

# CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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Administered by:



29<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Dear Board Members

## Upcoming meeting of the Board Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Holme Village Hall, Short Drove, Holme PE7 3PA at 5.30pm on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025.

**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

# CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 5.30pm

Holme Village Hall, Short Drove, Holme PE7 3PA

## 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter re drainage ditch</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Pages 3 - 9                                                                                                               | Chair             |
| 4       | Constitution & Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Election</li> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Vacancies &amp; appointments</li> <li>Training</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Pages 10 - 12                                                                                                             | Clerk             |
| 5       | Clerk's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fens Reservoir</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Pages 13 - 18<br>Pages 19 - 21                                                                                            | Clerk             |
| 6       | Environment Officer's Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Verbal                                                                                                                    | Clerk             |
| 7       | Consulting Engineer's Reports, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital Programme &amp; FCRM Grant-In-Aid</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Pages 22 - 30                                                                                                             | Clerk or Engineer |
| 8       | Health & Safety                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Pages 31 - 34                                                                                                             | Chair             |
| 9       | District items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance work in district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gravity Area</li> <li>Pumped Area</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Verbal                                                                                                                    | Chair             |
| 10      | Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal Controls</li> <li>Banking</li> <li>Accounts Return for 2023/2024</li> <li>Auditors report for 2023/2024</li> <li>Risk Assessment</li> <li>Review Policies</li> <li>Review Policy Statement</li> <li>Exercise of Public Rights</li> <li>Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments</li> <li>Transparency code for smaller authorities (if relevant)</li> <li>Defra IDB 1 Returns</li> <li>Annual Governance Statement</li> </ul> | Pages 35 - 39<br><br>Pages 40 - 44<br>Pages 45 - 54<br><br>Pages 55 - 64<br>Pages 65 - 70<br><br>Pages 71 - 81<br>Page 82 | Clerk             |
| 11      | Finance Report: looking back <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance officer's review</li> <li>Budgeting</li> <li>Payments 2024</li> <li>Highland Water Contributions</li> <li>Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Pages 83 - 84<br><br>Pages 85<br><br>Pages 86 - 91                                                                        | Clerk             |
| 12      | Finance Report: looking forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance Officer's summary</li> <li>Fees, remuneration and subscriptions</li> <li>Precept to the Environment Agency</li> <li>Rating Estimates for 2025/2026</li> <li>Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2025/2026</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                    | Pages 92 - 93<br><br>Pages 94 - 95<br>Pages 96 - 97                                                                       | Clerk             |
| 13      | Middle Level IDB Change                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Pages 98 - 100                                                                                                            | Clerk             |
| 14      | Date of Next Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Verbal                                                                                                                    | Chair             |
| 15      | Any other business                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Verbal                                                                                                                    | Chair             |

(NB: If required for any agenda item:

In pursuance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are being considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.)

**CONNINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**  
**At a Meeting of the Connington and Holme Internal Drainage Board**  
**Held at the Home Village Hall on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

Present:

|                                  |                |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| P Keates Esq (Chairman) by phone | T Alban Esq    |
| R Elmore Esq                     | T West Esq     |
| D Elmore Esq                     | T Stimpson Esq |
| J Racey Esq                      |                |

P Burrows (Clerk & MLC Chief Executive) and Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) were in attendance.

**Welcome and Apologies**

The meeting started without a chairman due to his car breaking down. He had contacted the Clerk and asked to join the meeting by phone when appropriate. The Clerk then asked if anyone would step in as Chairman due to the Board having no Vice Chairman. It was agreed that the Clerk would lead the meeting.

**B.1158 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.

No interests were declared.

**B.1159 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Matters Arising would be covered within the agenda items, and the Minutes of the Last Meeting (Special Meeting) were agreed.

**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

**B.1160 Constitution and Membership**

The Clerk gave a summary of the current position of the Board and reminded the Board of the discussions had at the last meeting about vacancies. The Clerk suggested that the Board considered changing the constitution, and to submit to Defra to reduce the number of elected members from 8 to 6 and therefore also reduce the number of members needed for a quorum. This is a small board with only 16 Ratepayers, 6 of which have less than 3 Hectares. There is an enhanced and increasing risk of not achieving quorum and therefore the Board not being able to discharge its duties. Mr Burrows in his position as Clerk recommended making the changes. Mr Racey observed that there is a risk in the future that no one will want to sit on the board. There are people who may come onto the Board in future but not now. All agreed to go forward with the reconstitution and to also amend the standing orders. The Clerk will need to write to Huntingdonshire District Council, but the reconstitution will not directly affect them as there will still be at least one appointed member.

**RESOLVED**

- i) That the Clerk commences the Reconstitution process, amending the elected membership from 8 to 6.

- ii) That the Standing Orders be amended to reduce the quorum once the reconstitution process has or is nearing conclusion.

#### B.1161 Clerks Report

The Clerk then provided a brief overview of his report, taking the report as read. As there were no questions, any further questions or comments were invited by the phone or email to the Clerk after the meeting.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the report be noted
- ii) That the proposed approach to determining the next electricity contract is supported.
- iii) That the Board have noted the banking overview and that unless there is collective approval, they will not be maximising their interest on available balances.

#### B.1162 Environment Officers Report

The Clerk referred the Board to the Environment Officers report. The Clerk drew attention to the need for an Ecological Screening Report to be completed for any non-routine works. This Board had experienced the importance of this, with the Great Crested Newts found in the Pumping Station well. The Clerk advised the Board that if the landowners promote the works at the Pumping Station they will need to factor this into the works.

The Clerk concluded the report by reminded the Board that they need to be more aware of how activities impact on protected species, such as ground nesting birds and badgers.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the report be noted
- ii) That the Board's Environmental Representative is still to be agreed.
- iii) That the current BAP will be reviewed
- iv) That an Ecological Screening Report (ESR) is completed and submitted to the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager well in advance of any non-routine work
- v) That they have noted and will comply with the provided flail mowing, badger, water vole and weed screen guidance.

#### B.1163 Consulting Engineers Report

The Clerk referred to Board to the Consulting Engineers Report, including the Chief Engineers Summary, M&E Report and Capital Programme. The Clerk advised the Board that all reports will be taken as read.

The Clerk drew the Boards attention to the planning applications listed in the report.

The Operational Services report was considered, and the Boards attention was drawn to the sampling costs, and that due to the Board's financial position are an expensive exercise. Mr Elmore advise the Board that it was his understanding that The Rochester Bridge Trust are funding the exercise, and that Jon Fenn (MLC) has spoken with their representative. Mr Burrows advised he will check this with Jon. The Board then agreed the Chairman and Mr David Elmore can agree the approach with optimum outcome being no cost to the board.

The Mechanical & Electrical Report reiterated the points made last year, in that the Pumping Station is at the end of its reliable life, and the report reflects this. The Clerk advised it was his understanding that the Landowners have not yet agreed funding split – 5 year temporary works by lifting pumps and works to electrics. Board will need to recognise carrying risk into next winter.

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the reports be approved

- ii) That the Chairman and Mr D Elmore agree the sampling approach

#### B.1164 Health and Safety

The Clerk drew the Board's attention to the Cope Health and Safety report. Mr Racey reported that report recommended the installation of rail and barriers, and that the rail could be used to attach a harness to when raking. He advised that the current arrangement is a two-person action. It was agreed that Mr Racey and the Chairman would develop the most appropriate mitigation at least cost to Board.

#### B.1165 Governance

The Clerk referred the Board to the Governance report and summarised its content.

##### a) Review of Internal Controls

The Clerk reported that the financial controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board have now been summarised and are available on the Board's web-page.

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

##### b) Risk Management Strategy and Insured Values

The Clerk outlined that the Board's Risk Management Strategy had been due an update, that he 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.

##### c) Finance Regulations & Finance Code

The Clerk 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.

The Clerk also reported that the Treasurer, Robert Hill, has recently announced his intention to retire early next year, after 26 years of diligently managing finances, and recruitment to the role is currently underway.

##### d) Annual Governance Statement

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

##### e) Exercise of Public Rights

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

##### f) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

The Clerk 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

- i) That the Risk Management Strategy is agreed by the Board
- ii) 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.
- iii) That the Chairman be authorised to sign the annual return for 2024.
- iv) 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.

#### B.1166 Finance Report: looking back

The Chairman joined the meeting by phone at this point.

#### Finance officer's review and key messages

The Clerk asked the Board to consider the key finance messages included in Mr Hill's 'Finance Report: Looking Back' report.

It was noted that Area 2 bore the brunt of the winter pressures due to the high energy costs. The Chairman has slubbed a lot on his land and at no cost to the Board. As a result of the financial impact, the Treasurer had to freeze the internal loan payments between Area 1 and Area 2. This was acknowledged by the Board. The expenditure in Area 1 was more stable compared to the estimates. The General Fund Balances in Area 1 has increased but to less than a year in hand. The General Fund Balances in Area 2 has decreased due to pumping costs.

The Board approved the key finance messages.

##### a) Budgeting

The Board considered and approved the budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2024.

##### b) Payments 2023

The Board considered and approved the Payments for 2023.

The Chairman reflected on the previous year, and that they had encountered an horrendous autumn, winter and spring. The pumps were working at capacity, but at times the water struggled to get through the drains, resulting in the need for slubbing. All of the flailing has been carried out by one contractor, but the Chairman would like to understand both Areas better before reviewing the works. He felt there was a need as a Board to agree who instructs contractors due to their considerable expense, and a tighter control on costs are needed due to the Boards financial position.

A discussion followed on the need to carry out flail mowing, who should be commissioned to carry out these works and at what cost. It was agreed that the Chairman along with Mr Racey or Mr D Elmore would meet with the current contractor to debrief about last year and to plan the works for this financial year. It was also resolved to provide a clearer maintenance programme going forward.

The Clerk reported to the Board on the Government's IDB Storm Recovery and Asset Improvement fund, a £75million fund supporting Drainage Boards following last winter and its impact on assets.

There are two elements to the fund. There is a £25million Storm Recovery fund for Boards exceptionally impacted by last winter, to assist with operational expenses and repairs to assets damaged during the winter. This is known as Tranche 1 and applications have to be made by 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Tranche 2 is for Asset Improvement and is a fund of £50million. Applications for this fund need to be made by 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024. This fund is for the modernisation and upgrading of assets, but the funding has to be spent by the end of this financial year.

There will be no clarity on either fund allocation until the end of June for Tranche 1, and the end of July for Tranche 2. Middle Level Commissioners staff will do what they can to put bids together for all Boards they represent as well as the Commissioners, but hope the Board understands that this is a huge task at a time where staffing is already under immense pressure, and so any assistance the Board can give is appreciated. He added that the requirements of the funding did not appear to be in the Boards favour with regards to the works required at the pumping station, however there was an initial meeting regarding Tranche 2 eligibility next week.

Discussions moved on to the Pumping Station, and the Chairman advised he had been to various meetings as a tenant. With this in mind he said he was unable to invest in an asset he doesn't own. He has asked the Davis family how they are considering that the repairs be met. He advised that there is a meeting next Monday between Sentry and Davis Family, and that Peter Davis' agent is developing a bid for the Tranche 2 Defra funding. It is likely that they will want the work undertaken at the end of June or early July. He added that there has been no response from Network Rail and the Rochester Bridge Trust via Savills, but a decision is needed so that the works progress. The Chairman confirmed that he would update the Board with the outcome of the meeting.

To conclude, the Clerk advised the Board that they need to recognise that they carry a risk if the works do not go ahead.

c) Annual Accounts and Annual Return 2023/2024

The Board considered and approved the Annual Accounts and Finance Papers for 2023 – 24 and authorised the Chairman to complete and sign the Annual Return 2023 – 24.

B.1167 Finance report: looking forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Clerk asked the Board to consider the key finance messages included in Mr Hill's 'Finance Report: Looking Forward' report.

The Board considered and approved the key finance messages by Mr Hill.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

a) ADA subscription

The Clerk advised that ADA have agreed a discount and that fees are required on a biannual basis.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2024/25

The Clerk drew the attention of the Board to the Finance Officer's comments in his report.

The Chairman confirmed that he had requested the capital payments on the loan from last year are rectified within the estimate. He advised that the new electricity rate is being negotiated. At present the Boards income is not sufficient to fund what is needed. This means a further increase in rate is needed as he cannot see any other way. He added that this is not good news but that he could not see any other options.

The Clerk added that in his calculations Mr Hill has split the figures into Area 1 and 2 working to the premise that both areas need to work towards a year in hand, plus Area 2 the costs of nursing the pumping station through another year. None of this is taking into account the capital costs of the Pumping Station, but just getting the Board moving towards a more stable revenue funding situation.

On this basis the estimates were agreed.

Mr West then proposed a Rating of 17p in the £ for Area 1, which was seconded by Mr Stimpson. This was agreed by the Board.

The estimates as agreed would require an increase in the rating for Area 2 from 50p to 70p. It was observed that this would allow for the phased reinstatement of balances and the provision to reinstate the internal loan repayments. The estimates also included for the costs associated with the slubbing and flailing that had previously been funded by the Chairman. The Chairman added that in his opinion this work was not required every year, but that a robust plan was needed and that the Board needed to considering building up the required resources.

At this point Mr Alban left the meeting due to another appointment.

The Clerk drew the Boards attention to the Finance Officers Summary report. Due to the Boards rural position, their Grant eligibility was much less. Mr Elmore asked what would happen if the pump could not be repaired. The Clerk advised that the Board would need to do something, such as bringing in temporary pumps. The Chairman added that engineers have looked at the pump and they are confident it could be refurbished but they wouldn't know for sure until the pump is out. In addition, they cannot make an assessment on the pump house until the pump is removed. The ratepayers will have to pay more money, but as most ratepayers are tenants, he feels that the landowners should help with costs too.

The Chairman the proposed a rate of 70p in the £ and added that this would only put a small surplus into Area 2 at the end of the year. Mr Racey seconded a rate of 70p but added that this was agreed begrudgingly.

This was agreed by all.

The Chairman added that the Board really need some engagement from the Rochester Bridge Trust and Savills. The Clerk reported that he has written to the Trust before but asked if the Board would like him to write again. The Board agreed that the Clerk draft a letter to Rochester Bridge Trust summarising the issues.

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:-

|                | <u>Area 1 (Gravity Area)</u> | <u>Area 2 (Pumped Area)</u> |
|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Drainage rates | 54.10%                       | 97.56%                      |
| Special levy   | 45.90%                       | 2.44%                       |

#### RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £55,578 be raised by drainage rates and special levy (Area 1 - £20,884; Area 2 -£34,694).
- 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:-

|                | Area 1  | Area 2  |
|----------------|---------|---------|
| Drainage rates | £11,298 | £33,846 |
| Special levy   | £ 9,586 | £ 848   |

- iii) That a rate of 17.00p in the £ in Area 1, and 70.00p in the £ in Area 2 be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

- iv) That a Special levy of £10,434 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure
- v) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution iv).
- vi) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

#### B.1168 Date of Next Meeting

#### RESOLVED

That the next meeting of the Board be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025, 5.30pm at Holme Village Hall.

#### B.1169 Any Other Business

Mr West asked if the Fens were to flood would the Board be liable. The Clerk advised that the Board has permissive powers, and that the people impacted would be the members of the Board.

Mr Racey advised that he is still waiting for a letter from Chris Convine at MLC to give to the Parish Council regarding Glatton and asked that Mr Convine be reminded.

Nothing further was raised, and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance. The meeting closed at 6.50pm

|                                            |                                     |                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                     | Item No:             | 4                         |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME IDB               | Subject:             | CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 | Officer Responsible: | Polly Tombleson           |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Election Notice
- B. Consider the 3 vacancies on the Board
- C. Update on reconstitution of Board
- D. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
- E. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
- F. There are currently 3 vacancies on the Board
- G. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
- H. Reinforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
- I. 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 | 8               | N/A               |               | 5      |
| Actual      | 5               | 2 HDC             | 7             |        |
| Vacancies   | 3               |                   | 3             |        |

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

| No | Name      | Status (one of four categories)                       | Commentary |
|----|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|    | T West    | Ratepayer – <b>resigned from the Board 10/12/2024</b> |            |
| 1  | D Elmore  | Ratepayer                                             |            |
| 2  | R Elmore  | Ratepayer                                             |            |
| 3  | P Keates  | Nominee of ratepayer (Sentry Ltd)                     | Chairman   |
| 4  | J Racey   | Ratepayer                                             |            |
| 5  | T Simpson | Ratepayer                                             |            |
| 6  |           |                                                       |            |
| 7  |           |                                                       |            |
| 8  |           |                                                       |            |

- 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  | T Alban   | HDC                | Councillor                           |
| 2  | M Chudley | 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                       | 4/6/2024 | 6/3/2024  | 8/6/2023 | 7/7/2022 |
|----|----------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
|    | T West – resign 10/12/2024 | Present  | Apologies | Present  | Present  |
| 1  | D Elmore                   | Present  | Present   | Present  | Present  |
| 2  | R Elmore                   | Present  | Present   | Present  | Present  |
| 3  | P Keates                   | Present  | present   | Present  | N/A      |
| 4  | J Racey                    | Present  | Present   | Present  | Present  |
| 5  | T Simpson                  | Present  | Apologies | Present  | Present  |
| 6  |                            |          |           |          |          |
| 7  |                            |          |           |          |          |
| 8  |                            |          |           |          |          |

### Attendance at Chairs Meetings

| No | Name     | 6/12/2024 | 6/10/2023            | 13/12/2022 | 12/4/2022 |
|----|----------|-----------|----------------------|------------|-----------|
| 1  | P Keates | Present   | Present (as V-Chair) | N/A        | N/A       |

### Appointed Members (current and previous)

| No | Name (Council)  | 4/6/2024 | 6/3/2024 | 8/6/2023 | 7/7/2022  |
|----|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1  | T Alban (HDC)   | Present  | Present  | Present  | Apologies |
| 2  | M Chudley (HDC) | N/A      | N/A      | N/A      | N/A       |

## 3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

- 3.1 The Election of members of the Board will take place this year. Members will receive an election notice during July/August and are requested to return their complete slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025.
- 3.2 Appointment of District Officer
- 3.3 There are currently **3** vacancies. (D Fabb has been invited to join the Board – 29/5/2025)
- 3.4 Update on the reconstitution of the Board

## 4. Composition and amalgamations

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

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

## **5. Training**

- 5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/>
- 5.2 To date 0 of 7 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.  
To date 3 of 7 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.
- 5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.
- 5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

**Author Name: Polly Tombleson**

**Role: Senior Business Support Officer**

|                                            |                                                          |                      |                       |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                                          | Item No:             | 5                     |
| Meeting:                                   | <b>CONINGTON &amp; HOLME<br/>INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD</b> | Subject:             | <b>CLERK'S REPORT</b> |
| Date:                                      | <b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                | Officer Responsible: | <b>Paul Burrows</b>   |

## 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 at the latest. We will however conclude the year-end accounts and annual returns for 2025/26 which happens after 1<sup>st</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 (Transmission) 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 new model will be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. This will be reviewed annually, and the Clerk invites feedback.

## **5. 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.

## **6. 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.

## **7. Highland Water & IDB Precept**

A formal appeal to the Minister under Section 57 (4) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 was thankfully narrowly avoided in 2024/25 given that the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) agreed a one-off approach to covering the shortfall in the Environment Agency's budget to ensure highland water claims (HWC) to local IDBs were met.

In addition, the Environment Agency's HWC budget for 2025/26 was increased from that which was indicatively allocated. Had the indicative allocation stood, the forecast budget shortfall would have essentially resulted in the Environment Agency imposing an active withdrawal of management of a number of districts and the Middle Level catchment without any underpinning consultation with those affected, impact assessment, any clear policy position or procedure.

However, without a programme of reform and mitigations, we will potentially be in an appeal situation at some not too distant point in the future. The time that would have been spent drafting and lodging an appeal has been used more constructively to develop 'The Highland Water Conundrum' document. This has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the Environment Agency and our Local Authorities.

There are a range of measures that are outside of the control or influence of ourselves and IDBs that would make a positive difference. I have identified these as recommendations within the document. Many of these recommendations are for the Environment Agency to consider and implement as appropriate. I would be happy to discuss further and contribute directly to any reviews that take account of this matter.

We feel that it is unfair that HWC payments are under threat without mitigations being available that provide us and IDBs with a greater degree of control, influence and/or choice. We and IDBs have no choice but to receive and manage water that flows into our/their districts from highland areas. We/they are providing a public service to beneficiaries within (and of) highland areas and we/they have no choice to not provide this service.

The 'Highland Water Conundrum' document is available to Middle Level Board Members and Commissioners upon request.

**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.**

## **8. Insurance**

Our insurance has been arranged using Towergate insurance brokers for the year to 31st March 2025. AXA offered a 2-year extension of the tripartite 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 not being any changes to the existing cover, i.e. increase in valuations.

Covering MLC and our administered IDBs, the business combined policy premium has increased this year by £16,875, due to the significant increase in pumping station valuations following the meetings last year. The fleet policy premium has also increased considerably due to the both the number and size of claims during the year, together with there being additional vehicles and plant. We have been warned that AXA capped the increase in the fleet premium, but if this had gone out to tender would probably have been in the region of £110,000 plus 12% Insurance Premium Tax. This equates to an increase of £68,000.

More concerningly, AXA will no longer be offering a specific policy for IDBs going forward so this is likely to have a significant impact on the premium for 2026-2027 as there are only a few insurance companies that will quote for our business. NFU have declined to quote.

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**

**Role: Clerk**

|                                            |                                              |                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                              | Item No:             | Under Clerks report |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME<br>INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD | Subject:             | FENS RESERVOIR      |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025          | Officer Responsible: | Paul Burrows        |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Approve that the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.
- B. Acknowledge that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

## 1. Latest position

- 1.1 On behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and IDBs, we responded to the phase two public consultation and having worked closely with Anglian Water over the last 24-months, what is now clear within the proposals is that in terms of water source, water transfer, site flood resilience, emergency drawdown and downstream water transfer routes, the planning, construction and operation of the reservoir will be dependent upon the Middle Level Commissioners' and IDB infrastructure, our operations and our resources. These need to be ready and resilient for this enhanced future role.
- 1.2 Whilst the Middle Level has always been key within UK food security, the Fens Reservoir ([see website](#)) is a game-changer as our collective infrastructure and operations will also become critical for regional housing and economic growth beyond our catchment. This is arguably the boldest and most transformational investment in the Fens since the original great drainage schemes of the 1600s. It presents a great opportunity to bring resilience and investment into the Middle Level as we face the accelerated challenges of a changing climate as evidenced within the recent [Future Fens Integrated Adaptation Programme's Climate Change Risk Assessment](#).
- 1.3 We will be prioritising input into the Fens Reservoir as the potential gains are significant and the stakes are high. Therefore, please be mindful that other service standards may be affected.
- 1.4 We have been recovering our staff time costs associated with many aspects of supporting Anglian Water develop the Fens Reservoir proposals through a Service level Agreement (SLA). The SLA is being updated to cover additional technical support we need to bring in, e.g. consultants. We are also finalising a separate agreement for reservoir project funded additional staff capacity.
- 1.5 By spring 2025 Anglian Water aim to have a whole scheme solution identified ahead of another design freeze and third non statutory public consultation.

## 2. IDB Interests

- 2.1 The table below outlines the IDBs that we administer that are directly impacted in one way or another by the proposals so far. However, with the Middle Level being the proposed primary source of water, this means indirectly all the other IDBs that gravity outfall or pump into the Middle Level Commissioners watercourses also have an interest.

| Organisation                                                                                                                                                           | Direct Interest areas                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Middle Level Commissioners</a>                                                                                                                             | Interaction with and impact on MLC infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water sources</li> <li>• Emergency drawdown</li> <li>• Site design</li> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul> Governance impacts of reservoir |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Curf &amp; Wimblington Combined IDB</a>                                                                                                                    | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site design (main site)</li> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul> Governance impacts of reservoir                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Commissioners for imbanking fen lands and low grounds within the Parishes of Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington, also known as the 'Imbanking Commissioners'</i> | <i>Governance opportunities the reservoir may enable dissolve the Commissioners and redistribute assets</i>                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Nightlayers IDB</a>                                                                                                                                        | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site design (treatment works)</li> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul> Governance impacts of reservoir                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Sutton &amp; Mepal IDB</a>                                                                                                                                 | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Warboys Somersham &amp; Pixley IDB</a>                                                                                                                     | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Manea &amp; Welney District Drainage Commissioners</a>                                                                                                     | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Upwell IDB</a>                                                                                                                                             | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul>                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <a href="#">Bluntisham IDB</a>                                                                                                                                         | Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downstream transfer</li> </ul>                                                                                                               | <i>From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 we are discontinuing MLC services to these IDBs. With them and their new service provider we'll need to consider what this means for the Fens Reservoir.</i> |
| <a href="#">Hundred Foot Washes IDB</a>                                                                                                                                | Ouse Washes as a potential water source                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### 3. Legal approach

- 3.1 Over the coming months we need to work with Anglian Water to develop a draft 'Statement of Common Ground' and identify any 'Principle Areas of Disagreement'.

In terms of our external legal costs, Anglian Water have confirmed that they are prepared to cover the reasonable costs associated with activities that assist in the Development Consent Order (DCO) process/implementation of the scheme. This would be Anglian Water covering legal costs associated with:

1. The drafting, negotiation and completion of any legal agreements for the protection of MLC's assets (as a result of the DCO).
2. The drafting, negotiation and completion of any legal agreements in relation to operational matters required to be agreed/formalised to allow the DCO to be implemented/operate.
3. The drafting and negotiation of any protective provisions on the face of the DCO.
4. Entering into, and review of, the Statement of Common Ground (SoCGs)

Anglian Water would not expect to cover any legal costs related to activities such as:

1. Review of consultation and other materials and the drafting/review of consultation responses
2. Drafting/review of relevant and written representations during the DCO examination.
3. Drafting of responses to Examining Authority posed questions directly to MLC.
4. Drafting/review of any other written submissions during the DCO examination (e.g. Principle Areas of Disagreement (PADSS)).
5. Attendance at hearings.

- 3.2 We approached several external solicitors with experience in DCOs and are due to get into contract with our preferred supplier in January 2025.
- 3.3 For the Fens Reservoir, if the Middle Level Commissioners (including their employees and consultants) are to act on behalf of the MLC and IDBs they administer in a manner that is legally robust for a scheme of this complexity and significance, it is prudent to secure specific delegations and authority from each organisation.
- 3.4 Acting as one will enable efficiencies, increase agility, improve responsiveness and help manage and mitigate conflict of interests that some individual MLC/IDB Board Members have with the Fens Reservoir.
- 3.5 Acting independently would mean each organisation may need different staffing and legal service arrangements to look after their individual interest, i.e. the MLC staffing structure would not be able to act for each IDB as well as the MLC. This is impractical. It is also unlikely we would be able to practically manage the terms of any security/non-disclosure requirements that come with a scheme of this type by acting independently.
- 3.6 As the Fens Reservoir Development Consent Order will disallow/overwrite exiting statutory powers held by the Middle Level Commissioners and IDBs, the Board is asked to acknowledge this need and delegate the decision-making authority to the Clerk engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chair as he sees fit.

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**

**Role: Clerk**

|                                            |                                                               |                      |                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                                               | Item No:             | 7                                                                               |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME IDB<br>(Hereafter referred to as the Board) | Subject:             | CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT:<br>CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY &<br>CAPITAL PROGRAMME |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                           | Officer Responsible: | Nicola Oldfield                                                                 |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Acknowledge the revised approach to charges for responding to applicant's questions.
- B. Confirm if you would like MLC to restart the quarterly routine maintenance inspections.
- C. Confirmation if the site telemetry has been refitted with the new control panel or if any assistance is needed with it.
- D. Confirm if a new EICR has been completed as part of the station works, and if so please provide a copy for file.
- E. Review pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.

### 1. Summary

The Chief Engineer is currently developing capital investment programmes across the catchment, starting with estimated refurbishment/replacement costs based on the age of assets.

A new FCERM grant in aid programme will start in 2026/27.

### 2. Technical Services

- 2.1 Since Chris Bailey started as our new Head of Technical Services, we have been updating the catalogue of services which 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.
- 2.2 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. We have completed the review of our charging model and we will be introducing a new charging model for answering these questions if applicants do not enter into a pre-app agreement.

Please refer to item 4 in the Clerks report.

**The Board is asked to acknowledge this approach.**

### 3. Summary of Key Planning Issues

We continue to receive an increasing number of consent applications and developer enquiries across the catchment. Managing this workload is a significant pressure on available staff resources. As a result, we are prioritising this critical work and will not be including any specific information for any Board report, other than if directly requested.

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.

### 3.1 **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 30<sup>th</sup> July and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 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 draft consultation document and provide comments 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 LPA's 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 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 taken to raise some issues not covered by the reform consultation as a concern by many Boards, in the hope that these points are heard and acted upon. These included:

- A. The Fenland Situation – special requirements needed 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.

### 3.2 **New developments and the use of SuDS**

Analysis of the responses from the last round of meetings revealed that the Board and its 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.

### 3.3 **Engagement with the Local Planning Authorities (LPA)**

We have been prioritising proactive efforts to reengage with local planning departments and developers since the new Head of Technical Services started.

There is particular concern about the larger strategic sites which will take several years to build out and involve several RMAs. In view of our revised charging model a more robust response to developers seeking advice and guidance is being adopted which may enable additional resource that would benefit the MLC and the Board in dealing with increasing workloads.

Policies and processes are being reviewed and updated.

## 4. **Strategic Issues**

The Consulting Engineer has responded on the Board's behalf concerning the following:

### 4.1 **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)**

Further, more proactive, discussions have occurred with HDC's Planning Policy Team and its consultants concerning the Call for Sites; the SFRA Level 2 Update with a consultation on the Infrastructure Delivery Study – Baseline Assessment anticipated imminently.

An Infrastructure Development Strategy is a comprehensive plan aimed at enhancing a region's physical systems, such as transportation, utilities, and communication networks, to promote economic growth and improve living conditions. This strategy often includes investment in roads, bridges, public transit, and other essential facilities to support urban development and sustainability. By addressing infrastructure needs, cities can better accommodate population growth, attract businesses, and improve overall quality of life.

Themes relevant to the Board's interests are Leisure and Community Facilities; Green & Blue Infrastructure and Flood Management.

### 4.2 **Cambridgeshire County Council**

#### **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood and Water (C&P FloW) Partnership**

In addition to the items discussed above, the following issues of interest to the Board have been raised:

#### a. **Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme**

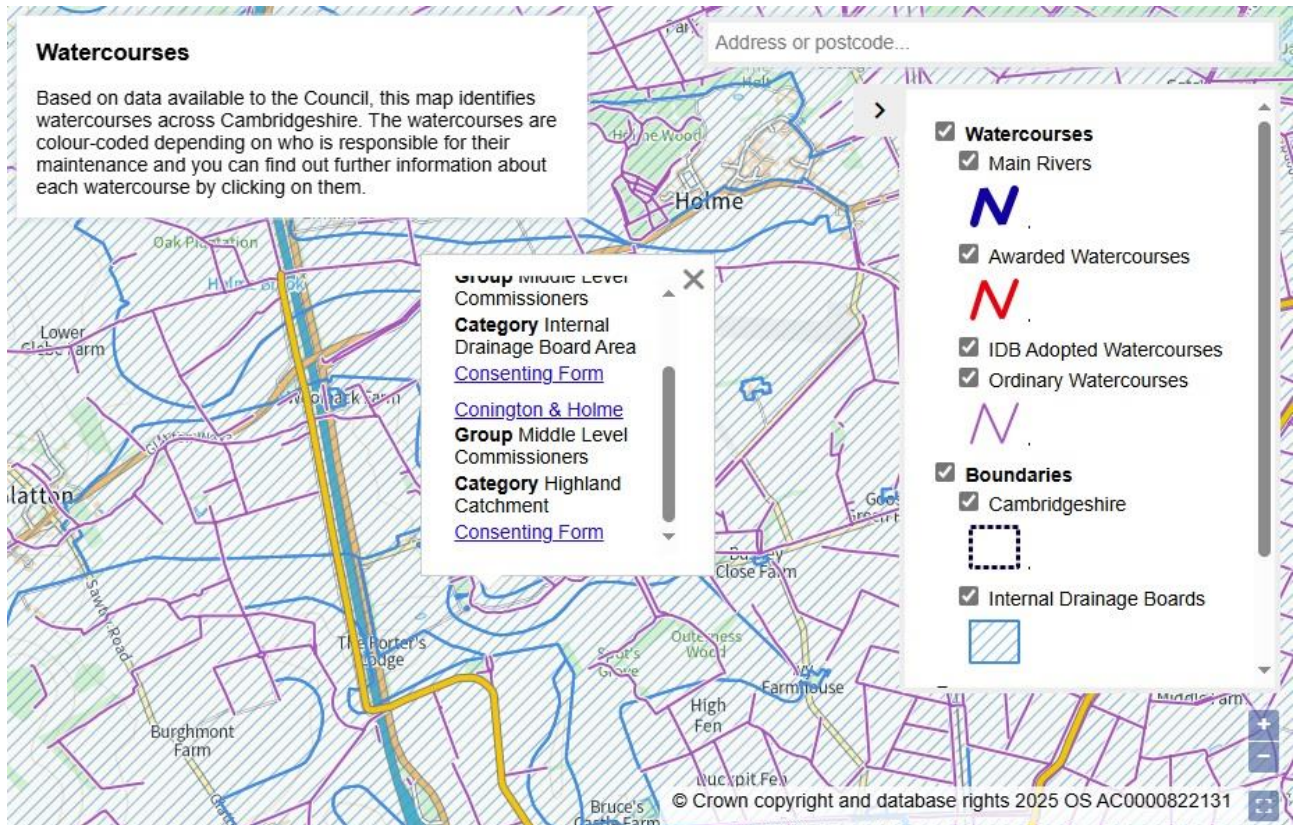
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action Plan Review. See below.

b. Community Flood Action programme

Further copies of the Community Flood and Water newsletter have been issued. You can view previous editions and subscribe to receive the newsletter automatically at [Community flood action programme | Cambridgeshire County Council](#).

c. Watercourse Mapping Tool

The Flood Risk team has published a Watercourse Mapping Tool - [Watercourse management | Cambridgeshire County Council](#) that can be used to identify location of, and responsibility for different, watercourses.



Extract from the CCC Watercourse Mapping Tool showing part of the Boards area

#### 4.3 Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy (FRMS): 2024 Action Plan Review

A plan review has been prepared to provide an update on the progress of actions listed in the Cambridgeshire FRMS, which was adopted in 2022, highlighting contributions, completed work and any risks or challenges.

The contents are currently being reviewed in detail, but it summarises that:

*“Progress has already been made against 54 of the 58 actions with 6 actions now having been completed. There are several obstacles that impede progress in some areas, these are outlined below. Despite that and the persisting wet weather conditions, headway has been made across most actions and by multiple partners.*

*The importance of clear communication remains in focus, whilst the impactful action led by community groups and local landowners continues to provide positive results.*

*There is still some uncertainty from external factors that influence the work we do. In response to this we take an adaptive approach so we can be prepared for the changing circumstances.”*

**5. Capital Programme**

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.

**The Board is asked to consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**

**Author Name: Nicola Oldfield**

**Role: Chief Engineer**

**Appendix 1: List of applications since last meeting**

**Appendix 2: Operational Services Report**

**Appendix 3: M&E Report**

## Appendix 1

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

| <b>MLC Ref.</b> | <b>Council Ref.</b> | <b>Applicant</b>         | <b>Type of Development</b>                                        | <b>Location</b>             |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 253             | 24/00999/HHFUL      | Mr L Mawhinney           | Residence (Timber garage for storage)                             | Roundhills View, Glatton    |
| 254             | 24/01162/HHFUL      | Mr A Stefanelli          | Residence (New entrance and annexe extension)                     | Glatton Ways, Glatton       |
| 255             | 24/01428/AGDET      | Mr Branson               | Agricultural                                                      | Bullock Road, Glatton       |
| 256             | 24/01519/FUL        | J H Simpson & Son        | Change of use (Agricultural to hardstanding for storage purposes) | Old North Road, Stilton Fen |
| 257             | 24/02052/OUT        | Mr & Mrs J & R Ayres     | Residential (2 dwellings)                                         | Station Road, Holme         |
| 258             | 24/02358/HHFUL      | Mr A Stefanelli          | Residence (New entrance and annexe extension)                     | Glatton Ways, Glatton       |
| 259             | 25/00226/FUL        | Tilson Auto Services Ltd | Commercial (New car servicing & repair structure)                 | Infiled Road, Glatton       |

There have been no Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses or to discharge to a watercourse) or infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

|                                            |                                                                |                         |                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                                                | Item No:                | 7                                                    |
| Meeting:                                   | CONNINGTON & HOLME IDB<br>(Hereafter referred to as the Board) | Subject:                | CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT:<br>OPERATIONAL SERVICES |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                            | Officer<br>Responsible: | Morgan Lakey                                         |

**1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance**

- 1.1 Following a request from the Board, suitable silt testing was organised by the Middle Level Commissioners. Silt samples were sent to Eurofins laboratory for their recommended environmental package, testing for heavy metals and hydrocarbons (fuel & oil) and the results have been forwarded to the Board as agreed.

**Author Name: Morgan Lakey**

**Role: Assistant Operations Engineer**

|                                            |                                                               |                      |                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                                               | Item No:             | 7                                                       |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME IDB<br>(Hereafter referred to as the Board) | Subject:             | CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT:<br>MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                           | Officer Responsible: | Dave Bantoft                                            |

## 1. M&E key messages and advice

In light of 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.

- 1.1 No routine inspections have been carried out at the station since June 2024 as the board had refurbishment plans in place.

**Please confirm if you would like MLC to restart the quarterly routine maintenance inspections.**

## 1.2 Electricity Readings

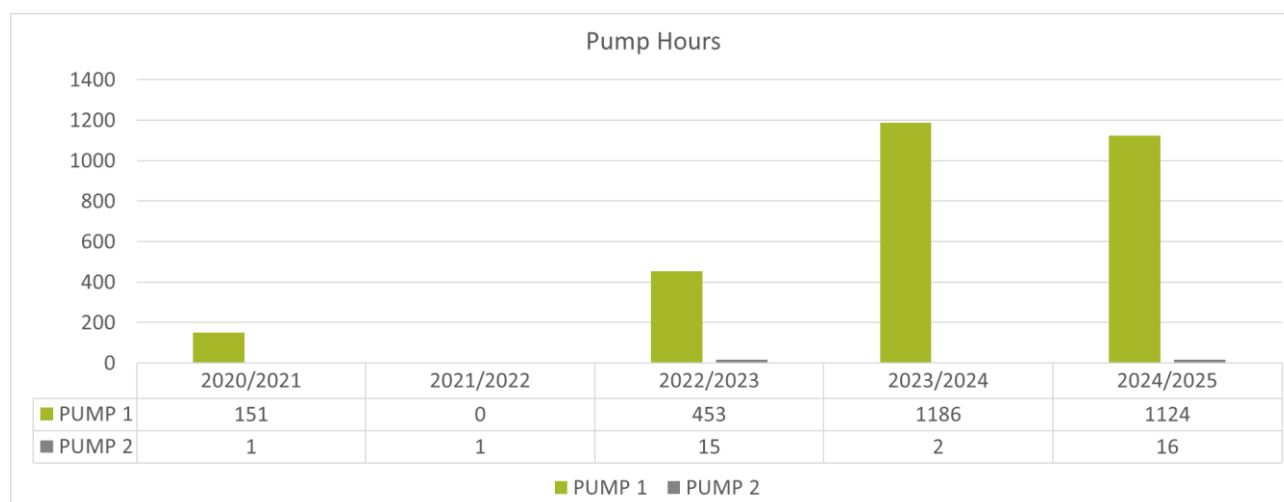
Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting usage. **Last year MLC was able to successfully challenge 93000 kWh of incorrectly invoiced electricity, this would not have been possible without the manual readings.**

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month as they can) and then forward them onto the M&E Engineer on [david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk](mailto:david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk) or 07768 026119.

## 2. Pumping summary

The hours run meters have failed on the pumps so there are no readings for 2021-2022. The readings from 2022 onwards have been estimated from telemetry.

**The site telemetry has not been communicating since 12-4-2025 please confirm if this has been refitted with the new control panel or if any assistance is needed with it.**



### 3. Inspections

3.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report was completed in May 2024

**Please confirm if a new EICR has been completed as part of the station works, and if so please provide a copy for file.**

| EICR Date   | EICR Due    |
|-------------|-------------|
| 22 May-2024 | 22 May 2029 |

### 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.

| Station |      |               |          | Weedscreen |
|---------|------|---------------|----------|------------|
| Built   | Pump | Pump Overhaul | Controls | Bars       |
| 1970    | 1970 | Mid 1980s     | 1970     | 1970       |

**Is it correct that Pump 1 was overhauled in 2025 and the control panel was replaced in 2025?**

**If you would like MLC to hold any of the O&M files for the works, then please forward electronic or paper copies.**

**Author Name: Dave Bantoft**

**Role: M&E Engineer**



## Site Safety Inspection Record

Conington and Holme IDB SSI 110225

Complete

|                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of organisation:</b>         | Conington and Holme IDB               |
| <b>Date of site visit</b>            | 11.02.2025 12:00 GMT                  |
| <b>Address of inspected premises</b> | Conington Pumping Station             |
| <b>Name of Advisor</b>               | Simon Cross                           |
| <b>Time of arrival at site:</b>      | 11.02.2025 11:15 GMT                  |
| <b>Audit Name</b>                    | Conington and Holme IDB SSI<br>110225 |

## Audit

### An opening meeting was held with

Dan Fabb on behalf of the Board.

#### 1

Introduction. During the opening meeting and throughout the visit, issues highlighted on previous visits and progress made on recommendations made were discussed. No additional issues or concerns were raised by yourselves.

It was reported that a programme of electrical panel replacement is in progress for various pumping station locations, including this one.

It was understood that a number of mobile water pumps have been purchased by Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) to be used in the event of an emergency. This may therefore negate the need for PTO power to be used.

The pumping station is provided with a PTO shaft already connected for use in an emergency to power the pumps. One of the two pumps has been removed for repair, therefore a mobile pump was on site to provide the necessary pumping capacity.

As part of the visit, it had been requested by MLC that a focus is placed on the items outlined below to determine current status and where improvements could be made, where applicable:

- \* Signage. Determine the type and locations of site identification and hazard warning signage for the sites to then try and get consistency of signage with just one sign for each location that has name of site, location details (e.g. What3Words, grid ref), contact details and warning pictograms.

- \* Gate pedestrian access. Where gate access is provided, particularly double gates, identify any sites where the gates don't align very well so are difficult to open/close. In addition, quality of the pedestrian access to, and around the pumping station grounds.

- \* Site vehicle access. Following on from the above identifying any sites where access might be difficult or hindered for telehandler / tractor, etc due to location of gates relative to the weed piles area, tight corners, steep inclines or poor surfaces (ie. Grass, mud or loose stones making it slippery).

- \* Weed piles. How the weed piles are being managed / removed at pumping station sites where either manually or machinery cleared. MLC are sometimes contracted by the IDBs to remove them when they have got too big making it difficult to scoop up with telehandler/tractor or in-position trailer overflowing.

- \* Lighting. Identify what lighting provision is at each site, if none or there is any - what, where, etc. to determine if any improvements can be made across all sites. Although access to pumping stations is typically infrequent and for short durations, particularly during darkness, suitable internal and external lighting is recommended to be provided, such as external PIR lighting. In the interim, pump attendants can use vehicle lights or torch to provide temporary lighting if required.



Photo 1

#### 2

Conington Pumping station. This small brick built building contains the electrical control panel for the two internal pumps, one of which has been removed for repair as detailed above. A large weedscreen is cleared manually using a rake/crome when necessary. In addition, a 360 long reach excavator is also used on occasion to clear significant weed accumulations from the basin. Testing of the electrical panel had been undertaken recently, this is repeated every 5 years, although the panel is due to be replaced with a new unit in the near future.

- \* Signage. There is currently a sign displayed on the side of the building indicating the location and contact details, together with a generic construction site hazard warning sign. Consistent signage across all

locations, applicable to each site, has been recommended.

\* Pedestrian access. Considered suitable, the access from the farm track has been covered with road planings, as has the higher level access gate to provide a parking / turning area. The weedscreen deck is a concrete surface. However, as previously recommended, an intermediate rail, or as a minimum a chain, should be provided above the weedscreen to provide additional support and protection when manually cleaning the screen.

\* Vehicle access. Access to the site is along a suitable farm track and then down the planings access. In addition, the other side of the building can be accessed from a track above the site, this is where the temporary mobile pump is located.

\* Weedpile management. Only a small weedpile was observed, this was placed on the ground of the weedscreen deck and would be removed by vehicle as required.

\* Lighting. There appeared to be external lighting provided to the front of the building to illuminate the weedscreen area, this was checked and worked when switched on from inside although its effectiveness could not be judged during daylight. It is recommended that appropriate external lighting is provided, such as a small PIR light, to replace or supplement the existing unit to illuminate the access and external work area(s).

\* Entrance. It was reported that proposals had been put forward to replace the double doors whose condition appeared to be deteriorating. In addition, a suitable stable step, rather than the concrete block in place. This proposal is recommended to provide a safer entry into the building.

\* Flooring. It was observed that some of the floor tiles were damaged. Due to the age of the building, it is possible that asbestos material could be present in the tiles or adhesive and as the tiles are damaged could present a risk of exposure. It was understood that new flooring has been proposed as part of the ongoing refurbishment works, therefore the tiles should either be tested for the presence or absence of asbestos or assumed to be present and then removed and disposed of appropriately by a competent contractor.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

### Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature

Simon Cross  
11.02.2025 20:39 GMT

Departure time

11.02.2025 12:10 GMT

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0  
From 0 to 99

## Media summary



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

|                                            |                                              |                      |              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                              | Item No:             | 10           |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME<br>INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD | Subject:             | GOVERNANCE   |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025          | Officer Responsible: | Paul Burrows |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider and approve the Internal Audit Return for 2023/2024
- B. Consider and approve the Auditors Report for 2023/2024
- C. Note the continued appointment of Whittings 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. Review and approve the updated Policies included as appendix.
- G. Review the Board's Policy statement
- 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. To review and approve the publishing of Exercise of Public Rights
- L. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
- M. To note and approve the submission of the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
- N. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

## 1. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and Internal Auditor

- 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](http://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 Whittings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Note the Financial Code for the Board is included within its 'Governance Documents' also available on its page via [www.middlelevel.gov.uk](http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk)

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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 The Board are asked to consider and approve their Risk Management Strategy.
- 5.2 The insured values for the Board's assets are detailed below:

**CONINGTON & HOLME IDB**  
**INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS**

**PUMPING STATION**

As At  
1st April 2025

|                           |                                |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CONINGTON PUMPING STATION | <u>739,381.00</u> Index linked |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|

## 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 (which includes the need to log offers of gifts and hospitality) & Financial Regulations policies (Appendix 3).

The Board are asked to review their Policy Statement (Appendix 4).

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.

- 7.2 To note and support the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf for the year 2023/24 is included as Appendix 5.

## **8. Annual Governance Statement:**

- 8.1 To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement. (Appendix 6)

## **9. Exercise of Public Rights**

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 In order to warrant a positive response to this assertion 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.

- 9.3 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.

- 9.4 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.

**10. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:**

10.1 The clerk to report.

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**

**Role: Clerk**

|                   |                                                          |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Appendix 1</b> | <b>Annual Return 2023/2024</b>                           |
| <b>Appendix 2</b> | <b>Audit Report 2023/2024</b>                            |
| <b>Appendix 3</b> | <b>Anti-Bribery &amp; Financial Regulations Policies</b> |
| <b>Appendix 4</b> | <b>Policy Statement</b>                                  |
| <b>Appendix 5</b> | <b>IDB1 2023/24</b>                                      |
| <b>Appendix 6</b> | <b>Annual Governance Statement 2025</b>                  |

# **Conington & Holme 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 Conington & Holme 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 Conington & Holme Internal Drainage Board on application to:

The Clerk  
Conington & Holme Internal Drainage Board  
85 Whittlesey Road  
March  
Cambridgeshire  
PE15 6AH

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: 15th August 2024

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

## CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENTER HERE WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK ? \* 4 \* 7 12 ADDRESS

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.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.                                                                                                                                                                                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 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.                                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 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')                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 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). | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| O. (For local councils only)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes                                 | No                       | Not applicable                      |
| Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

10/06/2024 13/06/2024 18/06/2024

WITTING & LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

P. PETERSON - WITTING & 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:

### CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

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

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

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

04.06.2024

and recorded as minute reference:

B:11/6/6

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

Chair

Clerk

ENTER HERE: WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK: PAGE ADDRESS

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

### CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

|                                                             | Year ending        |                    | Notes and guidance                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                             | 31 March 2023<br>£ | 31 March 2024<br>£ |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1. Balances brought forward                                 | 35,071             | 34,249             | 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                          | 30,676             | 40,751             | Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.                                                                                 |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts                                 | 5,615              | 5,424              | Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.                                                                   |
| 4. (-) Staff costs                                          | 0                  | 0                  | Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments. |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments                     | 0                  | 0                  | Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).                                                                                      |
| 6. (-) All other payments                                   | 37,113             | 43,809             | Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).                                                                      |
| 7. (=) Balances carried forward                             | 34,249             | 36,615             | 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           | 43,924             | 57,480             | 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 | 610,000            | 610,000            | The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.                                                                      |
| 10. Total borrowings                                        | 0                  | 0                  | The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).                                                                                                        |

| For Local Councils Only                                    | Yes | No | N/A |                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. |
| 11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | The figures in the accounting statements above 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 16/05/2024

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

04 06 2024

as recorded in minute reference:

MIN 8:1167

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

Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board – DB0018

### 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:

None

### 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



Date

08/08/2024

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3  
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*

Page 6 of 6



Fenland House, 158 Holbourn Avenue  
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX  
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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.

#### PARTNERS

Christopher D. Rogers FCA  
Jon L. Taylor FCA  
Andrew R. Reid FCA

Tina H. Hume FCA  
John J. Day FCA  
Armando L. Newman FCA

Paul H. Johnson FCA  
Jonathan P. Harris FCA  
Nicholas Ridgeley FCA

Stephen G. Hallett FCA  
Sebastian Beach FCA

#### ASSOCIATES

Elizabeth A. Moxall AIT  
Giles B. Bishop FCA  
Harriet R. Nisley ACP

Michael R. Keadwell FCA  
James King FCA  
Robert Davidson FCA TEP

#### PRACTICE MANAGER

Joan J. Peacock

Whitings LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales, number 00451095. The above listed Fenland and Whitings Capital Ltd are both members of Whitings LLP. The registered office is: Cedarwood House, Gresham Court, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

BURY ST EDMUNDS | ELY | KING'S LYNN | MARCH | MILDENHALL | PETERSBOROUGH | RAYNES | ST IVES | ST NEOTS | WISBECH

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 taken 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 payrollising any standard benefits but are currently unable to do this for accommodation and use of vehicles.*

### 3. Provisions

We are pleased to note that, in the main; provisions recognised within the accounts of applicable boards are being monitored and written back as required. There are still isolated cases where provisions are “brought forward and carried forward” that relate in excess of the standard life of debt, being 6 years. Whilst we are satisfied there is reasonable rationale for their retention we would question whether payments could be reinforced if the life of debt has been exceeded, with the exception of amounts recognised in respect of development contributions. We would encourage continued review of provisions brought forward from prior years, especially those exceeding the standard life of debt, writing these off as appropriate, with board approval as appropriate.

#### Client comment:

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

### 4. Budget figures

We refer to the significant overspend arising in the 2023/24 against the budget set for the same period. We understand that this is largely due to the unprecedented levels of rainfall experienced during the 2023/24 winter period which in turn resulted in the most significant volume of water ever pumped by the organisation. Which has resulted in pumping stations operating at capacity for a number of months, using significantly more fuel and electricity to enable this.

Given the change in weather patterns globally and in our region, we would recommend that a higher budgeted energy and fuel cost be provided for in the budget going forwards, and that the organisation maintain sufficient reserves to combat any such deficiencies in the future. Consideration should also be taken as to whether budgets should be updated for actual results if significant variances are apparent, to ensure they remain meaningful to the individual boards to which they relate.

#### Client comment:

*As part of the finance regulations, we are required to carry out a budget monitoring exercise during the course of the year. For those Boards that have a relevant meeting, this is reviewed by the Board at their autumn/winter meeting. For all other Boards the monitoring exercise is completed as at the end of the calendar year, at this point the majority of the drain maintenance works have been completed, as would be any planned maintenance works at pumping stations. The expenditure to-date is then forecast to the end of the financial year and compared to the budget and initially sent to the chairman for review. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring exercise depends on whether it is considered appropriate to hold an emergency meeting. However, it is likely that if there were an extraordinary event the Board would be aware “in real time” and appropriate action taken at that point.*

*it is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure 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 slump land, which cannot be considered the same as general agricultural land for rental purposes. All Boards look to get the best rents available, but these are relevant to the size and type of land being let.*

**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 unrepresented 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:

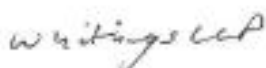
*This area is designated as an attenuation pond, holding surface water to discharge at a controlled rate into the District System. The valuation takes into account its use and therefore limited value. In view of this and to maintain value for money for the Board it was agreed by the officers of the Board 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Whittings LLP', written in dark ink.

Whittings 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 or 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](mailto: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.

# Conington & Holme IDB

Administered by:



**middle level**  
commissioners

## **Governance**

### **Financial Regulations 2025 – 2035**

References in this Code to "the Clerk" shall be a reference to such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) as may from time to time undertake the relevant work or functions on behalf of the Board and references to "the Chairman" shall also include the Vice Chairman.

#### **A SUMMARY**

1. These Financial Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Board's, Standing Orders, Regulations as to proceedings, Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegations to ensure that its resources are properly managed, accounted for and controlled.
2. The level at which decisions relating to the finances and functions of the Board are to be taken are as set out in the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining adequate and effective controls and procedures in the manner and format he/she considers to be best and shall where appropriate, prepare additional rules of procedure or guidance, supplementary to these Regulations.
4. The Clerk shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining the financial and management accounting/reporting systems, processes, procedures and coding lists. Such systems shall be properly documented and shall not be changed without the approval of the Clerk. The Head of Finance (Treasurer) to the Middle Level Commissioners shall be the Board's Responsible Financial Officer, as defined in and for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The MLC finance team will support the Head of Finance in providing this function.
5. The Clerk shall advise the Board and carry out the Board's instructions in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and for ensuring that value for money is provided.
6. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board's Financial Statements for each Financial Year ending 31 March are prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities and, so far as may be appropriate, the Practitioners' Guide to the Preparation of Financial Statements for IDBs (and any subsequent requirements) applicable at the time of preparation.
7. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board considers and approves its Financial Statements for a Financial Year in accordance with the provisions of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
8. All employees and members have a responsibility for health and safety, compliance with policies and legislation, procedures and codes of practice, for the general security of the Board's property, and, for economy efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.
9. All members and employees shall familiarise themselves with and observe the Schedule of Reserved Matters, the Scheme of Delegations and these Regulations.
10. Failure to comply with any aspect of these Regulations may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual(s) concerned. Serious breaches by Board Members may result in action being taken against them, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

## **B SCHEME OF BUDGET DELEGATION**

1. The Clerk shall be a budget holder and is responsible to the Board for the overall management of the Board's Finances, the Expenditure Estimates and all Budgets.
2. The Board's Consulting Engineer is responsible to the Board to the extent that he/she is so authorised by the Board and is allocated funds for the purpose of preparing and managing the Board's Capital Works Budget.
3. The Board's Consulting Engineer and/or the Chairman and/or the District Officer are responsible to the Board to the extent that they are so authorised by the Board and are allocated funds for the purpose of preparing and managing where applicable the Board's Maintenance Works Budget, the Plant/Labour Operating Accounts, the Plant Renewals Budget, the Stock Control Account and the Rechargeable Works Budget and any other matter in respect of which they are authorised under the Scheme of Delegations.
4. Other than as set out in the Scheme of Delegations or where authorised to do so by a resolution of the Board, no other person shall be empowered to enter contracts on behalf of the Board unless authorised to do so by a budget holder. Nor shall any other person commit the Board to a particular course of action or provide an undertaking or assurance to any third party without the prior consent of the Clerk and/or Responsible Finance Officer and/or the Chairman.
5. No budget holder other than the Chairman shall procure goods and services, charge, allocate or otherwise commit expenditure against a budget that they have no budgetary responsibility for.

## **C MANAGING BUDGETS & REPORTING**

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the Board's Estimates/Budgets, for monitoring income and expenditure during the course of the year, for alerting the Chairman to any material variances, and, for providing budget holders with the financial information that they require and assisting them as necessary to enable them to properly prepare/manage their budgets. The Clerk shall further ensure that the Board are presented with and consider the proposed expenditure estimates in order that the Rates and Special Levies can be determined for each financial year in due time in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and it is the individual budget holder's responsibility to provide him/her with their detailed budgets and supporting information in order that this may be done.
2. Any drainage rate refunds due for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.
3. All correcting journal entries shall always be authorised and approved by the Clerk.
4. The Clerk shall ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for alerting the Chairman immediately should a Local Authority fail to make their Special Levy payment at the agreed time, or where Drainage Rates are outstanding following reminder. The Clerk and Chairman will agree a course of action and whether a special meeting of the Board is required.
5. Every budget holder is responsible for seeking to ensure that actual expenditure on each of their budgets does not exceed the budget as approved and shall regularly monitor income/expenditure to this end. Budget holders shall, whenever practicable, get approval for material adverse variances to any of their budgets that are anticipated. Approval shall be sought in accordance with the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations.
6. The Clerk may convene a meeting of the Board or a Committee. The Chairman or any 3 other Board members shall also have the power to convene such a meeting.
7. The Consulting Engineer shall prepare a Report for each Board meeting at which such items appear on the agenda detailing amongst other things the progress made on approved capital

schemes in respect of which he/she has been instructed during the reporting period as compared to approved budgeted costs, and, when appropriate, will propose new capital schemes for consideration. Such Report will also detail any maintenance work which he/she has organised for the Board during the reporting period and the cost of such work.

8. The Clerk shall also prepare Financial Report(s) for each Board meeting and, shall prepare any other management accounting/financial report that may be required by the Board.
9. In considering its financial health, estimates, rates and investment strategy, the Board will consider as a minimum:
  - I. Whether it has sufficient General Fund Reserves to cater for above average annual expenditure due to, for example, excessive pumping or urgent works.
  - II. Whether it is utilising and planning for use of any Development Charges account appropriately for future capital works.
  - III. Whether it has sufficient Asset Improvement/Future Works budget taking account of its asset base, asset age/reliability, capital programme requirements and likely grant eligibility.
  - IV. Its financial ability to secure and pay off a suitable value Public Works Loan to bridge any gap between its Asset Improvement/Future Works budget and likely value of works.

#### **D PURCHASING GOODS & SERVICES (INCLUDING PLANT)**

1. Unless otherwise authorised by the Board by resolution or required under the terms of any formal procedures relating to such work, budget holders shall always comply with the following procedures when procuring goods and services.

Quotations/Tenders will be sought as follows, other than in emergency situations where approved buying groups or agreed contractors/consultants/suppliers for a particular area of work or expertise have been appointed or are used or where approved service level agreements are in force. These threshold amounts may be amended from time to time by resolution of the Board:

| <u>Estimated Value of Goods/Services Quotes/</u> | <u>Quotation/Tenders to be sought</u>           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <= £5,000                                        | No quotations/tenders required                  |
| > £5,000 and <= £10,000                          | Obtain 1 written quotation                      |
| > £10,000                                        | Obtain 3 quotations or 3 tenders as appropriate |

2. The budget holder shall be responsible for ensuring that quotations or tenders are sought when required by the above table. Where it is not possible to get the required quotations or tenders, the Chairman's written approval must be obtained prior to awarding any contract.
3. Any agreed contractors, consultants or suppliers list shall be maintained and kept up to date by the Clerk.
4. A budget holder must never agree to permit a third party to provide them with goods/services where tenders or quotations are required without obtaining a copy of their terms of business beforehand.
5. Budget holders shall fully comply with all Competition Law, the Bribery Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and shall so far as is reasonable, satisfy themselves as to the insurance policies of contractors, and their systems of work before awarding works contracts.
6. Budget holders shall not enter into any contract that has been reserved to the Board or delegated to a Board Committee without obtaining the Clerk's approval beforehand. The Clerk

shall not permit any budget holder to enter in to such a contract if he/she considers it to be inappropriate or that the required approval has not been given.

7. The relevant budget holder is responsible for ensuring that the procurement of all goods and services is authorised by the Board or in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations. All emergency work must be approved by the Chairman.
8. All procurement of goods and services shall be authorised by the signing and dating of an official purchase order or purchase instruction. On so authorising the procurement of goods or services the budget holder will have satisfied themselves that the Financial Regulations have been complied with and that any approval required by the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations has been obtained. The Clerk shall be authorised to raise, sign and date a purchase order or purchase instruction where the procurement has been authorised by resolution of the Board.
9. The budget holder must never break down a job and string a number of purchase orders or authorisations together simply to avoid having to get 3 written quotations/tenders.
10. The following information must be clearly stated on each purchase order or instruction:
  - i. The name of the supplier.
  - ii. The agreed price of the goods/services required, other than in an emergency or where impractical to do so.
  - iii. The Unique Order No as approved by the budget holder.
11. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for establishing when goods or services, have been charged, allocated or otherwise expenditure has been committed against an unauthorised budget.
12. All quotes/tenders, delivery notes, invoices for payment and credit notes shall be matched to the official purchase order or instruction, examined and coded before they are proposed for payment or set off. If the budget holder or the Clerk deems any invoice/credit note to be incorrect they shall not process such invoices/credit notes for payment or set off until satisfied that payment or set off is properly due. The quotes/tenders, purchase orders and delivery notes where required to be signed or where amended, shall all be filed together with the invoices/credit notes as otherwise directed by the Clerk
13. The Clerk shall ensure that all Invoices which have been approved for payment are duly scheduled for payment.
14. All Invoices shall be authorised by the Chairman and checked by the Clerk prior to making payment.
15. Where it is considered that there are valid reasons for departing from these procedures the approval of the Chairman shall be obtained. Any such departure shall be reported to the Board.

## **E BANK MANDATE AND INVESTMENTS**

1. No changes shall be made to the Board's bankers or the bank mandate without the prior consent of the Board.
2. Approved signatories for the Board's bank accounts are as follows:
  1. The Chairman
  2. Such other member(s) as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board
  3. Such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board

3. All cheque books, deposit books, banking cards, online access and other documentation or materials relating to the Board's bank accounts shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.
4. All payments, bank transfers and Investments shall be made in the most efficient/secure manner as determined from time to time by the Clerk
5. The Clerk shall maintain Contact Details relating to financial transactions. All bank accounts shall be reconciled monthly and checked at regular intervals by separate officers of the Clerk.

## **F INVESTMENTS AND BORROWINGS STRATEGY**

1. All investments made by the Board are made within guidance received from CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) Guidance for the Public Sector, and relevant legislation:
  - The Board's investment activities are limited by statute
  - The Board may invest with major Banks and/or Building Societies
  - The Board's investments are to be regarded as low/medium risk
  - The Board's investments must be made in the name of the Board and not any named individual
2. All investments shall be negotiated by the Clerk and reported to the Board. They must be for an appropriate period.
3. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Board and shall be from the Public Works Loans Board. In an emergency there may be an exception.
4. No borrowings shall be taken out without a resolution of the Board.
5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

## **G COLLECTING MONEY**

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies received are properly recorded in the accounting records.
2. Electronic copies of all receipts issued shall be retained for at least six years.
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Drainage Rates and Special Levies are substantially collected by **1 November** each year. Outstanding Rates/Levies shall be pursued in a timely manner after that date.
4. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for all debts to be substantially collected within 30 days from the Debtor Invoice tax point date and for when a debt becomes 3 months overdue or whenever a debt becomes doubtful or is disputed.

## **H FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

1. Ideally any grant or third-party funding opportunities will be reviewed, supported and approved by the Board, however bidding windows normally constrain the ability to enact this meaning Boards potentially missing out on funding. Therefore, the Clerk and/or Chairman shall be empowered to bid for grant and/or other third-party funding on behalf of the Board. This includes being able to determine and accept any risk exposure.

## **I SUNDRY DEBTORS**

1. Each budget holder shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with the necessary information to enable rechargeable work to be properly accounted for and invoiced, and, any other debts

due to be properly invoiced. The budget holder shall advise the Clerk whenever an Invoice is to be raised for goods provided or services rendered, under their control.

2. The Clerk shall ensure that all such Invoices are properly raised as soon as practicable after being authorised.
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all other debts due to the Board are properly raised when required and collected appropriately.
4. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Board consider whether any rents payable to them should be reviewed by a Chartered Surveyor at least once every 5 years.
5. The Clerk shall calculate any claims for Highland Water payments from the Environment Agency and send such claims to the Agency by the dates specified by the Agency.
6. Any refunds due to debtors for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.
8. The Clerk shall be empowered to collect all sundry debts due.
9. The Clerk shall obtain the Chairmans approval for instigating legal proceedings to collect outstanding amounts in excess of the County Court Small Claims limit.

#### **J EMPLOYING/MANAGING STAFF**

1. The Chairman shall be responsible to the Board for all matters regarding any employees, including employment policies, procedures, terms and conditions. The Chairman acts as the employee's line manager. This includes taking capability and disciplinary action against Board employees having followed due process.
2. The Board's approval shall be required for the employment of additional permanent staff.
3. The Chairman shall have the authority to employ temporary staff and replace permanent staff provided the employment costs are contained within the Expenditure Estimates/Budgets approved by the Board.
4. Subject to the above paragraphs and to the terms of any employee's contract, Board members shall not individually have the power to formally offer anyone any form of employment or to dismiss a Board employee, or otherwise take disciplinary action against any of the Board's employees unless the Board has specifically authorised such action by resolution.
5. Board members other than the Chairman and the District Officer shall not individually give instructions to any of the Board's employees, unless delegation has been approved by the Board.
6. The Chairman and the District Officer shall be responsible for managing the day-to-day activities of employees and for determining the nature and extent of these activities.

#### **K ASSET ACCOUNTING/MANAGEMENT**

1. Any assets to be sold will be advertised in the appropriate media or by the method most appropriate for securing best value and will be sold for the highest offer (of legitimate bids from reputable sources) unless they are being part-exchanged or traded-in when acquiring another asset, or otherwise sold for a budget price approved by the Board.
2. The Clerk shall be responsible for documenting and maintaining the records of the Board's Assets.

## **L     AUDIT**

1. As a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Clerk shall ensure that the Board is presented with the Internal Auditor's Report each year. The Board are required to review and where necessary take appropriate action.

## **M     SALARIES AND WAGES**

1. The Board shall, where appropriate, seek independent advice before making significant changes to terms and conditions of employment and, save where such changes are as a result of legislative change, no changes shall be made to terms and conditions of employment (deliberately or otherwise) without the prior consent of the Board.
2. The Clerk shall be responsible for the proper compilation of the payroll(s) and for the final determination of pay, as approved by the Board.
3. All annual holiday entitlements (including any carried forward provisions) shall be agreed with the Chairman and/or the District Officer at the beginning of every financial year and signed off by him/her as such, in accordance with the Board's terms and conditions of employment.
4. All time-off in lieu, sick leave, working-from-home arrangements and other absences from work or the work place shall be approved in writing by the Chairman and/or the District Officer.
5. All proposed payments of salaries and wages shall be authorised by the Clerk prior to being made.

## **N     INSURANCES**

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for expeditiously submitting all insurance claims that the Board agrees should be pursued. The Board shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with all of the necessary information he/she deems necessary in order to successfully make an insurance claim.
2. The Chairman and/or the District Officer shall immediately notify the Clerk of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim on any of the Board's insurance policies and shall, where appropriate, notify the police of the relevant circumstances.

## **O     SECURITY**

1. Keys to the Board's buildings and property shall be controlled by the Chairman and/or the District Officer who shall maintain the list of such key holders.

## **P     REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

1. The Board and Clerk reserves the right to make reasonable changes to these Regulations at any time in future.
2. Failure to take action against any employee or Member following a breach of the Financial Regulations does not constitute a waiver of the Board's right to take disciplinary action on any future breaches of the Financial Regulations and no single or partial action taken shall prevent any further disciplinary action being taken or other action being taken against any employee or Member.

# Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board

*Administered by:*



## Governance

### Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management

#### 1 Issued

- 1.1 This policy is issued and has been adopted by the Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board.
- 1.2 The policy was last reviewed and republished in June 2025 and will be reviewed at least every five years.

#### 2 Introduction

##### Purpose

- 2.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Conington and Home Internal Drainage Board to provide a public statement of the Boards' approach to its management of water levels and flood risk within their District (the District). The Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board are constituted by order of Parliament operating under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and is designated as a flood risk and coastal erosion 'Risk Management Authority' (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 2.2 The Board serves the local community by managing water levels in ordinary watercourses and other water infrastructures within the District to mitigate against the risks from flooding and drought. In delivering its functions the Board will meet its environmental obligations and commitments and seek opportunities to enhance the environment. The Board recognises their responsibility for good governance, local accountability and financial security, achieving value for money from all its activities. As an independent public body the Board are committed to the pursuit of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2.3 It should be noted that although this document refers to 'flood and coastal erosion risk management' (FCERM) the District is not affected by coastal erosion.

##### Background

- 2.4 The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. The Environment Agency is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. Lead Local Flood Authorities (unitary authorities or county councils) are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas.

Delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood risk and coastal erosion “Risk Management Authorities” (RMA), which includes the Conington and Holme Internal Drainage Board.

- 2.5 This Policy Statement sets out the Board’s approach to meeting the national policy aims and objectives in this area, as stated in the *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England 2020* (the National Strategy); the statement will be revised to reflect future revisions of the National Strategy. It summaries what plans the Board have in place to manage water levels and reduce flood risk, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment, and ensuring good governance and local accountability. Copies of this Policy Statement are available from the Board’s office at Middle Level Offices, 85 Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AH. Digital copies can be downloaded from the Middle Level Commissioners website: [www.middlelevel.gov.uk](http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk).

### **3. Governance and local accountability**

- 3.1 The Board will ensure that its policies and procedures enable effective representation of and accountability to drainage rate payers and the occupiers of non-agricultural land within the district, including elections in line with the requirements of the Land Drainage Act 1991, and timely engagement with charging authorities to fill vacancies in seats allocated to appointed members.
- 3.2 Board members must take decisions objectively in their best interest and uphold the ethical standards expected of public officeholders. Board members must adhere to the Board’s Members Code of Conduct, including the seven principles of public life (Nolan Principles). The Board will make sure that there is suitable training in place for board members and staff, including on financial and environmental matters as appropriate.
- 3.3 Board members must declare financial and other interests relevant to their function with the Board. Board members will recuse themselves as appropriate where conflicts of interest may occur in relation to procurement, contract management and decision making.

### **4. Delivering the National Strategy’s policy aim and objectives**

#### **Aim**

- 4.1 The overall aim of the National Strategy is to ensure the risk of flooding and coastal erosion is properly managed by using the full range of options in a co-ordinated way. The Strategy states that communities, individuals, voluntary groups and private and public sector organisations will work together to manage the risk to people and their property, facilitate decision-making and action at the appropriate level, and achieve environmental, social and economic benefits, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

#### **Objectives**

- 4.2 The 2011 Strategy sets out five objectives in pursuance of the overall aim as follows.
- understand the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, working together to put in place long term sustainable plans to manage these risks and making sure that other plans take account of them;
  - avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and being careful to manage land elsewhere to avoid increasing risks;
  - build, maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society as well as achieving wider environmental benefits;
  - increase public awareness of the risk that remains and engaging with people at risk to encourage them to take action to manage the risks that they face and to make their property mor resilient; and

- improving the detection, forecasting and issue of warnings of flooding, co-ordinating a rapid response to flood emergencies and promoting faster recovery from flooding.
- 4.3 The Board supports the national aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels and the Board's policy and approach will be consistent with them.
- 5. Flood risk and water level management in the Board's District**
- 5.1 The District has been determined to derive benefit, or avoid danger, as a result of drainage operations. As such the whole of the District is at some risk from flooding, but that risk is managed wherever it is practically, environmentally and financially viable<sup>1</sup>.
- 5.2 The Board makes decisions regarding flood risk within the District taking into account the following:
- assets in place considering design standard and life;
  - Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority flood risk strategies, plans and maps; and
  - other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.
- 5.3 The following outlines the key details of the District:
- |                                                          |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| • Total area of the drainage district:                   | 1117 ha |
| • Catchment area draining to and including the District: | 2873 ha |
| • Area of Agricultural Land:                             | 1012 ha |
| • Area of other (non-agricultural) land:                 | 105 ha  |
- 5.4 Assets for which the Board have operational responsibility:
- |                                        |       |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| • Water Level Control Structures:      | 8 No  |
| • Watercourses (maintained):           | 26 km |
| • Raised embankments:                  | 0 km  |
| • Reservoirs:                          | 0 ha  |
| • Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): | 0 no  |
| • Pumping Stations:                    | 1 no  |
- 5.5 Assets within or adjacent to the District that are maintained by the Environment Agency:
- |                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| • Main Rivers:                    | 0 km |
| • Raised embankments/flood walls: | 0 km |
| • Pumping Stations:               | 0 no |

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the Land Drainage Act 1991 provides the Board with statutory powers to carry out works of maintenance and improvement for land drainage and flood defence purposes, rather than imposing a duty on the Board to carry out such works.

## **6. Building, maintaining and improving flood and coastal erosion risk management systems**

- 6.1 Through the operation, maintenance and improvement of watercourses and other water control assets within the District, the Board seeks to achieve a general standard of water level management that enables navigation, the drainage and irrigation of agricultural land, reduces flood risk to developed areas, and sustains environmental features throughout the District.
- 6.2 The Board monitors and reviews the condition of its watercourses and other assets, particularly those designated as critical, over-spilling from which could affect people and property.

Consistent with the resultant needs established, a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards required. The programme is reviewed periodically by the Board to ensure it is delivering the appropriate condition.

- 6.3 Where standards are not at the desired level, improvement works will be sought where they are considered to be practical and financially viable by the Board. Where improvement works meet the criteria set by Defra, financial support will be sought from the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding. Where appropriate works will be undertaken in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and take opportunities to work with natural processes.
- 6.4 Work for and by the Board will be carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of local flood risk management requirements and strategies, opportunities for partnership working, environmental obligations and guidance available from Defra, the Environment Agency and other organisations.
- 6.5 The Board's powers to carry out water level and flood risk management works are permissive (i.e. the Board are not obliged to carry out works) and their resources are limited. The Board's policy is therefore to designate what they consider to be the most important watercourses in the District as "District Drains" and prioritise their resources to the appropriate maintenance and, where necessary, improvement of such channels and associated structures. The watercourses and structures so designated will change over time as necessary but the current designated watercourses and structures are shown on the plan attached to this Statement.
- 6.6 Other watercourses usually are the responsibility of other bodies or the adjoining owners. The Board will only take action in respect of these latter watercourses where resources are available and where it is in all the circumstances appropriate for the Board to become involved, bearing in mind the powers available to other persons or bodies.
- 6.7 The Board have a supervisory duty, under section 1(2)(d) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 over all matters relating to the drainage of land in their District and will, under this duty where appropriate advise others regarding the undertaking of works when it is not appropriate for the Board to exercise its own powers.
- 6.8 The Board will also seek to ensure, where possible that assets managed by other risk Management Authorities, which also reduce flood risk to the District, are maintained at a satisfactory standard and may enter into a Public Sector Co-operation Agreement with another Risk Management Authority to achieve better value for money when carrying out work to reduce flood risk.

## **7. Regulation of activities – avoiding inappropriate development and land management**

- 7.1 The Board will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.
- 7.2 The Board will regulate as necessary, using available legislative powers and byelaws, the activity of others to ensure their actions within, alongside, and otherwise impacting its drainage system do not increase flood risk, prevent the efficient working of drainage systems, or adversely impact the environment.
- 7.3 The potential impact on flood risk from future development both within the District and the wider catchment draining into the District, is fully recognised by the Board. The Board will take an active role in the assessment of local plans, major development and, individual (planning) applications, to prevent inappropriate development and land use to ensure that flood risk is not increased. This will include, where appropriate, providing pre-application advice and checking of flood risk assessments.

7.4 Where appropriate the Board will seek contributions from developers to cover the cost of consultations and advice and for both immediate and longer term works necessary to mitigate against any resultant increase in flood risk. Such contributions will be recorded in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance.

7.5 The Board will where appropriate designate structures or features affecting flood risk using Section 30 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

## **8. Communication and transparency**

8.1 The Board will publicise the local risks from flooding, the reasons for managing water levels within the District and articulate the efforts being undertaken by the Board to manage water levels and flood risk as well as the steps the local community and land managers can take to assist in its management.

8.2 The Board will be open and transparent in its actions and decisions. The Board will comply with the requirements set out in the relevant Local Government transparency code.

8.3 The Board will provide an overview of the objectives and costs of its water level management operations by publishing on its website:-

- A record of the watercourses it periodically maintains;
- A statement of the types of general maintenance activities it routinely undertakes and why;
- Its Annual Report to Defra (IDB1 Form); and
- Approved Board minutes and papers.

8.4 The Board will seek views and respond to enquiries from the local general public in this regard and work with local partners to build a culture within which watercourses are seen as vital to managing flood risk, and enhancing habitat and amenity. Every effort will be made to dissuade abuse of watercourses.

8.5 The Board invite any comments regarding the condition of its system, which could assist with the management of water levels.

## **9. Working together**

9.1 The Board will co-operate and share information with other relevant authorities in the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion flood risk management function. The Board will contribute to strategies, plans and consultations relevant to its catchment and functions.

9.2 The Board will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems, and assist Risk Management Authorities where necessary during flood emergencies. The Board will participate as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.

9.3 The Board have provided the Environment Agency and other local Risk Management Authorities with information on the major flood defence assets for which they are responsible. The information is available from the Environment Agency.

9.4 The Board will seek to work with all relevant local organisations, in carrying out its flood and coastal erosion risk management functions and environmental obligations.

## **10. Environmental Measures**

10.1 The Board have nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Countryside and Rights of Way

Act 2000, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, the Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 and Amendments 2011, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, the Environment Act 2021, and as a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.

- 10.1.1 Further to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, the Board will review their Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans with reference to the local nature recovery strategy and relevant species conservation or protected site strategy for their areas.
- 10.2 Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work constitutes vegetation control and desilting and is often a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short-term impacts will arise, this management is often essential to maintain the distinct assemblage of aquatic habitat and species present in the District. Such work will be carried out in a way that manages the potential risks to the environment. The Board have access to environmental expertise from their Ecology and Environmental Services Manager and have a Biodiversity Action Plan, developed according to ADA and Natural England guidelines, which indicate the way in which their functions can be carried out in a way appropriate to the environment and how the environment can be enhanced. The Board maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the significant majority being the responsibility of the adjoining land owners or of other bodies.
- 10.3 When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:-
- Avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to agricultural interests and to natural habitats and species;
  - Carry out the monitoring of any gains and losses of biodiversity and report annually to the Environment Agency; and
  - Take appropriate opportunities to achieve multiple environmental outcomes and work with natural processes, wherever possible, including the enhancement of habitats and water bodies within the District.
- 10.4 The District encompasses no sites of national and international biological or geological interest.
- 10.5 The Board has no Water Level Management Plan.
- 10.6 The Board will play its full role in sustaining the Water Level Management Plans prepared for SSSIs to maintain, or bring sites into, favourable condition, in conjunction with Natural England and other interested parties and review the plans in accordance with guidance.

Internal drainage boards in England



# Annual Report for the year ended

31 March 2024

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

**No later than 28 February 2025 a copy must be provided to:**

- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs via [flood\\_reports@defra.gov.uk](mailto:flood_reports@defra.gov.uk)
- Asset Management and Engineering, Environment Agency via [idbfund@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:idbfund@environment-agency.gov.uk)
- The Chief Executives of:
  - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
  - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

Please complete the form electronically, and please answer **ALL QUESTIONS**.

Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

## Section A – Financial information

**Preliminary information on special levies issued by the Board for 2024-25**

| Special levies information for financial year 2024-25 |              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Name of local authority                               | £            |
| 1. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL                   | 9,586        |
| 2.                                                    |              |
| 3.                                                    |              |
| 4.                                                    |              |
| 5.                                                    |              |
| 6.                                                    |              |
| 7.                                                    |              |
| 8.                                                    |              |
| <b>Total</b>                                          | <b>9,586</b> |

## Section A – Financial information (continued)

### Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31 March 2024

All internal drainage boards must ensure that the Income and Expenditure information provided below is consistent with the Board's annual accounting statements which have been prepared in accordance with proper practices found in *Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – A Practitioners' Guide to proper practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements March 2023*<sup>1</sup>

|                                                                               | Notes | Year ending<br>31 March 2024 £ |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>                                                                 |       |                                |
| A. Drainage Rates                                                             |       | 32,815                         |
| B. Special Levies                                                             |       | 7,936                          |
| C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency                |       | 3,381                          |
| D. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries                 |       |                                |
| E. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions) |       |                                |
| F. PSCAs overall total                                                        |       |                                |
| Breakdown:                                                                    |       |                                |
| from EA                                                                       |       |                                |
| from other RMAs                                                               |       |                                |
| G. Loans                                                                      |       |                                |
| H. Rechargeable Works                                                         |       |                                |
| I. Interest and Investment Income                                             |       | 192                            |
| J. Rents and Acknowledgements                                                 |       |                                |
| K. Other Income                                                               |       |                                |
| Write back of provisions                                                      |       | 1,851                          |
|                                                                               |       |                                |
| <b>Total income</b>                                                           |       | <b>46,175</b>                  |
| <b>EXPENDITURE</b>                                                            |       |                                |
| L. New Works and Improvement Works                                            |       | 219                            |
| M. Total precept to the Environment Agency                                    |       | 2,207                          |
| N. Watercourse maintenance                                                    |       | 11,841                         |
| O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures               |       | 627                            |
| P. Administration                                                             |       | 10,825                         |
| Q. PSCAs                                                                      |       |                                |
| R. Rechargeable Works                                                         |       |                                |

<sup>1</sup> [https://saaa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide\\_2023.pdf](https://saaa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide_2023.pdf)

|                                                               |        |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| S. Finance Charges                                            |        |               |
| T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total  |        | 421           |
| Breakdown:                                                    |        |               |
| General, across the whole region                              | 421    |               |
| SSSI specific, where relevant                                 |        |               |
| U. Other Expenditure                                          |        | 522           |
| Insurance                                                     |        |               |
| Electricity costs – overall total                             |        | 17,147        |
| Breakdown (if possible):                                      |        |               |
| Standing charge (per annum)                                   | 290    |               |
| Unit charge (per annum)                                       | 16,857 |               |
| Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total                |        |               |
| Breakdown:                                                    |        |               |
| Pumping stations                                              |        |               |
| Fleet and plant machinery                                     |        |               |
|                                                               |        |               |
| <b>Total expenditure</b>                                      |        | <b>43,809</b> |
| <b>EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS</b>                                      |        |               |
| V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets |        |               |
| <b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>           |        | <b>2,366</b>  |
| W. Developers Funds Income not applied in year                |        | 29,479        |
| X. Grant income not applied in year                           |        |               |

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0.83 %

£ 275.21

Value of special levies outstanding at year end?

0 %

£ 0

**Notes:**

- K. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other income in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.
- L. State the gross cost of undertaking minor capital works that have not been capitalised and the annual depreciation charges of all major schemes that have been capitalised. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the schemes.
- M. State the total precept demanded for the year as properly issued by the Environment Agency, in accordance with section 141 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Providing that the precept has been properly issued as before stated it should always be included here, even when the Board has appealed

against the amount of contribution, in accordance with section 140 of the Water Resources Act 1991. Where the Board knows with certainty the outcome of any such appeal, it should also include the appropriate accrual/prepayment.

- N. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- O. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- P. Include the cost of non-technical staff only, office accommodation, annual depreciation of office equipment that has been capitalised, minor office equipment that has not been capitalised, postages, telecoms, stationery, printing, advertising, auditing of accounts, general insurances and all other costs associated with supporting the organisation. Please note that this does not include support costs, which are directly associated with the delivery of front line services. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- Q. State all costs associated with the PSCA.
- R. State all costs associated with undertaking work for third parties. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with undertaking the rechargeable work.
- S. Include the cost of servicing any borrowing, in terms of bank/loan/hire purchase Interest payable.
- T. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help enhance and/or conserve biodiversity. These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions. If possible, you should identify the overall costs and break them down into two groups: general across the whole IDB area, and SSSI specific areas (in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans). Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.
- U. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other expenditure in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.
- V. For the disposal of assets, state the difference between any proceeds from the sale/disposal of the asset and the cost of the asset less accumulated depreciation.
- W. Total balance of developer fund year end.
- X. Unspent grant at year end.

## Section B – IDB Reporting

Please answer **ALL QUESTIONS**. We will assume a negative response for any that are not answered.

### Policy Delivery Statement

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

1. Is an up to date statement in place and copy (or weblink) provided to Defra, and EA? ..... Yes ☒ No ☐
2. What year was your statement last updated? ..... 2019

### Biodiversity

3. Please indicate whether your Board has a Biodiversity Action Plan ..... Yes ☒ No ☐
4. If "yes" is the Biodiversity Action Plan available on your website? ..... Yes ☒ No ☐
5. What year was your Biodiversity Action Plan last updated? ..... 2022
6. Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your website? ..... Yes ☐ No ☒
7. When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)? ..... 04/06/2024
8. Do you have a biosecurity process? ..... Yes ☒ No ☐

### SSSI water level management plans

9. Are you responsible for any SSSI water level management plans? ..... Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please complete the following table:

| Name | Partners | Date of last review | Date of last update |
|------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |

10. Do you contribute towards any SSSI water level management plans? ..... Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please complete the following table:

| Name | Partners | Date of last review | Date of last update |
|------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |
|      |          |                     |                     |

|                                                                                                                           |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 11. Area of SSSI with IDB responsible for water level management plan/s.....                                              | 0 hectares |
| 12. Area of SSSI with IDB contribution towards water level management plan/s.....                                         | 0 hectares |
| 13. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?..... | 0 hectares |
| 14. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are needed to achieve recovering or favourable condition?.....  | 0 hectares |

**Access to environmental expertise**

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

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

If so, please list:

**Public sector cooperation agreements (PSCAs)**

|                                                                       |   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 21. How many active PSCAs are you working on?                         | 0 |
| 22. Which risk management authorities are you working with on a PSCA? |   |
| Environment Agency                                                    |   |
| Lead local flood authority                                            |   |
| Local authority (not a lead local flood authority)                    |   |
| Internal drainage board                                               |   |
| Water company                                                         |   |
| Other                                                                 |   |

If other, please list:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

23. Please indicate the type of work being undertaken.

Routine maintenance  
Asset operation and monitoring  
Asset repairs  
Support during flood incident  
Support during flood recovery  
Other

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |
|  |

If other, please list:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

#### Asset Management

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

24. ADIS ☐
25. Paper Records ☐
26. Other Electronic System ☒

If so, please list:

|       |
|-------|
| Excel |
|-------|

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

28. What is the cumulative total of identified watercourse that the Board periodically maintains?

|                 |
|-----------------|
| 25.4 kilometres |
|-----------------|

29. How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

|                    |
|--------------------|
| 2 pumping stations |
|--------------------|

30. How many pumps does the Board operate?

electric  
diesel  
renewable energy pumps (e.g. directly powered by wind, solar, hydro, etc)  
temporary / mobile pumps  
other type of pumps

|   |
|---|
| 2 |
|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |

31. If other, please list:

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

0.714 cm3/sec

### Health and Safety

33. Does the Board have a current Health and Safety policy in place? Yes ☒ No ☐

34. Does the Board have a Board Member focused on ensuring that Health and Safety is considered when board decisions are made? Yes ☒ No ☐

35. Does the Board have a responsible officer for Health and Safety? Yes ☒ No ☐

36. Have there been any reportable incidents in the past year? Yes ☐ No ☒

If so, please summarise in the box below:

### Guidance and Best Practice

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

Has your IDB provided, or accessed via a third party, training for board members in the last year in any of the following areas?

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 38. Governance                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 39. Finance                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. Environment                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 41. Health, safety and welfare    | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 42. Communications and engagement | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 43. Other                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

If so, please specify:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

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

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

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

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

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

Has your Board adopted the following governance documents:

49. Standing Orders ..... Yes ☒ No ☐

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

51. Byelaws ..... Yes ☒ No ☐

If you have Byelaws, have:

52. you adopted the 2021 model byelaws..... Yes ☒ No ☐

53. Or have you adopted the 2012 model byelaws..... Yes ☐ No ☒

54. the byelaws been approved by Ministers..... Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

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

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

#### Board membership and attendance

59. How many Board members (in total – elected and appointed) do you have on your IDB?

|   |
|---|
| 7 |
|---|

60. Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

|   |
|---|
| 4 |
|---|

61. Number of elected members on the board at year end.

|   |
|---|
| 6 |
|---|

62. Number of appointed members on the board at year end.

|   |
|---|
| 1 |
|---|

63. Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.

|   |
|---|
| 5 |
|---|

64. Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.

1

65. Have you held elections (with or without a vote) within the last three years?.....Yes ☒ No ☐

66. If you have held elections, did they comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938?.....Yes ☒ No ☐

### Complaints procedure

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

68. Number of complaints received in the financial year?

0

69. Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?

0

70. Number of complaints referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?

0

71. Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?

0

### Public Engagement

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

Published:

72. your completed IDB1 Form

☒

73. press release/s

☐

74. newsletter/s

☐

75. notice/s

☒

76. public consultation

☐

77. updated your IDB website

☒

Media engagement with:

78. national and/or local media e.g. TV, radio, etc

☐

79. national and/or local media e.g. newspaper, magazine, etc

☐

80. trade media

☐

81. social media

☐

Public meetings:

82. Held public meeting/s

☒

83. Attended meetings e.g. Parish Council, local interest group, local flood group, etc

☐

Public events:

84. attended show/event/s e.g. county shows, fairs, etc ☐
85. attended trade event e.g. Flood and Coast, Flood and Water Live, etc ☐
86. hosted IDB open day ☐

## Section B: NOTES

### Guidance and Best Practice

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

### Board membership and attendance

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

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

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

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

## Section C – Declaration

CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature

*SS Ablett*

Date

18/02/2025

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT

Designation

ASSISTANT TREASURER

Email address

sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

### CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

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

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

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|                                            |                                              |                      |                              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                              | Item No:             | 11                           |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME<br>INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD | Subject:             | FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025          | Officer Responsible: | Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett       |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the Budgeting review
- B. Note the Highland Water contributions
- C. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
- D. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/2025 within Appendix 2.

## Finance Officer's review and key messages

### GRAVITY AREA - AREA 1

For 2024/2025 Gravity area 1 had estimated expenditure for the year of £20,884 equivalent to a rate of 17.00p and the Board set a rate of 17.00p which raised £20,884 in agricultural drainage rates and special levy. Included in the estimated expenditure was £2,457 to be raised to reinstate balances following the events of 2023/2024.

Net expenditure in 2024/25 was lower than the estimated budget. The main reason for the underspend was because of lower Drainworks of £8,296 against a budget of £12,575. For future years the board should consider a phased maintenance programme.

Therefore, the general fund balance has only increased by £7,685 to £13,557 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### PUMPED AREA - AREA 2

#### Storm Recovery Grant

Following the setting of the rates for 2024/2025 details concerning the Storm recovery Grant were released and claims had to be submitted within an incredibly tight timeframe. A claim for £9,213.81 was submitted on behalf of the Board for excess winter pumping costs (Tranche 1) which was successful and has now been paid

#### Actual Expenditure against Budget

For 2024/2025 Pumped area 2 had estimated expenditure for the year of £34,693 and the Board set the rate of 70.00p which raised £34,693 in agricultural drainage rates and special levy. Included in the estimated expenditure was £5,487 to be raised to reinstate balances following the events of 2023/24.

Net Expenditure in 2024/25 was £2,939 lower (after adjusting for the amount raised for restatement of balances) than the estimated budget because of several reasons. Drainworks were £8,563 higher than budget. Fuel costs were approximately £1,614 lower than budget, following a relatively average year for pumping volumes. Repairs and Renewals was under budget by £920. Other Improvement costs relating to the pump overhaul completed in the year at a cost of £129,920, the work carried out was fully funded from the Storm Recovery Grant Tranche 2. Therefore, the budget was under by £500.

As outlined above funded following the setting of the rates for 2024/25 we received a grant for the excess pumping costs from 2023/24, the amount that was recognised to the general fund was £7,739.60 and is described in more detail below.

Therefore, the general fund balance has increased to £10,138 as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

#### Summary:

Works carried out last year on the viability of the board which have been invoiced, as agreed were not paid and remain outstanding.

Both areas have General Fund balances at significantly lower than a year's expenditure in hand and as agreed this is to be rectified through future years rates.

These balances are reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested to review and approve.

## 1. Budgeting

- 1.1 The budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2025.

## 2. Payments for 2024

- 2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

## 3. Highland Water Contributions

- 3.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board can make a claim for funding to the Environment Agency for the additional costs of the onward management of water from the district's highland. It is at the Environment Agency's discretion if they pay the contribution, and it is accounted for within the local team's annual maintenance budget.
- 3.2 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 more than 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 £1,897.27. Following an earlier Government announcement, details were eventually released concerning the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for the first tranche (T1) was submitted in the sum of £9,213.81.

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 £1,470.84, which will be adjusted from the Storm Recovery Grant.

During the autumn of 2024/2025 we were notified by the Environment Agency that they were not able to meet all Highland Water payments in full for 2024/2025, however the RFCC have since made up the difference and we can confirm that the full Highland Water claims have been paid.

## 3. Storm Recovery Grant – T2A

- 3.1 During the year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the IDB's that they administer. As a result of the decisions made when setting the rates for 2024/2025 works that had already been started or was to be started meet the criteria to be Grant eligible. The following work was done and was 100% Grant funded as a result:

| <u>Work Done</u>              | <u>Value</u> | <u>Penny rate equivalent</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Connington PS - Pump Overhaul | £129,920     | 262.0p                       |
|                               | £129,920     | 262.0p                       |

## 4. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

- 4.1 Annual Return 2024/2025:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2025 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations.  
Appendix 2

**Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

**Role: Responsible Officer/Assistant Treasurer**

**Appendix 1      Payments for 2024/25**

**Appendix 2      Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/25**

**CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**Payments 2024/2025 (1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025)

|                                                                                                                                                  |                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Middle Level Commissioners - Taking electricity meter reads for start of new contract                                                            | 69.99                    |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and travelling                                       | 4,717.54                 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)                                       | 204.00                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)                                                                        | 33.00                    |
| Environment Agency - Precept                                                                                                                     | 1,136.36                 |
| Holme Village Hall - Expenses in connection with Board meeting                                                                                   | 30.00                    |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance                                                                                         | 227.47                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2023-2024 accounts)                                                        | 618.00                   |
| PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2023-2024 accounts)                                                                                              | 252.00                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges for 5 years to April 2027                                                                         | 288.00                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges                                                               | 4,641.19                 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)                                            | 148.80                   |
| Environment Agency - Precept                                                                                                                     | 1,136.36                 |
| Holme Village Hall - Expenses in connection with Board meeting                                                                                   | 100.00                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances                                                                                               | 743.33                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical inspection condition report (Account from CMS Electrical)                                      | 120.00                   |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)                                                                        | 137.40                   |
| Davies Contracting Limited - Drain maintenance                                                                                                   | 1,209.60                 |
| Sentry Farms Ltd - Flailmowing and slubbing of drains                                                                                            | 8,034.00                 |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)                                                                                | 663.00                   |
| Davies Contracting Limited - Drain maintenance                                                                                                   | 1,252.80                 |
| V & J Services - Flail mowing                                                                                                                    | 8,672.10                 |
| AxFlow - Lift Hiab and return to AxFlow                                                                                                          | 5,067.92                 |
| D R A Fabb Construction Ltd - Repair to both lower and higher areas for access to pumping station, hire of pumps for 4 weeks and removal of pump | 14,166.00                |
| AxFlow - Allen Gwynnes pump repair - Stage payment                                                                                               | 13,795.91                |
| AxFlow - Supply and install replacement control panel resistor start - Stage payment                                                             | 23,285.52                |
| UK Power Networks - To move existing electricity supply to a different location                                                                  | 1,948.80                 |
| Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration                                                                               | 52.00                    |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift                                                                                | 25.00                    |
| Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)                                                                        | 38.10                    |
| D R A Fabb Construction Ltd - Hire of pumps for 7 weeks                                                                                          | 9,475.20                 |
| AxFlow - Allen Gwynnes pump repair - Final payment                                                                                               | 23,285.52                |
| AxFlow - Supply and install replacement control panel resistor start - Final payment                                                             | 13,795.90                |
| Anglia Farmers - Meter operator agreement                                                                                                        | 105.23                   |
| IMServ - Data collector agreement                                                                                                                | 117.54                   |
| IMServ - Meter operator agreement                                                                                                                | 41.49                    |
| Corona Energy - Meter operator agreement                                                                                                         | (103.68)                 |
| Corona Energy - Electricity supply to pumping station                                                                                            | 4,013.44                 |
| Corona Energy - Electricity supply to pumping station - Payments on account                                                                      | 19,678.69                |
|                                                                                                                                                  | <u><u>163,223.52</u></u> |

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

**CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**  
**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025**

**GENERAL FUND**

**INCOME**

|             |                              | TOTAL      | GRAVITY<br>AREA | PUMPED<br>AREA |
|-------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <u>2024</u> |                              |            |                 |                |
| Apr-01      | Balance brought forward      | 7,136.06   | 5,871.28        | 1,264.78       |
| <u>2025</u> |                              |            |                 |                |
| Mar-31      | Rate income and Special levy | 55,577.90  | 20,884.20       | 34,693.70      |
|             | Interest of Deposit Accounts | 135.83     | 111.76          | 24.07          |
|             | Development Charges          | 58.00      | 58.00           | 0.00           |
|             | Highland Water Contributions | 3,400.76   | 1,470.84        | 1,929.92       |
|             | Write Back of Provisions     | 0.00       | 0.00            | 0.00           |
|             | Storm Recovery Grant - T1a   | 7,739.60   | 0.00            | 7,739.60       |
|             | Storm Recovery Grant - T2a   | 129,920.25 | 0.00            | 129,920.25     |
|             |                              |            |                 |                |
|             |                              | 203,968.40 | 28,396.08       | 175,572.32     |

**EXPENDITURE**

|             |                                                                            | TOTAL      | GRAVITY<br>AREA | PUMPED<br>AREA |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <u>2025</u> |                                                                            |            |                 |                |
| Mar-31      | Expenditure during the year:-                                              |            |                 |                |
|             | Precept                                                                    | 2,272.72   | 1,704.54        | 568.18         |
|             | Insurances                                                                 | 743.33     | 207.53          | 535.80         |
|             | Repairs and renewals                                                       | 430.14     | 0.00            | 430.14         |
|             | Fuel                                                                       | 8,636.41   | 0.00            | 8,636.41       |
|             | Drainworks                                                                 | 22,908.75  | 8,296.25        | 14,612.50      |
|             | Administration charge, Audit fee,<br>printing, stationery, advertising etc | 9,937.32   | 4,631.16        | 5,306.16       |
|             | Loan Repayment                                                             | 5,425.00   | 0.00            | 5,425.00       |
|             | Improvement Works<br>Conington Fen PS - Pump Overhaul                      | 129,920.25 | 0.00            | 129,920.25     |
|             | Balance Carried Forward                                                    | 23,694.48  | 13,556.60       | 10,137.88      |
|             |                                                                            |            |                 |                |
|             |                                                                            | 203,968.40 | 28,396.08       | 175,572.32     |

**CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**  
**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2025**

**LIABILITIES**

|                                                    | TOTAL      | GRAVITY<br>AREA | PUMPED<br>AREA |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b><u>CAPITAL SECTION</u></b>                      |            |                 |                |
| Capital Provisions Account                         | 610,000.00 | 4,064.75        | 605,935.25     |
| Loan account - Area 1 to Area 2                    | 0.00       | -4,064.75       | 4,064.75       |
| <b><u>REVENUE SECTION</u></b>                      |            |                 |                |
| General Fund                                       | 23,694.48  | 13,556.60       | 10,137.88      |
| Development Charges Account                        | 1,097.72   | 1,097.72        | 0.00           |
| Discharge Consent Contributions -<br>A1(M) Account | 34,309.57  | 34,309.57       | 0.00           |
| Future works account                               | 0.00       | 0.00            | 0.00           |
| Sundry Creditors                                   | 64,595.70  | 4,248.54        | 60,347.16      |
|                                                    | 733,697.47 | 53,212.43       | 680,485.04     |

**ASSETS**

|                                        | TOTAL      | GRAVITY<br>AREA | PUMPED<br>AREA |
|----------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b><u>CAPITAL SECTION</u></b>          |            |                 |                |
| Pumping Station (Valuation)            | 610,000.00 | 0.00            | 610,000.00     |
| <b><u>REVENUE SECTION</u></b>          |            |                 |                |
| Value added Tax - Refunds due          | 17,840.92  | 471.10          | 17,369.82      |
| Ratepayers Account - Arrears           | 1,745.41   | 1,745.41        | 0.00           |
| Sundry Debtors                         | 199.42     | 50.00           | 149.42         |
| Balance in hand:-                      |            |                 |                |
| Barclays -Treasurer's Account          | 29,900.00  |                 |                |
| Barclays -Business Premium             | 73,413.27  |                 |                |
| National Savings - Treasurer's Account | 598.45     |                 |                |
|                                        | 103,911.72 | 50,945.92       | 52,965.80      |
|                                        | 733,697.47 | 53,212.43       | 680,485.04     |

## Conington & Holme Internal Drainage Board

### Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025

#### Barclays - Treasurers Account 2024/2025

|                              |                          |                               |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1st April 2024               |                          | 31st March 2025               |                          |
| Balance brought forward      | 56,883.72                | Payments made during the year | 163,223.52               |
| 31st March 2024              |                          |                               |                          |
| Receipts during the year     |                          |                               |                          |
| Clerk's collection account   | 208,958.63               |                               |                          |
| Interest on deposit accounts | <u>691.44</u>            | Balance carried forward       | 103,310.27               |
|                              | 209,650.07               |                               |                          |
|                              | <u><u>266,533.79</u></u> |                               | <u><u>266,533.79</u></u> |

#### National Savings - Treasurers Account 2024/2025

|                              |                      |                               |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1st April 2024               |                      | 31st March 2025               |                      |
| Balance brought forward      | 592.96               | Payments made during the year | 0.00                 |
| 31st March 2025              |                      |                               |                      |
| Interest on deposit accounts | 5.49                 | Balance carried forward       | 598.45               |
|                              | <u><u>598.45</u></u> |                               | <u><u>598.45</u></u> |

#### Barclays Bank PLC

##### Current Account

|                                             |                   |                         |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025 |                   | 30,000.00               |
| Less unrepresented cheques                  | 23/08/2024 100794 | 100.00 100.00           |
| O/S lodgement                               |                   | 0.00                    |
| Balance per Trial Balance                   |                   | <u><u>29,900.00</u></u> |

### Cash balances as at 31st March 2025

#### Barclays Bank PLC

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Current Account          | 29,900.00 |
| Business Premium Account | 73,413.27 |

#### National Savings

|                                                    |                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Investment Account per passbook                    | 598.45                   |
| <u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u> | <u><u>103,911.72</u></u> |

**Conington & Holme IDB****Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2025****Per Annual  
Return**

|               |                                  |                   |                |
|---------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| <b>Line 1</b> | <b>Balances brought forward</b>  |                   |                |
|               | General Fund                     | 7,136.06          |                |
|               | Development Charges Account      | 1,134.13          |                |
|               | Discharge (A1M) Account          | 28,345.06         |                |
|               | Future Works Account             | 0.00              |                |
|               |                                  | <b>36,615.25</b>  | <b>36,615</b>  |
| <b>Line 2</b> | <b>Rates and Special Levies</b>  |                   |                |
|               | Agricultural rates               | 45,143.90         |                |
|               | Special Levies                   | 10,434.00         |                |
|               | Penalty                          | 0.00              |                |
|               | Costs                            | 0.00              |                |
|               | Write-off                        | 0.00              |                |
|               |                                  | <b>55,577.90</b>  | <b>55,578</b>  |
| <b>Line 3</b> | <b>Total other receipts</b>      |                   |                |
|               | Interest                         |                   |                |
|               | General fund                     | 135.83            |                |
|               | Development charges account      | 21.59             |                |
|               | Discharge (A1M) account          | 539.51            |                |
|               | Storm Recovery Grant             | 137,659.85        |                |
|               | Highland Water                   | 3,400.76          |                |
|               | Discharge contributions          | 0.00              |                |
|               | Write back of provisions         | 0.00              |                |
|               |                                  | <b>141,757.54</b> | <b>141,758</b> |
| <b>Line 4</b> | <b>Staff costs</b>               |                   |                |
|               | Wages/salaries                   | 0.00              |                |
|               | National insurance contributions | 0.00              |                |
|               | Pension costs                    | 0.00              |                |
|               | Travelling expenses              | 0.00              |                |
|               |                                  | <b>0.00</b>       | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>Line 5</b> | <b>Loan repayments</b>           |                   |                |
|               | PWLB - Principal                 | 0.00              |                |
|               | PWLB - Interest                  | 0.00              |                |
|               |                                  | <b>0.00</b>       | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>Line 6</b> | <b>All other payments</b>        |                   |                |
|               | Precept                          | 2,272.72          |                |
|               | Rates, insurances, telephones    | 743.33            |                |
|               | Repairs and renewals             | 430.14            |                |
|               | Fuel                             | 8,636.41          |                |
|               | Drainworks                       | 22,908.75         |                |
|               | Administration                   | 9,937.32          |                |
|               | Development charges fees         | 0.00              |                |
|               | Improvement works                | 129,920.25        |                |
|               |                                  | <b>174,848.92</b> | <b>174,849</b> |

**Conington & Holme IDB**

**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return**

**Financial year ended 31st March 2025**

**Per Annual  
Return**

|                      |                                 |                  |               |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| <b><u>Line 7</u></b> | <b>Balances carried forward</b> |                  |               |
|                      | General Fund                    | 23,694.48        |               |
|                      | Development Charges Account     | 1,097.72         |               |
|                      | Discharge (A1M) Account         | 34,309.57        |               |
|                      | Future Works Account            | 0.00             |               |
|                      |                                 | <hr/>            |               |
|                      |                                 | <b>59,101.77</b> | <b>59,102</b> |

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 59,101.77

**Balances carried forward**

Per Annual return **59,102.00**

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

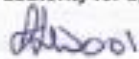
### CONINGTON & HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

|                                                             | Year ending        |                    | Notes and guidance                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                             | 31 March 2024<br>£ | 31 March 2025<br>£ |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1. Balances brought forward                                 | 34,249             | 36,615             | 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                          | 40,751             | 55,578             | Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.                                                                                 |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts                                 | 5,424              | 141,758            | Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.                                                                   |
| 4. (-) Staff costs                                          | 0                  | 0                  | Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments. |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments                     | 0                  | 0                  | Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).                                                                                      |
| 6. (-) All other payments                                   | 43,809             | 174,849            | Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).                                                                      |
| 7. (=) Balances carried forward                             | 36,615             | 59,102             | 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           | 57,480             | 103,912            | 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 | 610,000            | 610,000            | The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.                                                                      |
| 10. Total borrowings                                        | 0                  | 0                  | The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).                                                                                                        |

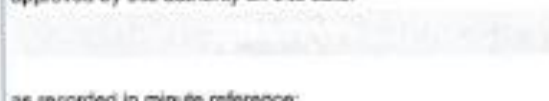
| For Local Councils Only                                    | Yes | No | N/A |                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets. |
| 11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable) |     |    |     | The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.                                |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 23-05-2025

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



as recorded in minute reference:



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

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                              |                      |                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                              | Item No:             | 12                              |
| Meeting:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | CONINGTON & HOLME<br>INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD | Subject:             | FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD |
| Date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025          | Officer Responsible: | Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett          |
| <p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>The Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary</li> <li>B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions</li> <li>C. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency</li> <li>D. Review &amp; Approve Rating Estimates for 2025/2026</li> <li>E. Consider &amp; approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2025/2026</li> </ul> |                                              |                      |                                 |

### Finance Officer's summary and key messages

#### GRAVITY AREA - AREA 1

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. The provision for drain maintenance works has been increased to a level which is more reflective of the works being carried out.

A provision has been included to recognise the need to restore the General Fund balance towards a year's expenditure in hand and members should consider the acceptable time-period for doing this.

#### PUMPED AREA - AREA 2

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. The provision for drain maintenance works has been increased to a level which is more reflective of the works being carried out.

Estimates for pumping costs are as problematical as last year in that we need to factor in an 'average' pumping year, taking-into-account the impact of climate change. Further, we will have a new electricity supply contract from October 2025 with no current indications of possible unit costs. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates (5% increase on 2024/25 rates). Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate.

Also included is an amount for the recovery of balances depleted during winter 2023/2024 pumping and to eventually build balances to a year's expenditure in hand. It is proposed to address this position over a four-year period.

The budget proposal does not include any amounts for improvement works at the pumping station and members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping station.

#### Summary:

The Board have benefited greatly by the Storm Recovery Grants. Boards must continue to address the problems of increased maintenance/operational costs of dealing with the likely effects of climate change and addressing the significant financial impact of dealing with the 2023/2024 rainfall events. The Board needs to continue to move towards a more financial resilient position and the Board are recommended to approve the estimates and the financial plan that these set out.

## **1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions**

- 1.1 ADA Subscription – fees are required on a bi-annual basis. The fees were last paid 2023, this means the fees are due 2025. The fee for the ADA subscription for 2025 is £678 (+ vat).

## **2. Precept to the Environment Agency**

- 2.1 Internal Drainage Boards are required to pay a Precept (IDB Precept) to the Environment Agency for their expenses managing water passing into main rivers. Predominantly, the Precept funds additional maintenance downstream of and/or benefitting IDB districts.
- 2.2 The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £2,272.72.

## **3. Estimates for 2025/26**

- 3.1 The estimated budget for 2025/26 is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Board are reminded that it is standard practice to budget for an average year in terms of rainfall and associated pumping requirements.

## **4. Rate Requirements for 2025/26**

- 4.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.
- 4.2 Board Members are welcome to propose alternative rate requirements and invite these for consideration by the Board along with their supporting rationale and proposed mechanism for catering within the budget estimate and/or the Board's investment strategy.

**Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

**Role: Responsible Officer/Assistant Treasurer**

**Appendix 1 Estimates for 2025/26**

**Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2025/26**

**CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**BUDGET 2025/2026**

**GRAVITY AREA (AREA 1)**

|                                                                                                                                                          | <u>Budget</u><br><u>2024/2025</u><br>£ | <u>Actual to</u><br><u>31/03/2025</u><br>£ | <u>Proposed Budget</u><br><u>2025/2026</u><br>£ |                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)                                                                                                          | 12,575                                 | 8,296 <sup>A</sup>                         | 11,821 <sup>B</sup>                             | A - Includes:<br>Slubbing & Flail Mowing 6,695<br>Slubbing 756                                                                         |
| 2 Repairs and renewals                                                                                                                                   | 50                                     | -                                          | 50                                              |                                                                                                                                        |
| 3 Insurances                                                                                                                                             | 100                                    | 208                                        | 218                                             | B - General provision <i>(based on prev years)</i><br>Drain maintenance programme to be agreed at meeting                              |
| 4 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc | 5,475                                  | 4,631                                      | 5,556                                           | <i>Total flail mowing for Board:</i><br>2020/2021 9,189<br>2021/2022 12,073<br>2022/2023 7,367<br>2023/2024 10,192<br>2024/2025 13,922 |
| 5 Environment Agency - Precept                                                                                                                           | 1,705                                  | 1,705                                      | 1,739                                           |                                                                                                                                        |
| 6 Reinstatement of balances                                                                                                                              | 2,457                                  | -                                          | 2,457 <sup>C</sup>                              | C - Provision to start to restore balances to a years expenditure in hand - provision equals a rate of 2p                              |
|                                                                                                                                                          | 22,362                                 | 14,839                                     | 21,841                                          |                                                                                                                                        |
| LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc                                                                                                                      | 1,478                                  | 1,641                                      | 957                                             |                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                          | 20,884                                 | 13,199                                     | 20,884                                          |                                                                                                                                        |

**CONINGTON AND HOLME INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**BUDGET 2025/2026**

**PUMPED AREA (AREA 2)**

|                                                                                                        | <u>Budget</u><br><u>2024/2025</u> | <u>Actual to</u><br><u>31/03/2025</u> | <u>Proposed Budget</u><br><u>2025/2026</u> | <u>Remarks</u>                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                        | £                                 | £                                     | £                                          |                                                                                                                     |
| 1 Drainworks (including Environmental measures)                                                        | 6,050                             | 14,613 <sup>A</sup>                   | 11,979 <sup>B</sup>                        | A - Includes:<br>Flail mowing 8,858<br>Slubbing 5,588                                                               |
| 2 Electricity                                                                                          | 10,250                            | 8,636                                 | 8,200 <sup>C</sup>                         |                                                                                                                     |
| 3 Repairs and renewals                                                                                 | 1,350                             | 430                                   | 1,559                                      | B - General provision ( <i>based on prev years</i> )<br>Drain maintenance programme to be agreed at meeting         |
| 4 Insurances                                                                                           | 500                               | 536                                   | 563 <sup>D</sup>                           |                                                                                                                     |
| 5 Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, etc | 5,475                             | 5,306                                 | 5,320                                      | C - Provision based on 2 year average plus increase in rates of 5% from October 2025                                |
| 6 Environment Agency - Precept                                                                         | 568                               | 568                                   | 580                                        | D - Includes estimate for increased premiums                                                                        |
| 7 Improvement works                                                                                    | 500                               | 129,920 <sup>E</sup>                  | -                                          | E - Pumping Station Overhaul                                                                                        |
| 8 Loan repayments ( <i>Year 6 &amp; 7 of 10</i> )                                                      | 1,055                             | 2,110 <sup>F</sup>                    | 1,055 <sup>G</sup>                         | F - Two Year Loan Repayments                                                                                        |
| 8 Loan repayments ( <i>Year 3 of 3</i> )                                                               | 595                               | 595 <sup>F</sup>                      | - <sup>G</sup>                             | G - From A1(M) account /Replacement weed-screen                                                                     |
| 8 Loan repayments ( <i>Year 1 of 3</i> )                                                               | 595                               | 1,190 <sup>F</sup>                    | 595 <sup>G</sup>                           | G - From A1(M) account / Motor & control panel repairs                                                              |
| 8 Loan repayments ( <i>Year 2 of 3</i> )                                                               | 765                               | 1,530 <sup>F</sup>                    | 383 <sup>G</sup>                           | G - From A1(M) account - Revenue funding support                                                                    |
| 8 Loan repayments ( <i>Year 1 of 10</i> )                                                              | -                                 | -                                     | -                                          | G - From A1(M) account / Telemetry installation                                                                     |
| 9 Loans - missed repayments 23/24                                                                      | 2,893                             | -                                     | -                                          | H - Reinstatement of balances - Year 2 of 4                                                                         |
| 10 Reinstatement of balances                                                                           | 5,933                             | -                                     | 5,933 <sup>H</sup>                         | J- Includes<br>T1a Storm Recovery Grant - Excess Pumping 7,740<br>T2 Storm Recovery Grant - Pumping Station 129,920 |
|                                                                                                        | 36,529                            | 165,434                               | 36,165                                     |                                                                                                                     |
| LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc                                                                    | 1,836                             | 139,614 <sup>J</sup>                  | 1,473                                      |                                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                        | 34,693                            | 25,821                                | 34,693                                     |                                                                                                                     |

Conington & Holme Internal Drainage BoardAREA 1Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2025/2026 is:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 54.10%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Huntingdonshire District Council – 45.90%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £665.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £1,228.

---

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - £13,557

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2025/2026 is £20,884 and equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 17.00p and
- b) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £9,586.

In 2024/2025 the Board set a rate of 17.00p in the £ together with a Special levy of £9,586 on Huntingdonshire District Council. **Members should give consideration to the current and required level of balances when setting the rate for 2025/2026**

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

June 2025

AREA 2

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Board must be borne for 2025/2026 is:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 97.56%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Huntingdonshire District Council – 2.44%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £484.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £496.

---

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 - £10,138.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2025/2026 is £34,693, and is equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 70.00p and
- b) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £848.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 70.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £848 on Huntingdonshire District Council. **Members should give consideration to the current and required level of balances when setting the rate for 2025/2026.**

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

June 2025

|                                            |                                     |                      |                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners |                                     | Item No:             | 13                                             |
| Meeting:                                   | CONINGTON & HOLME IDB               | Subject:             | MIDDLE LEVEL IDB CHANGE                        |
| Date:                                      | Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 | Officer Responsible: | Paul Burrows<br>On behalf of the working group |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Have an open and objective discussion about their health, their fitness for the future and their reliance and interdependency with the health of all other IDBs within the Middle Level and the Middle Level Commissioners.
- B. Respond to the questions posed to inform the approach to detailed design.
- C. Gauge the degree of support for taking control of change proactively locally.
- D. Provide a £300 contribution towards the costs of developing the detailed design.

## 1. Recap

- 1.1 As previously reported to the MLC Board and IDBs administered by the MLC, on 15<sup>th</sup> 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 has been identified to draft an initial case for change.
- 1.2 The working group met on 5<sup>th</sup> 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 note from the meeting was issued on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- 1.3 The Middle Level Board of the Middle Level Commissioners, recognising their leadership, convening and facilitating role, as well as their interest in the governance and operational health of IDBs within their catchment, approved £10k of seed funding used to commission an outline design report. Gradeas Consulting Limited was engaged to undertake this work.
- 1.4 The working group met on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to review the draft report and agree the approach to crucial engagement with IDBs that is essential in moving forward with the work into a detailed design phase.
- 1.5 The outline design report has been made available to IDB Chairman and Board Members to be read in conjunction with this paper.

## 2. Case for Change – Key Messages

- 2.1 There are a variety of factors that contribute to the view that the current IDB governance model within the Middle Level is not sufficiently robust for future generations, with an increasing number of IDBs being in poor financial and membership health today.
  - a) Changes in agriculture and land-ownership, with fewer family farms reducing the scale of hands-on active IDB membership, along with a general aging demographic.
  - b) Degradation of pumping stations the majority of which are at the end of their reliable life, with insufficient funds and complex governance arrangements stifling proactive and efficient investment.
  - c) A steady increase in legislative and statutory responsibilities, along with increased societal and government expectations of IDBs meaning the resources and costs

associated with these overheads have become a sizeable proportion of overall expenditure, particularly for smaller IDBs. This is set to increase further.

- d) Increasing operational pressures as climate change accelerates and IDBs have to adapt to dealing with extremes of drought and high, intense rainfall, whilst being highly vulnerable to energy costs.
- e) The inherent financial dependence upon eligibility, availability and leverage of government grant with responsible investment strategies being beyond the reach of many IDBs' rate and levy payer base.

2.2 Given the two-tier nature of water management within the Middle Level **we collectively are only as strong as the weakest link**, so whilst an IDB may be or may consider themselves relatively fit for the future, they ought to consider the landscape scale position.

2.3 Boards need to be mindful that the scale of change potentially needed in the Middle Level would be beyond the 'business as usual' IDB amalgamations that are ongoing or have happened in recent history and would therefore need significant resourcing to enact and implement. This would need to be programmed and resourced with the Environment Agency and Defra. Even with dedicated and bespoke drive, realistically any change we stimulate now would take a 5-15 year period to come to fruition. The problem ought not to be left to the next generation to fix.

2.4 The five key messages the working group would encourage the Board to consider are:

- 1. The need to **future-proof** – thinking about the next two generations of farmer, land manager and beneficiary.
- 2. The ambition to **retain local control** – the increasing risk of change being designed and directed nationally.
- 3. Our collective ability to inform and **influence** locally, regionally and nationally to strengthen our negotiating position to **lever investment** and policy change, as well as **deliver efficiently and effectively to avoid higher future costs**.
- 4. The **changing representation** within IDB membership given changes in land-use, development and water level management.
- 5. The need for a more **cost-effective delivery model** with overhead costs proportionate to expenditure.

### 3. Outline Design – Questions for IDBs and individual Board Members

3.1 The approach taken to the outline design has been an objective, analytical one driven by readily available data. Collectively we need to add the operational view and Middle Level knowledge to focus and scope the next stage of detailed design.

3.2 Having reviewed the draft outline design report the working group debated the outline options and despite a range of differing views, they suggest that:

- a) The option of one or two IDBs is not progressed to detailed design as it was felt that this would create an entity that is too big and would arguably be as cumbersome to govern and service as the existing model. There is little appetite for becoming the largest IDB in the country.
- b) Options for five or six IDBs are not developed, supporting the view and rationale presented within the report (Section 7).
- c) Options for three and four IDBs are progressed to detailed design.

3.3 Alongside seeking the views of IDBs via this paper the working group suggested that an online form be made available for individual Board Members to also submit their views and that in parallel to this engagement we write to the following seeking their view and steer:

- a) Local Authorities, including Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)
- b) Environment Agency
- c) Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC)
- d) Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)

e) Defra

- 3.4 Questions for IDBs to consider and feedback via the Chairman to the MLC Chief Executive by close on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

|            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Q1</b>  | <b>On a scale of 1-10, do you consider that there is a need for change?</b><br>1 = don't see a need to change to 10 = radical reform is long overdue.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Q2</b>  | <b>What are your hopes and fears for the future and within any new model?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Q3</b>  | <b>Do you consider that your IDB is fit for the future?</b><br>Yes or No – Please explain your answer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Q4</b>  | <b>What are the current strengths of your IDB that you wish to see retained within any new model and what are the weaknesses you wish to see mitigated?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Q5</b>  | <b>Do you agree that the options of one, two, five and six IDBs are not progressed to detailed design?</b><br>Yes or No – Please explain your rationale if you disagree.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Q6</b>  | <b>Which options to you feel warrant progressing to detailed design, or have you an alternative suggestion?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Q7</b>  | <b>Do you have a preferred option from within the outline design options of three and four IDBs? Yes or No - If yes, which option and explain why.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Q8</b>  | <b>The report references a number of considerations that could be considered further within detailed design <i>eg specific boundaries, differential rates, ringfencing accrued budgets, operational districts, employee and the service delivery model.</i> Which of these is most important to you and why? Have you any specific issues or observations you would like to be assessed?</b> |
| <b>Q9</b>  | <b>Are you supportive of any change being designed and led locally and what role would you like to play within this?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Q10</b> | <b>Have you any other feedback or issues that you feel have not been considered within the work so far?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

#### **4. Next steps and potential timescales**

- 4.1 The aim is for feedback to be consolidated over summer and reviewed by the working group in September 2025.
- 4.2 If human and financial resources are available and the feedback corroborates the need to act, the detailed design will then be scoped and commissioned with the ambition to present the results and seek IDB approval to a preferred option at their 2026 meetings.

**Author Name: Paul Burrows**

**Role:**

**Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners**

**Working group members:**

**Mick Mottram, Michael Dale, Emma Alerton, Sam Johnson, David Boyce, Jonathan Brown, Hugh Whittome, Marc Heading, Richard Price, Paul Burrows (plus other MLC staff inputs)**