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Administered by:

15th November 2024

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board
Thursday 28th November 2024

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Lakeside Lodge, Pidley at 2pm on Thursday 28th November 2024.

Please arrive by 9.30am at the Pidley Golf Course for the Inspection, followed by lunch at 12.45pm and then the meeting.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING PLEASE DESTROY YOUR COPY OF THE PAPERS OR RETURN THEM TO THE OFFICE TO BE DESTROYED.

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

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

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

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Thursday 28th November 2024 – 9.30am Inspection (Lunch 12.45pm & Meeting 2pm)

Lakeside Lodge, Pidley

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 13	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership • Attendance • Elections, vacancies & appointments • Composition and amalgamations – reconstitution update • Training	Pages 14 - 16	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 17 - 22	Clerk
6	Environment Report	Verbal	Clerk
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: • Capital Programme & FCRM Grant-In-Aid	Pages 23 - 33	Clerk
8	Health & Safety Update	verbal	Chair
9	District Officer's Report	Verbal	Clerk
10	Governance • Internal Controls & Banking • Annual Return 2023/2024 • Auditors report 2023/2024 • Review Policy • Consider & approve authorised officers, RFO & DPO • Risk Assessment & insured values • Exercise of Public Rights	Pages 34 - 38 Pages 39 - 43 Pages 44 - 52 Pages 53 - 55	Clerk
11	Finance Report • Budget Review • Highland Water Contributions • Determination of land for rating (Confidential) • Rate arrears (Confidential) • Precept to the Environment Agency	Pages 56 - 57 Page 58	Chair
12	Date of Next Meeting	Verbal	Chair
13	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB

At an Inspection and Meeting of the Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB
hosted at Lakeside Lodge, Pidley at 5.30pm on Thursday 6th June 2024

PRESENT

D Brown (Chairman)	J German	H Whittome
T Noble (Vice-Chairman)	I Johnson	S Whittome
D England	S Johnson	
M England	Ms C Lowe	
D Fabb	Ms L Munns	
M Heading	J Short	

Mr Robert Hill (representing the Clerk), Mr Alwyn Sweeney (District Officer) were also in attendance.

The Chairman welcomed members to this evening's meeting of the Board.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jacob Armstrong, James Carney, David Cornwell, Stephen Edgley, Daniel Edwards and Charles Leadbetter.

B.1906 Declarations of Interest

The Clerk 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.

Mr M Heading, Mr H Whittome and Mr S Whittome declared an interest in the payments made to and any matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners (as members of the Middle Level Board).

Mr J German declared an interest in the payment made to K R German & Son.

Mr D Brown declared an interest in the payment made to himself.

B.1907 Confirmation of Minutes of meetings

RESOLVED

i) That the Minutes of the Board held on 30th November 2023 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.
ii) That the minutes for the Finance Committee meeting held on 23rd May 2024 be approved.
iii) That the Board approve the recommendations of the Finance Committee save as to the rate as this would be considered later in the agenda.

B.1908 Matters arising from the minutes.

Puddock Bungalow

The Chairman reported that Mrs Kent is currently unwell but remains in the bungalow and the tenancy agreement therefore continues. He reported that a new heating system had been installed at the bungalow and referred to the Board's decision that the tenancy agreement should be relevant to the current tenant only.

RESOLVED

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

Access Issues – Womb Farm development (Abbots Walk, Chatteris)

The Chairman reported that he had carried out site visits with Tom Noble and Ian Johnson where they had set out the Board's requirements which had been agreed with the developers. These conditions had been taken away by the consulting engineer to formalise the agreements.

The Chairman confirmed that he and the District Officer would continue to monitor the situation.

Review of Easements (A Barlett & Sons Ltd)

Mr Hill reported on the agreements and arrangements in place on the site and that following the change of use felt it prudent to ensure all agreement and arrangements previously made continued to be relevant.

The District Officer reported on incidents with members of the public using the area around Washways pumping station as a meeting point in the evenings. He confirmed that the site does have a working CCTV camera close by the building.

Mr H Whittome queried if it was worth the Board installing its own CCTV and flood lights at the station. The District Officer reported that there was currently not any suitable point at the pumping station to put these on.

RESOLVED

> That the Clerk update the Chairman on the agreements and arrangements in place and for the Chairman to be authorised to review and update these agreements as may be necessary.

Somersham Pocket Park (ref 333/22)

The Chairman referred to the decision of the Board at their last meeting to pause work related to and associated with this matter. He reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended a meeting with Mr & Mrs Leadbetter to review the current position and there was no further information presented to indicate that the transfer of the site from the developer included agreements concerning the Drainage Board.

B.1909 Constitution & Membership

Mr Hill reported that although there was a vacancy on the Board, the Board had previously resolved not to fill vacancies as they arrive until the re-constitution had been finalised.

Appointments

Mr Hill reported that Mr M England had confirmed he wished to stand down from the Finance Committee and that for the last Finance Committee Meeting the committee had agreed to invite Mr S Johnson to attend.

RESOLVED

> That Mr S Johnson be appointed to the Finance Committee.

Training

Mr Hill reported that ADA are in the process of updating the Good Governance Guide, and a new version is expected with new training materials. Mr Hill agreed that this would be circulated once it has been published.

Standing Order – reduction of elected members

Mr Hill reported that at last year's meeting it was approved to reduce the numbers of elected members from 21 to 15 with a quorum reduced to 8. He confirmed that a draft scheme had been prepared by the Environment Agency which had been sent to Defra. Following some suggested small amendments this had been re-submitted and was currently back with Defra.

B.1910 Clerks Report

Mr Hill referred to the Clerk's comments regarding the procurement of electricity for the Middle Level Commissioners and its administered Boards. He reported that an Electricity Committee had been formed bringing together a small group of IDB Chairs to review options and ultimately decide on the next contract arrangements.

He enquired whether the Board would authorise the Electricity Committee to decide the next electricity contract on their behalf.

RESOLVED

That the Board noted and approved the report

That the Electricity Committee be authorised to decide the next electricity contract on behalf of the Board.

B.1911 Environment Officer's Report

The District Officer reported that he had attended several training days with the Environment Officer and queried the latest position concerning works near badger setts. Mr Hill referred to the Environment Officers report and the apparent contradiction regarding conditions of licences and until these had been resolved, it was the Environment Officer's view that routine maintenance works should currently be avoided around badger setts and if urgent works are needed then contact the Environment officer to agree an approach.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be appointed as Environment Representative.

B.1912 Consulting Engineers Reports

The Board considered & noted the Consulting Engineers reports.

Mr D Fabb referred to the cost of dealing with planning applications. Mr H Whittome reported that as drainage authorities were not statutory consultees, they were unable to charge for dealing with the applications. Ms C Lowe reported that Huntingdon District Council would be updating the local plan and she will review this with the council to see if there was a way forward concerning this. Mr S Whittome reported that this is a long-standing problem and that there had been a number of ways investigated to resolved this position but none had been successful.

He referred to the Middle Lele pre-application advice service but this had not been supported by the developers.

New developments and the use of SuDs

Members discussed the use of SuDs and raised concerns over the effectiveness of these. Members considered that current systems do not operate effectively and Board's end up with all the water to deal with regardless, generally quicker than the design parameters. Members considered that current surface water design practises do not take into account exceptional weather conditions or the complex systems within the Fens.

Fairburn way, Chatteris

The Chairman referred to a proposed development on land to the south of Fairburn Avenue, Chatteris and a recent site visit. He informed the board that in a high rainfall event, water from the highland area near the villages of Warboys and Pidley can take 12 hours to reach Washways pumping station, which then runs at capacity to discharge the water into the Middle Level System.

As the proposed development is close to Washways pumping station, it was felt that it caused less of a flood risk to the system if the water from the development could reach the pumping station before the 12-hours peak, when the station could better cope with the discharge. To do this would require a discharge higher than the proposed attenuated rate. Mr Hill reported that there was also a proposed second site north of Fairburn Way which might require the same conditions.

Mr H Whittome referred to the possibility of the Middle Level Commissioners making a charge for an increased discharge rate and in such circumstances did not wish for the Board to then receive a charge in relation to this.

RESOLVED

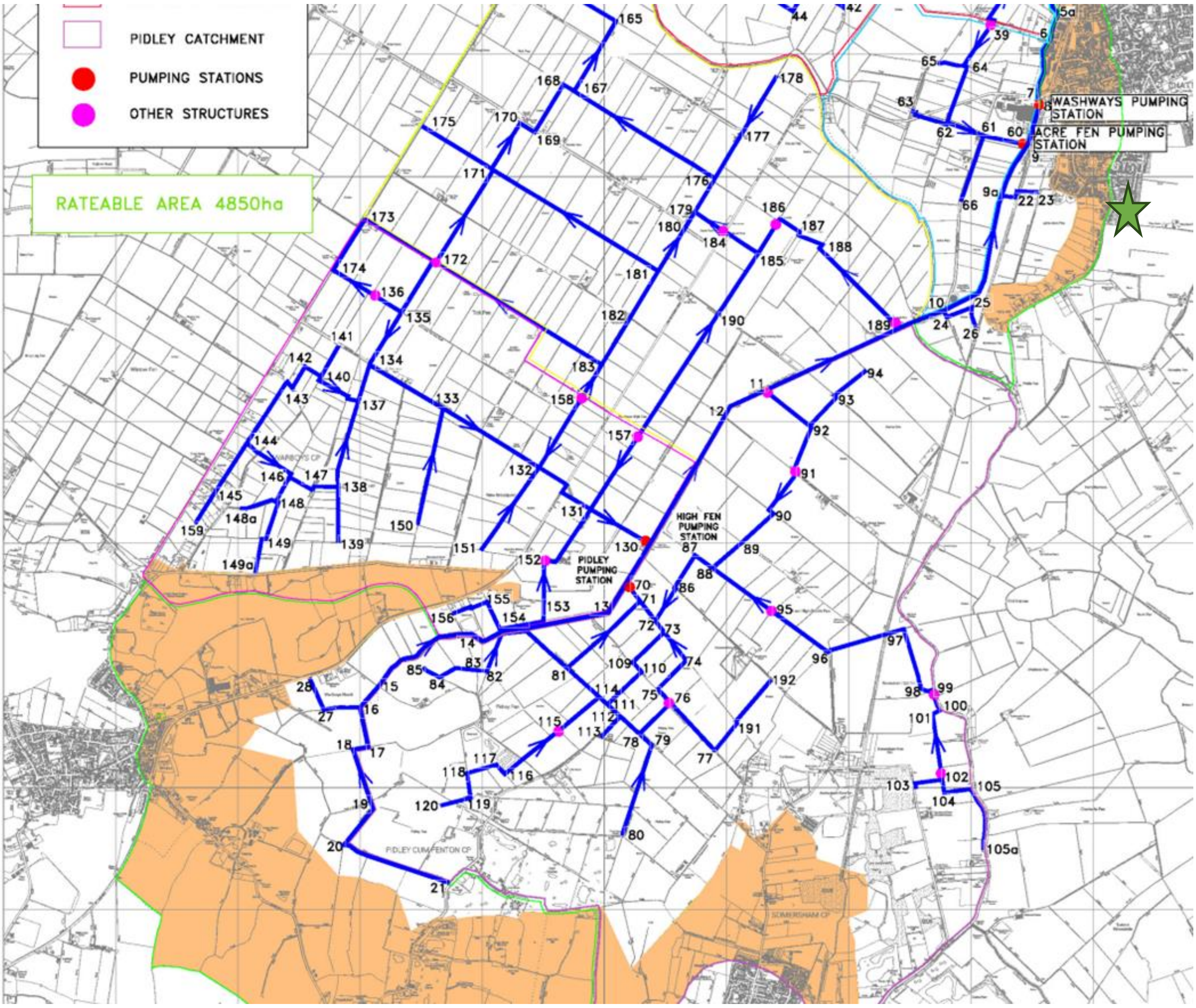
That the Board approved for the issuing of a statement regarding the disposal of surface water from the development. Viz:

Residential development on land to the south of 8 - 59 Fairbairn Way, Chatteris

Following the Board's recent annual meeting, the Board wishes to issue the following statement regarding the disposal of surface water from the above development.

- *The above development is within the highland area of the Board's system, close to the Washways Pumping Station.*
- *In a high rainfall event, water from the highland area near the villages of Warboys and Pidley can take 12 hours to reach the Washways Pumping Station, which then runs at capacity to discharge the water to the Middle Level system. Please see the map below showing the Board's system and the position of the development site.*
- *As the above development is close to the Washways Pumping Station, the Board feel that it would cause less of a flood risk to the system, if the water from the development could reach the pumping station before the 12-hour peak, when the station could better cope with the discharge. This would require a discharge higher than the proposed attenuated rate.*
- *As a rule, the Board request discharges from new developments to be at greenfield rates, but for the above reasons, an exception could be made in this case.*
- *This would not set a precedent for discharges over greenfield rate, but the Board may consider a similar solution if further development was proposed in this area south of Chatteris.*
- *The receiving ditch will need improvement to accept the discharge and the route that the discharge will take to meet the Board's system will need to be identified and possibly improved. These works would be consented as part of the discharge and byelaw consent applications and separate agreements would also need to be made between the developer and landowner.*
- *The proposed attenuation pond would not be reduced in size, but the Hydro-brake flow control diameter could be enlarged to increase the discharge rate to be agreed.*

Once the LLFA's comments have been received, regarding a discharge over greenfield rates, and details of the receiving ditch and onward route have been received, and confirmation of acceptance of works by landowner the discharge rate can be discussed with the applicant further to submission of consent application(s) to the Board.



Extract from Board's District Plan, development shown

<u>Capital Programme</u>

Mr Hill referred to the Capital Programme submitted by the engineer and that this will be updated on the completion of the grant aided study which is currently programmed for 2025/26.

He reported that the programme included for the replacement of the Boards Doosan excavator and referred to the discussions on this matter at the Finance Committee. The Chairman reported that the District Officer had recently carried out a second inspection of a machine for sale by a nearby drainage board. The District Officer reported that although the machine was in good order, the arrangement of the hydraulics would not allow travel and cutting with a flail head at the same time, so it would not be a viable option.

The Chairman reported that the Doosan excavator had had a full-service last year and was generally in good order.

RESOLVED

i) That the Capital Programme be approved in principal and kept under review.
ii) Further to minute B.1747, a sum up to £50,000 be available for the replacement of the Board's excavator and that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be authorised to make the decision when to change.

Mechanical & Electrical

Mr Hill referred to the discussions of the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Finance Committee concerning the Mechanical and electric repairs at the Board's pumping stations be approved.

The Chairman reported that the weedscreen cleaner at Washways pumping station does not have a surface clean ad he had contacted the engineer over providing this option and that the engineer had confirmed that it would cost around £1,000 to provide this. Mr I Johnson considered this would provide value for money as there are additional problems if the weed basket gets stuck or turns over.

RESOLVED

That the proposed work to provide a surface clean option for the automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment at Washways pumping station be approved.

B.1913 Health & Safety

The Chairman reported on the visit by Martin Clark from Cope safety Management on 19th January 2024 and informed members that matters raised had either been addressed or were planned. He confirmed he had spoken with the District Officer concerning the use of a life jacket when working near to the water, The District Officer reported on a number of signs at pumping stations which either needed updating or replacing.

Mr I Johnson reported on an issue at Westmoor pumping station concerning mains electrical cables being placed next to the weedscreen and he considered the cables should be shielded with a metal cover.

RESOLVED

i) That the report be approved
ii) That the Middle level Commissioners be requested to update and replace the signage at the Board's pumping stations
iii) That the Chairman and Mr I Johnson be authorised to take any action as they consider necessary to protect the mains electric cables at Westmoor pumping station and at any other pumping stations where this is an issue

B.1914 District Officer's Report

The District Officer introduced himself and reported that he had now been around the majority of the district. He has started with high rainfall and high-water levels so considered he had had a good grounding. He reported on a number of slips over-winter, the majority of which had been attended to and the remainder will be addressed through the routine maintenance programme.

He informed Members that he had started to tidy at the pumping stations and there was a pile of old tyres at Puddock pumping station for which he had a quote for their disposal at between £500 to £600. He confirmed that the air conditioning on the Doosan excavator had now been repaired and the works truck had received a full service. Mr H Whittome referred to the Fenland District Council rapid response team if there were instances of fly tipping within the district. The district officer reported that repairs/adjustments were required to the gates and Washways and Pidley pumping stations to allow for better access and more efficient working and that in tidying around the pumping stations there was now scrap metal to dispose of.

RESOLVED

i) That the Board approved the District Officer's report and thanked him for his work.
ii) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Mr I Johnson be authorised to take any actions as they consider appropriate in the disposal of scrap tyres and metal.
iii) The Chairman, Vice-Chairman & Mr I Johnson be authorised to approve repairs to the gates at Washways & Pidley pumping stations

B.1915 Governance

Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual return of the Board 2022/2023

a) The Board considered and approved the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended on 31st March 2023.
b) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Risk Management Strategy & Insured Values

Mr Hill outlined that the Board's Risk Management Strategy had been due an update, that the Clerk had drafted and published an updated strategy for all IDBs clerked by the Middle Level Commissioners. The new strategy will run from 2024 to 2027 and outlines how Members and the Middle Level Commissioners staff govern the Board's risks. Mr Hill outlined the strategy for the Board.

Mr Hill reminded members that they had previously approved for the engineer to revalue all pumping stations and when this was completed to then index link the valuations for insurance purposes. However, valuations are ever increasingly complex and the Middle Level do not have the required expertise currently to offer a service for valuation for insurance purposes and there were currently no relevant pumping station replacements that can be used as a guide. Mr Whittome reported that on another Board he was a member of the Board approved to value pumping stations at £1m per pumping unit within the structure. Members discussed options available pending the engineer being able to either carry out this function or a suitably qualified way in which to do so.

RESOLVED

i) The Board reviewed & approved the new Risk Management Strategy 2024-2027 and expressed satisfaction with their Risk Management Policy.
ii) That the insured valuations for pumping stations be uplifted by 30% and then index link the valuations annually.
iii) That when the engineer is able to provide a suitably qualified method of valuation the Boards pumping stations are revalued for insurance purposes.

Finance Regulations & Finance Code

Mr Hill reported that the Board's Finance Regulations and Finance Code Policy were due for review and renewal this year. However, he informed the Board that it was intended to carry out a full review of the Middle level Service Provision, the introduction of Key Health Indicators and to start a review of the IDB landscape of drainage boards within the Middle Level. Further, these reviews would also trigger a review of the finance dept. at the Middle Level and all these matters would likely influence areas of delegation regarding finance through the Middle Level offices, it would therefore make sense to retain the current regulations and policy pending a more in-depth review.

RESOLVED

> That the Board's current Finance regulations and Finance Code Policy be approved for a further year and the Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer be authorised to carry out a full review of both and report at next year's meeting.

Review of Internal Controls

The Board considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls.

Exercise of Public Rights

Mr Hill referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and Right to inspect the Annual Return.

Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mr Hill reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Board were required to consider if there were any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the authority. He confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

> That there are no such events that would have an adverse financial impact on the Board that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

Banking

Mr Hill reported that it was necessary to update the boards banking mandate at Barclays Plc but with his retirement, it was likely that the Board would also be requested to change its mandate at the November 2024 meeting and as there was no immediate need to change, he considered it more appropriate to make all the changes following the November 2024 meeting.

RESOLVED

> That the Boards bank account mandate with Barclays Plc be reviewed at the November 2024 meeting.

Annual Governance Statement

The Board considered and approved the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended on the 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED

> That the Chair be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2024.

B.1916 Finance – Looking Back

Mr Hill referred to the comments concerning the 2023/2024 year which the Board noted and approved.

Payments 2023/2024

The Board considered and approved the payments amounting to £220,804.27, which had been made during the financial year ending 31st March 2024.

NB. Mr M Heading, Mr H Whittome & Mr S Whittome declared an interest in the payments made to Middle Level Commissioners (as Members of the Middle Level Board).

NB. Mr J German declared an interest in the payment made to K R German.

NB. Mr D Brown declared an interest in the payment made to him.

Highland Water Contributions

Mr Hill referred to the Highland Water contributions the gross sum of £4,015.32 (£17,030.62 less £13,015.30received on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment Agency for the financial year 2022/2023 based on the Board's actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £21,238.81 in respect of 80% of the Board's estimated expenditure for the financial year 2023/2024.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2023/2024

The Board considered and approved the Annual accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended 31st March 2024, as required in the Audit regulations.

B.1917 Finance – Looking Forward

Mr Hill referred to the comments concerning the 2024/2025 year which the Board noted and approved.

Fees, remuneration & Subscriptions

i) ADA Subscription

RESOLVED

That the increased ADA subscription of £975 for 2024 be paid.

ii) Clerks Fee

Mr Hill reported that for 2024/2025 there would be a small inflationary increase applied.

iii) Charges for Plant Hire

The Board approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee to increase all rates by £10 per hour

charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work (reviewed June 2024):-

(a) Doosan DX 140W Excavator

- £70 per hour in the District (inclusive of operator’s wages)

£75 per hour outside the District

(b) Flail Mower

- £75 per hour inside the District (inclusive of operator's wages)

£80 per hour outside the District

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

iv) District Officers Salary

The Board approved the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the salary of the District Officer be increased by the Middle Level pay award for the current year on the anniversary of his commencement of employment with the Board, and that this indicator be used annually.

v) Precept to the Environment Agency

Mr Hill reported that the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 3% for 2024

Rate Arrears

The Board approved that the Rate Arrears of £156.06 be written off.

Expenditure estimates and special levy and drainage rate requirements 2024/2025

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2024/2025 and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 89.11% and 10.88%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £265,726 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 £236,795 and £28,931 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 32.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) a) That a Special levy of £21,585 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

b) That a Special levy of £7,346 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1918 Date & Time of next Meetings

Thursday 28th November 2024, 14.00 (inspection 9.30am, meal & meeting)

Thursday 5th June 2025, 17:30, Lakeside Lodge, Pidley

B.1919 Any Other Business

The Chairman reported on the section of watercourse at 23-22-9a which has restricted access and is an issue for the Board to properly maintain. In response to the Chairman, Mr Hill confirmed that if the Board were to consider relinquishing this section of district watercourse then they should look to clean it out thoroughly and then issue notices following a resolution of the board to do so.

RESOLVED

For the District Officer to arrange for the section to be flailed and slubbed and for the matter to be discussed at the November 2024 meeting.

Millennium Bridge

The District Officer reported on the poor condition of the bridge at the Washways discharge channels discharge point into the Forty Foot River and that he had received telephone calls from members of the public concerning this. He confirmed that he had discussed matters with Cambridgeshire County Council who had confirmed this was a permissive right of way and that responsibility would rest with the land-owner.
In response to Mr S Whittome, Mr Hill considered that the bridge was originally put up by Chatteris Rotary Club following discussions with the Chief Engineer of the Middle Level Commissioners at the time.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk write to the land-owner to inform them of the condition of the bridge and concerns of members of the public and that as this is a permissive pathway the bridge is their responsibility.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 28th November 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
B. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
C. Consider the **2** vacancies on the Board
D. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
E. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	21	N/A	24	12
Actual	19	1 FDC, 2 HDC	22	
Vacancies	2			

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Jacob Armstrong	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr C Armstrong)	
2	Daniel Brown	Ratepayer	Chairman
3	Stuart Cornwell	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr D Cornwell)	
4	Stephen Edgley	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr A Edgley)	
5	Daniel Edwards	Ratepayer	
6	David England	Ratepayer	
7	Mark England	Ratepayer	
8	Daniel Fabb	Ratepayer	
9	James German	Ratepayer	
10	Marc Heading	Ratepayer	
11	Ian Johnson	Ratepayer	
12	Sam Johnson	Ratepayer	
13	Charles Leadbetter	Ratepayer	
14	Lucy Munns	Nominee of ratepayer (Mr G Munns)	
15	Thomas Noble	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
16	Jonathan Short	Ratepayer	
17	Rupert Waters	Nominee of ratepayer (Abbots Ripton Farming)	
18	Hugh Whittome	Ratepayer	
19	Stephen Whittome	Ratepayer	
20			
21			

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

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

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

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	James Carney	FDC	Councillor
2	Adela Costello	HDC	Councillor
3	Charlotte Lowe	HDC	Councillor

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	06/06/2024	30/11/2023	8/6/2023	1/12/2022
1	Jacob Armstrong	Apologies	Present		attended
2	Daniel Brown	Present	Present	attended	attended
3	David Cornwell	Apologies	Present	N/A	N/A
	Lord de Ramsey	N/A		apologies	apologies
4	Stephen Edgley	Apologies	Present	attended	attended
5	Daniel Edwards	Apologies	Present		attended
6	David England	Present	Present	attended	attended
7	Mark England	Present	Present	attended	attended
8	Daniel Fabb	Present	Present		Apologies
9	James German	Present	Present	attended	attended
10	Marc Heading	Present		attended	
11	Ian Johnson	Present	Present	attended	attended
12	Sam Johnson	Present	Present	attended	attended
13	Charles Leadbetter	Apologies	Present	attended	attended
14	Lucy Munns	Present	Present	apologies	apologies
15	Thomas Noble	Present	Present	attended	attended
16	Jonathan Short	Present	Present	attended	attended
17	Rupert Waters		Present	attended	attended
18	Hugh Whittome	Present	Present	attended	attended
19	Stephen Whittome	Present	Present	apologies	attended
20					
21					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022	2/11/2021
1	Charles Leadbetter	apologies	attended		N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	06/06/2024	30/11/2023	8/6/2023	1/12/2022
1	James Carney (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies		N/A

2	Adela Costello (HDC) substitute if C Lowe not available	N/A	N/A	apologies	attended
3	Charlotte Lowe (HDC)	Present	Present		attended

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 There is currently **2** vacancies on the Board

3.2 To consider the appointments of the Chairman of the Board (present Chairman - Daniel Brown)

3.3 To consider the appointment of the Vice-Chairman of the board (present Vice-Chair – Thomas Noble)

3.4 To consider the appointment of Clerk to the Board (present Clerk – Middle Level Commissioners)

3.5 To appoint the Finance Committee – (present Finance Committee – Daniel Brown, David England, Daniel Fabb, James German, Ian Johnson, Sam Johnson, Charles Leadbetter, Thomas Noble & Hugh Whittome)

4. Composition and amalgamations

4.1 The Clerk to provide an update on the reconstitution of the Board.

5. Training

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

5.2 To date 0 of 22 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 13 of 22 Board Members have reported viewing 2 or the 5 videos.

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

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners</td><td>Item No:</td><td colspan="2">5</td></tr>
<tr><td>Meeting:</td><td>WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD</td><td>Subject:</td><td colspan="2">CLERK'S REPORT</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:</td><td>Thursday 28th November 2024</td><td colspan="2">Officer Responsible:</td><td>Paul Burrows</td></tr>
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RECOMMENDATIONS
The Board is asked to:
A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.

1. MLC Services to IDBs

We have made the business decision to focus our clerking and technical services offer to IDBs within the Middle Level where there is water management connectivity with the Middle Level Commissioners' catchment.

The continued service offer to IDBs is contingent on their open-mindedness, support and leadership within the reform/amalgamation agenda, as this is needed to create a more sustainable medium- long term business model between the MLC and IDBs. It also contingent on IDBs taking active decisions to manage their risks appropriately to sustain and/or improve their health.

Therefore, the following eight IDBs have been provided with notice that our service offer will be discontinued:

- Bluntisham IDB
- Over & Willingham IDB
- Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
- Swavesey IDB
- Hundred Foot Washes IDB
- Hundred of Wisbech IDB
- Waldersey IDB
- Feldale IDB (administered by the Whittlesey Consortium of IDBs)

This covers all the services offered by MLC, i.e. clerking (admin, governance and finance), environment, M&E, planning & consenting, operations, survey, GIS and capital works.

The 'consultancy agreement' for clerkship services between the MLC and each IDB requires no less than 6-months' notice by either party expiring on 31st March in any year. Therefore, notice must be given by the end of September in any year. To provide each IDB with sufficient time to source alternative suppliers and to enable us to work with those suppliers and the IDB on a transition plan, the termination of services will come into force on 1st April 2026 at the latest. We will however conclude the year-end accounts and annual returns for 2025/26 which happens after 1st April 2026.

It is likely that there will be certain activities or pieces of work that may need to be continued beyond this date until a suitable milestone is reached. This will be agreed as part of a transition plan and a bespoke fee arrangement will be agreed for each of these.

Our service offer to Sutton & Mepal IDB and Manea & Welney DDC will continue given:

- The Old Bedford River interrelationship and potential future amalgamation with Upwell IDB.
- The Fens Reservoir proposal and Cranbrook/Counterdrain strategy may change the water management connectivity between these districts and the Middle Level Commissioners' system.

We are in discussion with Ramsey IDB with a view to taking on their clerkship.

We are refocussing because:

- There has been significant incremental change over the last 10-20 years in terms of IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health & safety, and environmental legislation.
- The scale of M&E and capital works is increasing as a generation of assets deteriorate and come to the end of their reliable life.
- Development pressures and the squeeze on Byelaws have intensified over the last 15 years.
- There is now much more of a need than in the past to work in partnership with a wider range of bodies across an increasingly diversifying suite of agendas.
- The active member inputs around many IDBs have reduced given the changes in farming and age demographic and some Boards are now struggling for attendance.
- The scale of strategic issues facing the Middle Level catchment has and will continue to increase exponentially and will require more focussed working with a broader range of partners locally, regionally and nationally than ever before (e.g. scale and impact of development, pressure on water resources, Fens Reservoir, scale of MLC capital works, impact of climate change on our system, lowland peat, environmental enhancement).
- We are not exploiting the opportunity to maximise sources of income beyond the drainage rate and special levy funding base.

All of the above means that MLC staffing resource is currently spread far too thinly and has been for some time. We consider that the organisation broadly has the staff capacity to provide a good level of service for the Middle Level Commissioners' responsibilities alone. Many staff are working well beyond their contracted hours to provide as good a service as possible for the MLC and the IDBs we currently have a service provision relationship with.

This all means that our service provision to IDBs is now having a direct impact on the delivery of the Middle Level Commissioners' responsibilities, therefore increasing their risks, liabilities and costs. The quality of service provided to all IDBs is also not where we feel it needs to be, which affects all IDBs.

The shorter-term measures to mitigate this are:

- Focussing our service provision
- Creating a new MLC Service Catalogue, including a review of fee arrangements, targeted improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.
- Introducing Key Health Indicators to better enable IDBs to manage their risks and enable comparison across the Middle Level.
- Targeted increase of staff capacity and use of 'bought in service'.
- Developing a 'case for change' in terms of IDB reform/amalgamation across the Middle Level (this needs resourcing).
- Ongoing amalgamation of March East & Euximoor IDBs and reconstitutions of Conington & Holme IDB and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB.

The medium-term measures to mitigate this are:

- IDB reform/amalgamation across the Middle Level, including a review of the business model between the MLC and IDBs.
- Increasing and diversifying income, including a review of our charges associated with planning and consenting.

In terms of developing a new catalogue and associated fee structure, this is underway but not yet as developed as hoped given workload challenges. New staff are also bringing a new perspective to this. There are a few significant gaps in service provision emerging that need to be explored with the IDBs and would require resourcing (finance and people) and training. These include:

- Consent compliance
- Enforcement (inc complex cases and legacy issues)
- Major development and sites of concern (inc, multi-agency working)

- Authorisations and powers of entry
- Proactively formalising land registry, easements and agreements
- Communications and engagement

To ensure no conflict of interests within our service provision to IDBs, we will not undertake private work for ratepayers, landowners, developers, or any prospective consent applicant. It is particularly important that ratepayers' and Board Members understand and respect this position within any works they plan or are involved in that may need consent from the IDB or MLC. This will support Board Members in managing their own conflict of interest and within their code of conduct. There may be exceptions to this that will need to be reviewed and agreed between the MLC Chief Executive/Clerk and IDB Chairman.

2. The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fens

As previously reported to the MLC Board and IDBs, on 15th February 2024 the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Board Members who sit on more than one IDB within the Middle Level (and those outside the catchment that we administer) had been invited to an informal session in Ramsey to share thoughts about the future IDB governance landscape within the Middle Level and whether action was needed to ensure this was resilient for the future.

The consensus from those who attended was that we needed to act and a small working group was identified to draft an initial case for change. The working group met on 5th September 2024 and were joined by Innes Thomson, ADA Chief Executive. The group used the 'Geoff Beel' vision from 2009 as a starting point to discuss the primary drivers for change and the key concerns that any proposed new model would need to take account of.

A summary of the discussion:

- Change is not new within the Middle Level and there has been ongoing evolution of IDBs.
- We need to locally design and drive future change, proactively taking control of our own collective future. IDBs are the decision makers.
- We need to agree what we need to look like in 5-15 years to be sustainable and efficient for the subsequent 25 years.
- Do Nothing and Do Minimum (continued incremental change) are not considered as options as amongst other risks they increase the likelihood of reform being directed upon us.
- The scope is to develop options and then identify a preferred option for the future IDB model of IDBs within the Middle Level catchment ie where we have two tiers of land drainage.
- Similar discussions are happening elsewhere and currently the new government is in supportive and listening mode. We need to develop our approach very much with the Minister (plus Defra and Environment Agency) not for the Minister.
- We risk becoming more of an anomaly if other IDB landscapes drive reform and we do not.
- Amalgamating IDBs into the Middle Level Commissioners or becoming one very large two tier IDB has been ruled out and will not be recommended to the MLC Board (see below for rationale).
- We think options for one, two, three, four and maybe five IDBs need to be developed to an outline design stage. The management and operational delivery model may change for each of these.
- Any preferred option would need to ensure and ideally enhance value for money and make sense from a business point of view.
- Private Districts are an added complexity that ought to be considered within a detailed design phase, once a core IDB preferred option has been determined.
- There is a recognition that additional resources are needed to develop and deliver a case for change. IDBs will need to make a provision/contribution for this and in doing so increase the likelihood of securing funding from others. Seed funding to get us moving is needed ahead of asking 24 IDBs for funds.
- There is a recognition that implementation of a preferred option would need to be resourced, managed and led as a change programme.

The Middle Level Commissioners, whilst having the responsibilities and functions of an Internal Drainage Board under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and Floods & Water Management Act 2010, have functions and responsibilities beyond a 'normal' IDB that are specified and catered for within a suite of primary legislation, predominantly the Middle Level Acts.

Amalgamating 24 IDBs into the Middle Level Commissioners would likely need new primary legislation and similarly becoming one large two tier Middle Level IDB (solely acting under the Land Drainage Act) would mean repealing a suite of primary legislation. Both approaches would be significantly more complex, costly time-consuming and controversial than recent experience with the Middle Level Act (2018) that introduced navigation licensing.

Repealing the Middle Level Acts and becoming a Middle Level IDB would mean new legislation and a new body would be needed to take over the MLC's navigation authority role (or the Environment Agency subsume these) and potentially our water transfer role. This would add unwelcomed additional complexity to water level management within the Middle Level given how the system and infrastructure serves and balances a variety of interests and is likely to be largely unsupported by many of beneficiaries of our system.

The next steps identified:

- Paul Burrows and Innes Thomson to pitch for seed funding from the Environment Agency's Fens2100+ programme. Paul Burrows to ask the MLC Board to consider a financial contribution at their meeting on 7th November 2024.
- MLC to then act as lead client bringing in local knowledgeable extra hands to develop the scoping and outline design. A scope for this will need to be developed.
- The ambition would be to present outline design options via IDB 2025 meetings. This ambition is subject to funding, resources and not having an exceptionally wet winter to contend with again.
- Working Group to meet again in January 2025 (dependent upon the above).

3. Electricity

3.1 Electricity Service

In terms of standing charge policy, our appearance on BBC Countryfile has contributed to ofgem consulting on a revised approach. They have no definite timescales as yet unfortunately but have reiterated that IDBs remain an important case study for them and one they will continue to raise with decision-makers within government.

A group made up of nominated IDB Chairs along with the MLC Chairman and Vice Chair reviewed the electricity contract. Having reviewed options, it was agreed by all to enter into a 12 month fully fixed, 100% renewable power electricity contract with EDF Energy, together with a service level agreement with Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), who will manage the contract and validate invoices.

New Unit Rates are within the range of 21-29p. Following the last TCR in 2023/2024 the annual standing charges amounted to £155,662.32, these now stand at £130,467.61 before adding St. Germans, which at present equates to £49,122.50, being a total of £179,590.11, an annual increase of £23,927.79 across the portfolio. The St. Germans quote does not include the Targeted Charging Review (TCR) charges, which is not down to GEAB nor EDF, but a supplier wide decision due to the EH1V type of meter, which means suppliers will charge the TCR as they are charged from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO).

We have been advised that the standing charges will continue to increase due to the TCR charges as these are going up year on year. The DUoS (Distribution) and TNUoS (Transmition) charges are set each year, and this is the distribution and transportations costs and will be affected by such things as oil prices and demand for dealing with Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) shipments.

4. Charging for Planning & Consenting

As previously reported, we have for a long time been reactive and had insufficient resources to cater for the amount and range of planning and consenting workload for the Commissioners and IDBs with an inability to step back and identify and implement improvements. Our reputation has suffered, and we receive regular complaints.

With new leadership capacity and capability within Technical Services, we are now in a healthier position to identify and drive improvements. A key foundation of improvement is a review and implementation of our charging approach for developers and consent applicants. We have identified that we are significantly out of sync with neighbours and have likely been missing out on substantial income over many years. This is income that could in part be reinvested into developing our capacity and capability to improve our service, as well as contributing to asset improvement budgets.

The Board is asked to support the need to review our charging model to maximise income. The intent is to present a proposal to the MLC Board for approval in April 2025 with subsequent approval being sought by the IDBs thereafter.

5. Highland Water & IDB Precept.

On 18th October 2024 we were informed that the Environment Agency has insufficient sufficient budget to cover all the IDB Highland Water Claims. Their intent is to make payment capped to their budget and then bring IDBs from within the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) area together in November 2024 to review options. The Anglian (Northern) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee has provided Lincolnshire IDBs with reassurance that the shortfall will be met, even if from the RFCC's local levy funding. At their meeting on 17th October 2024, the Anglian (Great Ouse) RFCC also voted on a 2% increase in IDB Precept for the year 2025/26.

If relevant to the specific IDB, the Board is asked to delegate the decision to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman on whether to appeal under (s57 (4) of the Land Drainage Act) any reduced or non-payment of its Highland Water Claims. The Board is asked to support the packaging any such appeal with similar appeals from MLC administered IDBs and potentially IDBs from the wider Gt Ouse catchment. Any appeal must be lodged within 6-weeks of formal notification.

The Board is asked to delegate the decision on whether to appeal the IDB Precept (under s40 of the Water Resources Act) to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman. Any appeal must be lodged within 6-weeks of formal notification.

6. Rating

As previously reported the Water Management Alliance's (WMA) support for their rating software (DRS2005) which we use to manage and issue circa 4000 drainage rates on behalf of the Commissioners and administered IDBs will be discontinued on 31 March 2025. ADA subsequently decided not to lead on the redevelopment of DRS.

The WMA have re-written DRS for their members IDBs in Access 365, which will be made available for other IDBs to use under licence. This software is known as DRS365 and runs on their Terminal Server, which will be securely operated, maintained and supported remotely.

Upgrading to DRS 365 (the software licence, training and transitioning work) will cost circa £10k per site (ie covering MLC and our administered IDBs) and the annual support charge will be circa £5k per site. This covers their costs and provides a more robust, sustainable and better supported system than we currently have, reducing risk to MLC and our administered IDBs. These costs will be reviewed next on 1 April 2025 and annually thereafter. The existing DRS2005 maintenance fee is £1k per annum.

The only other options we have would be to create our own software (which is impractical) or revert to a paper-based system (which would be a retrograde and resource intensive step). In these circumstances the WMA would offer a year extension to the DRS2005, hosted on their server, but at our risk should Microsoft decide to turn off the Access 2003 platform upon which the existing DRS is dependent.

7. Debt Management

Having had limited success with previous bailiffs, we are trialling a new approach to debt management. We have issued a suite of legacy drainage rate and developer charges debt held by the Commissioners and some IDBs to Glenwood debt management company. They operate on a no win no fee basis, and if they prove successful there is opportunity to issue them cases much earlier on in the process, at non-payment stage. This could be significantly more efficient in terms of staff time and hopefully more effective.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Thursday 28th November 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Acknowledge the proposed approach to introduce interim charges for responding to applicant's questions.
B. Confirm whether the Board wishes to create, adopt and issue standing advice notes for its district and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.
C. Decide how to proceed in light of GiA funding uncertainty.

1. Technical Services

1.1 Since Chris Bailey started as our new Head of Technical Services, we have been updating the catalogue of services which the MLC could provide. Given the increasing frequency of complex cases where Boards consider there may be a need for regulation and enforcement dependent on the costs and benefits, we are reviewing and updating training, policies, and capacity to undertake enforcement and compliance regulation on behalf of the Boards we represent.

1.2 We are receiving an increased number of questions from developers ahead of planning applications/ consent applications, with an expectation that we can provide the information freely. Until we have completed the review of our charging model, we will be introducing interim charges for answering these questions if applicants do not enter into a pre-app agreement. There is already a provision for this within our existing charging structure.

The Board is asked to acknowledge this approach.

1.3 A list of the planning, consent and infiltration device applications responded to since the last report is provided as Appendix 2.

1.4 <u>Summary of key planning issues</u>
We will, when possible, seek the Board's input, rather than wait for Board meetings. This will be done via correspondence with the Chair, Vice Chair, District Officer and any appropriate sub-committees.

1.4.1 ***Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - Open consultation***
Following the change of government in July an open consultation was held between 30th July and 24th September on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system.

As the NPPF sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied, it is therefore a significant driver and influence on development related planning policy, and it was essential that a suitable response be made.

During August the Boards' Chairs were given the opportunity to comment on the issues raised within the consultation and any other related items of unease that the Boards had.

A response, which was primarily providing answers to specific questions, was submitted before the deadline.

One of the big issues related to development of the "green belt" and the introduction of the “grey belt” but the consultation also included decision making, climate change, flood risk, and environmental related issues. Responses to specific questions contained within the consultation included:

1. The advantages and disadvantages of restoring the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS).

2. Further supporting effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters.

3. The LPAs need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development on their special levy and future funding requests under Defra’s Partnership Funding Policy. Under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is not included in FCERM government Grant in Aid (GiA) calculations.

4. The need to consider the adoption of appropriate measures that consider the whole water cycle process such as rainwater harvesting and the re-use of as much water as possible.

5. The need for bodies involved in the planning process but which are not LPAs to be provided with suitable compensation, benefit and other incentives for contributing to and enabling the aspirational growth and local economy.

The opportunity was also taken to raise some issues of concern outside of the reform consultation, including the issues about SuDS and nationally accepted design procedures which have been raised as a concern by many Boards, in the hope that these points are heard and acted upon.

Some comments which it was considered appropriate to raise but were not covered by the consultation questions included:

A. The Fenland Situation – special requirements due to the low-lying topography, the managed flood risk and land drainage systems, the provision of enabling infrastructure to allow life to continue and also accommodate current growth aspirations.

B. The flawed methodology used by LPAs and poor decisions made by the LPAs when considering and allocating sites often caused by the need to meet government targets.

C. The impacts of growth and climate change and the need to revise nationally accepted design standards.

It is understood that several thousand responses to the consultation were submitted and, therefore, the implementation of the reforms may be delayed accordingly.

1.4.2 ***New developments and the use of SuDS***

Analysis of the responses from the last round of meetings revealed that the Boards and their members had overwhelming concerns about the uses of SuDS devices from the design, construction, ownership, management and maintenance phases.

Despite the new government growth agenda, as partly discussed above, it appears unlikely that the previously announced implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act and the introduction of the SuDS Approval Board (SAB) will occur in the near future.

1.4.3 ***The Board's System Flood & Drainage Infrastructure Capacity***

At the last Board Meeting it was suggested that the Board "may choose to create, adopt and issue similar standing advice notes for their districts", see previous report for further details.

The Board is asked to confirm whether it wishes to create, adopt and issue standing advice notes for its district and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

NB – The following entries provide an update since the November 2023 Meeting Report.

1.4.4 **<u>Gravity Drained areas</u>**

Chatteris

<u>Downstream of Washways Pumping Station</u>

Development at Womb Farm to the south west of Doddington Road (Fillenham Way and Vermuyden Close), Chatteris - Colliers CRE (MLC Ref No 524), Triman Developments (UK) Ltd (MLC Ref No 528), Client of Haskoning DHV UK Ltd (MLC Ref No 1036), Barmach Ltd (MLC Ref No 1040), Triman Developments (UK) Ltd & Robertson Strategic Asset Management Ltd (MLC Ref No 1066) & Persimmon Homes East Midlands (MLC Ref Nos 1177, 1246, 1249 & 1301)

Further to the November 2023 report, Persimmon Homes provided environmental survey and enhancement reports, copies of which were forwarded to the Ecology & Environmental Services Manager for comment/acceptance.

In the absence of the Planning Engineer due to sick leave, the Board's Chair assisted in progressing the consent document associated with the berm formation which was issued subject to conditions in late May. One of these is a pre-commencement condition which requires the provision of certain items including a Works Programme/Project Schedule; Risk Assessment & Method statement for the Works; Maintenance responsibilities and associated plan/schedules; and Public Safety Risk Assessments.

Other conditions include the following:

- All spoils from the drain can and will be placed on the 9m access strip. If any person other than the Authority wishes to remove it, they will do so at their own expense.

- Any subsidence to any adjoining property will be the responsibility of the Applicant.

An application for the Variation of Condition 11 (list of approved plans) (FDC Ref No F/YR24/0196/VOC, MLC Ref No 1301) with specific reference to "widen internal drainage board easement strip at Fillenhams Drain from 6.0m to 9.0m, and further amendments" was submitted to the District Council in February and is currently pending a decision. The last documents on the relevant Public Access web page date from June. Upon his return to work the Planning Engineer has tried to contact the Case Officer to discuss this and other issues relevant to the site but despite some initial optimism the meeting has not yet occurred.

Concern has been expressed by members about the timing and delay of the berm formation which it is feared may coincide with the completion/habitation of the adjacent properties. It is considered that no works will commence until the Variation of Condition (VOC) application is granted and the weather conditions improve. Whilst this concern is understood it is really a matter for Persimmon Homes and <u>not</u> the Board to resolve.

The Planning Engineer is currently:

A. Pursuing a meeting with the Case Officer and/or Persimmon Homes in order to establish and resolve any problems and ask when the VOC will be issued.

B. In discussion with the:

   1. Ecology & Environmental Services Manager concerning an enhanced and focussed maintenance programme, as the housing is constructed and residents move in to set expectations as to the role of the channel, the berm and the Board. The involvement of Persimmon Homes and the Board's Chair, Vice Chair and District Officer may also be required.

   2. Commissioners' Community Liaison Consultants about the supply of information/engagement leaflets to Persimmon Homes for the new residents, informing them of the Board's role and responsibilities for waterways.

<u>Upstream of Washways Pumping Station</u>

Mixed Use Development on land at Tithe Barn Farm and south east of London Road, Chatteris - Hallam Land Management Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 160, 184, 606, 630 & 1252)

An enquiry has been received from BDW Northampton (a trading name of Barratt Developments PLC) concerning this large development which is primarily within the neighbouring Sutton & Mepal IDB but abuts London Road, Chatteris.

Residential development on land to the south of 8 - 59 Fairbairn Way, Chatteris - A Bartlett & Sons (MLC Ref Nos 281 & 284); Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd (MLC Ref Nos 508 & 514); Client of Rossin Associates (MLC Ref No 553); Mr T Bartlett (MLC Ref No 890); Alan Barlett & Sons Ltd (Chatteris) (MLC Ref No 1020) & Accent Homemade Ltd (MLC Ref No 1248)

The applicant initially proposed an attenuated discharge from this development, slightly above the greenfield rate. As per the comments above regarding Washways pumping station, the applicant was advised that the Board would prefer a larger discharge, as soon as possible after a rainfall event. This proposal was forwarded to the LLFA by the applicant, but unfortunately the LLFA would not accept this proposal, as they were of the opinion that it will be impossible to fully establish whether the downstream network has sufficient capacity to allow for a higher discharge rate from site without increased flood risk. The Board therefore agreed to accept the attenuated discharge on this occasion. The consent documents are currently being processed.

Little Acre Fen Gravity Outfall

The Board's members advised that during a rainfall event water levels do not generally rise at Washways Pumping Station in the first five hours and that water from the highland area takes about twelve hours to reach the pump. After this time flows are extreme for about five days before water levels return to normal.

The Board noted that an attenuated discharge had been proposed by the developer but suggested that in view of the site's close proximity to Washways it would be preferable for any flows to discharge into the downstream section of Fenton Lode within the first five hours of a storm commencing.

Puddock

Puddock Road Safety Scheme - Cambridgeshire County Council (MLC Ref No 1286)

Members will be aware of the hazards associated with the 2.5km single-track stretch of Puddock Road heading south from the Forty Foot Bank which had 4 fatal incidents between 2016 and 2020 where a vehicle left the road and entered the adjacent watercourse.

Initial contact was received from the County Council, in its role as the Highway Authority, in October 2023 concerning the undertaking of Ground Investigation Works alongside the road to support any future structural design. It is understood that a trial section of the deep rutting may be treated with a gabion mattress solution.

A response to the County Council highlighted the Board's concerns and potential issues including any adverse impacts on the Board's system due to the stability of the channel profile and potential environmental damage during the works.

Discussion recommenced in early April and a copy of the relevant documents, including a report and supporting Safety Scheme Options Matrix, was presented to the County Council's Highways and Transport Committee for the meeting held on the 5th March 2024, this was copied to the Board's Chair. Options included the installation of a Vehicle Restraint System (VRS), the reduction in speed limit to 30mph, using enforcement cameras to restrict access to only those users with rights of access.

These documents were discussed at a Sub-Committee Meeting which generally considered that the use of speed cameras would be the most appropriate improvement for the Board but queried how a coded access, if utilised, would operate. Who would it be distributed to? etc. The response to the specific question concerning reed cutting was that this was not possible due to the adverse impacts on ecology and biodiversity. It was noted that Swans often nest in the verge. It was agreed that the solution employed should protect the Board's interests and not restrict access to the District Officer, Board Members, other Board's employees and/or contractors.

An application for works within the Board's 9m wide maintenance access strip including twelve number trial holes in the verge and nineteen carriageway cores was submitted in May. In the absence of the Planning Engineer, who was on sick leave, the issuing of the consent was dealt with by a colleague.

Pidley

Developments at Fen Road, Pidley

A request from the Board's Chair to investigate surface water disposal in the area is currently being undertaken.

Somersham

Change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers' site on land at Legacy Park (to the north of The Paddock), Chatteris Road, Somersham - Mr & Mrs F Adams (MLC Ref Nos 521, 532, 544, 562,563 & 573) & Fenland Leisure Ltd (MLC Ref No 1287)

A planning application for the Use of Land for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Use creating 7 pitches comprising the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, a Day Room and associated parking and a new Children's Play Area at Legacy Park was submitted to and subsequently granted by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC).

The Decision Notice includes conditions related to both surface and foul water disposal.

No correspondence has yet been received from either the applicant or its agents.

Application for outline planning permission for up to 145 dwellings and associated access, all other matters reserved on land north of the bank at land north of 16 The Bank, Somersham – Client of Waldeck Consulting (MLC Ref No 1045) and Larkfleet Homes (MLC Ref Nos 1058, 1084, 1259, 1292 & 1302)

Applications for the Discharge of Conditions including Condition 14 (surface water run off during construction) (HDC Ref No 24/80138/COND, MLC Ref No 1292) and Condition 23 (Surface Water Drainage Management and Maintenance) (HDC Ref No 24/80279/COND, MLC Ref No 1302) have been submitted to and subsequently discharged by HDC.

In the Decision Notice for the Discharge of Condition 14 dated 15th August the Case Officer states that:

> "Officer assessment: The Local Lead Flood Authority (CCC) have recommended the discharge of the condition. The documents demonstrate that surface water can be managed suitably during construction to mitigate the risk of pollution or increased discharge into the receiving watercourses. It is considered the information submitted is sufficient to demonstrate surface water will be managed appropriately during the construction phase of the development, in accordance with Policy LP15 of the Local Plan. Condition 14 is discharged."

However, no assessment appears to have been made to the design of the downstream watercourse network, which was established to accommodate agricultural run off, and may have inadequate freeboard and capacity or if this will increase the risk of flooding.

With the exception of an enquiry in early July concerning the disposal of surface water and the associated consent no further correspondence has been received.

2 Capital Programme

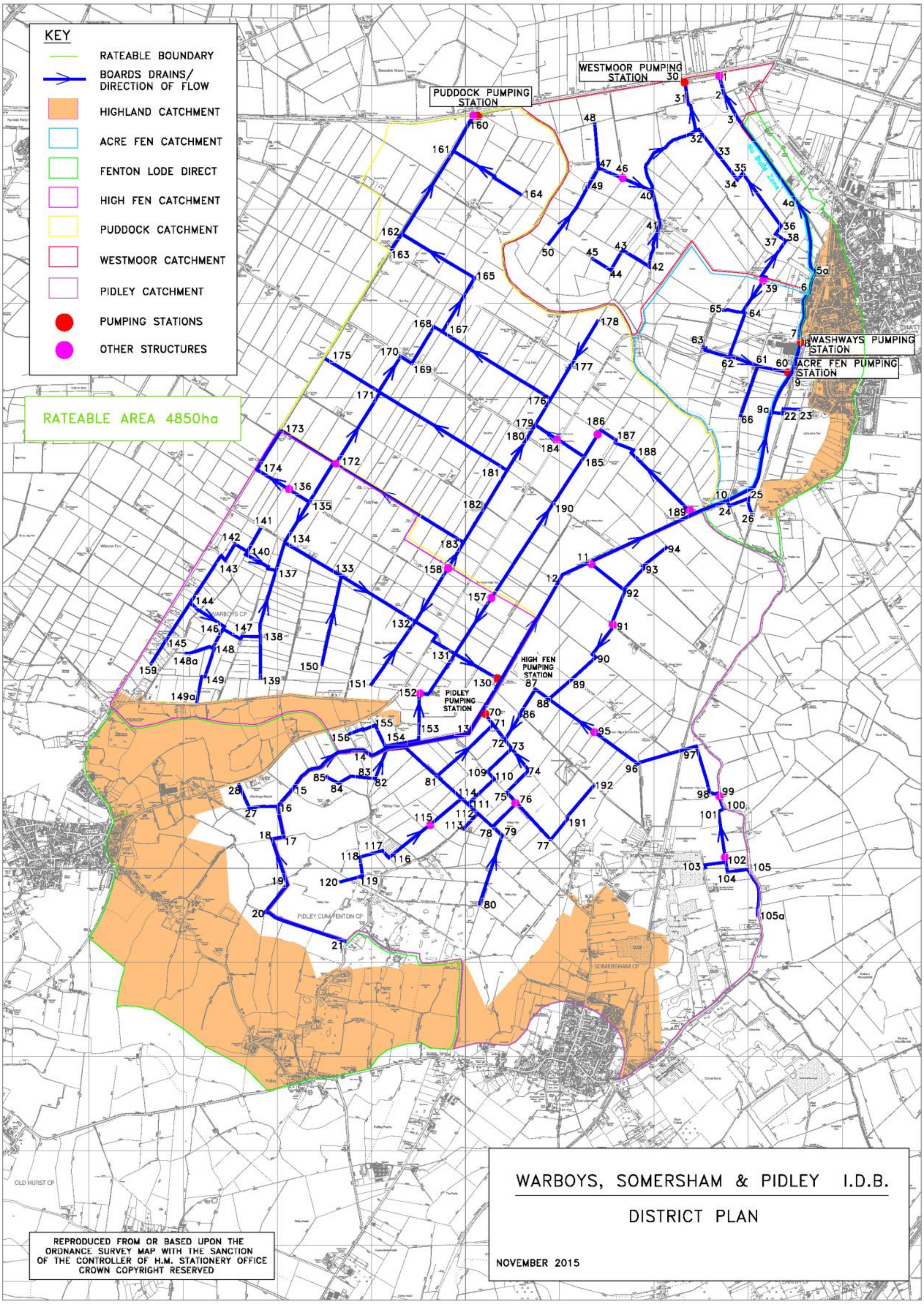
2.1 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) the current indication is that there will be no funding allocation within the current spending review period.

The Board is asked to decide how to proceed.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: District Plan
Appendix 2: List of planning applications since last report
Appendix 3: M&E Report

Appendix 1


KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
ACRE FEN CATCHMENT
FENTON LODE DIRECT
HIGH FEN CATCHMENT
PUDDOCK CATCHMENT
WESTMOOR CATCHMENT
PIDLEY CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
RATEABLE AREA 4850ha
PUDDOCK PUMPING STATION
WESTMOOR PUMPING STATION
WASHWAYS PUMPING STATION
ACRE FEN PUMPING STATION
HIGH FEN PUMPING STATION
PIDLEY PUMPING STATION
REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED
WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY I.D.B.
DISTRICT PLAN
NOVEMBER 2015

Appendix 2

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref*	*Applicant*	*Type of development*	*Location*
1286	Scheme	Cambridgeshire County Council	Highway Safety Scheme	Puddock Road, Warboys
1287	H/24/00511/FUL	Fenside Leisure Ltd	Leisure (change of use to touring and caravan park)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1288	F/YR24/0237/F	Executors of L Allpress	Residential (5 dwellings)	London Road, Chatteris
1289	F/YR24/0242/F	Mr F Simpson	Residence (Garage)	The Hawthorns, Chatteris
1290	H/24/00426/FUL	Parkhall Nurseries & Garden Centre	Horticultural (Storage building)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1291	H/24/00641/AGDET	G W England & Son	Agricultural (Storage building)	Heath Road, Warboys
1292	H/24/80138/COND	Allison Homes East	Residential (Up to 145 dwellings)	The Bank, Somersham
1293	H/24/00683/HHFUL	Mr S Clark	Residence (Extension)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1294	F/YR24/0340/O	Mr J Shy	Residence	London Road, Chatteris
1295	H/24/00693/FUL	Mr & Mrs Robinson	Residence (Retrospective)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1296	H/24/00903/HHFUL	Mrs R Moor	Residence (Extension)	New Road, Tick Fen, Warboys
1297	H/24/00653/FUL	Mr R Johnson	Residence	High Street, Pidley
1298	H/24/80213/COND	Qualitec Construction Ltd	Residential (6 dwellings)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1299	H/24/01167/AGDET	T E A & R L Noble & Son	Agricultural (Grain Store)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1300	H/24/01276/PMBPA	Mr & Mrs Robinson	Change of Use (Agricultural to Residential)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1301	F/YR24/0196/VOC	Persimmon Homes East Midlands	Residential (248 dwellings)	Doddington Road, Chatteris
1302	F/YR24/80279/COND	Allison Homes East	Residential (Up to 145 dwellings)	The Bank, Somersham
1303	H/24/00425/FUL	Mr D Hopkins	Agricultural (Barn)	Fen Road, Pidley
1304	F/YR24/0767/F	Mr & Mrs B Morley	Equine (Manege)	Doddington Road, Chatteris

The following applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) have been granted since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	***Council Ref***	***Consent No***	***Applicant***	***Description of Works***	***Location***	***Date consent granted***
524, 528, 1036, 1040, 1066, 1177, 1246 & 1249	F/YR21/1224/RM	WSP/BC/84	Persimmon Homes	Earthworks within 9 metres of a Board's drain between Points 4a and 5a,	Doddington Road, Chatteris	21/5/2024
1286	2024/028	WSP/BC/85	Cambridgeshire County Council	12 trial holes in the Highway verge and 19 carriageway cores	Puddock Road between Forty Foot and Warboys	1/7/2024
N/A	N/A	WSP/BC/86	Whittome Farms	10 field underdrain outfalls between Points 171 & 175 3 field underdrain outfalls between Points 171 & 172 5 field underdrain outfalls between Points 172 & 173 and provision of "dyketector" headwalls and marker posts	Tick Fen, Warboys	30/7/2024

The following infiltration device application has been acknowledged since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	***Council Ref***	***Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)***	***Location***	***Date acknowledged***
1296	24/00903/HHFUL	Option 1	New Road, Tick Fen, Warboys	24/6/2024

No Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) applications have been processed since the last meeting.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Thursday 28th November 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Dave Bantoft**

1. **M&E key messages and advice**

1.1 Other than the matters previously reported or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The stations and pumps are at an age where reliability is a concern and a plan should be put in place to overhaul or replace items as necessary to ensure ongoing reliability.

In light of the uncertainty of GiA funding the Board is strongly advised to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

2. **Minor Works**

2.1 Puddock
The pumps have run well through this period but as previously reported they are at an age to consider overhaul or replacement. The inlet slacker is leaking which needs to be addressed and the outlet doors are not seating correctly which needs to be investigated.

2.2 Westmoor
Pump 2 was vibrating and noisy during the last pumping season. The pump thrust bearing has been replaced by the MLC M&E team with the pump in situ and the pump is now running well. The pump was last fully overhauled in 2008.

The weedscreen hoist drums are starting to corrode.

2.3 Acre Fen
The Pump Cabinet is heavily corroded, and replacement should be considered. The control panel is from 1984 and the oldest of the WS&P control panels so should be replaced.

2.4 High Fen
Pump 2 insulation resistance has started to drop which may be an indication of water ingress into the motor. Pump 2 has been set to duty and will continue to be monitored. If pump 2 requires replacement the support frame will also need replacing as it is heavily corroded. Pump 2 discharge pipe is weeping which needs to be investigated to determine repair required.

The weedscreen is noisy when traversing which will be investigated to determine cause.

2.5 Washways
Pump 4 newbrook gearbox was removed for overhaul by OEM in June 2024 and refitted in July 2024.

The power factor correction capacitor and contactor on pump 2 need replacing and parts are being sourced.

The battery on the backup generator was found to have failed on a routine inspection and was replaced.

2.6 Pidley
The weedscreen hydraulic pack failed and has been replaced.

3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering's annual inspections for insurance were carried out on 5th September 2024 at Westmoor and 6th September 2024 at High Fen, Pidley and Washways. All weedscreen cleaners passed Inspections with the following advisories:

- High Fen – Noisy in Operation when traversing Left & Right – to be investigated and repaired.
- Washways – Bump Stop Damaged/Missing - Trolley bump stops have been replaced and grab bump stops now also need replacing.

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) were completed successfully in December 2023.

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Acre Fen	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
High Fen	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
Pidley	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028
Puddock	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028
Washways	6-Dec-2023	6-Dec-2028
Westmoor	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

4.1 **Please review the pumping station key dates below, if there are any discrepancies or you can add any details, please let me know. The key dates are an important reference and will feed into the upcoming Key Health Indicators and District Studies.**

					Weedscreen			
Station	**Built**	**Pump**	**Pump Overhaul**	**Control Panel**	**Weedscreen Bars**	**WSC**	**WSC O/H**	**WSC Controls**
Acre Fen	1984	1984	2006	1984	1984	N/A	N/A	N/A
High Fen	1976	2021 (1) 2009 (2)	2021 (1) 2009 (2)	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Pidley	1940s	1979	2005 (1) 2007 (2)	2016	2003	2003	2003	2003
Puddock	1992	1992	2004 (1)	1992	1992	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washways	1975	1975	2016	2016	1998	1998	2016	2016
Westmoor	1962	1962	2007 (1) 2008 (2)	2011	2000	2016	2016	2016

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	10
Meeting:	**WARBYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 28th November 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the Annual Return 2023/2024
B. Consider and approve the Auditors Report for 2023/2024
C. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
D. Consider and approve of authorised officers for operational/regulatory roles
E. Consider and approve resolutions regarding new Responsible Finance Officer
F. Consider the pumping station valuation proposal
G. Review and approve the updated Policy included as appendix.
H. Consider and approve the Data Protection Officer
I. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
J. Note the system of financial Internal Controls that are in place and consider whether additional controls are required within the running and decision making of the Board.
K. Exercise of Public Rights
L. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

1. Annual Return & Auditors Report 2023/2024

1.1 The AGAR provides the framework by which the governance of the Board is assessed. The Board's last AGAR is available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

1.2 The Board/Commissioners to consider:

- the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2024. (Appendix 1)
- the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2024. (Appendix 2)

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

1.4 The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

2. Internal Controls

2.1 Within the financial operations at the Middle Level offices there are a series of controls in place to ensure the segregation of duties, so as far as practical within a small workforce, that no one person has control of a single operation from start to finish. The Internal Controls are available via the website within the 'Governance' section on the Board's page.

2.2 The Board needs to ensure there is adequate separation of duties within its running and decision making. Members are asked to refresh themselves as to the Member Code of Conduct (available within the Governance Documents on the Board's webpage) and ensure their declarations of interests are clear and up-to-date.

2.3 If a Board Member (or their business) undertakes contracted work (or bids for such work) for the Board it is recommended that they be excluded from any decision making as a matter of course and that appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.

2.4 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (eg Chairman/Vice Chairman) then it is important that the Board puts in place safeguards to ensure a separation of duties, particularly being clear on who is acting as lead client for the contractor.

3. Authorisations

We have undertaken a review of how we enact our powers of entry and are introducing new identification badges for all MLC employees alongside training in conflict resolution and creation of a violence and aggression at work policy. Contractors working on our behalf are issued with a letter of authorisation. This is an approach that administered IDBs would also benefit from.

The Board are asked to confirm the stance that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

The Board are asked to confirm the stance that their Chairman, Vice Chairman, District Officer(s), pump attendants and employees (if applicable) are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

4. Responsible Finance Officer

Robert Hill the MLC Treasurer leaves at the end of January 2025 and Andrew Wool has been appointed as MLC Head of Finance. There are a number of resolutions recommended to the Board to manage the transition and improve resilience, thus reducing risk to the Board.

The Board are requested to approve, that while there is a Service Level Agreement for the provision of clerking services in place between the Board and the Middle Level Commissioners:

a) **That the role of the position of Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners is to include the appointment as Responsible Financial Officer to the Board.**

b) **That the person appointed as Head of Finance for the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board.**

c) **That the person appointed as clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and be authorised to sign cheques and to authorise payments on behalf of the Board.**

d) **That the person appointed as Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners will be appointed as the administrator on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Middle Level Commissioners.**

e) **That following Mr Robert Hill leaving the employment of the Commissioners that the Head of Finance of the Middle Level Commissioners be delegated the authority to appoint a member of the finance team to be an additional administrator on the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Board.**

5. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

5.1 Our insurance has been arranged using Towergate insurance brokers for the year to 31st March 2025. AXA offered a 2 year extension of the tri-partite agreement we had previously signed and this was accepted as they offered to keep our business combined policy premium at the same rate for 2025-2026, subject to there being any changes to the existing cover, i.e. increase in valuations.

Having professional valuations of ours and IDB pumping stations for insurance purposes is an action identified by our internal auditors. We have received a proposal from a company called Kroll and they have offered two options:

- Sample site visits to a representative set of 15 pumping stations followed by a desk top assessment covering the remainder - £30k + VAT and expenses.
- Site visits to all pumping stations - £55k + VAT and expenses.

This is clearly a sizable project that we would need to oversee as client and facilitate a seamless programme of visits with relevant IDB officers to keep expenses reasonable. Within their terms and conditions there is also client liability for the quality and completeness of data and information they request in order to fulfil their valuations. We will need to review the proposal with IDB Chairs and establish how costs would be apportioned.

The Board's is asked for their opinion on the pumping station valuation proposal.

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

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS & BUNGALOW

	As at 1st April 2025
Puddock Pumping Station	1,001,000.00
Pidley Pumping Station	1,170,000.00
High Fen Pumping Station	954,200.00
Acre Fen Pumping Station	598,000.00
Washways Pumping Station	2,210,000.00

Westmoor Pumping Station	1,007,500.00	
	6,940,700.00	Index linked
Puddock Bungalow	150,000.00	
	7,090,700.00	

6. Policy Reviews

We have an ongoing review and update of policies. Within this we are also improving our management of Freedom of Information requests. The update to the Privacy Policy has identified some area of Data Protection that require further attention. It is timely to schedule a Data Audit, which will help to identify any further areas that require updating. Additional staff and Board/IDB training will be a likely result, along with some other strengthening of procedures across the business.

The Board are asked to note the update and re-publication of their Complaints Procedure and Privacy Policy.

The Board are asked to review and approve the publication of an Anti-Bribery policy (Appendix 3) which includes the need to log offers of gifts and hospitality.

The Board are asked to approve that the MLC Lead Clerk, currently Ruth Martin, acts as their Data Protection Officer and acknowledge that this role will be associated within the incumbent employee role of MLC Lead Clerk.

7. IDB1

7.1 Defra Reporting

All IDBs are required to report annually to Defra via an Annual Report called an IDB1 form. These reports are copied to the Environment Agency and to the relevant District Councils. In September 2024 an updated form has been issued to cover the 2023/24 returns and is due for submission by 28 February 2025.

There are new or enhanced questions within the form which indicate increasing expectations on IDBs of government.

In summary:

- Breakdown with financial reporting of electricity and fuel cost
- Reporting on biodiversity enhancement expenditure alongside conservation
- Value of drainage rate debt
- Detail of any Public Sector Cooperation Agreements
- Whether a specific Board Member is focussed on ensuring that health and safety is considered within board decision making.
- Significant new reporting expectations in terms of public engagement, including media engagement, public meetings and public events.

8. Exercise of Public Rights

8.1 For completion of the Annual Governance Statement the Board is required to confirm that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

8.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertation the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous annual return:

Exercise of Public Rights: The authority provided for the exercise of public rights set out in Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Part 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the RFO to have published including on the authority's website or other website:

- Sections 1 and 2 of the annual return
- A declaration that the status of the statement of accounts is 'unaudited;' and
- A statement that sets out details of how public rights can be exercised, as set out in Regulation 15(2)(b), which includes the period for the exercise of public rights.

8.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the 'Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights' with the notice.

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

9. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

9.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1	**Annual Return 2023/2024**
Appendix 2	**Audit Report 2023/2024**
Appendix 3	**Anti-Bribery Policy**

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2024

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 /234)

1 The Audit of accounts for the Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2024 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

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

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

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 30th August 2024

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 11/06/2024 13/06/2024 18/06/2024

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: R. BEVERLY - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 18/06/2024

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB

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 2024, that:

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

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

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

06/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

B.1914

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

Chair

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. **Balances brought forward**	707,687	684,194	*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**	182,784	223,877	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. **(+) Total other receipts**	40,961	44,671	*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**	65,746	37,145	*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**	181,492	306,707	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. **(=) Balances carried forward**	684,194	OS 608,890 ~~609,890~~	*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**	861,353	937,142	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. **Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets**	5,226,826	5,227,309	*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 exclude any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

Date 21/05/2024

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

06/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

B.1915

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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board – DB0119**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

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

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

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

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:

1. The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. The AGAR has been amended.

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

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 2024.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature	PKF Littlejohn LLP	Date	26/08/2024

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

BB/MM053
30 June 2024

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

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

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2023-2024

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 2024, 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 – mainly for residential properties.**

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

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

Client comment:

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

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

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

2. Employee Benefits

Following HMRC's announcement that double cab pickups would be treated as cars rather than vans for benefit in kind purchases from 1st July 2024 this was swiftly reigned in following a backlash from affected parties, largely from the construction and agricultural sectors. Given the new Labour governments need to increase the tax receipts into the Treasury this could be a measure that is revisited and we would advise that you be mindful of any changes that arise in the forthcoming Autumn Budget, although nothing has been confirmed at this stage.

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

Client comment:

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

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

It is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure as there is no ability to increase revenue through rates and special levy once they have been set. The original budget is therefore used as comparative to analyse variances of actual expenditure against.

We have started to use a 5-year average for pumping volumes, calculating these against actual/anticipated electricity unit rates. For the 2024/2025 rate setting process we started to build in a 'climate change factor' into the 5-year average calculation, which will be refined for future years. While aware of the need to hold sufficient balances, this was highlighted during the 2023/2024 storm events and as well as having climate change awareness in the budget setting process Boards also were required to take steps concerning the reinstatement of balances depleted during the year.

It is intended to introduce a range of Key Health Indicators for all boards, part of which will be taking into account the impact of climate change on budgets and relevant level of balances required.

5. Surplus Funds

In previous years we have communicated the importance of investing cash assets that are not required to fund operational needs, to combat the erosion of these liquid assets through inflation. We are pleased to see that the organisation have taken heed of this advice and made a number of deposits with Barclays, in addition to discussing the potential pooling of cash resources with IDB's under their administration to gain access to higher rates of interest. Whilst inflation has now fallen back to 2%, the lowest level in nearly three years, it is important to continue to reinvest and "sweat" these assets going forward.

Client comment0:

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

6. Rental of Land

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

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

Client comment:

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

7. Financial Regulations

Last year we noted that the Financial Regulations were due to be updated by the end of the year, following a delay due to the retirement of the Chief Executive and appointing of the new Chief Executive/Clerk in February 2023. We are pleased to see that during 2024 the boards are reviewing and approving the updated Financial Regulations and Financial Code and look forward to considering this area during the course of the 2024/25 internal audit.

Client comments:

There will be a full review of the provision of clerking services and will be, as has been mentioned reviewing these regulations for presentation to boards for the 2025 meeting season.

8. Bank Transfers

We are satisfied with the accuracy of bank and cash balances and have successfully reconciled these to the underlying accounting records. We note that transfers between bank accounts are being recorded as movement per-month in the accounting records, on enquiry this was due to time constraints experienced within the finance department during the financial year. Whilst we are satisfied that reconciliations have been carried out manually correctly, we would recommend that all bank movements are fully reflected in the postings to the accounting software of the board.

Client comment:

Concerning audit point 5 – surplus funds, to maximise returns within the mandated authority with Barclays we are required to operate linked accounts, with receipts/payments being made from the standard current account. This account has a fixed balance which is adjusted following receipts/payments to it – surplus balances above the fixed limit transferred to the Business Premium account, deficit balances below the fixed amount transferred from the Business Premium account to the current account. These transfers are adjusted through the accounting software in relation to the statement frequency, with both accounts being fully reconciled – a credit in one account being matched with a debit in the other. Current staff resources do not allow for additional time to be spent transferring individual values, the net transfer for the statement being made – as we are doing this for around 28 accounts this currently provides the best value for money to the boards.

9. National Saving & Investment bank accounts

We understand that a formal complaint has been lodged with National Savings & Investments. Firstly in relation to the organisation and its administered entities desire to change the signatories on the investment accounts held with this organisation and secondly due to the fact that bank statements for the period to 31 March 2024 have not been received for the majority of boards. As a result interest receivable has had to be estimated, we have considered the estimations and are happy that these are reasonable by reference to the last received statement and the applicable interest rate. We look forward to reviewing the position in the 2024/25 financial year.

Client comment:

This was an unfortunate situation but to recognise the interest in the correct accounting period estimates were made. Differences between estimates and actuals will be adjusted through the 2024/2025 accounting statements.

10. Website Publication

We note that there has been, for a number of years, significant information available to the public. We note that for some boards the latest information does not appear to have been updated, for example the JPAG practitioner guide on the website across all the boards has not been updated since the 2018/19. An updated version of JPAG guide is made available each year.

The same situation related to the Annual Return Form (DEF-IDB1), which appeared have not been updated since year ended 31 March 2022.

We would recommend that all items are updated on the website for applicable boards as soon as practicable, or remove if regulations do not require such information to be published on the website.

Client comment:

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

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

11. Outstanding old cheques and unreconciled transactions

We are pleased to note that the majority of old outstanding cheques and unreconciled transactions are being written off across all Board in the timely manner. However, there was the isolated cases where this has not occurred. We would suggest that concerted effort is made to ensure all old and unreconciled transactions are written off as soon as it is clear that such transactions will not be paid in or received.

Client comment:

Bank reconciliations should be looked at and cleared for older unpresented transactions, however, these will initially be transferred to debtor/creditor until their statutory standard life has expired. For 'house-keeping' these will be looked at as part of the year-end processes.

12. Fees for the service of District Officers and Pump Attendants

We have noted that not all boards are approving payment rates for the services rendered by District Officers and/or Pumping Attendant during the board meetings, instead approval is confirmed as a percentage increase, generally being in line with the Middle Level Commissioners award.

We appreciate that the board is approving the payment lists, where the amount is specified. However, we would suggest to include the amount to the discussion during the meeting and confirm the approved sum in the minutes as per prior years.

Client comment:

District Officer/pump attendants are contracted services and the boards are approving an amount for the provision of these services, however, the point is noted and the actual amount payable discussed at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

Specific Points

Nightlayers IDB

During our review it was noted that land sold during the year was not recorded on the fixed asset register. Our subsequent enquiries found that as the land was considered of minimal value individually this was included within the adjoining pumping station's valuation and was within the footprint of the old pumping station site. The consideration achieved is higher than would generally be expected due to its importance to a local developer.

We would suggest that you consider whether any other parcels of land held by administered boards could be sold in similar circumstances and if so, whether the valuation individually or as part of the overall pumping station valuation is appropriate.

Client comment:

While we are aware of these circumstances the Nightlayers position was rare. We will monitor sites which could have areas with potential for re-sale, substantial value can only be attached after developers make applications and this proves to be the only access. Unless these circumstances arise an uplift in valuation will not be possible.

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	£92,912.67
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£93,919.96
Difference	**£1,007.29**

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

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

Client comment:

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

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

At the 2024 meetings for both Boards amalgamation was discussed and both Boards have approved to enter into discussions concerning a potential amalgamation between the Boards.

March East IDB

During our review it was noted that the pumping station attendants' payments were not all authorised during the year. This included an additional payment to the Binnimoor pumping station's attendant following him taking over from the previous attendant. We understand following discussion with the board that this was the result of an error in the minutes as the fees' amount was not specified, but the payments were clearly approved by the board. We would suggest that the board considers their internal processes for ensuring the accuracy of minutes.

Client comment:

The services of pump attendant are carried out by contractors and the Board approves the payment for these services. Procedures have been looked at to ensure proper recording in the minutes.

Hundred of Wisbech

We noted that a parcel of land has been transferred to the board during the 2023-24 year with the attenuation pond, sized at approximately 1 acre. This land was estimated by the Chairman and District Officer to have a value totalling £5,000, a value approved by the Board. We have not been provided with any professional valuation or justification with regards to this valuation. We understand that the land cannot be used for development or agriculture, making it difficult to value due to the lack of specific use.

We understand that the consideration of land valuation has conducted after the year end and details should be included in the next published minutes related to June 2024 meeting.

We look forward to reviewing this in due course.

Client comment:

This area is designated as an attenuation pond, holding surface water to discharge at a controlled rate into the District System. The valuation takes into account its use and therefore limited value. In view of this and to maintain value for money for the Board it was agreed by the officers of the Board not to engage professional valuers.

Manea & Welney

During our review, it was noticed that the Debtors Report showed a significant unallocated amount of £1,456,606.99. Following discussion with the client, we understand that this is an isolated incident related to software issue and not down to the human error. We are satisfied that balance showing on the Debtors Report is correct and no difference was identified.

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

middle level commissioners

And administered IDBs

Governance

Anti Bribery Policy

(includes gifts, hospitality & donations)

2024 - 2029

The Bribery Act 2010 is the legislation relating to bribery. Very generally, this is defined as giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so. This could cover seeking to influence a decision-maker by giving some kind of extra benefit to that decision maker rather than what can legitimately be offered as part of a tender process.

Government guidance summarises that it is illegal to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes – and highlights that organisations should have an anti-bribery policy if there is a risk that someone who works for you or on your behalf might be exposed to bribery.

An anti-bribery policy should be appropriate to the level of risk the organisation faces and should include:

- your approach to reducing and controlling the risks of bribery
- rules about accepting gifts, hospitality or donations
- guidance on how to conduct your business, eg negotiating contracts
- rules on avoiding or stopping conflicts of interest

Risk Assessment

The Middle Level Commissioners and administered Internal Drainage Boards are considered as at minimal risk of bribery given that business is undertaken almost entirely within the UK.

As there is very little risk of bribery being committed on behalf of the organisation it is considered that there is no need for extensive written documentation or policies.

The most likely area of MLC or IDB business with a bribery risk are outlined below and these already have adequate controls:

- Bribery by others to secure business from the MLC/IDB
- Bribery by others to secure regulatory decisions from MLC/IDBs
- Bribery by others to secure operational benefits from MLC/IDBs
- Bribery by MLC/IDB employees or MLC Board/IDB members of others to influence an advantage

Control Measures

- MLC/IDB Board Member declarations of interest and the application by the clerk of these within meetings and decision making.
- Boards, their delegated Committees and/or MLC employees as service providers making key procurement and regulatory decisions rather than individuals.
- Application and review of Internal Controls
- Within the MLC staff structure there are no procurement/regulatory decisions made without more than one employee being involved
- Application of Member Code of Conduct and employee performance and disciplinary procedures
- Offers of gifts, hospitality and donations to be reported to the Chief Executive/Clerk.

Gifts, Hospitality and/or Donations

Employees and members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing or seeking to do business with the MLC/Board or may be applying to the MLC/Board for some decision to be taken in his favour or someone with whom he is connected.

There are no hard and fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality or tokens of goodwill. For example, working lunches may be an appropriate way of doing business provided they are approved by the Chief Executive/Clerk and provided no extravagance is involved. In the same way it may be reasonable for staff/members to represent the MLC/Board at a social function or sporting event organised by outside persons or bodies. Persons attending such functions or events as part of an official MLC/Board delegation are exempt from the above registration requirement, providing their attendance has been approved by the Chief Executive.

Each member or employee is personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding risk of damage to public confidence. The receipt and detail of gifts and hospitality should always be reported to the Chief Executive/Clerk.

When gifts and/or hospitality have to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operated by the MLC/Board and told why hospitality cannot be accepted. This should be logged within the register in order to track any patterns.

Members and employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although the Board will allow members and employees to keep insignificant items of token value such as pens, calendars and diaries of an estimated value below £20. These insignificant items do not require recording in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Acceptance by members and employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where the member or employee is satisfied that any purchasing decisions will not be compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, supplies or services are required, employees and members should ensure that the MLC/Board meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

Procedure

MLC/IDB Board Members and Employees are required to log the offer and acceptance/rejection of a gift, hospitality or donation within the Gifts and Hospitality Register by emailing details of the offer to chiefofficers@middlelevel.gov.uk

Dealing with Bribery

Bribery committed by an employee will be considered a disciplinary issue and likely to be treated as gross misconduct.

Bribery or attempted bribery committed by a third party may lead to the termination of the business relationship.

Bribery committed by an MLC or IDB Member will be considered as a breach of the Member Code of Conduct.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 28th November 2024**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

M. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
N. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
O. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
P. Note the Highland Water contributions
Q. Review & approve Determination of land for rating purposes & Rate arrears (Confidential papers)
R. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Storm Recovery Grant

Following the setting of the rates for 2024/2025 we were advised of the criteria for submissions of claims against the Government announced Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for the first phase of funding (T1) was submitted for £108,959.07, which has now been received

Although claims have been submitted for combined IDB works against the Storm Recovery resilience works (T2) there has been no indication from the Environment Agency concerning the progress of claims submitted or possible eventual payment of claims.

7. **Budget Monitoring**

7.1 The current forecast for income/expenditure to 31st March 2025 shows that expenditure could be in-line with the budget against which rates were set. Appendix 1

However, members are advised that these figures are estimating pumping costs to be in-line with the budget proposal against which the rates have been set and should therefore also take into account the significant financial implications major storm events can have on drainage Board budgets.

The full highland water claims have been included but while payment remains outstanding it is the recommendation that the balance of the Storm recovery Grant (T1) is held in reserve.

To balance the budget the reinstatement of balances provision has been reduced by £8,910 from the budgeted amount to £18,156.

There will be a full reconciliation of balances at the financial year end.

8. Highland Water Contributions

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

2.2 When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2023/2024 and the budgeted expenditure for 2024/2025. The winter storm events gave claims significantly in excess of previous claims but following an understanding that the Environment Agency were able to switch funding within their revenue/capital programmes the full estimated claims were included in the rating proposals. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £44,880. Following an earlier Government announcement, details were eventually released concerning the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim excess pumping costs for the first trance (T1) was submitted in the sum of £98,959.06.

To adjust for this additional funding the relevant elements of the Storm Recovery Grant (T1) need to be adjusted against the highland water claims. The highland water calculation for these additional receipts amounts to £15,502.41, which will be adjusted from the Strom Recovery Grant.

Payment of theses adjusted highland water claims remains outstanding and the current position has been noted in the clerks report.

3. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Confidential papers

4. Precept to the Environment Agency

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

The precept for 2023/2024 was £23,674.

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

Enclosure 1 Determination of Land Values for Rating (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)
Rate Arrears (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring

Appendix 1

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2024/2025

		Approved budget 2024/2025 £	Expenditure to 30.09.2024 £	Est. Expenditure 01.10.24 to 31.03.25	Estimated out-turn at 31.03.2025 £	Variance to budget £	Actual 2023/2024 £
1	District labour (including District Officer's salary)	42,500	24,969	17,781	42,750 [A]	250	37,145
2	Rates, insurances and telephones	6,300	6,367	383	6,750 [B]	450	5,614
3	Repairs and renewals	37,000 [C]	27,558 [C]	22,442	50,000 [C]	13,000	29,494
4	Drainworks	25,000 [D]	18,668 [D]	6,332	25,000 [D]	0	12,354
	Piling works						
5	Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	141,750 [E]	31,800 [F]	109,950 [F]	141,750 [F]	0	210,247
6	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	26,500	12,712	15,038	27,750	1,250	25,531
7	Environment Agency - Precept	23,673	11,837	11,837	23,673	0	22,984
8	Reinstatement of balances	27,066 [G]	0	18,156 [G]	18,156 [G]	-8,910	
9	Capital Reserve Fund	0 [H]	0 [H]	0 [H]	0 [H]	0	0
		329,789	133,911	201,919	335,829	6,040	343,369
	Improvement works	0	0	0	0	0	483
	Bad debt provision	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Less income						
	Budgeted income	64,062 [F]	9,191 [F]	60,911	70,102 [F]	6,039	39,276
		265,727	124,719	141,008	265,727	1	304,576
	Rate Requirement						
	Rate set						

General Fund					
Opening balance	72,549	*72,549*	*105,418*	72,549	153,248
Rate income	265,727	*157,588*	*107,729*	265,317	223,877
Write back of provisions					0
Net expenditure	265,727	*124,719*	*141,008*	265,727	304,576
Use of balances	0	*0*	*18,156*	18,156	0
Closing balance	72,549	*105,418*	*90,295*	90,295	72,549