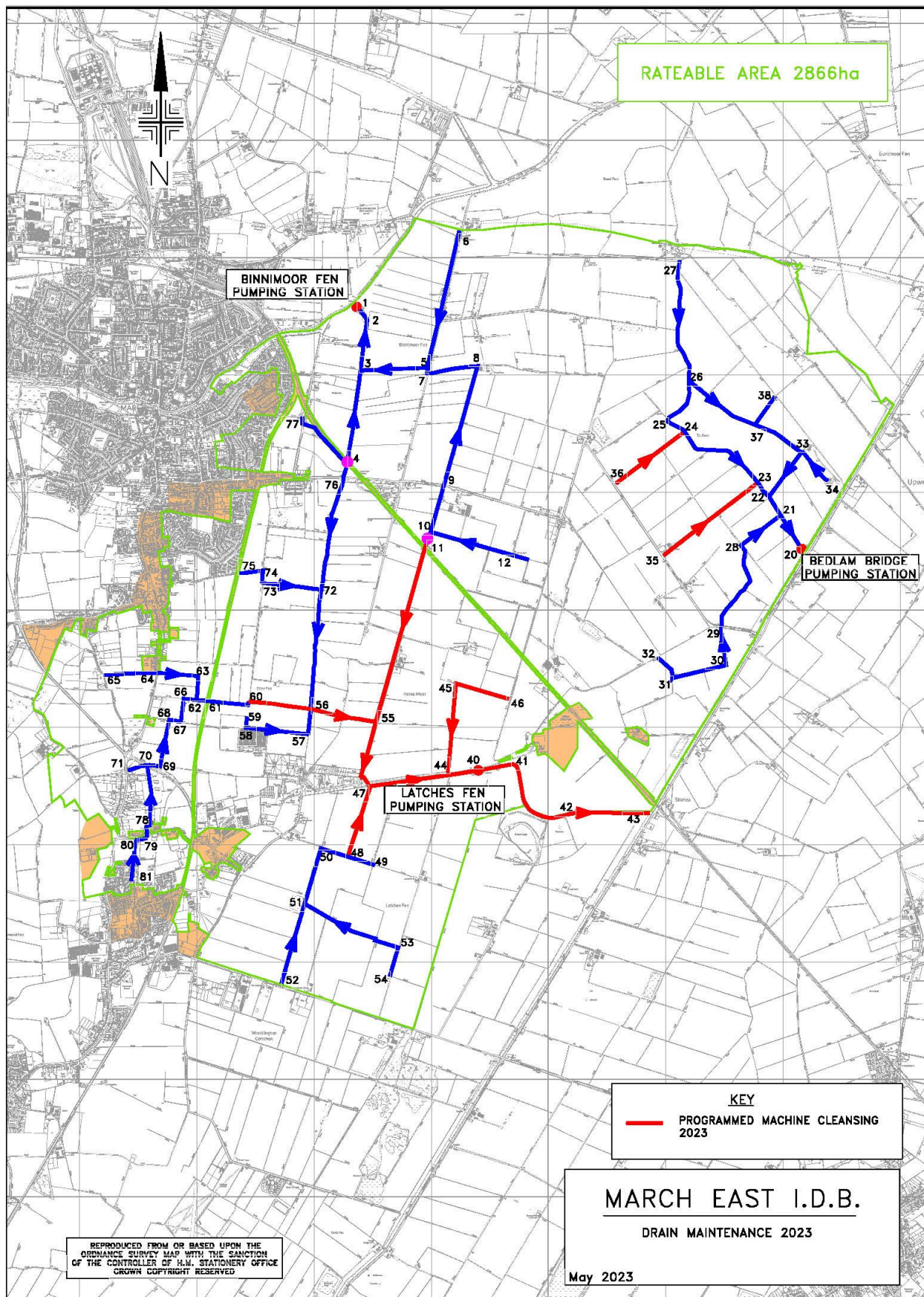
A recent inspection of the Board's district drains has revealed that the majority of the drains are in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection indicates that many of the Board's drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, will only require light machine cleansing to retain their good status.

Barkers Lane, reach 73-74



Sporadic stands of emergent aquatic vegetation are evident in several of the Board's drains and, as with previous years, they will be treated with an application of Roundup Herbicide as part of the weed control programme this year.

As with many other local Internal Drainage Boards, the March East district continues to suffer its fair share of fly tipping incidents throughout the year. A provisional sum has been allocated to allow fly tipped debris to be cleared, on the basis that the Board's area has been targeted in past years and unfortunately is likely to be targeted again.



The inspection also highlighted an abundance of self-sown saplings in the Bridge Lane (Wimblington) drains, reach 80-81. The vigorous growth has overwhelmed the grass sward within the ditch in a relatively short time and will require flailing this season, in an attempt to control the infestation. If the vegetation proves to be too dense to be dealt with by the Board's flail mowing contractor a heavy-duty excavator mounted forestry flail can be utilised to clear the drain, following the harvest of the adjacent crops.



The Board's flail mowing contractors, Messrs Ashman, have indicated they will be available to undertake the Board's flail mowing requirements this year. A sum has been allocated within the estimated costs to allow for flail mowing of the district drains.

A provisional sum has also been included within the Board's estimates for any bank slip repair, emergency cleansing, Cott removal or culvert clearance that may be required later in the year.

The estimated costs of this year's weed control and drain maintenance works are as follows. An additional allowance has been included in the estimates, in anticipation of an increase in contractors' rates this year, due to general economic uncertainties and the current rise in fuel costs.

Please refer to the site plan on the previous page for locations.

1. Machine cleanse the following drains:				£	£
<u>Bedlam Bridge Pumping Area</u>					
(i)	Reach 23-35	1000	m	@	1.20 1200.00
(ii)	Reach 24-36	750	m	@	1.20 900.00
<u>Latches Pumping Area</u>					
(i)	Reach 44-45-46	1300	m	@	1.20 1560.00
(ii)	Reach 55-56-60	1100	m	@	1.20 1320.00
(iii)	Reach 47-48	650	m	@	1.20 780.00
(iv)	Reach 11-55-47-44-40	3200	m	@	1.50 4800.00
(v)	Reach 40-41-42-43	1800	m	@	1.20 2160.00
2. Roundup application to control reed water cress and other emergent weed growth in district drains				Item	Sum
					1750.00
				Carried forward	14470.00
				Brought forward	14470.00

3. <u>Provisional Item</u> Allow sum to remove fly tipped materials from Board's drains as required	Item	Sum	1000.00
4. Allow sum for flail mowing.	Item	Sum	8600.00
5. <u>Provisional Item</u> Allow sum for bank revetment, emergency Cleansing, cott removal or culvert clearance works	Item	Sum	2000.00
6. Fees for inspection, preparation, and submission of report to the Board, arrangement, and supervision of chemical applications and maintenance works.	Item	Sum	2000.00
TOTAL			£28,070.00

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that the application is weather dependant, and they will not be held responsible for the failure or efficacy.

Pumping Stations

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

Bedlam

Pump 1 staggered start timer failed and was replaced.

Latches Fen

The Electric pump main contactor was very noisy so was replaced in March.

The diesel engine has been serviced and the temperature sensor replaced. The weedscreen exercise timer and new wire ropes for the hoist have been fitted.

Lights have failed both inside and outside of the station, due to the age of the fittings it would be cost effective to replace them with LED units throughout. **The Board is asked to confirm whether it would like a quote for full replacement of the lights or wish this to be included in the pumping station refurbishment, if possible.**

The drive coupling replacement has not been progressed, Rands are confirming price and availability. **The Board is asked to confirm if this should be included in the pumping station refurbishment or funded by the Board.**

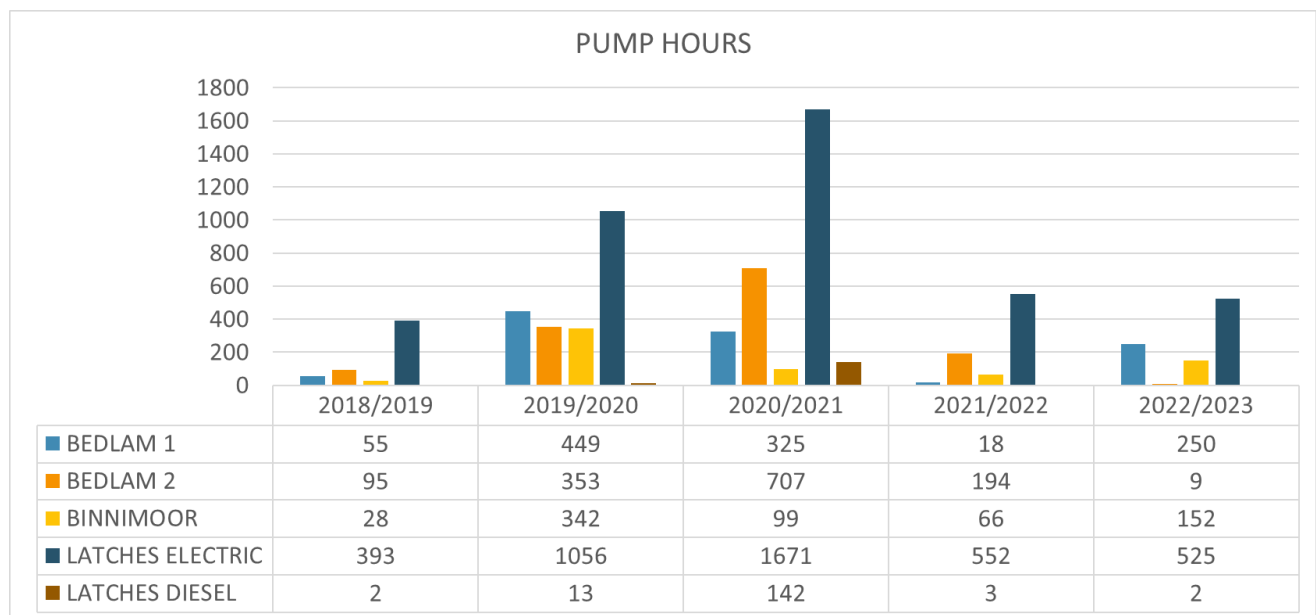
Replacement of the floor plates should be addressed during the station refurbishment as they may need to change.

Pumping Station Refurbishment

The Chief Engineer is currently reviewing all the IDB projects on the EA's FDGiA programme to ensure they can be delivered in the most efficient and timely manner possible. Please refer to the Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023 Improving Capital Delivery.

A Project Initiation Form (PIF) should be used to capture all the relevant information provided to the Consulting Engineer. A draft PIF for a Combined System Study with Euximoor IDB is contained as an Appendix. **It is requested that the Board delegates a member/members as key contacts for future discussions.**

Pumping Hours



Planning Applications

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
996	F/YR22/0418/RM	Granford Homes Ltd	Residential (2 plots)	Upwell Road, March*
997	F/YR22/0647/PNH	Mr S Ahmed	Residence (Extension)	Eastwood Avenue, March
998	F/YR22/0618/F	Mr S Macer	Residence (Extension)	Wimblington Road, March
999	F/YR22/0716/F	Mr A Nosworthy	Residence (Garage)	Clydesdale Close, March*
1000	F/YR22/3065/COND	Mr C Waters	Residential (3 plots)	Eastwood End, Wimblington*
1001	F/YR22/0717/F	Mr G Mills	Residence (Outbuilding)	Mills Gardens, March
1002	F/YR22/0633/F	St Lawrence Hall Farms	Residence	Hook Drove, Wimblington
1003	F/YR22/0705/RM	Mr D Clarke	Residential (6 plots)	Upwell Road, March*
1004	F/YR22/0783/F	Mr S Rutterford	Change of Use (Agricultural field to a builder's yard)	Eastwood End Wimblington*
1005	F/YR22/0843/F	Mr B Hinson	Residence	Wimblington Road, March
1006	F/YR22/0912/F	Mr Wenn	Residence	Clydesdale Close, March
1007	F/YR22/0884/PIP	Living The Dream Properties Ltd	Residential (Up to 9 plots)	Eastwood End, Wimblington
1008	F/YR22/0892/F	Miss C Marshall	Residential (4 plots)	Mill Hill Lane, March*
1009	F/YR22/0936/F	Mr & Mrs M Pocklington	Residence	Mill Hill Lane, March*
1010	F/YR22/0943/FDC	FDC	Residential (Up to 6 plots)	Grounds Avenue, March
1011	CCC/22/096/DCON	Data Shredders Ltd	Commercial/Industrial (Waste processing building)	Eastwood End, Wimblington*
1012	F/YR22/0997/O	Mr H V Aveling	Residence	Badgeney End, March
1013	F/YR22/0784/RM	Bellway Homes Ltd	Residential (Up to 88 plots)	Bridge Lane, Wimblington*
1014	F/YR22/0705/F	Mr D Clarke	Residential (6 plots)	Upwell Road, March*
1015	F/YR22/3119/COND	Bellway Homes Ltd	Residential (Up to 88 plots))	Bridge Lane, Wimblington*
1016	F/YR22/1135/F	Mr J Loveridge	Change of Use (Siting of residential mobile home and touring caravan [part retrospective])	Horsemoor Road, Wimblington
1017	F/YR22/1157/F	Mr R Prance	Residence (Extension)	March Road, Wimblington
1018	F/YR22/1190/FDC	FDC	Residence	Upwell Road, access from Smiths Drive, March*
1019	F/YR22/1242/F	Mrs P Knowles	Residence	March Road, Wimblington
1020	F/YR22/1279/F	Mr & Mrs King	Residence (Garage)	Eastwood End, Wimblington*
1021	F/YR22/1300/F	Mrs V Darville	Residence (Extension)	Upwell Road, March*
1022	F/YR22/3158/COND	Bellway Homes Ltd	Residential (Up to 88 plots)	Bridge Lane, Wimblington

1023	Enquiry	Client of M J Engineering	Residential (Details to be confirmed)	Barkers Lane, March*
1024	F/YR23/0034/F	Mr C Morton	Residence	Eastwood Avenue, March
1025	F/YR23/0083/F	Mr R Smith & Mr M Groves	Industrial (Replacement building)	Upwell Road, March
1026	Pre-application consultation	BDW Trading Limited	Residential (450 plots)	Wimblington Road, March* (South of Barkers Lane and North of Lambs Hill Drove)
1027	F/YR23/0188/O	Ashewell Developments	Residence	Eastwood End, Wimblington*
1028	F/YR23/0201/F	Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Ltd	Residential (48 plots)	Wimblington Road, March*
1029	F/YR23/0206/F	Seagate Homes Ltd	Residential (54 plots)	Eaton Estate, Wimblington*
1030	F/YR23/0231/AG1	Mr G Heys	Agricultural (Building)	Horsemoor Road, Wimblington
1031	F/YR23/0241/O	Mr P Gumbley	Residential (Up to 9 plots)	Bridge Lane, Wimblington
1032	F/YR23/0266/F	Mr R Skoulding	Residential (26 plots)	Upwell Road, March*
1033	F/YR23/3037/COND	Construct Reason Ltd	Residential (21 plots)	Willow Gardens, Wimblington*

***Planning applications ending 'RM', 'REM' or 'RMM' relate to reserved matters
Planning applications ending 'PNH' relate to household permitted regulations notification
Planning applications ending 'COND' relate to the discharge of relevant planning conditions
Planning applications ending 'PIP' and 'IP' relate to Permission in Principle
Planning applications ending 'DCON' relate to Discharge of Condition
Planning applications ending 'AG1' relate to Agricultural Notification***

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

Mr Prance chose to use the Infiltration Device Self-Certification Service for surface water disposal from an extension to his dwelling in March Road, Wimblington (MLC Ref No 1017) and, in doing so, agreed that if the device was to fail in the future, the land owner would be liable for any remedial works to rectify the situation.

Note: As discussed later in this report specific concerns have been raised about the piecemeal development encountered along Upwell Road in March, the Bridge Lane area in Wimblington and other sites in the district, which is resulting in many small and isolated attenuation systems which will be difficult to maintain in the medium term and will be a future liability for the parties concerned, the failure of which could potentially increase flood risk. The Council was advised that the Middle Level Commissioners and associated Boards would prefer more holistic solutions to be utilised.

March (General area rather than parish/town boundaries)

Developments off Upwell Road

Erect up to 6 x dwellings involving upgrade to access on land to the south of 85 - 89 Upwell Road, March - The Executors of W Feary (MLC Ref Nos 788 & 937) and Mr Dan Clarke (MLC Ref Nos 1003 & 1014)

Further to the last Board Meeting Report, a planning application for six dwellings – FDC Ref No F/YR22/0705/F (MLC Ref Nos 1003 & 1014) was submitted to, and subsequently refused by, the District Council.

Reason 3 on the Decision Notices advises that:

“The submitted drainage information is not sufficient to enable the proper assessment of the impacts of the proposal on flood risk, whether third parties consent to the drainage strategy proposed and in addition the site layout does not take account of the existing drainage infrastructure, thereby leading to likely riparian ownerships and lack of a clear access for maintenance of ditches. As such the proposal has not demonstrated that the development adequately deals with surface water drainage in a sustainable manner and will not lead to an increased risk of flooding contrary to policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan.”

Proposed residential development on land at Ashfield House to the north of 86-124 Upwell Road and east of 16-64 Smiths Drive, March – Client of WSP UK Limited (MLC Ref No 825) & Client of JPP Consulting Ltd (MLC Ref No 935)

The previously anticipated instruction for a pre-application consultation concerning this site has not been received. The site has not been identified as one of the “Proposed Sites” within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan – see later in this report.

Erect up to 9 dwellings at land south of 137 Upwell Road, March – Mr & Mrs Gray and Mr & Mrs Rankin (MLC Ref No 897) and Mr & Mrs C Grey (MLC Ref Nos 963, 964 & 965)

Further to the last Board meeting, a site visit attended by the Commissioners’ Planning Engineer and Assistant Engineer was undertaken to discuss the alternative solutions.

The applicant continues to propose the discharge of surface water to the private watercourse along the Upwell Road frontage. This matter was referred to the Board’s Chair and Vice-Chair who advised that the Board will not accept a pumped discharge, as the risks of failure are high. This accords with both the LLFA’s and the Middle Level

Commissioners' policy which also include concerns about maintenance and sustainability. Even if this was a potential option, the system connecting the point of discharge and the watercourse system would require some improvements to be undertaken.

The applicant has been asked to investigate a gravity surface water disposal solution the details of which are currently awaited.

It is currently proposed that foul water will be pumped into the Anglian Water (AWSL) system that serves the area.

Erect 26 x dwellings (20 x single-storey 1-bed, 6 x single-storey 2-beds for over 55's) and the formation of an access road and attenuation pond on land to the south of 107 Upwell Road, March - Mr R Skoulding (MLC Ref No 1032)

During March, the District Council validated a planning application for twenty-six dwellings to form an extension to the existing Upwell Park retirement home complex. It is proposed that a hybrid surface water disposal system, including permeable paving and an attenuation pond, will be used before discharging into an existing open watercourse forming the southern boundary of the site.

The District Council's Public Access webpage advises that the application is "Pending consideration."

The site has not been identified as one of the "Proposed Sites" within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan – see later in this report.

Developments off Mill Hill Lane

Residential development on land to the south and west of 4-5 Mill Hill Lane, March – Mrs S Duncan (MLC Ref Nos 574 & 592), Mr J Duncan (MLC Ref No 640), Mr S Simon (MLC Ref No 733) & Mr M Topping (MLC Ref Nos 704, 868, 914 & 973)

Further to previous Board Meeting reports, a discharge consent application for surface water disposal has been received for the partly attenuated discharge to the watercourse to the south of the development, which ultimately discharges to the Board's system at Point 65. This application is currently being processed.

The applicants' agent, Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd, has advised that AWSL will now accept a connection to their sewer in Mill Hill Lane. This will discharge into the Middle Level Commissioners' system via the March WRC.

It has been noted, while investigating the history of this location, that discharge consent has not been issued for the two properties now known as 6 & 7 Mill Hill Lane FDC Ref Nos F/YR/11/0785, F/YR/13/0561, F/YR/15/0311 and F/YR/15/1091 (MLC Ref Nos 574, 640, 704 & 733). A discharge consent application was refused in 2016 as not enough information was received to validate the application, and a further application does not appear to have been made. The applicant was advised, at the time, of the Board's requirement to connect to the AWSL sewer in Mill Hill Lane for foul water disposal, although it is not clear whether this was done. The agent has been asked to provide more information concerning this outstanding discharge and has again been reminded of the Board's requirements about foul water disposal in this location.

Erect up to 4 dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) on land to the south of Field View, Mill Hill Lane, March – Miss C Marshall (MLC Ref Nos 942 & 1008)

Further to the last Board Meeting report, a revised planning application FDC Ref No F/YR22/0890/F (MLC Ref No 1008) has been submitted and is being considered by the District Council.

It is proposed that surface water disposal will be a combination of infiltration devices, SuDS and a discharge into the existing watercourse.

Both these sites are in an area that has previously reported poor drainage/flooding.

Developments off Wimblington Road

Proposed development to the South of Barkers Lane and north of Lambs Hill Drove, March – Cannon Kirk Developments (MLC Ref No 385); Cannon Kirk Homes (MLC Ref No 509); Mr & Mrs Hopkins & Mrs Mitcham (MLC Ref No 585); Cannon Kirk (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref No 742) Client of MJ Engineering (MLC Ref No 1023) & BDW Trading Limited (MLC Ref No 1026)

Further to the 2017 Meeting Report, correspondence has been received from Woods Hardwick Ltd, an Architecture and Planning consultancy, acting on behalf of its client, BDW Trading Limited, who are proposing a development of 450 residential

dwelling with the intention of submitting a hybrid planning application with 100 dwellings being in detail and the remainder in outline. The areas shown as 'Landowner 1' and 'Landowner 2' on the following plan are excluded from the current proposals however it is anticipated that development will come forward on these parcels at a later date either by BDW or other developers.



Extract from Pegasus Designs Development Framework Plan Drawing No. P22-0602_01 Rev. F

A preliminary drainage strategy that seeks to discharge to the existing on-site watercourse network at the (Qbar) greenfield rate with flows from the site ultimately discharging to the Board's District Drain at Point 75 (Barkers Lane) has been supplied, and is currently being considered.

The site has not been identified as one of the "Proposed Sites" within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan – see later in this report.

Erect 48 x dwellings (2 x single-storey 2-bed, 16 x 2-storey 2-bed, 24 x 2-storey 3-bed and 6 x 2-storey 4-bed) with associated parking, landscaping, and the formation of an attenuation basin and a new access on land to the west of 43-69 Wimblington Road, March - Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Limited (MLC Ref No 1028)

During March, the District Council validated a planning application for forty-eight dwellings on the western side of Wimblington Road.



Extract from Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Limited Site Layout Plan Drawing No. 21/01/201/03 Rev. A

The FRA and Drainage Strategy, Ref No AMA868 Rev B dated 21st February 2023, prepared by Amazi Consulting Ltd, states that:

“The proposed surface water drainage strategy therefore includes sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to control run off rates and mitigate against the impact of increased runoff volumes. The

site layout has been designed to ensure that there is space for the required surface water attenuation and other SuDS features.”

before continuing that:

“The main site surface water network will be offered to Anglian Water for adoption. The highway gullies and connecting pipes will be County Council” adding that “It is also recommended that each homeowner regularly cleans and inspects gullies/linear drainage channels, where located within their curtilage..” and suggests that “.. homeowners are informed of such responsibilities within their welcome packs or within their conveyancing.”

The District Council’s Public Access webpage advises that the application is “Pending consideration.”

The site has not been identified as one of the “Proposed Sites” within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan – see later in this report.

Wimblington (General area rather than parish/town boundaries)

Developments at Eastwood End, Wimblington

Development at Unit 1, Eastwood Industrial Estate, Eastwood End, Wimblington - Plasgran Ltd (MLC Ref No 274) & Recyplas Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 870 & 932)

No further correspondence has been received and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board’s interests.

Residential development on land to the south and west of 4-5 Mill Hill Lane, March – Mrs S Duncan (MLC Ref Nos 574 & 592), Mr J Duncan (MLC Ref No 640), Mr S Simon (MLC Ref No 733) & Mr M Topping (MLC Ref Nos 704, 868, 914 & 973)

Further to previous Board Meeting reports, a discharge consent application for surface water disposal has been received for the partly attenuated discharge to the watercourse to the south of the development, which ultimately discharges to the Board’s system at Point 65. This application is currently being processed.

The applicants’ agent, Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd, has advised that AWSL will now accept a connection to their sewer in Mill Hill Lane. This will discharge into the Middle Level Commissioners’ system via the March WRC.

It has been noted, while investigating the history of this location, that discharge consent has not been issued for the two properties now known as 6 & 7 Mill Hill Lane FDC Ref Nos F/YR/11/0785, F/YR/13/0561, F/YR/15/0311 and F/YR/15/1091 (MLC Ref Nos 574, 640, 704 & 733). A discharge consent application was refused in 2016 as not enough

information was received to validate the application, and a further application does not appear to have been made. The applicant was advised, at the time, of the Board's requirement to connect to the AWSL sewer in Mill Hill Lane for foul water disposal, although it is not clear whether this was done. The agent has been asked to provide more information concerning this outstanding discharge and has again been reminded of the Board's requirements about foul water disposal in this location.

Erection of up to 3 x dwellings and construction of footpath at land south of 6 Eastwood End, Wimblington – Mr P Jolley (MLC Ref Nos 881 & 944); Mr & Mrs C Waters (MLC Ref Nos 945 & 959) + Mr C Waters (MLC Ref No 949 & 1000) and Living the Dream Properties Ltd (MLC Ref No 1007)

Further to last year's Board Meeting Report, a new proposal was received from Living the Dream's engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd. The pond has been designed to cater for a 1-in-100-year storm plus a 40% allowance for climate change from two dwellings to the south of 6 Eastwood End, and three dwellings at 1 Eastwood End with surface water discharging at 2.3 l/s to the receiving watercourse in Workhouse Drove via an attenuation pond. The matter is currently being considered.

A separate but aligned Planning in Principle application was validated, and subsequently approved, by the District Council for up to nine dwellings involving the formation of accesses on land to the north of Hill View, Eastwood End.



Extract from Morton and Hall Consulting Ltd's Indicative Local Overall Development Plan Drawing No. H8421/04 Rev. – showing the location of the three related developments

Erect 9 x 2-storey 4-bed dwellings with garages including open space/play area with pond and formation of 6.0m metre high (approximately) earth bunding and footpath on land to the south of Eastwood End, Wimblington – FPP Facades (MLC Ref Nos 927 & 931)

Planning permission was granted by the District Council in August subject to the imposition of planning conditions, informatives and a Drainage Advisory Note.

Developments within the Bridge Lane Drain catchment

Developments off March Road/Bridge Lane

Residential development involving the demolition of 5 Bridge Lane and existing commercial buildings at land north of 3A-9 Bridge Lane, Wimblington – Messrs K & D Clark (MLC Ref Nos 705, 723 & 834) & MJS Construction (March) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 905 & 909)

With the exception of clarifying the Board's position concerning the maximum permitted rate of run-off discharging into its system with the applicant's engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd [MTC], no further correspondence has been received and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

The District Council's Public Access webpage advises that the application is "Pending consideration."

The site has been identified as one of the "Proposed Sites" within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan [Policy Reference LP50.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40087) – Land north of 3A - 9 Bridge Lane] – see later in this report.

Erection of 80 dwellings (max) at land east of 38 March Road (Lily Avenue), Wimblington – G Scarborough Ltd (MLC Ref No 665) & Matthew Homes Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 665, 743, 775, 776, 808, 817, 832 & 864)

In accordance with item vii) of Minute B.1383 Consulting Engineers' Report, including planning and consenting matters the Board's Solicitor wrote to Matthew Homes Ltd in late June advising that the Board had instructed that formal action be taken against it to resolve the continuing contraventions of the Board's Byelaws.



**Amended extract from Thrive Architects Ltd's Design & Access Statement showing the items discussed.
(Plan amended by the MLC)**

A site meeting attended by the Board's Chairman together with the Commissioners' Solicitor and Planning Engineer and a representative from the developer was undertaken a month later. At this meeting it was agreed that:

1. Matthew Homes Ltd would arrange for a surveyor to undertake measurements in order to determine the best solution to allow the Board access to its District Drain. The available options are:
 - a) Removing the fence line back to allow 4 clear metres for our plant and machinery to get access or some reprofiling of the watercourse to allow 4 metres access.
 - b) To pipe and fill the watercourse so that the grass could be mown and access would not be needed for flail mowing or dredging of the channel in the future.

It was stressed that this was not a solution the Board would normally suggest but in the present circumstances this would offer a practical solution and the Board is agreeable to this proposal subject to engineering advice.

2. Matthew Homes Ltd writes to the occupiers of Nos 33-45 Lily Avenue to advise them of the covenants imposed by the Company to protect the Board's maintenance access strip

and ask them to remove all items placed in the 4 metre strip and the fencing erected on the end property (No 45).

3. Because plot 18 has been allowed to fence up to the watercourse the Board will need access on the opposite eastern side of the watercourse and the vegetation cut back to allow a 5 metre access strip for the length shown.
4. In order to gain entry to work on the eastern side of the watercourse and to avoid taking heavy plant and machinery over the block paving installed as part of the development, which is not designed for HGV loading, the Board will need a culvert to be installed to allow access from Bridge Lane.

The Commissioners' Solicitor also advised that she would write to the individual householders, as one of the Flood Risk Management Authorities for the area, to educate them as to why the 4 metre strip must be left open, nothing should be placed on it and the Board's Powers under the Land Drainage Act. This letter was issued the following day.

Matthew Homes Ltd's surveyor visited the site and met with the Commissioners' Solicitor and Assistant Operations Engineer at the end of August.

Following a period of inaction and growing concern the Commissioners' Solicitor wrote to Matthew Homes Ltd reminding them of the position. Subsequently a hybrid meeting was held. The Minutes follow:

“At a Special Meeting of the March East Internal Drainage Board
held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Wednesday 14th December 2022

PRESENT

Lorna McShane – MLC Solicitor
Graham Moore – MLC Planning
Morgan Lakey – MLC Operations
Gordon Hodgkinson – Matthew Homes
Barry Jordan – Matthew Homes
Charles Allbut – Vice - Chairman

Easement Access – Nursery Gardens Development.

Culvert – if this is the agreed option:

- i) Fences still need to be moved back to 4m for future pipeline maintenance.
- ii) Land must never be conveyed to individual owners.

- iii) Maintained as grassed area only with no structures or planting etc.
- iv) Proposals for redressing the loss of environmental habitat caused by the piping of watercourse – new planting – conservation area – but needs to be elsewhere.

Middle Level Commissioners, on behalf of the Board, have tried to resolve this situation reasonably – aware that Matthew Homes would have legal and compensation costs to occupiers plus ongoing purchasers.

Under section 64 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 – legal power to enter on land for purposes of carrying out their functions under the act:- 7 days' notice if land occupied for residential purposes.

Prosecution of Breach of Byelaws – Section 66 (6) – offence prosecutable for breach of byelaws – Fine level 5 - £5,000

Direct Action – Section 66 (7) - do works & recharge – Bailiffs will go in and remove fences.

Plot 33 – Beverly Davies

Consent applied for by Matthew Homes - but cannot consent until we get access. Letter sent to Ms Davies and she has contacted me and Matthew Homes (no response) – lose part of her garden.

Restrictive Covenant

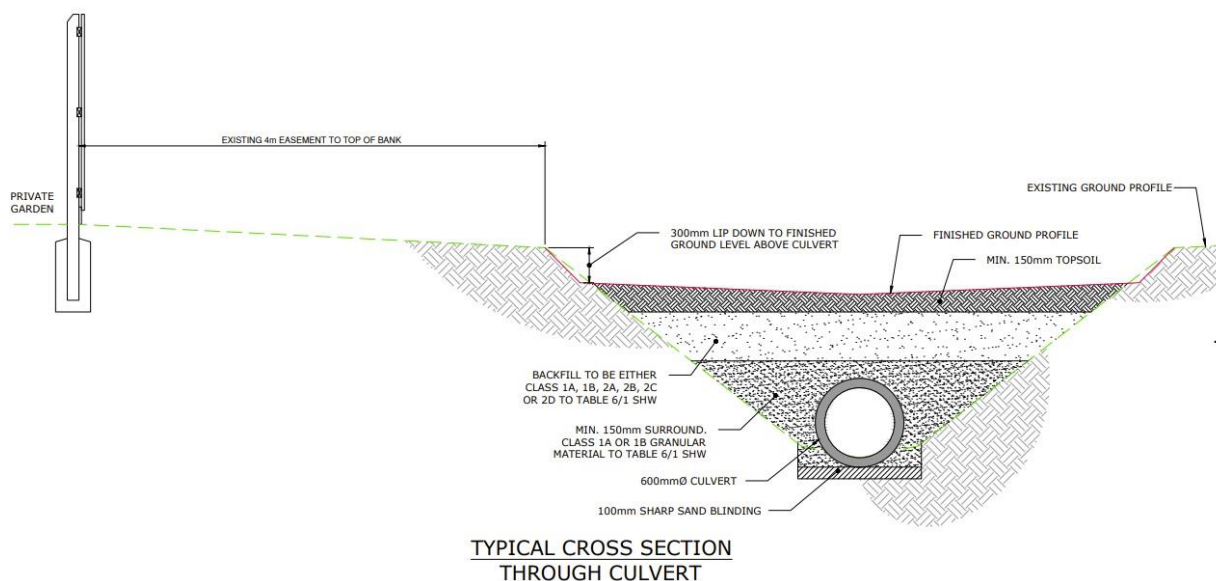
Letter sent to all residents about fence line and why there are restrictions for placing structures etc on the drain.

ACTIONS

1. Get quotes for work from 3 contractors – Morgan
2. What size pipe – 900m – how much soil on top of pipe – 4/5 lengths of pipe
3. Sections through drain – MH engineers

Write to Matthew homes re cross section of ditch – it will allow as to exclude size of pipe & soil infill.”

A copy of the survey drawing and pipeline proposals together with an application for consent were received from Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd during March but upon review it was considered that the pipe size could be larger and should extend to the end of the site, linking up to the existing culvert that Matthew Homes Ltd previously installed.



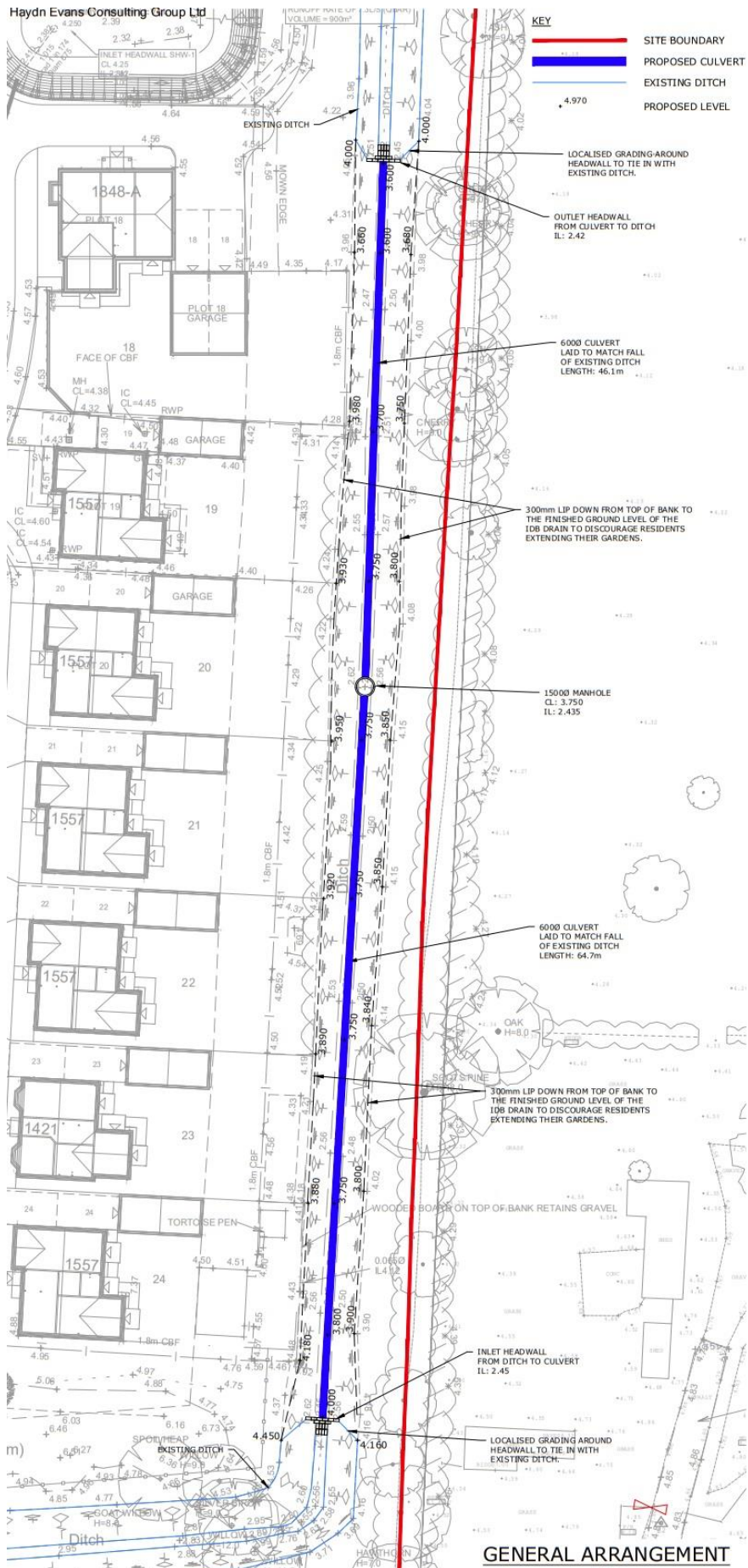
Extract from Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd Drawing No. 329-001-SK02 Rev. P02

In January correspondence was received from Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd advising that in order to discharge a planning condition Matthew Homes Ltd must construct a new footpath linking across the frontage of the development alongside March Road and wished to discharge surface water indirectly to the Board's system.

A drawing has been supplied showing the proposed drainage of the footpath, with attenuation within a swale feature beside the road and an orifice flow control limiting the discharge to 1 l/s. As the existing highway also currently discharges to the Board's system unattenuated into this watercourse an overflow weir has been provided to allow water to continue as per the existing drainage arrangement.

Discussions are continuing with both Matthew Homes Ltd and Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd concerning these matters.

The site has been identified as one of the "Proposed Sites" within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan [Policy Reference LP50.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40060) – Land east of 38 March Road] – see later in this report.



Extract from Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd Drawing No 329-001-SK02 Rev. P02

Residential development at land north of Stoneleigh, 22A Easton Estate, Wimblington – P Jolley & J S Harvey (MLC Ref No 899), Client of Roythornes Limited (MLC Ref No 971) and Seagate Homes Ltd. (MLC Ref No 1029)

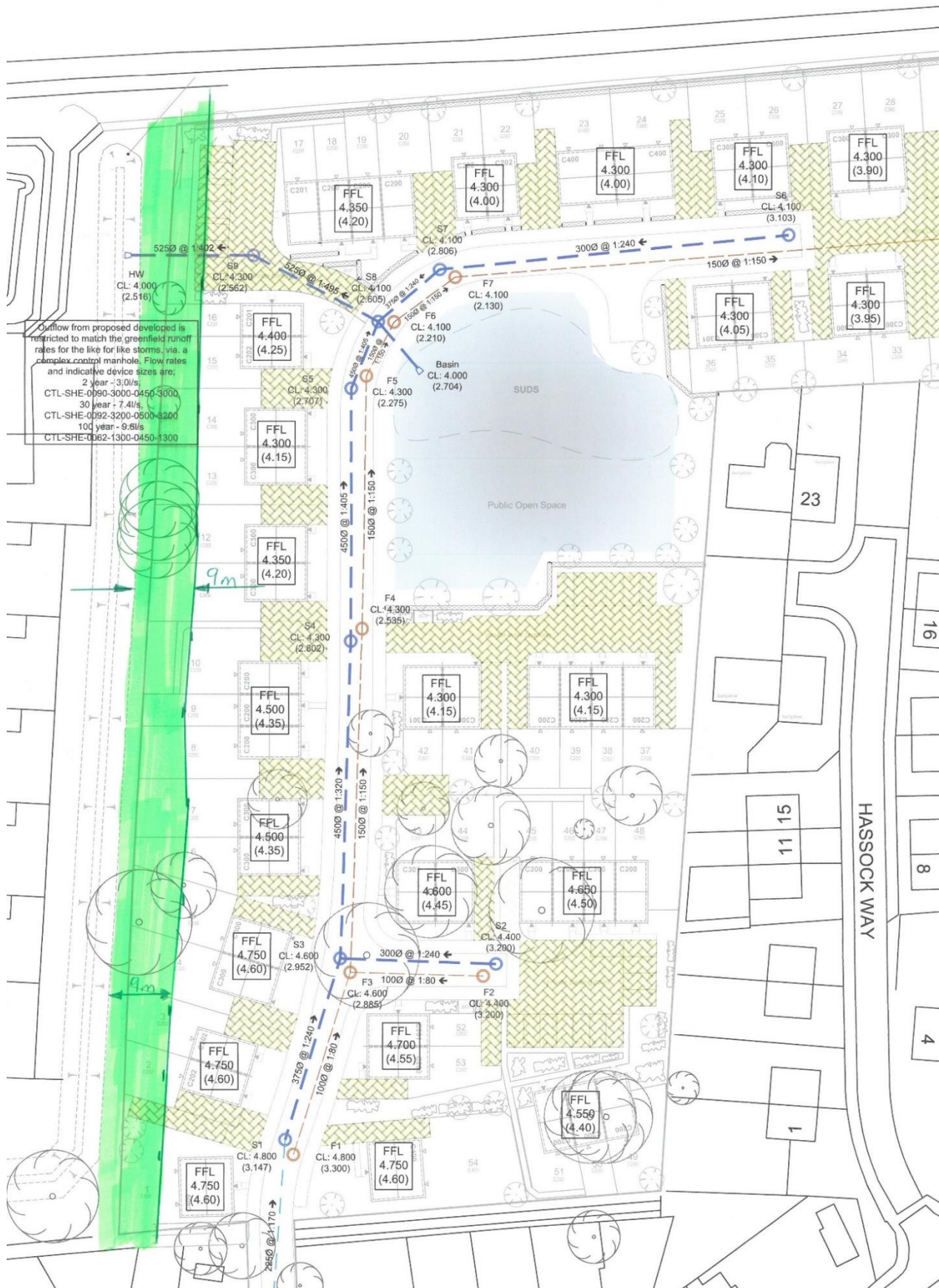
Further to the last Board Meeting Report, a planning application has been submitted to, and is currently being considered by, the District Council for fifty-four dwellings, which is nearly twice that for which the site has planning permission.

The Preliminary Drainage Strategy Report Ref DR-REP-0249 Rev 00 dated September 2022, prepared by Jackson Consulting Engineers, includes a hybrid sustainable drainage system (SuDS) using permeable paving and an attenuation pond to control run-off rates and mitigate against the impact of increased run-off volumes discharging into the Board's system. The report advises that the attenuation pond will be in a larger Public Open Space (POS) which will flood to attenuate rainfall events in excess of the 3.33 AEP (1 in 30 year) storm.

The Strategy adds that at the detailed design stage the specific surcharge levels will be reviewed and adoption discussed with AWSL.

The report includes an extract from the Board's District Plan but, during a brief review of the submission documents, it was noted that the proposed development encroaches within the Board's 9.0m wide maintenance access strip. An appropriate letter has been sent to both the District Council and the applicant reminding them of the position and attaching a plan, copy overleaf, with the maintenance access strip shown green.

The site has been identified as one of the "Proposed Sites" within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan [Policy Reference LP50.06 (SHELAA Site reference 40529) – Land north of Stoneleigh, 22A Eaton Estate] – see later in this report.



Amended extract from Jackson Consulting Engineers Drawing No. 0249-JCE-00-SI-SK-C-9000 Rev. –
with the Board's maintenance strip highlighted in green (amended by the MLC)

Erect up to 88 dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access) on land to the south of Bridge Lane, Wimblington - NYC Estates Ltd (MLC Ref No 938) and Bellway Homes Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 1013, 1015 & 1022)

Further to the granting of outline planning permission on 25 January 2022 a Reserved Matters Planning Application was validated in June 2022 and subsequently granted permission in February.

Regrettably there has been little communication with either the applicant, Bellway Homes; the applicants engineering consultant, Barter Hill Partnership Ltd; the LLFA or the District Council about the proposals with only minimal communication taking place with the Commissioners' Solicitor. Had this occurred, a more appropriate development may have been achieved. In a similar manner to the Seagate Homes' site the proposed development encroaches within the Board's 9.0m wide maintenance access strip. An appropriate letter has been sent to both the District Council and the applicant reminding them of the position.



Extract from Barter Hill Partnership Ltd Preliminary Drainage Strategy Plan Drg No 8842-101-001 Rev E



Extract from Barter Hill Partnership Ltd Preliminary Drainage Strategy Plan Drg No 8842-101-001 Rev E (amended by the MLC)

During October representation was received from several concerned residents who were offered the opportunity of a site meeting to discuss the issues but suitable times and dates for the meeting were not supplied and the meeting did not happen.

The site has been identified as one of the “Proposed Sites” within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan [Policy Reference LP50.01 SHELAA Site reference 40278) – Land east of March Road] – see later in this report.

Erect up to 9 x dwellings (outline application with all matters reserved) on land to the south of 2B and 2C Bridge Lane, Wimblington – Mr P Gumbley (MLC Ref No 1031)

During February, the District Council validated the above planning application for nine executive dwellings at the above location.

The District Council’s Public Access webpage advises that the application is “Pending consideration.”

The site has not been identified as one of the “Proposed Sites” within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan – see later in this report.

Developments off King Street

- A. Erection of 37 single-storey dwellings comprising of 25 2-bed and 12 3-bed with associated garages involving the demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings and formation of vehicular access on land to the north of 37-45 King Street, Wimblington – Construct Reason (MLC Ref Nos 797 & 863)*

When responding to purchasers’ solicitors it has recently been brought to the Board’s attention that the development did not accommodate the former open watercourse that bisected the site.

When contacted the applicant’s engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd [MTC], responded as follows:

“.. it was confirmed on site back in 2018 by Reason Homes/Construct Reason and discussed with the LLFA that although the ordnance survey mapping suggests this is a drain, it was no more than a depression on site which was believed to be made to mark the field boundary. On site investigations were carried out by the developer and confirmed that no pipe entered this depression on site and was barely visible [sic].

As a competent developer and out of due diligence they filled the small depression with a granular material”

MTC were questioned as to why the Board had not been involved in earlier discussions and were reminded that the LLFA has no powers within the Board’s rateable area and that its consent was required for the filling of the watercourse. MTC are currently preparing details to provide appropriate mitigation to restore the storage volume and biodiversity lost due the removal of the watercourse.

A partly attenuated discharge consent for surface water was issued in 2020.

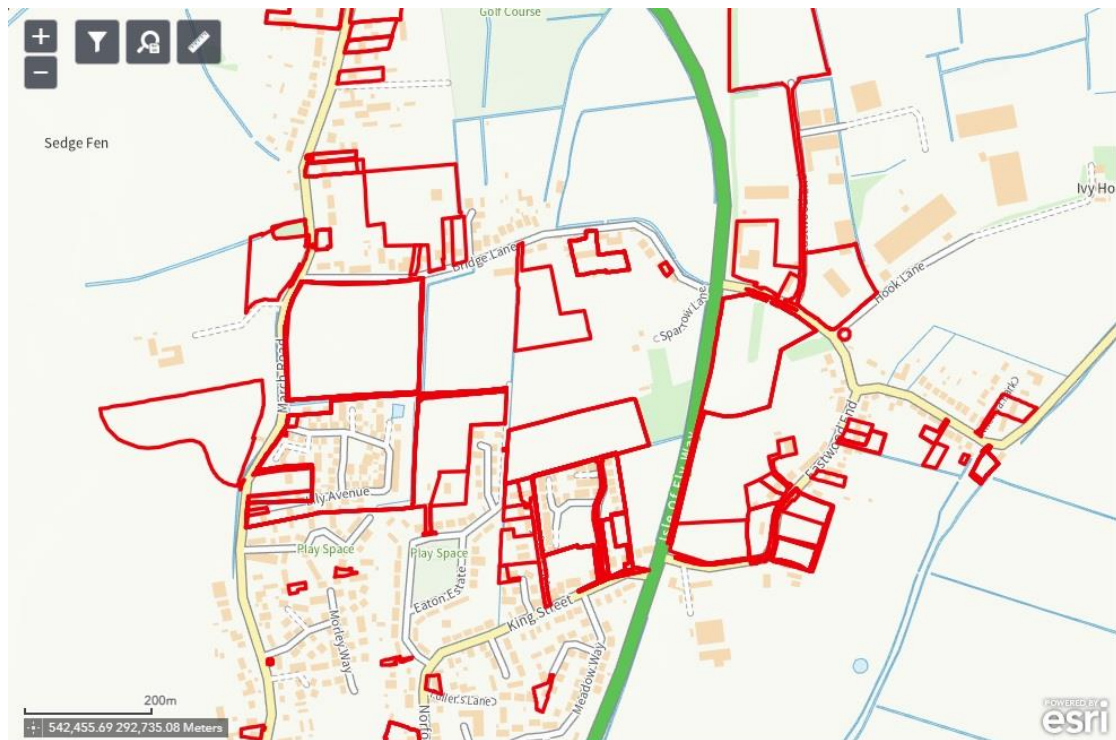
- B. *Erect 21 single-storey dwellings comprising of 18 3-bed and 3 2-bed with garages including 1.8 metre high (approximately) close boarded fencing at land north of Willow Gardens, Wimblington – Construct Reason (MLC Ref No 947)*

Following discussions with the applicant’s engineering consultant, MTC Engineering (Cambridge) Ltd [MTC], a discharge consent application has been received for a partly attenuated discharge to the watercourse on the eastern side of the footpath that forms the western boundary of the development.

Further drawings and calculations are currently awaited from MTC for this proposal, to enable the details to be considered more closely.

Both these sites have been identified as “Proposed Sites” within the Emerging Fenland Local Plan [Policy Reference LP50.02 (SHELAA Site reference 40152) – Land north of King Street and Policy Reference LP50.04 (SHELAA Site reference 40074) – Land north of 37 - 45 King Street] – see later in this report.

Note: The extent of the Board’s catchment is being reviewed within the southern part of its Bridge Lane Drain sub-catchment following the receipt of several reports of flooding in the Meadows Way, Church Street and Frogs Abbey Lane area.



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Extract from the District Council's Public Access GIS webpage showing the location of planning applications submitted in the past five years.

District Wide

*Future March - Investing in the potential of March - March Area Transport Study (MATs)
Public Consultation May/June 2020 - March Options Assessment Report (OAR) -
Cambridgeshire County Council (MLC Ref No 920)*

No further correspondence has been received and no further action has been taken in respect of the Board's interests.

It is understood that of the nine options for the Eastern Bypass/new river crossing all were rejected due to poor value for money as a result of high construction costs and projected low usage.

The other proposals within the study, such as the mini roundabout to be placed at the junction of Station Road and Creek Road together with the schemes for Peas Hill, Twenty Foot Road and St Peters Road, and also the preliminary designs for the Northern Industrial Link Road, which are all outside of the Board's catchment and thus do not impact on the Board, are now moving ahead through detailed design with a Full Business Case expected soon.

Planning Updates & Consultations

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

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

Emerging Fenland Local Plan

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

Proposed sites within the Board’s catchment

March

The “proposed sites”, as shown on the following extracts from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) March (Inset 16).

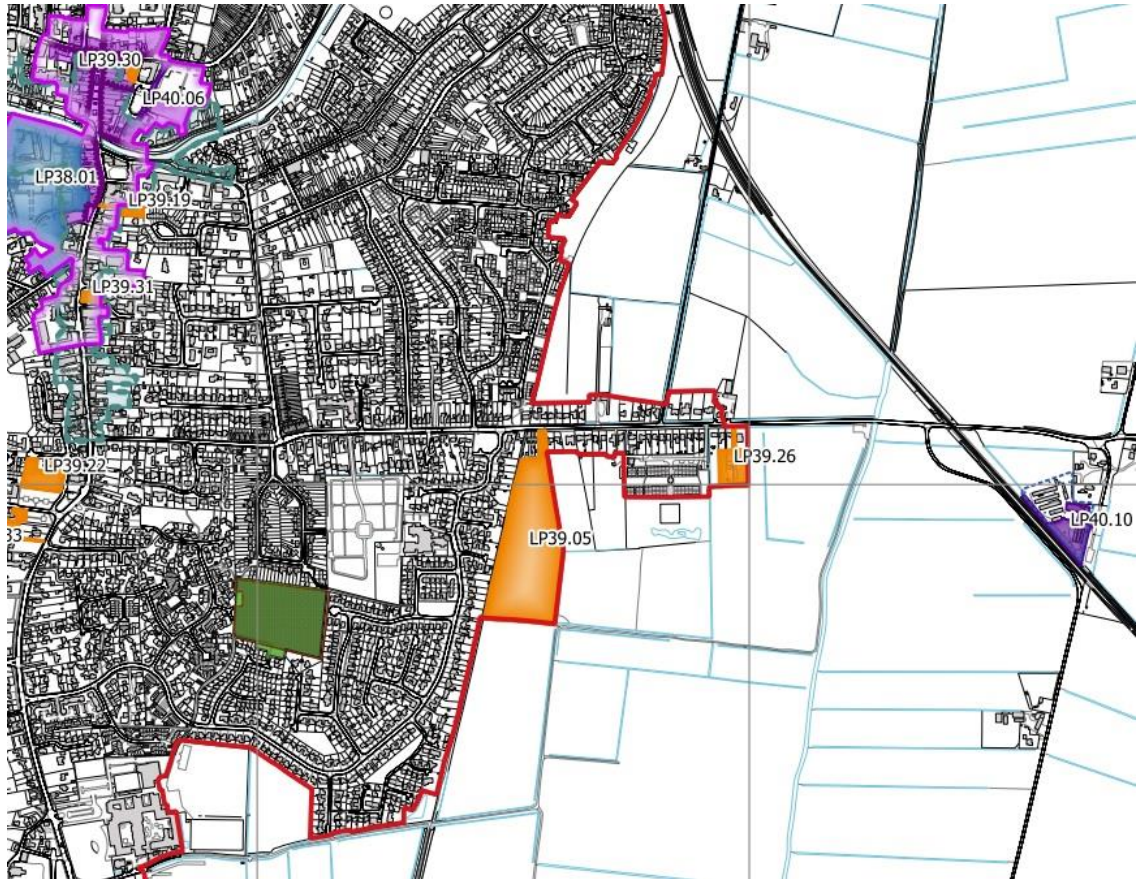
- A. Policy Reference LP39.03 (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment [SHELAA] Site reference 40382 north) – Land south of Knight’s End Road and west of Wimblington Road – 189 Dwellings

The Board’s District Drain, Points 64 – 65 Wimblington Road to Mill Hill Drove, forms the southern boundary of this site.

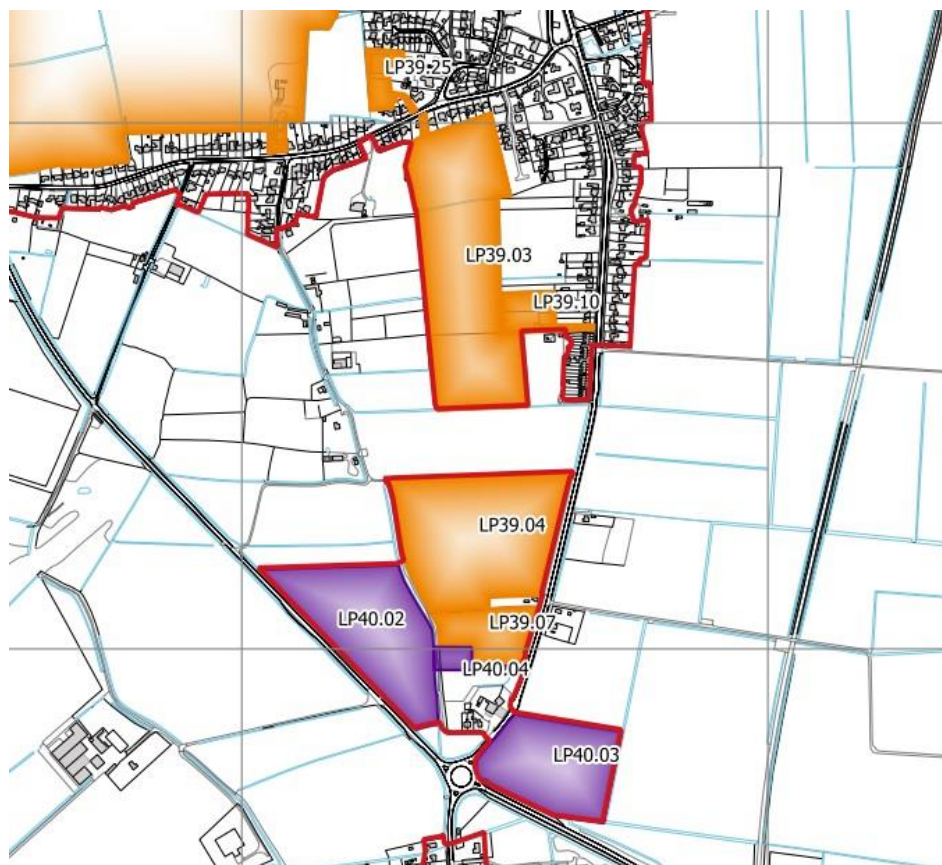
- B. Policy Reference LP39.04 (SHELAA Site reference 40382 - south) – Land west of Wimblington Road Site – 152 Dwellings

- C. Policy Reference LP39.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40190) – Land to the rear of 81 Upwell Road – 98 Dwellings

A planning application has been submitted to the District Council for up to 110 dwellings - FDC Ref No F/YR22/0062/O (MLC Ref No 987). A decision is currently pending.



Extracts from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) March (Inset 16) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment in the Upwell Road and Wimblington Road/Mill Hill areas



- D. Policy Reference LP39.07 (SHELAA Site reference 40115) – Land at Mill Hill – 48 Dwellings
- E. Policy Reference LP39.26 (SHELAA Site reference 40105) – Rear of 131-137 Upwell Road – 9 Dwellings

This site has planning permission for up to 9 dwellings - FDC Ref No F/YR19/0931/O (MLC Ref Nos 897, 963, 964 & 965).

- F. Policy Reference LP40.02 (SHELAA Site reference 40351) – Land to the north-west of Mill Hill Roundabout – 5.30 ha. employment uses within classes B and E(g)
- G. Policy Reference LP40.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40286) – Land north of Isle of Ely Way – 4.02 ha. employment uses within classes B and E(g)

The Board's District Drain forms the eastern and south eastern boundary of the site, upstream of Point 67 – 68 – 69, Hook Drove – A141 Isle of Ely Way.

- H. Policy Reference LP40.10 (SHELAA Site reference 40541) – Coleseed Business Complex Upwell Road – 0.58 ha. employment use - Class B8 Storage & distribution

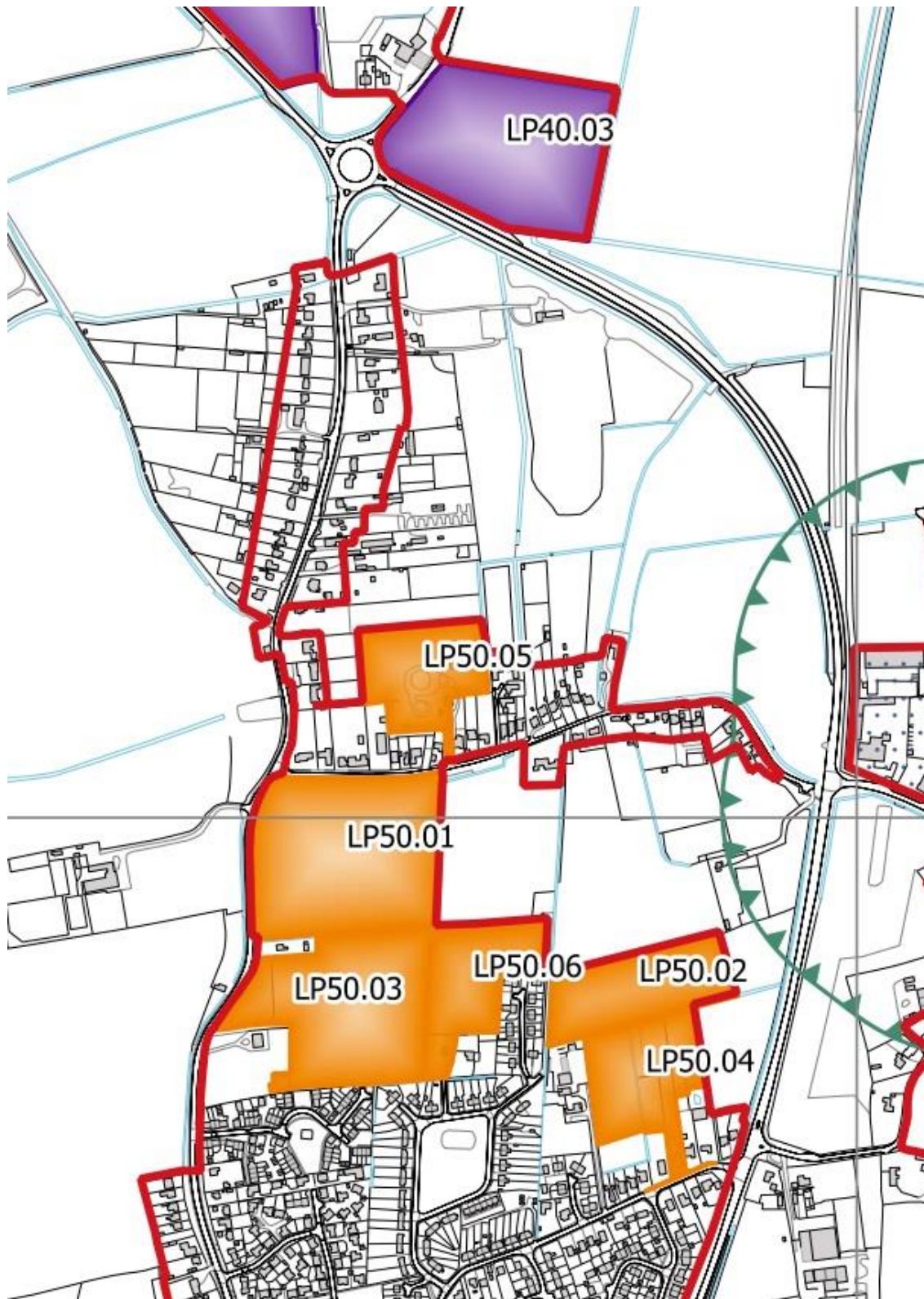
This site previously had planning permission for the change of use of land for siting of self-storage containers and caravan storage (part retrospective) including security fencing and CCTV - FDC Ref No F/YR19/0588/F (MLC Ref No 882) but more recently planning permission was granted for an industrial building involving demolition of existing buildings - FDC Ref No F/YR23/0083/F (MLC Ref No 1025).

Wimblington

The “proposed sites”, as shown on the following extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Wimblington (Inset 27) are:

- A. Policy Reference LP50.01 (Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment [SHELAA] Site reference 40278) – Land east of March Road – 97 Dwellings

This is the Bellway Homes site - FDC Ref Nos F/YR20/1235/O, F/YR22/0784/RM, F/YR22/3119/COND and F/YR22/3158/COND (MLC Ref No 938, 1013, 1015 & 1022).



Extract from the Draft Policies Map (August 2022) Wimblington (Inset 27) showing the proposed sites in the Board's catchment

B. Policy Reference LP50.02 (SHELAA Site reference 40152) – Land north of King Street – 46 Dwellings

This site has planning permission for 21 dwellings and is currently being developed - FDC Ref Nos F/YR21/0328/F (MLC Ref No 947).

C. Policy Reference LP50.03 (SHELAA Site reference 40060) – Land east of 38 March Road – 5 Dwellings

There seems to be some confusion as the plan shows the Lily Avenue (Matthew Homes) site which is currently being completed – 80 dwellings.

D. Policy Reference LP50.04 (SHELAA Site reference 40074) – Land north of 37 - 45 King Street – 25 Dwellings

This site, which is being developed, has planning permission for up to 37 dwellings - FDC Ref No F/YR17/0682/F (MLC Ref No 797).

E. Policy Reference LP50.05 (SHELAA Site reference 40087) – Land north of 3A - 9 Bridge Lane – 7 Dwellings

This site currently has planning permission for up to 7 dwellings - FDC Ref Nos F/YR15/0317/O, F/YR15/0798/O & F/YR18/0385/O (MLC Ref Nos 705, 723 & 834) but a decision on a subsequent planning application for 16 dwellings is currently pending consideration - FDC Ref No F/YR20/0234/O (MLC Ref No 909).

F. Policy Reference LP50.06 (SHELAA Site reference 40529) – Land north of Stoneleigh, 22A Eaton Estate – 30 Dwellings

This site currently has planning permission for up to 30 dwellings - FDC Ref No F/YR19/0945/O (MLC Ref No 899) but a decision on a subsequent planning application for 54 dwellings is currently pending consideration - FDC Ref No F/YR23/0206/F (MLC Ref No 1029).

Note: Sites A, C, E and F are all immediately adjacent to the Board's Bridge Lane Drain.

Response to the Consultation

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

The Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside – Frontage Infill Development

Growth Strategy – Neighbourhood Areas;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific comments included:

Disappointment was expressed that most of the contents of Part (B) Flood Risk and Drainage of Policy LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland within the current Local Plan have not been included in this policy contained within the draft Local Plan 2021-2040. As a result, it is considered that the new policy is much weaker which is disappointing given the special water level and flood risk management requirements within the Fens.

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

Policies for Sites and Settlements

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

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

Specific responses

Specific responses were made on the following sites:

- Policy LP 6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Infrastructure – Site Allocations LP06.01
SHELAA Site reference 40468 - 98.79 ha at Coldham Wind Farm, Elm + LP06.02
SHELAA Site reference 40469 174.29 ha at land adjacent to Graysmoor Drove, Elm.
- Policy LP36: Residential site allocations for Wisbech (Page 118) (Map 28 Wisbech (Inset))
- Policy LP46: Residential site allocations in Chatteris (Page 137) (Map 02 Chatteris (Inset))

Next Steps

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

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

It is presumed that, in a similar manner to previous developments, the Commissioners will wish to continue to raise concerns about the adverse impacts of growth and development within and affecting its catchment.

High Rainfall Event and Flooding Incident – December 2020

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

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

Initially, three areas of designation are proposed:

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

- B. Areas of concern - An area served by a water level and flood risk management system that can approach capacity during rainfall events which has been the subject of or is at an increased risk of flooding that is unlikely to be solved through the Board's "day-to-day activities" and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).
- C. Acute drainage areas – A geographical area with multiple or interlinked sources of flood risk where there is a need for a higher standard of water level and flood risk management than normal to ensure that any new development will not increase flood risk that affects people, properties and local infrastructure and may require protection, intervention and/or investment by the relevant RMA(s).

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

A review of the potential extents of either an "area of concern", edged in red, and/or "Acute drainage areas", edged in black, within the Board's catchment has been undertaken and plans will be supplied at the meeting.

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

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

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

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

- A. Incorporate a higher Standard of Protection (SoP), possibly up to 0.5% AEP (1 in 200 year) event

- B. Include a greater allowance for Climate Change, in excess of 40%, and
- C. Be able to “store” water on site for several days until the peak flows have passed.

Strategic Drainage and Wastewater consultation and issues

A. The Right to Connect

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other comments received expressed:

- A. Concerns about the lack of investment and the need for improvement to the existing adopted infrastructure and;
- B. Suggested that the permission to connect should be on an approval basis so that it can be controlled and any impacts managed and;
- C. Required the Clerk to promote and lobby the Board's position.

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

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

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

Draft DWMP

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

1. Draft DWMP Consultation

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

Groundwater infiltration & surface water removal

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

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

The question that will need to be resolved in these situations is where will the surface water go instead? Most other surface water systems are approaching their finite capacity and will require the installation of significant infrastructure to deal with the flows. Who will pay and be responsible for

this? Care will also need to be taken to ensure that flood risk is not being increased elsewhere within the WRCs catchment for another RMA to deal with as a result.

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

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

Water level Management Solutions

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

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

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

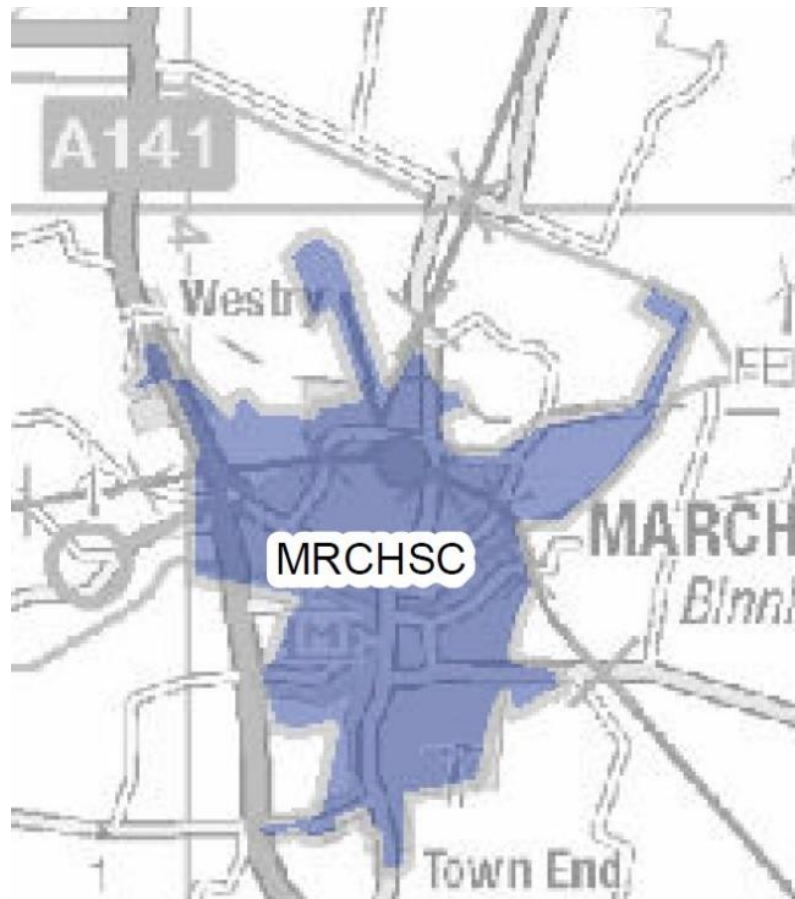
As the approval and consent of other RMAs may also be required, prior detailed consultation with the parties involved **MUST** be undertaken and agreed **BEFORE** work commences.

Partnership Working

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

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

2. Programme outputs



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



L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
MARCH	21662	24461	26041	Yes	2

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

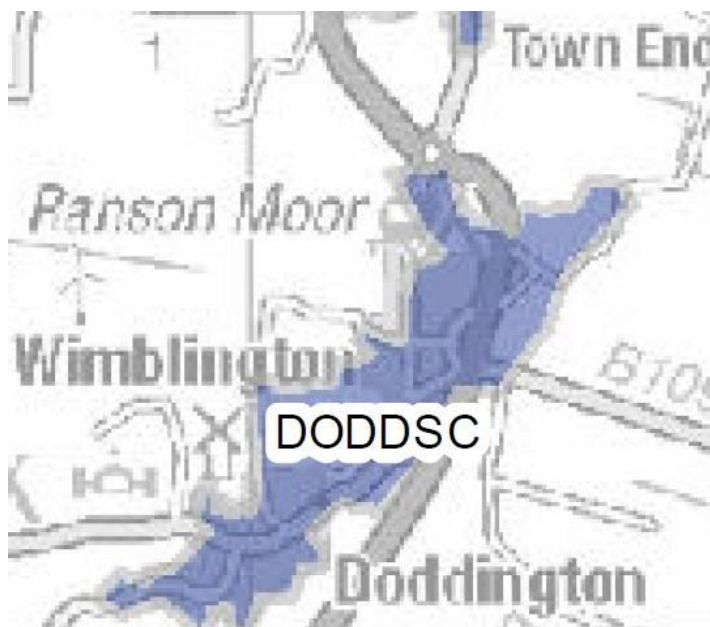
Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy	Partnership opportunities identified
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Identified in FRMP. Flood action group. Embankment scheme identified. Future Fens Strategy.	Network - Mixed strategies with main solution of SuDs	25% surface water removal.	Yes

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

March WRC

This WRC currently serves a population of 21662. An increase in population across the catchment of 4379 (20%) by 2050 was used in the BRAVA/RBCS process. Several concerns were raised during the process and a mixed strategy has been proposed for the medium term. This is likely to involve the removal of surface water from the combined system network, which has been the cause of significant flooding during recent events, by utilising SuDS facilities. However, it is not certain where these will be located given the dense urban environment or who will be responsible for these. The longer term strategy is to remove 25% of surface water by 2050.

Doddington WRC



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

This WRC currently serves a population of 3965. An increase in population across its catchment of 811 (20%) by 2050 was used in the BRAVA/RBCS process. Several concerns were raised during the process and a mixed strategy has been proposed for the medium term. This is likely to involve the removal of surface water from the system network, which has been the cause of flooding during recent events, by utilising SuDS facilities. However, it is not certain where these will be located given the dense urban environment or who will be responsible for these. The longer term strategy is to remove 25% of surface water by 2050.

L3 water recycling catchment	2021 population	2035 population	2050 population	Passed RBCS	Resilience risk score
DODDINGTON	3965	4484	4776	Yes	0

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

Planning objective themes reviewed	Stakeholder concerns/ comments	Medium term strategy	2050 Strategy
Escape from sewers WRC compliance Environment and wellbeing	Flood risk implications.	Network - Mixed strategies with main solution of SuDs	25% surface water removal.

WRC Compliance

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

3. Storm Overflow Consultation

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

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

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

A. Existing sewer systems and problems

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

B. General

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

Advice was given that:

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

C. Storm Flow Technical Overview

High Priority Sites

1. Ecology

a. *Environment targets*

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

b. *Sensitive Inland Water*

Reference was made to the proximity of trigger points.

2. Public Health

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

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

Potable Water

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

3. Amenity

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

4. Assessing spill frequency

Event data Monitors

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

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

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

Growth

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

Climate Change

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

Screening

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

D. Storm Overflow Consultation

Performance Guide

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

Preferred Plan

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

Customer Support

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

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

E. Consultation Questionnaire

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

F. Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Schedule 3

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

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

Currently the maintenance of a development typically falls under the responsibility of a Private Maintenance Company (PMC) which is usually paid for using service charge

agreements with the owners of the new properties and often selling residential properties as leasehold rather than freehold.

2. Review

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

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

3. Changes to existing laws

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

a) Building Act 1984

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

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

b) New Roads and Street Works Act 1991

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

c) Water Industry Act 1991

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

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

4. Implementation

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

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

These discussions will include, as a minimum:

- a) The suggested change in surface water design practice, as discussed elsewhere in this report.
- b) Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for long term ownership funding, management and maintenance arrangements for the upkeep of any water level and flood risk management system, whether on or off site, in perpetuity including details of the works to be carried out by the occupier/land owner, adopting authority, the Management Company or other responsible person/authority, together with the costs attached, are included in the “Homeowners Pack” and the Deed of Sale.
- c) The right to connect needs to be on an approval basis to ensure that it can be controlled and any adverse impacts managed.
- d) That any incurred costs on the rate payer are kept to a minimum.

Drain Maintenance – Point 77 – Grounds Avenue

Further to Minute B.1379 Drain Maintenance – Point 77 – Grounds Avenue discussions with the various parties have continued.

A quotation for the completion of the cleansing and other works have been provided to AWSL but a response has not yet been received.

General Advice

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

- (a) Two reports have been received about watercourses in the Eastwood End/Hook Road area of Wimblington.

The first was received from the County Council Highways who reported pollution and high-water levels in a watercourse close to Stonecross House. On inspection the pollution appeared to be coming from Stonecross House and this was reported to the owners who undertook checks to their sewage treatment plants. The high-water levels are being investigated by the Council.

The second report was received from Councillor Davis who was concerned that high-water levels in a roadside watercourse adjacent to Hook Road and behind Rhonda Park would detrimentally affect the structural integrity of the highway which could cause a road collapse. A site visit identified the high-water level was due to a blocked/collapsed culvert that transfers water from one side of the road to the other. The problem was reported to the County Council who will undertake repairs when finances allow.

Neither of the above issues involve the Board's District Drains but are within the Board's drainage district.

- (b) An application for byelaw consent from the County Council for the installation of coir rolls downstream of Martin's Bridge, Binnimoor Road, March has been withdrawn.



Consulting Engineer

26 May 2023

March East (312)\Reports\May 2023



Project Initiation Form

Board name	Euixmoor IDB and March East IDB
Project name	Combined System Study
Project no.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Doc Ref.	[To be inserted by Consulting Engineer]
Report/MA reference	Consulting Engineer's Report in minutes 2 nd June 2021 & 1 st June 2022 (Euximoor) & May 2023

Description of requirements

Project details	
Description of the problem	
Iron Bridge PS: refurbishment needed as pipes are cracked and perished and the low-level probe bracket is badly corroded and needs replacing. The WSC cleaner ultrasonic also showing as failed. Reed Fen PS: pumps are now 66 years old with the last recorded overhaul in 1985. Due to the design of the station the pump condition cannot be easily assessed in situ. Latches Fen PS: identified for refurbishment.	
Budget	£95,000 (Euximoor); £120k (March East)
Funding source	FDGiA
Timescales/Priority	[e.g. Urgent/5 years/long term plan/design life left]
Dependencies	
[Does delivery depend on cost, delivery of another project or recommendation of a study?] Amalgamation with March East IDB to be completed. Anticipated study start date 2024.	
Constraints	
[e.g. environmental? access? development?] Any conditions arising from the amalgamation agreement, e.g. refurbishment of assets required prior to completion of amalgamation.	
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]

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		

Mr Lakey reported on the works carried out over the past year and proposals for future works, together with the anticipated costs.

Miss Ablett referred to the M & E Consulting Engineer's recommendation that the lights both inside & outside the pumping station should be replaced with LED units throughout.

Members requested the Consulting Engineer obtain a quote for the lights and if the quote was in the region of £750, as per the budget, they should be fitted, however if the cost was in excess of this amount the Consulting Engineer was to contact the Chairman. They authorised the Chairman to take any action he considered appropriate and necessary.

Miss Ablett reported the Consulting Engineer had advised the drive coupling replacement had not progressed, but Rands were confirming price and availability. She enquired whether Members wished for this work to be included in the pumping station refurbishment or funded by the Board.

The Chairman reported the Consulting Engineer had spoken with him and advised that another Board has a pump replacement programmed and it's drive coupling may be available for use. He added the Consulting Engineer was reasonably happy for the pump to be repaired as there had been no significant deterioration. The Chairman considered that based on the engineer's comments the Board should wait to see if the second-hand part becomes available.

Mr Lakey advised that the second-hand part, if used, would eventually be replaced during the pumping station refurbishment, which may be funded by Grant in Aid.

Members discussed this further and agreed that second hand coupling should be acquired and used for a repair until a refurbishment occurs. Councillor Miscandlon enquired whether there were any drawings for the pumping stations and drive coupling as these would assist manufacturers in making any parts at short notice.

The Chairman proposed the Consulting Engineer be asked to investigate whether any drawings existed and Members agreed.

Miss Ablett referred to an update provided by the Planning Engineer regarding the Matthew Homes site. She reported a copy of the survey drawing and pipeline proposals together with an application for consent were received from Haydn Evans Consulting Ltd during March. She added that upon review it was considered a larger pipe would be required and the pipe should extend to the end of the site, linking up to the existing culvert that Matthew Homes Ltd. had previously installed. She advised the planning engineer would be advising them of this.

Ms Morris referred to a development of 450 dwellings with one outlet into an IDB drain. She added that she was aware this application was only at the early stages, but the number of properties were too much for one outlet to deal with.

Councillors French and Hicks left the room while this planning application was being discussed as they both sat on the planning committee of FDC and the development was a live application.

Miss Ablett advised that the developers proposed to discharge at greenfield rate. Mr Lakey explained this meant there would be no increased discharge when compared to that discharged from the land if undeveloped. He added that although the Board wouldn't have to deal with increased flow, it would not receive a discharge contribution and yet still had to suffer the costs of the Planning Engineer reviewing and responding to the application on behalf of the Board.

He reiterated Miss Ablett's comments and advised that MLC do try and promote pre and post application communications to try and reduce the cost to the Board. He advised that if Matthew Homes had entered into an agreement this would have helped prevent the problems now being experienced on the site. He added that this was a decision for the applicant as to whether they sign an agreement.

Miss Ablett advised that the Planning Engineer did liaise with the Council, but it was a matter for the Council whether they took his comments on Board as the MLC was not a statutory consultee.

Mr Heading advised that the Association of Drainage Authorities had pressed Government for many years for the IDB's to be statutory consultees, but were unsuccessful. He considered that where an application was made by developers, they should be paying the Board's costs not the ratepayers. He added he understood there was a limit to how much IDB's could request a developer to pay and he considered that needed to change.

Miss Ablett reminded the Board that developers are encouraged to enter into a pre and post application agreement.

Councillors French and Hicks rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman, for the purposes of new Members, advised of the problems the Board had encountered with the development by Matthew Homes Ltd, which had arisen due to the Board agreeing to reduce its 9-metre maintenance access strip to 4 metres. He added that despite this the developer had still encroached within the reduced maintenance access strip, which had created problems that had not yet been resolved.

The Chairman referred to the Consulting Engineers' report and the further development taking place within the area, which from a brief review of the submission documents indicated the proposed developments encroached within the Board's 9 metre maintenance access strip. He reminded the Board that it had previously resolved that the 9-metre maintenance strip be retained on all developments.

The Chairman stated it would be helpful if the Council could assist the Board regarding this matter. Councillor Boden advised that on some occasions the Council did not receive any comment from IDB's and Councillor Miscandlon agreed that the lack of information coming from the IDB's to the Planning Committee had always been a problem.

The Chairman expressed his concern regarding the comments made by both Councillor Boden and Councillor Miscandlon. He advised that planning applications were discussed by members every year at the Board meeting and the Planning Engineer requested to comment, where necessary, on any applications that may be detrimental to the Board.

Councillor French agreed with the Chairman's comments as applications were reported at Board meetings both for this Board and other Boards on which she is an appointed Member.

Upon the Chairman's request, the Consulting Planning Engineer joined the meeting.

Councillor Boden asked Councillor French, who had sat on the Council's planning committee for over 25 years, whether any comments raised by IDB's were received by the committee when it was making determinations.

Councillor French confirmed the planning committee may receive a small summary, but not very often. She advised she had received an extensive report from the Consulting Planning Engineer

regarding a live application, which she had requested, however the problem areas identified in the report were not read out at the planning committee meeting.

Councillor Miscandlon considered it essential information was sent to the Council's Planning Officer as it was vital that matters were identified and discussed at the initial stages of an application.

The Consulting Planning Engineer clarified the position as far as IDB's were concerned and confirmed the MLC were only a statutory consultee on strategic planning matters, but not on planning applications. He advised that the MLC had previously provided responses to bespoke applications, but had found that these were not being taken into account by the Council, when making decisions regarding planning matters.

The Consulting Planning Engineer advised that the Business Support Team usually sends a generic response to the Applicant at the initial stages of an application advising them of such matters as the Board's byelaws. He added that a bespoke response was sent to the Council's planning committee when requested by the Board, requested by the applicant, if they have entered into a pre or post application consultation or, as in the case with the report prepared for Councillor French, where it is of a strategic nature and we consider a response should be sent.

The matter regarding information provided by IDB's to the Council's planning committee, together with responses received from the Council relating to this information was discussed further.

Councillor Boden advised that the points raised will be discussed at a planned meeting with the MLC Chief Executive as the current situation was not satisfactory.

The Chairman asked the Consulting Planning Engineer to report the remaining issues in his report to the Board.

Councillors French and Hicks left the room while this planning applications were being discussed as they both sat on the Council's planning committee.

The Consulting Planning Engineer reported on the matters contained in his report.

Councillors French and Hicks rejoined the meeting.

The Chairman enquired of the best method the Board should use to inform the Council of its concerns and it was agreed that all bespoke correspondence advising a developer when they were in contraventions of the Board's byelaws, should also be sent to the planning committee at Fenland District Council.

Miss Ablett referred to supplementary report that had been drafted by the Chief Engineer, relating to improving capital delivery, viz;

March East IDB

Consulting Engineers' Supplementary Report - April 2023

Improving Capital Delivery

Introduction

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

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

Resources

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

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

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

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

IDB Projects

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

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

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

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

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

MLC Bank Raising Scheme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Consulting Engineer

5 April 2023

RESOLVED

- i) That the Report and the actions referred to therein be approved.

- ii) That correspondence sent to applicants, regarding developments, be sent to the planning committee at Fenland District Council
- iii) That a quote be obtained for the installation of lights both inside and outside the pumping station. If as per budget, then proceed otherwise contact Chairman
- iv) That second hand drive coupling be used for the pump repair until the refurbishment of the pumping station
- v) That the Consulting Engineer investigates whether any drawings relating to the pumping stations are held or archived
- vi) If available, drawings of drive coupling and pumps be retained and made available to manufacturers when parts are required in the future
- vii) That the Planning Engineer writes to Mathew Homes Ltd advising of the size and length of pipe required

B.1418 Capital Improvement Programme

Members reviewed and considered the Board's future capital improvement programme, viz;

March East 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
Bedlam 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	1,100.0	1100.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	5	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Binnimoor p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Latches Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.9	0	150.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	169.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels														
		14.7	0.0	185	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,115	1,345

Updated to engineer's asset appraisal - May 2020

Identified of PAFS submission 2020

Refurbishment of Latches Fen pumping station to be updated following completion of business plan assessment by engineer

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RESOLVED

That the Capital Programme be approved.

B.1419 District Officer's Report

The District Officer reported there was nothing exceptional to report and confirmed that most matters had been covered in the Consulting Engineers' report.

He reported the Board had three by three pump attendants and that Mr Brooks had resigned as pump attendant at Binnimoor pumping station earlier in the year. He advised that Tobias Martin had taken over the pump attendant's duties at this pumping station.

B.1420 Environment Officer's Report

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer's most recent report, viz;

MIDDLE LEVEL COMMISSIONERS

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**MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICES
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Sofi Lloyd
Environment Officer

March East Internal Drainage Board

Environmental Update – May 2023

Introduction

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

I have been familiarising myself with the IDB area, its approaches and plans as well as I can, over winter, but from now onwards I would like to plan some further visits to the IDB area to develop a much better understanding of the area and your priorities, so will be in touch to do organise this. I can see that the IDB already provides a number of valued provisions for biodiversity including Kingfisher holes, barn owl boxes and bat boxes, and a number of priority habitats including floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland. I look forward to working with you to enhance any areas that we agree would be beneficial and feasible to do so.

1. Bank Raising Project

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

2. Biodiversity Action Plan Review

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

3. Process and Compliance Review

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

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

4. GIS System Development

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

5. Work Package Ecological Screening Document

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

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

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

6. Protected Species

a) Water Vole

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

b) Badgers

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

c) Birds

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

i. Barn owls

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

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

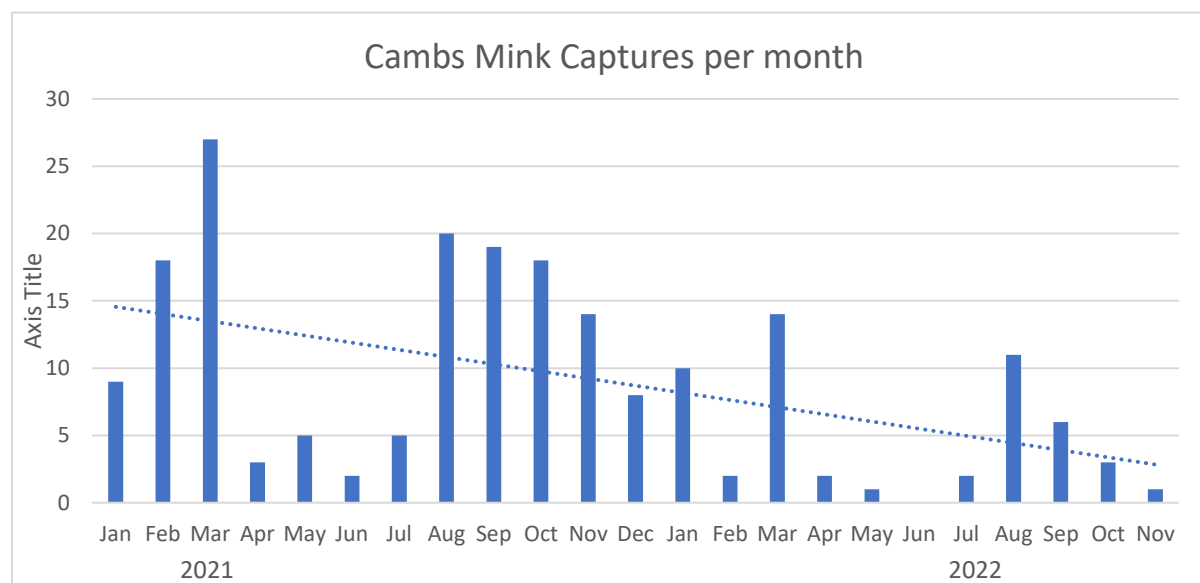
i. Avian Flu

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

d) Mink & Water Voles

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

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



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

Middle Level mink 2022_List

List of mink captures around the Middle Level in 2022

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

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

7. Invasive species

When any non-native species (particularly the following) are spotted, please record the location using the what3words app ([what3words /// The simplest way to talk about location](#)) if possible (if not postcode or grid ref)

and inform us ASAP. Useful identification guides and information can be found online at [ID sheets » NNSS \(nonnativespecies.org\)](https://nonnativespecies.org)

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

a) *Floating Pennywort*

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

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

b) *Azolla*

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

c) *Chinese Mitten Crabs*

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

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

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

d) *Turkish Crayfish*

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

strong biosecurity procedures. They can be distinguished from other crayfish species by their long narrow claws, as shown in the pictures below.



Turkish Crayfish

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



White-clawed crayfish

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



American Signal Crayfish

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

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

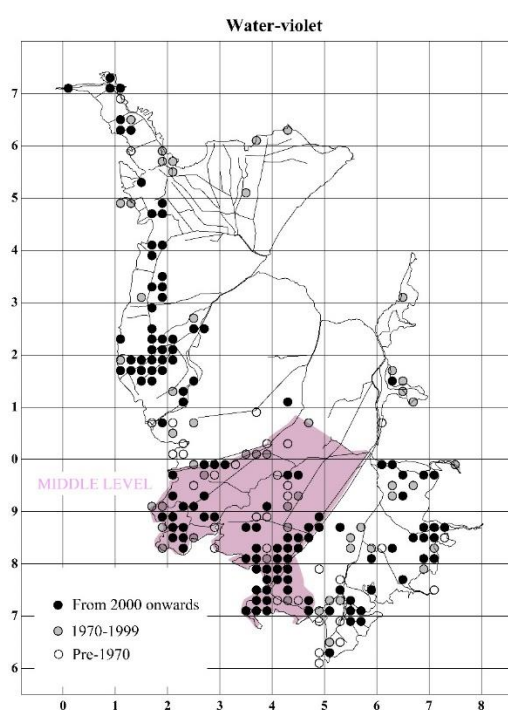
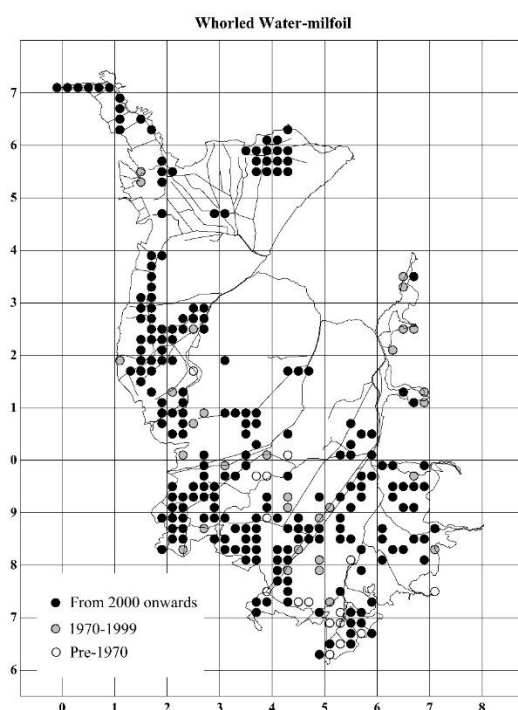
<https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/information-portal/view/381>

8. Fenland Flora Project

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

- There are lots of nationally significant aquatic plants in fens, many of which are only found in IDB drains and are present because of the way the drain is being managed.
- Water quality is important for many aquatic plants and a good proportion of IDB drains have good water quality.
- A summer-maintained water level is good for many plants.
- Non-IDB field drains are important too so where possible, aim to always hold some water and cut periodically.

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



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

9. Environmental Stewardship.

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

10. Carbon & Climate

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

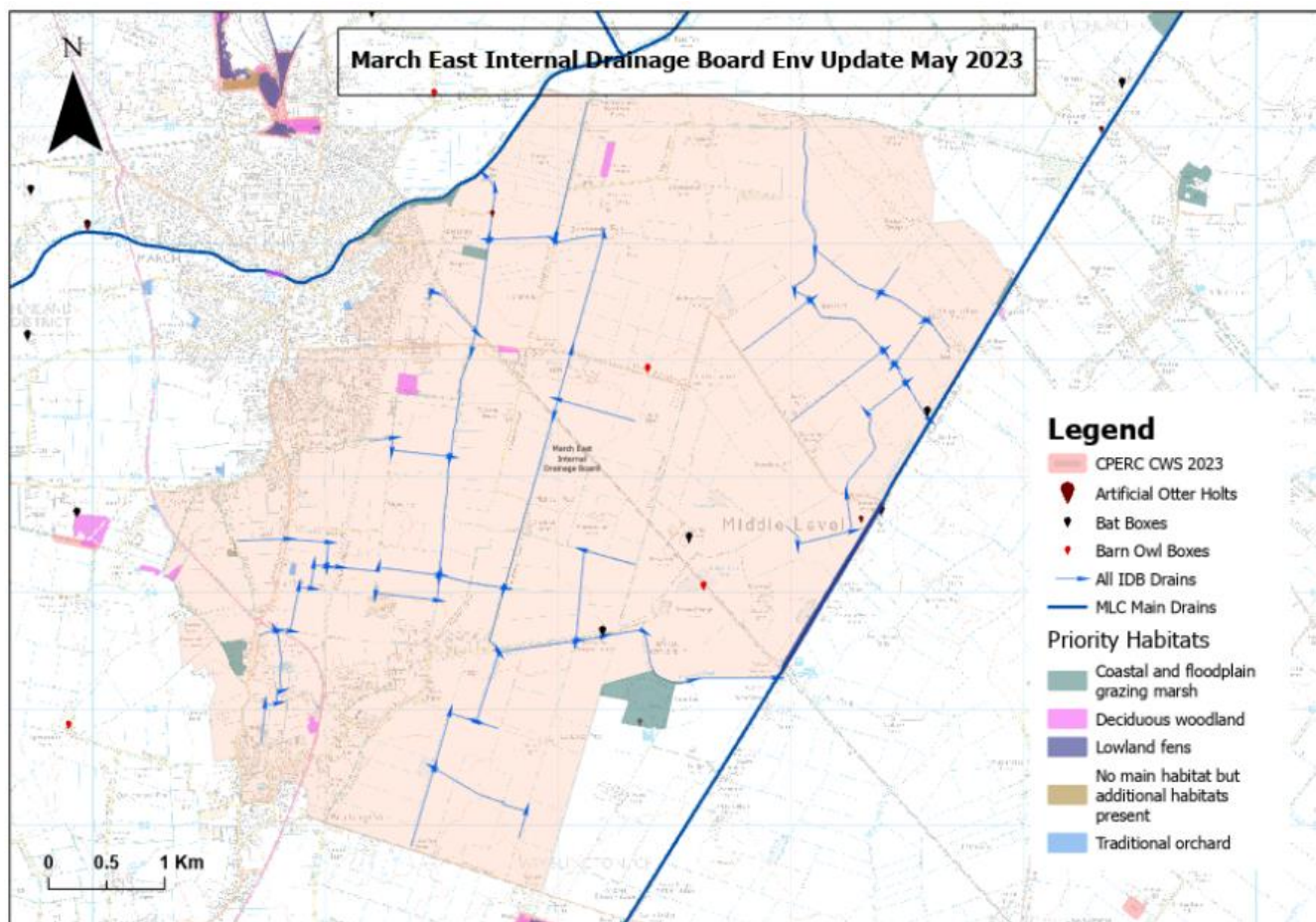
Last year ADA published a Carbon Accounting Guide for IDBs, which is available from their website. The process of calculating carbon emissions does not have to be as complicated as some may think. If you have reviewed the guide and would like some help to progress with calculating your carbon emissions,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

11. Paludiculture

I attended a workshop in Cambridge to discuss the progress of knowledge acquisition and trials around growing commercial crops, associated with wetlands in lowland areas, where the water level has been raised to reduce or eliminate CO2 emissions from degraded peat. This is known as paludiculture. This includes the potential for receiving an income for carbon sequestration from such approaches. As you would expect, there is a focus on the Cambridgeshire fens as a key area for development of this approach along with Somerset, Lancashire and the Lincs fens. If you would like to know more about how this topic is progressing, would like to get involved in some trials or would like to have a go at growing a paludiculture crop such as *Typha latifolia* (Bullrush or cattail) or Sphagnum moss yourself commercially, then please do get in touch.

12. Environmental Good Governance Guide for IDBs

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



B.1421 District Officer's Fee and Pumping Station duties – 2023/2024

The District Officer left the room and the Vice Chairman took the Chair.

- The Board gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2023/2024.
- The Board gave consideration to the payment in respect of pumping station duties for 2023/2024.

The District Officer rejoined the meeting.

Miss Ablett referred members to the auditors' comments relating to the pump attendant's fee being similar to the rental costs and disproportionate when compared to other IDB's that they had audited. She reminded members that the Board had previously resolved for a tenancy agreement to be drawn up to protect the Board.

Councillor Boden advised there was a danger that if the rent charged was subsidised it would be considered disguised remuneration. He further advised that from a strict legal tax point of view the amount paid to the pump attendant should be totally separate to the amount of rent charged by the Board.

Miss Ablett advised the rent charged for the type of property provided to the pump attendant was considered a reasonable and a market rent and added that the amount of invoice submitted by the pump attendant to the Board for his services was not a matter for the Board.

The Chairman considered the rent, charged by the Board, to be a market rent and proposed that no increase be made.

RESOLVED

- i) That the Board agree that the sum of £1,070.00 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2023/2024.
- ii) That the Board approved payments in respect of pumping station duties for 2023/2024.
- iii) That the Board agree that the sum of £8,300 be allowed for the provision of pumping station duties for 2023/2024.

That the Board agree that there be no increase in rent payable to the Board.

B.1422 State-aided Schemes

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

RESOLVED

That no proposals be formulated at the present time, other than those already identified.

B.1423 Environment Agency – Precepts

Miss Ablett 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.

The precept for 2022/2023 was £12,289.

B.1424 Claims for Highland Water Contributions – Section 57 Land Drainage Act 1991

Miss Ablett reported that following his submission of claims for contributions the gross sum of £58.11 (£1,112.37 less £1,054.26 received on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2021/2022 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £1,091.02 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2022/2023.

B.1425 Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions

Miss Ablett reported that ADA has increased subscriptions by 4.5% for 2023, from £721 to £755.

RESOLVED

That the requested ADA subscription for 2023 be paid.

B.1426 Determination of annual value for rating purposes

Miss Ablett submitted the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

RESOLVED

That the Board approved the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

B.1427 Rate arrears

Consideration was given to writing off rate arrears.

RESOLVED

That the arrears be written off.

B.1428 Contribution(s) from Developers

Miss Ablett reported that contributions towards the cost of dealing with the increased flow or volume of surface water run-off and treated effluent volume have been received.

B.1429 Health and Safety

Further to minute B.1394, The Chairman reported there had been a couple of visits made by COPE Safety Management over the past year. He advised they had made several recommendations and where any matters of concern had been raised, these had been dealt with by the Board. He added the only matter outstanding related to the requirement of warning signage, viz;



Site Safety Inspection Record

March East IDB SSI 080223

Complete

Name of organisation:	March East Internal Drainage Board
Date of site visit	08.02.2023 10:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Binnimoor Pumping Station Latches Fen Pumping Station Dam 11 location Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station.
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	08.02.2023 10:00 GMT
Audit Name	March East IDB SSI 080223

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Tobias Martin

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?

No

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?

No

Seasonal staff

1

Introduction. During the opening meeting, observations made during previous visits were discussed and then noted during the site visits to the pumping stations, details below. It was reported that no health and safety issues had been experienced since the last visit.

2

Binnimoor Pumping Station. The following observations and recommendations were made:

* Warning signs. As there is machinery / equipment at the pumping station that can operate automatically, together with other potential hazards, it is recommended that suitable warning signage is displayed on the equipment and/or perimeter fence / building to indicate the hazards. Similar warning signage has been displayed at other other pumping station locations. Ideally, it is recommended that signage displayed also includes the name of the pumping location, details of emergency contacts, location details (e.g. grid ref, 'What Three Words') and hazard warning symbols. See photo 1 below of an example type of sign.

* Information. It was noted that the location information poster, held in a wall mounted poster display unit, was still faded and much of the information illegible. It is recommended that this is replaced, alternatively the information provided on signage, as detailed above.

* Electrical Safety. Pleasing to note that electrical testing and inspection had been undertaken in Nov 2020 with a 5 year re-inspection frequency.

* Access steps. It was observed that the top couple of steps leading down to the weedscreen area were not consistent with the remainder as not level and appeared to have dropped on one side. Although a handrail is provided, this could increase the risk of a slip, particularly if wet. See photo 2 below. It is recommended that the access steps provided are suitable for use, such as repairing or replacing the affected steps.

* Inlet point. It was reported and noted that the security gate within the fence around the adjacent inlet point was not secure, thereby allowing potential access by unauthorised persons. See photo 3 below. It is recommended that the area is suitably secured. This could also be supplemented with hazard warning signage displayed.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3

3

Latches Fen Pumping Station. The following observations and recommendations were made:

- * Fire safety. Pleasing to see that fire extinguishers had been provided and recently been inspected by Fenland Fire Appliance LLP in Nov 2022, as indicated by the labels attached.

- * Lifting equipment. The lifting equipment was noted to have been secured with a padlock to prevent its unauthorised use. Should it require to be used in future, it should be ensured that a competent person undertakes the necessary inspection to ensure its suitability prior to use.

- * Electrical safety. It was noted that electrical inspection of the smaller electrical panel, located in the rear room, had been undertaken and was due re-inspection in Feb 2024. However, the label displayed on the larger electrical panel in the main room indicated a date of Mar 2009, with a re-inspection date of 2014, therefore it was not clear if a more recent had been undertaken. See photo 4 below. Fixed electrical equipment should remain safe to use, this can be checked with periodic inspection by a competent person, therefore it is recommended that arrangements are made for the last inspection to be clarified, and if necessary undertaken, with the label updated.



Photo 4

4

Drainage point 11 dam. Edge protection on the platform of the dam structure had previously been completed with the provision of two chains spanning the gap, which can be removed if adjusting the height using wooden boards. In addition it was reported that work at this location would never be undertaken alone.

5

Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station. The following observations and recommendations were made:

- * Warning signage. As detailed in section 2 above, as there is machinery / equipment at the pumping station that can operate automatically, together with other potential hazards, it is recommended that suitable signage is displayed both on the equipment and perimeter fence / building to indicate the hazard. Similar warning signage has been displayed at other other pumping station locations. The ideal recommendation, incorporating all information into one sign is reiterated.

- * Information. It was noted that the location information poster, held in a wall mounted poster display unit, was still faded and much of the information illegible. It is recommended that this is replaced, alternatively the information provided on signage, as detailed above.

- * Electrical safety. Fixed electrical inspection undertaken in Feb 2019, as indicated by a label displayed. Re-inspection frequency understood to be 5 yearly.

Appendix



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature



Simon Cross
09.02.2023 12:43 GMT

Departure time

08.02.2023 11:45 GMT

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

2
From 0 to 99

March East IDB

SUMMARY OF PHOTOGRAPHIC RISK ASSESSMENTS

Site Safety Inspection 14th October 2021

Ref.	Location	Risk Level	Brief Description	Action
1	Binnimoor Pumping Station	M	Missing warning signage for automatically operated machinery. Persons unaware of the automatic operation of the machinery. Display appropriate warning signage, on the machinery and perimeter fence to indicate the hazard of automatically operating machinery.	
2	Bedlam Bridge Pumping Station	M	Missing warning signage for automatically operated machinery. Persons unaware of the automatic operation of the machinery. Display appropriate warning signage, on the machinery and perimeter fence to indicate the hazard of automatically operating machinery.	

Mr Lakey advised Members of the type of signage that other Boards were displaying, which included hazards, contact details and ‘What Three Words’ to identify the location of the pumping station.

Councillor French reported that other Boards on which she was an appointed members had resolved to erect the new signage and she proposed the Board should do the same.

RESOLVED

That the Consulting engineer arranges for signage indicating hazards, contact details & ‘What Three Words’ to be erected at all pumping stations.

B.1430 Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2021/2022

- a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on the 31st March 2022, viz;

March East Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2022

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 March East Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2022 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 March East Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk
March East 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: D C Thomas - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 26th September 2022

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

We acknowledge as the members of:

MARCH EAST 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 2022, that:

	Agreed		Yes* means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of elections' 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:

09/06/2022

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE 0.1401

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

Chairman

Clerk

[Signature]
Chairman
[Signature]
Clerk

ENTER PUBLIC WEBSITE ADDRESS WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2021/22 for

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2021 £	31 March 2022 £	
1. Balances brought forward	248,939	236,745	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	84,607	93,188	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	9,506	21,183	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	106,307	88,590	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	236,745	262,526	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	256,984	264,349	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	2,446,370	2,446,370	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).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	N/A
			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

17/05/2022

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

09/06/2022

as recorded in minute reference:

10.1403 REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2021/22

In respect of **MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD – DB0048**

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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 2022; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor report 2021/22

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 2021/22

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 2022.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

11/09/2022

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

- b) Councillor Boden referred to the internal auditors' comments relating to the investment of surplus funds, viz;

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
The Old School House, Dartford Road
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8AE
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

BB/MNO53
11 October 2022

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

Dear Messrs. D Thomas, R. Hill, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2021-2022

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 2022, 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.

General points

1. Asset Valuations and Insurances

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. Should a pumping station or residential property require a complete rebuild following an unforeseen catastrophic event, current valuations may no longer be appropriate given today's prices which may lead to a shortfall in funds which have to be met by surplus funds.

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 strongly suggest that all boards agree to this proposal.

PARTNERS

James D-Cote FCA
Christopher D-Ridger FCA
Andrew P-Moore FCA

Ian G C-Roper FCA
Barbara Nicholas CTA
Andrew F-Band FCA

Travis J-Nunn FCA
Keith J-Day FCA
Amanda T-Stevenson FCA

Rod M-Jefferson FCA
Jonathan P-Moore ACCA
Nicholas S-Egley CTA

ASSOCIATES

Richard A-Alcock AAT
Stephen D-Hobbs ACA
Ben Beach ACA

Scott R-Bishop FCA
Hannah E-Wilday ACA
Helen Blackledge CTA

PRACTICE MANAGER

Janet S-Frostick

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BURY ST EDMUNDS | ELY | KING'S LYNN | MARCH | MILDENHALL | PETERBOROUGH | RAMSEY | ST IVES | ST NEOTS | WISBECH

1. Asset Valuations and Insurances - Continued

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. A number of Boards have previously approved to index link valuations and we will be asking all Boards to consider this during the 2023 meetings, along with consideration of current valuations. 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 - Vehicle Usage

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.

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.

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 Chairmen of individual Boards are given 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 due to circumstances to date or anticipated.

The budgets that have been set for 2022/23 year may need to be increased throughout the year due to the significant cost increases that are currently well publicised in the media, most notably in relation to the cost of gas and electricity 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 now being at a 40 year high, 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. 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:

We have previously made arrangements with our bankers concerning the costs for the provision of banking services and interest which when added together more than covered the costs associated with monthly/quarterly administration costs in transferring funds. As mentioned, interest rates in recent years have been negligible and as responsible public authorities we need to maintain caution as to where funds may be deposited - the general principle of the higher the reward the higher the risk applies. During this period we did re-negotiate our banking arrangements and maintained the cost benefit in relation to the provision of banking services. Although it is correct that the Bank of England is increasing interest rates to combat inflation, rates will not match/keep pace with (current) inflation and with the current spiralling fuel costs we also need to ensure Boards have sufficient liquidity to meet ongoing operational expenditure. We have planned meetings with our bankers when this will be discussed further as well as looking at possible alternative places for longer term investments.

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 slump 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.

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:

Although as previously mentioned these points will be raised as agenda items your comments and recommendations will also be considered when reviewing the internal audit report.

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	25,936.95
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	25,500
Difference	436.95

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 but in the short term could be considered slightly misleading.

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 wonder whether there is scope to bring the meetings and account preparation periods in line to address 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.

March Sixth DDC

During the course of our audit we noted that the 2021/22 public rights notice had not been published on the website, we are pleased to note that following notification of this fact the notice was 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.

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. It should be noted that as well as display on the website, notices are also displayed in paper format within the District.

Your comment is noted and procedures will be amended concerning this for the future.

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

Whitings LLP

Miss Ablett advised of changes to the type of banking accounts by the Board's bankers and added that now interest rates were rising, meetings had been planned with the Board's bankers to discuss the interest rates on the new arrangements as well as investigating possible alternative places for longer term investments. She advised it also had to be ascertained what amount of deposit would be sensible to invest in view of the increasing fuel costs and to ensure the Board had sufficient funds to meet its operational expenditure. Members requested the Treasurer investigate the options available to the Board regarding placing funds on deposit.

Miss Ablett advised that for the opening of new accounts it was likely there would need to be a specific resolution required by the Board.

In the meantime, she enquired whether the Board were able to authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to consider the savings accounts, together with the sum to be deposited, which would be presented to them by the Treasurer.

Members agreed both the Chairman and Vice Chairman should discuss the Boards banking affairs relating to savings accounts with the Treasurer and report back to the Board.

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

RESOLVED

That the Clerk investigates interest rates available on bank/building society accounts on deposit both fixed and flexible and advise both the Chairman and Vice Chairman of his findings.

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman be authorised to discuss the Boards banking affairs relating to savings accounts with the Treasurer and report back to the Board.

B.1431 Defra IDB1 Returns

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2021/2022 which Members noted and approved, viz;



Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022

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 2022 a copy must be provided to:

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Floor 3, Seacole, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- National Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (Strategic Delivery), The Environment Agency, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH 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 £.

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2022-23

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 2022-23 (forecast)	
Name of local authority	2022-23 forecast £
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	52,542
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	52,542

Section A – Financial information (continued)

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2022

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 2022 £
INCOME		
1. Drainage Rates		48,773
2. Special Levies		44,415
3. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		1,993
4. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		11,169
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		12
10. Rents and Acknowledgements		7,800
11. Other Income		208
Total income		114,370
EXPENDITURE		
12. New Works and Improvement Works		0
13. Total precept to the Environment Agency		12,049
14. Watercourse maintenance		30,414
15. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		32,686
16. Administration		12,411
17. PSCAs		0
18. Rechargeable Works		0
19. Finance Charges		0
20. SSSIs		0
21. IDB Biodiversity and conservation (other than item 20 expenditure)		705
22. Other Expenditure		324
Total expenditure		88,589

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
23. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		0
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		25,781
24. Developers Funds income not applied in year		59,065
25. Grant income not applied in year		0

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)?.....

09/06/2022

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?

34.1

How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

3

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

3.49 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?	23
Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	14
Number of elected members on the board at year end.	15
Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	8
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.	4

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?

0.51%

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

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature

S. Ablett

Date

12/09/2022

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT

Designation

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Email address

sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

B.1432 Budgeting

Miss Ablett referred to the budget update reviewed by the Chairman, with comparison to year end out-turn added, and any actions taken, viz;

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2022/2023

Page no.

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Actual to</u> <u>31/12/2022</u> £	<u>Forecast to</u> <u>31/03/2023</u> £	<u>Remarks</u>
1 District labour	11,800	7,193	11,800	
2 Telephone and insurances	2,750	2,343	2,750	
3 Fuel (electricity, oil etc)	18,500	3,830	18,500	- Accounts received to October
4 Repairs and renewals	7,750	8,183	10,000	- Includes repairs at Latches Fen p/s 4,350
5 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	37,250	28,953	37,250	
6 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	12,600	4,943	12,600	
7 Environment Agency Precept	12,289	12,289	12,289	
8 Future improvement works	23,500	21,000	23,500	
	128,439	88,738	128,689	
LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Development charges etc	24,728	22,306	24,806	
	101,712	66,429	103,883	
General Fund				
Opening balance	193,460	193,460	193,460	
Rates set	110,434	110,431	110,431	0.13029
net expenditure	101,712	66,429	103,883	
creditors				
Close balance	<u>202,183</u>	<u>237,462</u>	<u>200,008</u>	

B.1433 Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and approved the system of Internal Controls and appointment of Internal Auditor, viz;



Internal Audit Tender Proposal to Internal Drainage Boards and District Drainage Commissioners under the administration of the Middle Level Commissioners

November 2022



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Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Your Requirements

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

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

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

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



Our Audit Approach

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

A -Return, Accounts & Completion (Annually)

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

B - Purchases (Cyclically)

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



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

Minutes

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

Value for Money

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

Risk Management

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

Ethical Standards and Sustainability

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

D - Budget and Variance Analysis (Cyclically)

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

E - Sales (Cyclically)

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



F - Petty Cash (Cyclically)

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

G - Wages (Cyclically)

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

H - Assets (Cyclically)

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

I - Bank (Annually)

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

J - Trial Balance & Nominal (Cyclically)

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

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



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

Consultancy and Advice

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

Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption

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

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

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

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

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

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



About Whitings LLP

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

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

Service Offerings

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

Sector Specialisms

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

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



Our Fees

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Key Personnel and Career Summaries

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

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

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

The proposed core audit team will be:

Your Audit Principle

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

Your Relationship Manager

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

Your Audit Team

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



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

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

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



Appendix B - List of Administered Boards

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



B.1434 Risk Management Assessment

- a) The Board considered and approved the Board's Risk Management Policy.
- b) The Board reviewed the insured value of their buildings, viz;

MARCH EAST IDB

INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS & BUNGALOW

		As At 1st April 2023
BINNIMOOR PUMPING STATION		614,847.00
BEDLAM PUMPING STATION		844,388.00
LATCHES FEN PUMPING STATION		1,391,500.00
		2,850,735.00
LATCHES FEN BUNGALOW	Per Chairman	250,000.00
		3,100,735.00

Ms Morris enquired when the pumping stations had last been revalued. In response Miss Ablett advised that an asset appraisal had been undertaken in 2020 and the pumping stations revalued by the Consulting Engineer at that time. She added the Board approved to increase the insured sums of the pumping stations to the Consulting Engineer's valuations.

Councillor Miscandlon enquired whether, in view of the increase in building material costs, another appraisal and revaluation of assets should be carried out over the next year. Mr Lakey advised that if the Board wished for the pumping stations to be revalued it was likely that the revaluation exercise would be undertaken by an external consultant.

The Chairman advised that as the insured sums of the pumping stations had been increased by 15%, he considered they were adequate.

Ms Morris considered that if the assets were professionally revalued every five years and index linked in between times, this should be sufficient.

Miss Ablett advised that if the assets were to be revalued every 5 years this would be due in 2025 and added that if the matter had not been resolved during the refurbishment of the pumping station, the Board could consider whether to pursue a revaluation at that time.

Members agreed to continue index linking the insured sums of the pumping stations going forward and any revaluations considered again at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the insured sums of the pumping stations and the bungalow be approved. That the pumping stations insured sums continue being index linked and the bungalow valuations be index linked from 1st April 2024. That the revaluations be considered again at the next meeting.

B.1436 Exercise of Public Rights

Miss Ablett 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.1437 Annual Governance Statement – 2022/2023

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

DATE

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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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.1438 Payments 2022/2023

The Board considered and approved payments amounting to £92,106.78 which had been made during the financial year 2022/2023.

NB: Mr C Martin declared an interest in the payment made to him.

NB: Mr J Heading declared an interest in the payments made to the Middle Level Commissioners (as a member of Middle Level Board)

viz;

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Darren Storey - Pumping Station duties (paid monthly)	8,300.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2021/22, planning and development applications)	2,738.10
Shaun Amps Plumbing & Heating Limited - Repairs to boiler at bungalow	373.20
Environment Agency - Precept	6,144.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	415.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	262.13
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2022	865.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Latches Fen pumping station	288.26
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	343.73
D Brooks - Pumping station duties (Binnimoor Pumping Station)	547.50
G Ashman - Flail mowing	3,696.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Attend site and take meter reading at Binnimoor pumping station	61.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	2,457.48
G Ashman - Flail mowing	3,984.00
PKF Littlejohns LLP - Audit Fee (2021-2022 accounts)	480.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	554.24
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	481.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application)	108.95
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery	5,282.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	705.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2021-2022 accounts)	930.00
G Ashman - Flail mowing	1,824.00
Environment Agency - Precept	6,144.73
Middle Level Commissioners - Land registry search fees	15.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Bedlam pumping station	657.84
Shaun Amps Plumbing & Heating Limited - Repairs to heating at bungalow	342.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	480.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	224.98
Association of Drainage Authorities (River Great Ouse branch) - Subscription 2022/2023	30.00
G Ashman - Flailmowing	1,416.00
B J Plant - Drain maintenance	18,828.00
D Brooks - Pumping station duties (Binnimoor Pumping Station)	180.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	298.29
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	317.04
Tobias Martin - Pumping station duties (Binnimoor Pumping Station)	90.75
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical Weed Control of District drains	930.78
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner at Bedlam pumping station	531.09
Middle Level Commissioners - Cut fallen tree adjacent to Binnimoor pumping station	62.81
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Preparation of Highnd Water claims	51.55
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	507.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Remove rubbish at Point 76	167.26
C E Martin - District Officer's Fee 2022-2023	1,000.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	743.29
P Sramek - Pumping station duties (Bedlam pumping station)	1,095.00
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Bedlam pumping station)	209.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Latches Fen pumping station)	209.71
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Binnimoor Fen pumping station)	133.49
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Bedlam pumping station)	131.99
Anglia Farmers - Electricity data collection charges - (Latches Fen pumping station)	131.99
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Binnimoor pumping station)	1,213.70
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Latches Fen pumping station)	9,768.94
Anglia Farmers - Electricity supply (Bedlam pumping station)	5,309.66
	<u>92,106.78</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

B.1439 Annual Accounts of the Board – 2022/2023

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

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023
GENERAL FUND

2023 Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-		2022 Apr-01	Balance brought forward	193,460.30
	Precept	12,289.47			
	Rates, insurances, telephone	2,343.44			
	Repairs & Renewals	9,930.43	2023 Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	110,260.67
	Fuel	14,077.73		Stitches Fen Contribution	<u>245.70</u>
	Drainworks	31,837.24			110,506.37
	District Labour	11,213.25		Interest on Deposit Accounts	3.70
	Administration charge, audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	<u>12,307.58</u>		Highland Water contributions	1,106.18
		81,709.67		Development Charges	2,415.00
				Consents	100.00
				Rent	7,800.00
				Grant-in-aid	7,360.40
	<u>Improvement Works</u>				
	Installation of telemetry	14,720.79			
	Rates raised 2022-2023	<u>20,000.00</u>			
		34,720.79			
	Balance carried forward	201,392.41		By Future Works Account	
				Installation of telemetry	7,360.39
		<u>330,112.34</u>			<u>330,112.34</u>

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities

Capital Provisions	2,446,370.00
	<u>2,446,370.00</u>

Assets

Bungalow - Latches Fen	130,120.00
Land at Death Fen	1,000.00
Pumping Stations	2,315,000.00
Plant Assets	<u>250.00</u>
	2,446,370.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	201,392.41
Development Charges Account	46,299.19
Contributions Holdings Account	17,746.89
Future Works Account	22,639.61
Sundry Creditors	33,557.67
	<u>2,768,005.77</u>

Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	2,557.64
Value added Tax - Refunds due	5,988.36
Sundry Debtors	0.00
Stock	520.00
Grant in Aid	1,046.21
Balance in hand -	
Barclays - Treasurer's Account	306,551.26
National Savings - Treasurer's Account	4,972.30
Labour Account	<u>0.00</u>
	311,523.56
	<u>2,768,005.77</u>

March East Internal Drainage Board

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2022/2023

1st April 2022		31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward	259,381.81	Payments made during the year	92,106.78
		Returned direct debit	1,842.75
31st March 2023			
Receipts during the year			
Clerk's collection account	141,118.98		
Interest on deposit accounts	0.00	Balance carried forward	306,551.26
	141,118.98		
	<u>400,500.79</u>		<u>400,500.79</u>

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2022/2023

1st April 2022		31st March 2023	
Balance brought forward	4,967.68	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2022			
Interest on deposit accounts	4.62	Balance carried forward	4,972.30
	<u>4,972.30</u>		<u>4,972.30</u>

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2023	306,551.26
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>306,551.26</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2023

Barclays Bank PLC

Clients Premium Account	306,551.26
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National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	4,972.30
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<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>311,523.56</u>
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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	236,745	262,526	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	93,188	110,261	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	21,183	24,102	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	88,590	108,811	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	262,526	288,078	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	264,349	311,524	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	2,446,370	2,446,370	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

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

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

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

15th May 2023

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

March East IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return
Financial year ended 31st March 2023

			Per Annual Return
Line 1	Balances brought forward		
	General Fund	193,460.30	
	Development charges account	47,896.10	
	Contributions Holding account	11,169.28	
	Future Works account	10,000.00	
		262,525.68	262,526
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies		
	Agricultural rates	57,646.42	
	Special Levies	52,542.00	
	Penalty	0.00	
	Costs	75.00	
	Write-off	-2.75	
		110,260.67	110,261
Line 3	Total other receipts		
	Interest		
	General fund	3.70	
	Development charges account	0.92	
	Consent applications	100.00	
	Stitches Fen Cont.	245.70	
	Telephone	0.00	
	Highland Water	1,106.18	
	Discharge contributions	7,485.57	
	Rent	7,800.00	
	Grant in Aid	7,360.40	
		24,102.47	24,102
Line 4	Staff costs		
	Wages/salaries	0.00	
	National insurance contributions	0.00	
	Pension costs	0.00	
	Travelling expenses	0.00	
		0.00	0
Line 5	Loan repayments		
	PWLB - Principal	0.00	
	PWLB - Interest	0.00	
		0.00	0
Line 6	All other payments		
	Precept	12,289.47	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	2,343.44	
	Repairs and renewals	9,930.43	
	Fuel	14,077.73	
	Drainworks	31,837.24	
	Administration	12,307.58	
	Development charges fees	90.79	
	Contractors charges	11,213.25	
	Improvements	14,720.79	
	Write back of provisions	0.00	
		108,810.72	108,811
Line 7	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	201,392.41	
	Development charges account	46,299.19	
	Contributions Holding account	17,746.89	
	Future Works account	22,639.61	
		288,078.10	288,078

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6

288,078.10

RESOLVED

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

B.1440 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 Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 51.99% and 48.01%, viz;

MARCH EAST INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2023/2024

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Actual</u> <u>2022/2023</u> £	<u>Budget</u> <u>2023/2024</u> £	<u>Remarks</u>	
1 District labour	11,800	11,213	12,000	A - Includes estimate for increased premiums	
2 Telephone and insurances	2,750	2,343	3,500 ^A	B - Usage to end of year estimated from meter reads	
3 Fuel (electricity, oil etc)	18,500	14,078 ^B	33,400 ^C	C - Provision based on 5 year average and increased for new contract rates - see separate note	
4 Repairs and renewals	7,750	9,930 ^D	6,700 ^E	D - Includes weedscreen cleaner repairs - Latches Fen pumping station	3,933
5 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	37,250	31,837	31,500 ^F	E - Includes provision to replace lighting - Latches Fen pumping station	750
6 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	12,600	12,308	13,000	F - Includes engineers items	28,070
				G - Installation of telemetry Future works provision	14,721 20,000 34,721
7 Environment Agency Precept	12,289	12,289	12,658		
8 Future improvement works	23,500	34,721 ^G	30,000 ^H	H - Clutch replacement - Latches Fen pumping station Future works provision	10,000 20,000 30,000
	126,439	128,720	142,758	I - Includes: Grant-in-aid - telemetry installation Future works fund - telemetry installation	7,361 7,360 14,721
LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Development charges etc	24,728	26,146 ^I	21,723 ^J	J - Includes: Future works fund - clutch replacement-Latches Fen pumping station	10,000
	101,712	102,574	121,035		
General Fund					
Opening balance	193,460	193,460	201,392		
Rates set	110,434	110,506	121,035	0.14200	
net expenditure	101,712	102,574	121,035		
creditors					
Close balance	<u>202,183</u>	<u>201,392</u>	<u>201,392</u>		
per accounts		201,392.41 0.00			

March East Internal Drainage Board

Budget allocations 2023/2024 - electricity

There will be a new electricity contract commencing 1st April 2023 with significantly higher unit rates. For 2022/2023 the contract through Anglia Farmers was a "flex" contract, meaning the unit rates were changed monthly based on the wholesale price; also from October 2022 these charges were off-set by the Government price capping mechanism - this was based on the wholesale price with an adjustment made in addition to the monthly charges.

For 2023/2024 this capping has been significantly reduced, although ADA are lobbying Central Government to have Drainage Boards recognised as high users which could, if approved get the higher rate of capping.

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

As an indicator, the indicative possible current-day costs for the 2020/2021 expenditure would be :-

Expenditure 2020/2021	19,954
Indicative current day costs	69,839
Provision included for 2023/2024	<u>33,400</u>
Potential shortfall on budget	36,439

balances as at 31st March 2023

General Fund	201,392
Development account	46,299
Capital account	22,640
Other	<u>17,747</u>
	288,078

Potential shortfall as % of balances	12.65%
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Members are asked to note the position when considering the rate requirement for 2023/2024.

Rate and levy requirements

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

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 52.11%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 47.89%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £4,432.

In 2023/024 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £8,505.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2023 - £201,392.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2023/2024 is £121,035 and equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 14.20p and
- b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £57,838.
- c) a contribution from Cambridgeshire County Council of £268

In 2022/2023 a rate of 13.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £52,542 on Fenland District Council and a contribution of £246 from Cambridgeshire County Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

May 2023

Miss Ablett referred Members to the note relating to the budget allocations for 2023-2024 for electricity and asked them to consider the impact on the Board's funds a significant rainfall event would have, when considering the rate.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £121,035 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 £62,919 and £58,106 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 14.20p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £58,106 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special 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.1441 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Thursday 30th May 2024.

B.1442 Any other Business

Miss Ablett reported that approximately 80% of the IDB's, together with the MLC had longstanding issues of missing rates, which was generally due to the records linking ownership of rateable land with specific land parcels having evolved from historic records and there were land details for rates billed that were not held in a spatial record.

She advised that if this was to be addressed, a comprehensive GIS mapping exercise needed to be undertaken. She added that it was recommended that a project be scoped and costed, which would need additional dedicated resources to deliver and funding of the project could be apportioned based on the proportion of missing rates for each Board.

She advised that GIS mapping was trialled a number of years ago with Sutton & Mepal IDB and took 3-years to complete so this would not be a quick exercise.

Miss Ablett advised there would be efficiencies if this was packaged and delivered for all Boards together and enquired whether the Board wished to be included.

RESOLVED

That the Board be included in the scoping of a GIS mapping exercise.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date