

HADDENHAM LEVEL DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners
held at the Baptist Hall, Haddenham on Thursday 24th April 2025.

PRESENT

M Church (Chair)	R Darby	K Robinson
C Bidwell	Mrs R Dennis	N Tebbitt
I Chambers	R Flint	E Veal
T Chambers	K Furness	R Waddelow
S Cheetham (ECDC)	T Hughes	G Wilson (ECDC)
E Claydon-Lee	R Lee	N Wright
J Darby	A Lensen	A Yarrow
Mrs M Darby	P Mappedoram	

Miss Ablett representing the Clerk and Mr David Jordan (District Engineer) were in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from J Dennis, W Dennis and Mrs L Flint.

C.557 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman 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.

Mrs Rachel Dennis declared an interest in any item in the agenda concerning the construction of the irrigation reservoirs.

The Chairman declared an interest in all matters relating to the District Officer.

C.558 Confirmation of Minutes**RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 7th November 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.559 Matters Arising

The Chairman referred to minute no. C.549 c) and reported the new Atlas excavator had been delivered on 31st January 2025 and was working well.

He also referred to minute no. C.553 and confirmed the repairs to the culvert at Cracknell Drove had been completed satisfactorily.

C.560 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Polly Tombleson
RECOMMENDATIONS The Board is asked to: A. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board. B. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary. C. Consider filling the position of Vice-Chairman. D. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos. E. 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	24	N/A		6
Actual	24	2 ECDC	26	
Vacancies	0			

- 1.2 The table below details the current appointed Commissioners

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	C Bidwell	Landowner/ratepayer	
2	C Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
3	I Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
4	T Chambers	Landowner/ratepayer	
5	M Church	Representative of A G Wright & Sons	Chairman
6	J Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
7	M Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
8	R Darby	Landowner/ratepayer	
9	J Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
10	R Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
11	W Dennis	Landowner/ratepayer	
12	L Flint	Nominee of Mrs L Burton	
13	R Flint	Nominee of Mrs L Burton	
14	K Furness	Representative of E R Everett & Son	
15	T Hughes	Representative of BS Pell Trust	
16	R Lee	Landowner/ratepayer	
17	A Lensen	Representative of A G Reserves Ltd	
18	P Mappledoram	Landowner/ratepayer	
19	K Robinson	Representative of Sutton Smallholders	
	J Smith	Representative of A G Wright & Sons	Vice-Chair resigned 10/1/2025
20	N Tebbitt	Landowner/ratepayer	
21	E Veal	Landowner/ratepayer	
22	R Waddelow	Landowner/ratepayer	
23	N Wright	Landowner/ratepayer	
24	A Yarrow	Landowner/ratepayer	

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

No	Name	Appointing Council as at July 2023	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	S Cheetham	HPC	Councillor

2	G Wilson	ECDC	Councillor
3			
4			

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	7/11/2024	18/09/2024	25/04/2024	2/11/2023
1	C Bidwell		Present	Present	
2	C Chambers				
3	I Chambers		Present	Present	Present
4	T Chambers	Apologies		Present	Present
5	M Church	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	A J Darby	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	M Darby	Apologies		Present	Present
8	R Darby	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	J Dennis	Apologies			
10	R Dennis	Present	n/a	n/a	n/a
11	W Dennis	Apologies			
12	L Flint	Apologies		Apologies	apologies
13	R Flint	Apologies		Present	apologies
14	K Furness	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
15	T Hughes		Present	Present	apologies
16	R Lee	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
17	A Lensen	Present		Present	Present
18	P Mappedoram	Apologies		Apologies	Present
19	K Robinson	Present		Present	Present
	J Smith	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
20	N Tebbitt		Present	Present	
21	E Veal			Apologies	
22	R Waddelow			Present	Present
23	N Wright	Apologies		Apologies	Present
24	A Yarrow	Present	Present	Present	Present

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/04/2022
1	M Church	Present	Present	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	7/11/2024	18/09/2024	25/04/2024	2/11/2023
1	Cllr S Cheetham HPC	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Cllr G Wilson ECDC	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present

3					
4					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To consider the appointment of Vice-Chair.

4. Training

4.1 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/>

4.2 To date 1 of 26 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 1 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 1 of the five videos
To date 17 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the five videos
To date 1 of 26 Board members have reported viewing 4 of the five videos

4.3 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.

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

The Commissioners considered the report.

The Chairman introduced Ed Claydon-Lee and advised he had been appointed as a representative of A G Wright & Sons (Farms) Ltd and welcomed him to the Commissioners.

Annual Appointments

The Chairman reported that it was necessary for the Commissioners to appoint a Vice-Chairman and enquired whether there were any proposals.

Mr R Darby proposed Ed Claydon-Lee, which was seconded by Mr R Lee. As there were no further proposals, it was agreed that Mr Claydon-Lee be appointed as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Michael Church be appointed as Chairman of the Commissioners

That Ed Claydon-Lee be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Commissioners

C.561 Clerk's Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	CLERK'S REPORT
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.

1. 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.

On 18th October 2024 we were informed that the Environment Agency has insufficient budget to cover all the IDB Highland Water Claims for 2024/25 and there was a greater shortfall in budget predicted for 2025/26. This would have had an impact to all IDBs with highland, however a significant impact to a handful (including the MLC) where there is a sizeable highland area in proportion to rated area. We've been leading work with the IDBs locally to outline the impact that this would have on rates/levies or drain maintenance.

The good news is that the Environment Agency have now increased the grant allocation available for Highland Water in 2025/26, so there is unlikely to be a shortfall next year. They have increased the allocation by moving funds from capital to revenue.

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) met on 13th February 2025 to review and decide if they would and could cover the 2024/25 shortfall of £335k across

IDBs within the Great Ouse catchment. Paul Burrows was invited onto the Committee table for this item to give an IDB input, with other members of the Committee having declared their interests as some are also IDB Board Members. It was a wide-ranging discussion with a variety of views, but we are pleased to report that in the end they determined that the shortfall would be covered by their Local Levy funding. This is a one-off gesture and Local Levy is not considered a sustainable source of funding for any future shortfall.

Whilst this does alleviate the short-term impact, the risk remains that we will be back in a similar place in 2026/27. Rather than needing to formulate and submit and Ministerial appeal, we will now use more productively to highlight the issues and actions that are outside of IDB control and/or influence that the RFCC, Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Defra and others need to take forward so water in our highlands can be better managed to hopefully reduce the costs associated with IDB onward management of highland water, reducing future claims.

2. 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

Miss Ablett drew the Commissioners attention to the Clerks Report and asked members to note its content.

C.562 Transfer of Service Provision

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5a
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	TRANSFER OF SERVICE PROVISION
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows Clerk to the IDB and MLC Chief Executive

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Confirm their approval of their future service provider arrangements by minute at a quorate board meeting.
- B. Review and approve the resolutions in Section 3 of this paper to enable the effective transfer of services to the nominated future service provider(s).

1. Recap

- 1.1 In July 2024, the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) provided notice of a re-focussing of their service provision to local Internal Drainage Boards.
- 1.2 As a result, they issued notice to this Board that their service offer would discontinue and that the IDB would need to source an alternative service provider(s) to come into effect from 1st April 2026 at the latest. This covers all the services currently provided by MLC, i.e. clerking (admin, governance and finance), environment, M&E, planning & consenting, operations, survey, GIS and capital works.
- 1.3 The Middle Level Commissioners will conclude the year-end accounts and annual returns for the IDB for 2025/26, which happens after 1st April 2026. It should be acknowledged that there may be certain pieces of work or activities that need to continue after this date as part of a transition plan.
- 1.4 This Board have now confirmed that the following service provider(s) will be managing board affairs moving forward and they have agreed the service provider(s) relevant terms of engagement.

Service	Organisation
Clerking (inc Office functions, Finance, Governance, Insurance & Utilities)	further to board decision (Recommendation A)
Environmental	further to board decision (Recommendation A)
M&E	further to board decision (Recommendation A) or N/A where there are no M&E assets
Planning & Consenting	further to board decision (Recommendation A)
Capital Works and other Technical Services	further to board decision (Recommendation A)

2. Transition

- 2.1 Transition arrangements are to be completed by the 1st of April 2026 and will include elements set out in section 3 of this report. MLC and new service provider will work together to deliver these throughout the 2025/2026 financial year.
- 2.2 A year end/start handover is preferable to an in-year handover. However, an in-year transfer of some aspects of service provision may be practical.

3. Resolutions

- 3.1 The Board is asked to review and approve the following resolutions to enable the effective transfer of services and to manage their risks and those of the respective suppliers:

Ref	Theme	Resolution
A	Clerkship	That the position of clerk to the IDB transfer from Middle Level Commissioners to the approved future service provider at or as close to 1 st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date.
B	Finance	That the RFO from the approved future service provider be added to the Barclays Bank PLC Mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board. Once handover of Financial services is complete, then MLC staff are resolved to be removed from the mandate and authorisations. The Board also approve to change banks, if required, by the new service provider.
C	Finance	That the RFO from the approved future service provider be added as an additional administrator to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform and once handover of Financial services is complete, they will become the primary administrator and MLC staff are resolved to be removed as administrators.
D	Finance	That the position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to the IDB in transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners' Head of Finance to the RFO of the approved future service provider at or as close to 1 st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date. At this point the Board will need to adopt new Financial Regulations and Internal Controls.
E	Finance	That at the point of handover, the IDB are removed from the Middle Level Commissioners group banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC.
F	Finance	That the Middle Level Commissioners will finalise and submit accounts for 2025/26 and the IDB1 return.
G	Finance	That the preparation of 2026/27 budget estimates and rate assessment be developed by both parties, but any meetings and decisions made after the position of clerk has been handed-over be led by the approved future service provider. The issuing and collection of drainage rates for 2026/27 along with collection of past debt will be undertaken by the new service provider after handover of banking arrangements and the RFO role.
H	Finance	That the Board's internal audit services move from the Middle Level Commissioners' group arrangements with Whitings LLP to that as agreed with the approved future service provider as of April 2026.
I	Clerkship	That the approved future service provider provides a named person who becomes a shadow Data Protection Officer on behalf of the Board alongside the Lead Clerk of the Middle Level Commissioners and that both parties are considered as 'Data Handlers' on behalf of the Board who is 'Data Controller'.
J	Clerkship	Once handover of all data and information for all areas of service provision has been completed, then the person nominated in K above becomes the Board's sole Data Protection Officer.
K	Clerkship	That the Board authorise their 'Data Handlers' to transfer all relevant data and information, including personal data and any operational information held.
L	Clerkship	Authorise the approved future service provider to develop a shadow webpage for the Board and the removal of the MLC hosted webpage once clerkship services have transferred. At this point the Board approve to adopt their new supplier's Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure with the new supplier being the new public and partner point of contact for the Board at this point for all incoming/outgoing correspondence.
M	Clerkship	Other than the Board's Financial Regulations, Internal Controls, Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure, the Board's other existing policies will

		remain in place until new or adapted policies are proposed by their new suppliers.
N	Clerkship	That the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners Group insurance policy until they are included within their new suppliers' arrangements.
O	Clerkship	Where relevant the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners group approach to electricity contract arrangements (current contract ends Sept 2025) until they are included within their new suppliers' arrangements. The Board recognise this may be before or after 1 st April 2026.
P	Governance	The Board will adopt the model Reserved Matters, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation of the new service provider from 1 April 2026.
Q	H&S	The IDB H&S lead and the new service provider will let the MLC know, if appropriate to the IDB, whether the current services of COPE Safety Management as advisors to the Board (within MLC Group arrangements with COPE) will continue or whether there will be a new approach. The IDB H&S lead will inform the new service provider of all details relating to any near miss, learning events, or other relevant Health and Safety related events or information pertaining to the IDB and its operation.
R	Capital Works	The MLC will provide transfer all details and IPR relating to capital projects and their management and admin underway or in a medium-term plan for the IDB and will inform the Environment Agency and DEFRA of the change of service provider where required.
S	Other Services	That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the approved future service provider to the transition arrangements (including timescales and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.
T	Finance	That payroll functions for the Board's employee will transfer and their pension arrangements will transfer from MLC to the new service provider. As the employee is employed by the Board and not the MLC, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) – TUPE – does not apply.

4. Next steps

- 4.1 With resolutions in place, existing and approved future service provider(s) can undertake the transition and handover with confidence and with risk managed.
- 4.2 Timescales, handover dates and associated issues will be reported to the Chairman and tabled at future meetings of the Board. Special meetings of the Board may be required.

Author Name: Paul Burrows

Role:

Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners

Clerk to Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners

The Chairman reported that as advised at the last meeting he and Jack Smith had met with both the Ely Group and the Water Management Alliance (WMA) and considered the latter to be more favourable as the Ely Group required the Commissioners to amalgamate with the other Boards who were transferring to them.

The Chairman further reported that another meeting with the WMA had taken place to which Mr N Wright, Mr R Lee and Mr E Clayton-Lee had accompanied him.

Mr Wright advised Members that the meeting had gone well and in his opinion the proposal put forward was excellent. Mr Lee advised that he had been impressed at the meeting and considered the WMA to be a professional organisation with the resources available to provide the Commissioners with a good service. He added that as part of the package the Commissioners would only be charged for the services used and he advised the WMA were happy to attend the Commissioners' meetings in the evening at Baptist Hall in Haddenham.

The Chairman advised he had received quotes from the Ely Group and the WMA being £19,427 and £19,812, respectively. He added that these were slightly higher than the amount of £17,500 being charged by the Middle Level Commissioners.

Mr R Lee proposed that the WMA be the future service provider for the Commissioners. This was seconded by Mr N Wright.

It was then voted upon and agreed unanimously to move to WMA.

Mr Wright considered the Commissioners should move to the WMA as soon as possible and enquired whether there was any reason they had to wait until the 1st of April 2026.

Miss Ablett advised that transferring services part way through a financial year would not be advisable and would not be practical for any of the parties involved. She advised the Clerk had already had a conversation with the WMA who had confirmed they would not wish to provide their services part way through a financial year. She added that transferring the service on 1st April 2026 would allow all parties sufficient time to undertake the transition and handover with confidence.

Miss Ablett advised the Middle Level Commissioners would deal with matters until 1st April 2026, although some finance works may need to be handled by Middle Level Commissioners until later in the year. This is likely to include end of year accounts and preparation and submission of the IDB1 return.

Mr Wright did not expect the Commissioners to pay any extra money to facilitate the transition especially as the Middle Level Commissioners had asked the Commissioners to find an alternative service provider. Miss Ablett confirmed she would convey this to the Clerk.

Miss Ablett advised the Commissioners that there were a number of resolutions required to enable the effective transfer of services to the new service provider.

The Chairman proposed that these resolutions be approved, and this was seconded by Mr R Lee.

The Commissioners approved the resolutions unanimously and for the transition arrangements to be completed by 1st April 2026.

RESOLVED

The Commissioners approved that their future service provider would be the Water Management Alliance and resolved that the Chairman continue to finalise arrangements with them.

Service	Organisation
Clerking (inc Office functions, Finance, Governance, Insurance & Utilities)	Water Management Alliance
Environmental	Water Management Alliance
Planning & Consenting	Water Management Alliance
Capital Works and other Technical Services	Water Management Alliance

The Commissioners made the following resolutions to enable the effective transfer of services from the Middle Level Commissioners to the Water Management Alliance.

- A That the position of clerk to the IDB transfer from Middle Level Commissioners to the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date.
- B That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added to the Barclays Bank PLC Mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board. Once handover of Financial services is complete, then MLC staff are resolved to be removed from the mandate and authorisations. The Board also approve to change banks, if required, by the Water Management Alliance.
- C That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added as an additional administrator to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform and once handover of Financial services is complete, they will become the primary administrator and MLC staff are resolved to be removed as administrators.
- D That the position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to the IDB in transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners' Head of Finance to the RFO of the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date. At this point the Board will need to adopt new Financial Regulations and Internal Controls.
- E That at the point of handover, the IDB are removed from the Middle Level Commissioners group banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC.
- F That the Middle Level Commissioners will finalise and submit accounts for 2025/26 and the IDB1 return.
- G That the preparation of 2026/27 budget estimates and rate assessment be developed by both parties, but any meetings and decisions made after the position of clerk has been handed-over be led by the Water Management Alliance. The issuing and collection of drainage rates for 2026/27 along with collection of past debt will be undertaken by the Water Management Alliance after handover of banking arrangements and the RFO role.
- H That the Board's internal audit services move from the Middle Level Commissioners' group arrangements with Whittings LLP to that as agreed with the Water Management Alliance as of April 2026.
- I That the Water Management Alliance provides a named person who becomes a shadow Data Protection Officer on behalf of the Board alongside the Lead Clerk of the Middle Level Commissioners and that both parties are considered as 'Data Handlers' on behalf of the Board who is 'Data Controller'.
- J Once handover of all data and information for all areas of service provision has been completed, then the person nominated in I above becomes the Board's sole Data Protection Officer.
- K That the Board authorise their 'Data Handlers' to transfer all relevant data and information, including personal data and any operational information held.
- L Authorise the Water Management Alliance to develop a shadow webpage for the Board and the removal of the MLC hosted webpage once clerkship services have transferred. At this point the Board approve to adopt their new supplier's Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure with the new supplier being the new public and partner point of contact for the Board at this point for all incoming/outgoing correspondence.
- M Other than the Board's Financial Regulations, Internal Controls, Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure, the Board's other existing policies will remain in place until new or adapted policies are proposed by the Water Management Alliance.
- N That the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners Group insurance policy until they are included within the Water Management Alliance arrangements.

- O The Board will adopt the model Reserved Matters, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation of the Water Management Alliance from 1 April 2026.
- p The IDB H&S lead and the Water Management Alliance will let the MLC know, if appropriate to the IDB, whether the current services of COPE Safety Management as advisors to the Board (within MLC Group arrangements with COPE) will continue or whether there will be a new approach.
The IDB H&S lead will inform the Water Management Alliance of all details relating to any near miss, learning events, or other relevant Health and Safety related events or information pertaining to the IDB and its operation.
- Q The MLC will provide transfer all details and IPR relating to capital projects and their management and admin underway or in a medium-term plan for the IDB and will inform the Environment Agency and DEFRA of the change of service provider where required.
- R That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the Water Management Alliance to the transition arrangements (including timescales and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.

C.563 Environment Officers' Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	HADDENHAM IDB	Subject:	ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Sofi Lloyd

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the updated Environmental Services Package will take effect from April 2025.
- B. Be informed that an environmental review and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) update meeting has taken place and the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and policies are being drawn up for acceptance. Please make interim provision for the new BAP to be reviewed, agreed and adopted prior to the next Board meeting.
- C. Note that the new Hedgerow Regulations 2024 prohibits the cutting of any hedge growing on agricultural land between the 1st March - 31th August inclusive.
- D. Be reminded that any non-routine maintenance including bank slip repairs or reprofiling, culvert installation or replacements, tree felling, established scrub removal and channel de-watering require environmental screening well ahead of the planned works, to ensure works are compliant, using the request form available on the MLC website: [Conservation – Middle Level](#)
- E. Be aware that you will require licenced supervision of certain works that take place around badger setts, which MLC can provide.
- F. Note that a Board Representative will be required to attend a biodiversity training day in 2025. Those who have some control over the works undertaken within the district is best placed to attend.
- G. A reminder that the Board has a culverting policy and a presumption against culverting unless no other feasible option is available: [Standing Advice – Middle Level](#).
- H. Review the water vole myth busting summary attached to the Board Report.

1) Biodiversity Action Plan & environmental review

A successful review meeting took place earlier this year and the agreed refreshed biodiversity action plan and policies are now being drawn up for formal adoption.

2) Water Quality Issues

Michael and David brought to the attention of the Environmental Services Manager and Planning Officer during recent visits, and showed us examples of the channels that had appeared to be affected by volumes of fine sand and sediment. In all cases, problem areas of drain were a short distance downstream of dewatering outfalls from the nearby Mick George quarry. These areas have had to be desilted much more regularly than other nearby drains to maintain conveyance, as sediment had built up considerably over short periods. The extra work has also been an added cost to the IDB. Ochre pollution from the sediment is significant and there are concerns of the effect that this and the sedimentation is having on biodiversity in the channel, particularly due to its county wildlife designation for aquatic plants. The Planning Officer has since met with the quarry team and recommended improvements to the pump positioning to minimise sediment volume entrained during dewatering. This approach will form a standard clause in all consents for quarry discharges going forward and the situation will continue to be monitored by the MLC team, District Officer & Chairman.

3) Environmental Services Package Update

Further to the update and discussion at the Middle Level IDB Chairs meeting in December 2024, you will have seen and heard us over the previous 12 months, setting out our plans and reasoning for focussing, updating and re-defining the range of services that we provide to IDBs across and beyond the Middle Level. We plan to launch the new Environmental Services Package in 2025/26, as this will help IDBs to begin to significantly improve and evidence their environment compliance and delivery straight away. This also ensures that the Middle Level Commissioners are not under-writing other IDBs environmental responsibilities.

For the Boards where services from the Middle Level Commissioners will be discontinued from 1st April 2026, the new service provision will identify the actions and approaches the Board should progress through the 2025/26 period in order to maintain compliance until a new service provider is in place. The service package will also enable and facilitate a smooth transition. Please use information in this letter to help scope, define, compare and negotiate the environmental services you'll require from your new supplier(s).

Background

Historically, IDBs have made a small contribution towards the MLC Environment Officers' salary to access ecological and environmental advice and guidance if required, in a mostly re-active manner. There has been little definition around what services have been included.

However, protecting and improving biodiversity and the environment are higher than ever on the political agenda, and the Government is looking for strong and proactive environmental delivery from Public Bodies to contribute towards their own challenging statutory environmental targets. As such, legislation and scrutiny has strengthened significantly around how IDBs deliver their statutory environmental duties. This is demonstrated by the recent changes to the information Defra requests via the IDB1 report.

Also, the general public is nowadays much better informed and aware of the state of nature and have more confidence in challenging IDBs about their environmental delivery and compliance. For these reasons, it is more important than ever for IDBs to be able to evidence how they have considered the environment when determining their approaches to flood risk and water level management.

Inevitably, this has meant that IDBs now require greater support to meet and evidence their statutory environmental duties. There has also been a growth in demand for suitably capable and qualified ecologists and the market hasn't kept pace with the demand, therefore salaries have increased similarly to other in-demand professional services. This also reflects that these days ecologists also

take personal liability, thus if something goes wrong on their watch then, notwithstanding the responsibility and prosecution risk for IDB Board members, they can also be 'struck-off', a bit like doctors. They therefore need to be reassured about who they are working for and the associated commitment to compliance of the organisation.

Going forward

As outlined at the Chairs meeting in December 2024, we have developed an Environmental Service Package that aims to support IDBs to achieve minimum statutory environmental compliance. The details of the new package are set out below:

Environmental Services Package

Ref:	Category:	Details:	Days Equivalent:
1.	General Consultancy (inc. retained service)	Up to 2 days general consultancy which can be used for: - Screening and assessment of non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process. - Preliminary habitat and species surveys & reporting* - Ad-hoc advice and guidance. - Initial advice & communications for pollution incidents - INNS identification and advice. - Biodiversity Action Plan BAP ditch survey & reporting**	2
2.	Environmental Compliance Health Checking	- One environmental review with MLC Env. & Ecol. staff per year & subsequent reporting. - Review must include budget setting & expenditure recording for reporting to Defra (IDB1). - Review & assessment of proposed annual programme of works prior to Board approval. - BAP report & review for Board.	1.25
3.	Planning Ecology Services	- Up to 1 day for consent applications advice & guidance^ - Over 1 day will be charged on a time and materials basis. This includes responses to Local Plans and Strategies on the IDBs behalf.	1
4.	Keeping up-to-date	Communication of relevant updates in policy, legislation, regulation and best practice.	1
5.	Training	Attendance for up to 2 candidates at 1 environmental training day per year.	1
Total:			6.25 days p.a.
Cost (2025/26)			£2,375

Notes: *Any surveys or mitigations that follow on from preliminary surveys, including licenced work such as water vole displacement, will be charged on a time and materials basis or can be contracted out if MLC staff are fully booked.

** Any unused consultancy balance can be used to cover the recommended annual 1-day BAP ditch survey, with any shortfall charged separately. If any pre-works surveys (ESRs) are undertaken in the year, they will be extended so that they count as the BAP ditch survey for efficiency.

^ For activity not rechargeable to developers/consent applicants.

Unused category balances can be used to cover shortfalls in other categories within the financial year as mutually agreed. Unused balances cannot be carried forward outside the financial year but its use can be discussed with MLC with potential for it to be used to contribute towards assisting the IDB to progress a BAP objective instead if capacity allows.

For IDBs who also contract operational services from MLC (via Morgan Lakey, Operations Manager), there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures

into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995 (2025/26).

We are confident that the above service provision will deliver the range of support that is most frequently requested and required by IDBs and reflects what is necessary to achieve and demonstrate minimum environmental compliance.

However, the minimum service package is not exhaustive and is not all-inclusive, therefore additional ad-hoc consultancy, charged on a time and materials basis will still be available if needed and where MLC staff capacity allows. This could include:

- Supervision of Licenced CL27 drainage operations over a badger sett
- Licenced protected species activities including water vole displacements and badger sett disturbance / closures etc.
- Habitat creation or enhancement consultancy and habitat condition assessments
- Invasive species control

Where we have insufficient capacity to deliver additional consultancy, we will be able to advise on your selection of third-party supplier and provide them with advice, however the IDB would take on the client role and be the organisation commissioning the supplier, overseeing their delivery and performance.

Benefits of a service provided by MLC

Our commitment is that our fees will remain not for profit and will be very competitive compared with peer IDBs and those of qualified external profit-making environmental consultants.

It is our intention that from 1st April 2025, the service package fees will be charged. For IDBs who also contract their operational services from us via Morgan Lakey, there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995.

IDB ecology and the IDB industry is quite niche (e.g. bespoke ecological and environmental licenses and permits). Our ecologists specialise in and represent the local and national IDB industry interests and challenge local and national policy where it is not enabling of our work. We have strength of voice in representing the largest number of IDBs in the country. An example of this is the successful legal challenge made to Natural England last year to clarify and amend the conditions within the IDB-specific badger licence (CL27) to make it more enabling of our routine maintenance work taking place around badger setts. This was not something that ADA, our national representative was able to progress for us, despite the implications for IDBs nationally. Our ecologists also hold multiple IDB-relevant protected species licences and can carry out licenced activities most commonly required by IDBs for a much-reduced cost compared to an external ecological consultancy.

There are an increasing number of funding opportunities available for a wide range of environmental improvements, including those which could be of benefit to IDBs. This includes biodiversity net gain funding, peat conservation and developer contributions such as Section 106 funding. Many of these require use of local, regional and national networks, personal relationships and partnerships, along with a landscape scale view. We provide this as we invest in it to benefit the Middle Level Commissioners. We therefore can help IDBs to be better placed and more competitive to access such funding by evidencing their experience and competence in delivering positive outcomes for biodiversity in a consistent way and in partnership with other local environmental managers.

Some of the benefits you will have received to date from the ecology and environmental services department are not always visible and would be difficult for an external consultancy to replicate in the same efficient manner. A lot of work has taken place in the background to significantly improve the way that you can evidence your environmental compliance. This has included:

- Assessment of all relevant consent applications on behalf of many IDBs to ensure their statutory duties in relation to the environment are discharged and evidenced. This sometimes includes site visits, meetings and reports. It also includes the development and publication of new pre-application environmental guidance for consent applicants, for all IDBs.
- Influencing and contributing towards national, regional and local policy and strategy development. This includes wildlife licencing, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which IDBs have a statutory duty to consider, Local Plans, Fens Reservoir planning and Environmental Stewardship options which will benefit IDBs.
- New templates, processes and services available to all IDBs to help them deliver and evidence their environmental compliance in relation to non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process.
- Development and launch of compliant standard operating procedures for routine works including flail mowing and desilting. Associated training provided to a number of IDB contractors.
- A retained ecological consultancy service (which you may have chosen not to use)
- Monitoring, influencing and communicating legislative changes that affect IDBs such as badger licenses and Hedgerow Regulations
- A scheduled environmental review and BAP refresh visit (the BAP is required to deliver an IDBs statutory biodiversity duty)

We hope that this has provided you with sufficient information regarding the new service package from 1st April 2025. I appreciate that the step-change in fee may not be universally well received by Board Members that are less engaged and aware of their personal and collective environmental liabilities and risks.

We will work on the premise that your Board will opt in and engage with the Environmental Service Package. Indeed, it's success and your compliance requires a two-way relationship and input.

You may choose to benchmark this package against other service providers and opt-out. If so, please feel free to use the information above to secure comparable quotes.

We commit to reviewing the Service Package both qualitatively and quantitatively as it beds-in to ensure continued value for money for the IDBs and the Middle Level Commissioners.

4) The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024

In May 2024, Defra announced The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024 which put the baseline for hedgerow management practices into law, and replaced the regulation of management previously provided for via cross compliance. The Regulations require:

- a 2-metre buffer strip, measured from the centre of a hedgerow, where a green cover must be established and maintained. Also, no cultivation or the application of pesticides or fertilisers should take place within this buffer strip;
- a hedgerow cutting ban from 1 March to 31 August (inclusive).

These Regulations apply to any hedgerow growing on land used for agriculture if that hedgerow has:

- a continuous length of 20 metres or more; or
- a continuous length of less than 20 metres and, at each end, meets (whether by intersection or junction) another hedgerow.

Please advise your workforce / contractors of the change and programme such works to take place within the compliant period: [Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming - GOV.UK](#)

5) Licensing of IDB works around badger setts.

Previously, MLC had planned to roll out training and licence administration services to enable all IDBs to access the CL27 Badger Licence and to conduct their routine and periodic maintenance work compliantly around badger setts. However there were some issues with licence returns in 2023 which highlighted some regional variation in the regulation and enforcement of CL27 licence requirements within Natural England, and some developing impractical licence requirements. MLC and representatives from 3 other IDBs made a successful legal challenge to Natural England regarding the issues and have secured some positive changes to the licence which are more enabling of our low-risk routine maintenance work taking place around badger setts. This has removed the need for all IDBs to hold their own badger licences (although they may wish to do so anyway) and makes it much easier for MLC to continue to provide qualified and licenced supervision of works where necessary. Any work that carries any risk of damaging a badger sett or disturbing a badger within a sett, even if the risk is deemed to be small, is still licensable and MLC should be contacted for further advice where such works are planned. This includes desilting over or near to a badger sett. Where there is uncertainty, if any works are planned within 30m of a badger sett, please contact MLC for advice and guidance. Please see the updated CL27 licence on-line for full details of activities that are likely to be licensable: [Licence to interfere with badger setts for watercourse and drainage purposes \(CL27\) - GOV.UK](#)

6) Improved advice and guidance provision:

- a) We have developed some extended pre-application advice and guidance for consent applicants to help them understand what environmental considerations they need to make before submitting an application to us. This includes helping them to secure the correct ecological advice and what ecological assessments they need to submit with their application. This will help applicants to avoid delays in us processing their application until such information is received. It has already reduced the number of queries and frequently asked questions that we have had to respond to. It also helps to ensure more efficient delivery of the IDBs statutory responsibilities regarding the environment that are associated with consenting the work of others in and around IDB channels. Please take a look on the website for more information.
- b) We have welcomed new ecological resource at MLC who will be assisting with delivering the new service package to IDBs. **Abigail Leach** has a wealth of relevant knowledge and experience that she has brought with her, most recently from working at the Broads Authority, and is very well regarded in the industry. Abigail has already revised and updated the **biosecurity policy** and will be launching it later this year at the next IDB training event.

7) Water Vole Displacement Myth Busting

A number of recent, licenced IDB water vole displacements have taken place throughout the MLC area, which have enabled some of the DEFRA-funded improvement works to be completed. There appears to be some mis-information circulating amongst some IDBs around the need for and cost of water vole displacements which is causing some concern and confusion. To help all stakeholders to be better informed, we have produced a myth-busting document, attached as an Appendix to the Board report. We will also circulate a pamphlet summarising what activity, presence and timescales

landowners and farmers can expect when a water vole displacement is taking place on their land along with the notice of entry for all future displacements to help to set expectations correctly. Please contact us should you have any further questions.

Author Name: Sofi Lloyd

Role: Ecology and Environmental Services Manager

Water Voles - Myth Busting

1.	Claim - <i>Water vole displacements cost a lot of money!</i>	
	Fact - Water vole displacements do add some additional costs to bank works but if MLC services are used, this is much less than some may think. It is most certainly an incalculable amount less than legal, financial and reputational costs if criminal proceedings were progressed in relation to a water vole offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.	
	Approx. cost of bank repair per 150m (no water voles):	
	£4,680 – 5,140	£31-34 per metre
	Additional cost of MLC-progressed water vole displacement per 150m	
	£2,110 - £2,260	£14-15 per metre
2.	Cost of using external consultants for displacement per 150m	
	£4,810 - £9,810	£32-65 per metre
2.	Claim – <i>Other IDBs and RMAs and farmers etc. just get on with bank work without surveying for or displacing water voles and they aren't getting into trouble.</i>	
	Fact – Other IDBs and RMAs do displace water voles under licence before bank works as our ecologists have worked with them to do so. Where bank works take place without water vole displacements, it is likely that no water vole have been found in the works area to displace. There are also an increasing number of investigations and prosecutions where water vole offences have been committed in areas of bank works.	
3.	Claim – <i>If you are undertaking flood risk management work, you are exempt from needing to displace water voles as you are keeping land and property safe from flooding.</i>	
	Fact – Protected species legislation is law and no-one is exempt so routine and regular bank works must be undertaken compliantly. Urgent has a different legal meaning to emergency. Urgent works are those that require prompt action to resolve an expected but not imminent threat to public health and safety such as a bank slip. It is not likely that a repairing a bank slip after harvest to avoid damaging crops, that had originally occurred months previously will be seen legally as either an emergency or urgent works because sufficient time would have passed to allow for the works to be planned compliantly with a displacement if necessary. An emergency would be where an unexpected event requires immediate works to prevent or alleviate a significant threat to public health and safety, such as the sudden collapse of a bank and flood water threatening surrounding residential or developed areas. In an emergency it may be necessary to fix the problem first but be confident that you can provide evidence of threat to public health and safety to the Regulator as soon as possible after the works, as is legally required. The emergency declaration must always be made in partnership with a range of professionals including an ecologist.	

4.	Claim – <i>You can't do any bank works or maintenance where there are water voles anymore.</i> Fact – There are safe standard operating procedures that allow routine work such as desilting and flail mowing to be undertaken compliantly where there are water voles which help to avoid or minimise the risk of committing an offence. Any invasive work that breaks ground on the bank toe or bank face should be informed by a water vole survey, undertaken in the right season, well before works begin. For small areas of impact, for example a field drain or headwall installation, of a metre or so wide, it may be possible to reposition the works away from burrows under ecological supervision so a licenced displacement is not required. For longer lengths of bank impacts such as culvert installation or bank reprofile or repair, if a survey showed that water vole were present a displacement under licence would be required.
5.	Claim - <i>You can get rid of water voles to avoid the need for a displacement if you flail all the banks and marginal vegetation before a survey or dewater a channel.</i> Fact – Dewatering a channel where water voles were known to be present is a licensable activity could be classed as an offence if it were not for specific and very short-term purposes or where a survey had not taken place to determine their presence or absence. Cutting bankside vegetation alone would be unlikely to displace water voles but could be classed as an offence if it damaged burrows or disturbed water voles in their burrows.
6.	Claim – <i>If you fix a bank slip straight away it is unlikely to require a water vole displacement.</i> Fact – A survey would still be needed but it is likely that water vole burrows would have been destroyed or damaged during the slip in many cases and they may have therefore left the damaged areas. If the survey proved this to be the case, then the slip could be repaired as usual without the need for a licenced displacement.
7.	Claim – <i>Water voles are still in our ditches and we have done bank works before without displacing them so it can't bother them that much.</i> Fact – Regardless of this, damaging water vole burrows or disturbing them in their burrows is unlawful and carries a custodial sentence and/or a fine if found guilty. The law is based on huge volumes of scientific evidence which demonstrates that habitat damage and loss is a key factor in the drastic decline in water vole populations. The displacement approaches are shown to conserve and enhance water vole populations.
8.	Claim - <i>You can only repair one 150m length of bank where there are water voles.</i> Fact - The IDB water vole licence states that you can only legally displace from 150m at a time when you are displacing from both banks. You have to leave a 150m bank length for refuge in-between repaired sections. If only one bank is being repaired, theoretically you could displace from an unlimited length but only if an ecologist calculated that the opposite and adjacent habitat was suitable to take an increased number of water vole from the impacted area, which in most cases is unlikely. The usual maximum licensable displacement length for IDBs in all cases is 150m.
9.	Claim – <i>You can only displace water voles during a few specific weeks of the year.</i> Fact – This is true as licenced displacements during these weeks are shown to impact the water vole population the least and it avoids their dormant and breeding seasons.

	Displacement licence periods are from 15 th Feb-15 th April or 15 th Sept to 31 st Oct. You can also only survey for water voles between 15 th Feb to 31 st Oct as they are dormant during winter.
10.	Claim – <i>It is best not to tell anyone that you have water voles as they can stop you doing the work that you want to do, and don't allow surveys</i> Fact – It is assumed that water voles are everywhere in IDB ditches and drains so a survey would always be required ahead of any invasive works. Demonstrating transparency and competence in supporting biodiversity is likely to be attractive to potential funding partners and sources whereas having a lack of biodiversity data and evidence or being evasive can be conspicuous and can attract scrutiny.
NOTE! Water Vole displacement are only needed where there are water voles! If a survey shows they are not, then bank works can go ahead.	

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer's Report

Miss Ablett advised It was imperative that all Commissioners take note of the matters included in the report as this was an area that could have a significant impact on the Commissioners and if the current legislation was not adhered to, it could lead to criminal proceedings and significant fines.

She referred Members to the Environmental Services package that had been developed to help the Commissioners to meet their minimum statutory environmental compliance.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment with the service provided by the Environmental Officer as she had only met with him on one occasion and had still not made arrangements for training concerning working around badgers and licencing.

Miss Ablett referred to the Environment Officer's report and advised the training had been postponed following a successful legal challenge to Natural England, which had been made by the Middle Level Commissioners and representatives from three other IDBs.

The Chairman advised he considered the increase in fee from £775 to £2,375 to be excessive and advised the Commissioners that they did have the option to opt out and use an external consultant to provide Ecological Services.

Miss Ablett advised that the cost of using external consultants would be far more expensive than using Ms Lloyd and her IDB colleagues and she referred to the cost comparison regarding water vole displacements shown in the Environment Officer's report as an example.

After some discussion Members agreed to the Environmental Services package and the associated increased fee.

Miss Ablett advised the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and policies were being drawn up for approval and enquired whether Members were happy for the drafts to be sent to the Chairman for his approval.

Members agreed this was the best course of action.

RESOLVED

That the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager's Report be approved.

That the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and policies are sent to the Chairman for his consideration and approval on behalf of the Commissioners.

C.564 Chairman's Items

The Chairman advised there were several points he wished to raise.

a) Discharge complaint

The Chairman reported he had received a complaint from a Ratepayer, which had resulted in them refusing to pay their drainage rates. The complaint related to the quality of water being discharged into the drain from the settling pond, which had infiltrated the drain adjacent to their property, together with the damage this could cause to wildlife.

The Chairman advised that he agreed with the Ratepayer regarding the water quality and reported the Environment Officer had attended site to inspect the ditch, as he had asked for her opinion, however he had not yet received a response.

Miss Ablett advised that the Environment Officer had included a response in her report, shown under Water Quality Issues.

The Chairman reported he had discussed the situation with the Ratepayer and invited them to attend a Commissioners' meeting, which they had declined. The Chairman added that following various communications with the Ratepayer and they had now paid their drainage rates in full.

b) Construction of irrigation reservoirs

The Chairman reported he had asked Andrew Woodcock of Mick George for an update regarding the construction of the reservoir, but nothing had been received.

He advised that all invoices raised to date had been paid and an invoice to 31st March 2025 had been raised recently.

The Chairman reported that problems were arising with extracting the data from the meters as they were breaking on a regular basis due to sand slipping into the settling pond and sediment having built up over time. He added that the broken meters were being replaced, but the reads extracted from these were at times being disputed by Mick George.

The Chairman reported that Martin Redding of Middle Level Commissioners had advised that Mick George should record all the reads/units and provide these records to the Commissioners on a regular basis.

This matter was discussed further and Members agreed that if meters are replaced then the read should be assumed as having started at zero and all units charged by the Commissioners. It was hoped this may result in the appropriate action being taken by Mick George to prevent the sediment build up from occurring.

The Vice Chairman advised that he will contact Andrew Woodcock and would work with him to try and resolve the issue.

RESOLVED

That meter reads be taken and charged from zero if a meter is replaced.

That the Chairman contact Marting Redding at Middle Level Commissioners, if considered necessary.

c) Culverts Hoghill to Aldreth

The Chairman reported there had been no progress regarding the installation of the culverts from Hoghill to Aldreth.

He advised that his first point of contact had been very helpful but had unfortunately since moved departments and the matter had been transferred to another department who the Chairman had been unable to contact.

He further advised that the Council would not authorise the repairs as they interpreted that the pipes would need to be larger, the proposed pipes were smaller. The pipes need to be deeper in the ditch due to shrinkage of the land in the Fens. He added that the pipe at Dairy Drove had deteriorated significantly, and as the pipe which was now required was a similar size but this matter needed to be dealt with and authorised by the bridges department.

He has since been unable to contact anyone at the Council to discuss the matter further.

Mr T Chambers offered to assist the Chairman if required and the Chairman thanked him and advised he would try contacting the Council again.

d) Purchase of Height Limiter

The Chairman reported that as a result of the accident involving the excavator, it was necessary to purchase a height limiter for the new Atlas excavator. He advised the cost would be in the region of £4,500 and enquired whether the Commissioners were happy to proceed with the purchase. Members agreed for the height limiter to be purchased.

RESOLVED

That a height limiter be purchased for the new Atlas excavator.

e) Weedscreen Cleaner at Sutton Gault Pumping Station

The Chairman reported the weedscreen cleaner control system at Sutton Gault pumping station had not been refurbished as it had been unclear whether any Tranche 2a funding would be made available. He advised that the Commissioners had not been successful in securing any funding and added the refurbishment would be undertaken in May 2025 at a cost of £9,845.

C.565 Consulting Engineers' Reports

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY, TECHNICAL SERVICES, M&E & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Thursday 24th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield
RECOMMENDATIONS The Board is asked to: A. Acknowledge the proposed approach to introduce interim charges for responding to applicant's questions. B. Confirm whether it wishes to create, adopt and issue standing advice notes for its district and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.			

C. The Board is advised to consider what funding is needed from next year for submission to the Environment Agency.

1. Technical Services

- 1.1 Since Chris Bailey started as our new Head of Technical Services, we have been updating the catalogue of services which 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.

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.

1.2 Update on outstanding abstraction licences for Commissioners' inlets off the Old West River

The abstraction licence applications for the outstanding inlets off the Old West River are almost complete and the engineer is obtaining the latest information following a colleague's leave and will report back to the Chairman.

1.3 Update on Willow Hall Farm irrigation reservoirs

The MLC Engineer has continued to liaise with the Chairman and Vice Chairman regarding the agreement between the Board and Mick George Ltd (MG Ltd) in respect of Willow Hall Farm irrigation reservoirs (MLC Ref No 356/PL/008). The Chairman, Vice Chairman, District Officer and MLC Engineer continue to liaise with MG Ltd to monitor the reservoir construction on a day-to-day basis.

Dewatering of the working area and first of the reservoirs has been ongoing throughout the year. An invoice for volumes discharged between October 2023 to the end of March 2024 has been paid. Invoices for dewatering volumes will be issued every 6 months based on readings provided by the Chairman.

The variation to planning permission (Cambridgeshire County Council Ref: CCC/22/075/VAR, MLC Ref No 356/PL/015) has been reopened on the Cambridgeshire County Council planning portal and at the time of writing the status of the application is "pending consideration". A year-round abstraction licence was issued to the quarry operator, MG Ltd, in July 2023 by the Environment Agency.

A site meeting was planned for early April to check the installed recharge trenches, discuss measures for managing the recharge of groundwater until the missing section of trench is installed, and discuss a proposed additional dewatering discharge location to the south of the site. However, MG Ltd have not yet organised this meeting. Proposals for a second dewatering consent to the front of the site have not progressed further and appear unlikely to be required. The District Officer is monitoring the site and the Chairman is in regular contact with MG Ltd.

2. Summary of key planning issues

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.

2.1 Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - Open consultation

Following the change of government in July an open consultation was held between 30th July and 24th September 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.

2.2 **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.

2.3 **Engagement with the Local Planning Authorities (LPA).**

There has been a significant disconnect with the LPA's since the pandemic partly due to the changes of working practices, ever decreasing resources and lack of suitably qualified officers.

Several Council representatives have urged the need to engage with the LPA's and the developers. Where possible efforts have been made to reengage with all members of planning departments but particularly with the Case Officers but this has proved difficult. Despite several requests to engage, discuss and resolve the issues with the relevant parties these remain unanswered and this is considered to be poor partnership working.

There is particular concern about the larger strategic sites which experience has proven will take several years to build out and involve several RMA potentially including the LPA, the Environment Agency, the LLFA, the MLC, the Boards and Anglian Water etc. together with other interested parties with changing staff or representatives being involved. Therefore, it is considered that it is in everyone's interest for development specific "Drainage/Construction/Ecology" Strategy or Strategies to be established.

The documents can:

- A. Identify the key challenges involved and facing the LPA, RMAs, Landowners and Developers, and other parties concerned and identify opportunities and provide a strategic direction to encourage an integrated and sustainable approach in the context of the proposed development.
- B. Advise on how the site will be established, developed and maintained during its lifetime. This will include but will not be limited to the provision of further design detail of the on site surface water disposal systems; any potential improvement works and installation of relevant infrastructure; design, construction and long term maintenance arrangements including relevant open watercourses; ecological protection and enhancement of open watercourses; etc.

- C. Assist any new officers when dealing with the development concerned, provide more certainty and potentially speed up the decision making for all parties.
- D. Strengthen RMA strategic working and if dealt with correctly would speed up decision making, both are being promoted by Government and contained within the latest version of the NPPF and reduce long term costs for all parties including the LPA's.

In respect of an enquiry to an LPA in respect of a Strategic Allocation for a Mixed Use Development comprising residential development up to 1,000 dwellings, employment (B1, B2, & B8), Local Centre (A1, A2, A3, A4 & D1), Primary School and associated infrastructure the Case Officer involved responded as follows:

"As such, the IDB, and their decision to Grant or Refuse land drainage consent is at the discretion of the IDB and covered under legislation separate to planning, and I note your interest in engaging with them to address this matter. As this is separate to the planning system, the LPA will not involve themselves in this matter further, unless changes need to be made to the surface water drainage scheme approved by the LPA as a result of discussion with the IDB."

Planning Conditions

Efforts have also been made to engage with a well-respected local Principal Planning Officer requesting a conversation about the intricacies of imposing planning conditions. The officer concerned has advised that whilst the position is noted and would be a good idea he considers that it would be inappropriate for him to provide guidance given his status as an Interim Officer. He added that he understood that the authorities Head of Planning and Development Manager would be better placed to deal with the enquiry and would "be in touch". This approach has not yet been received.

2.4 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

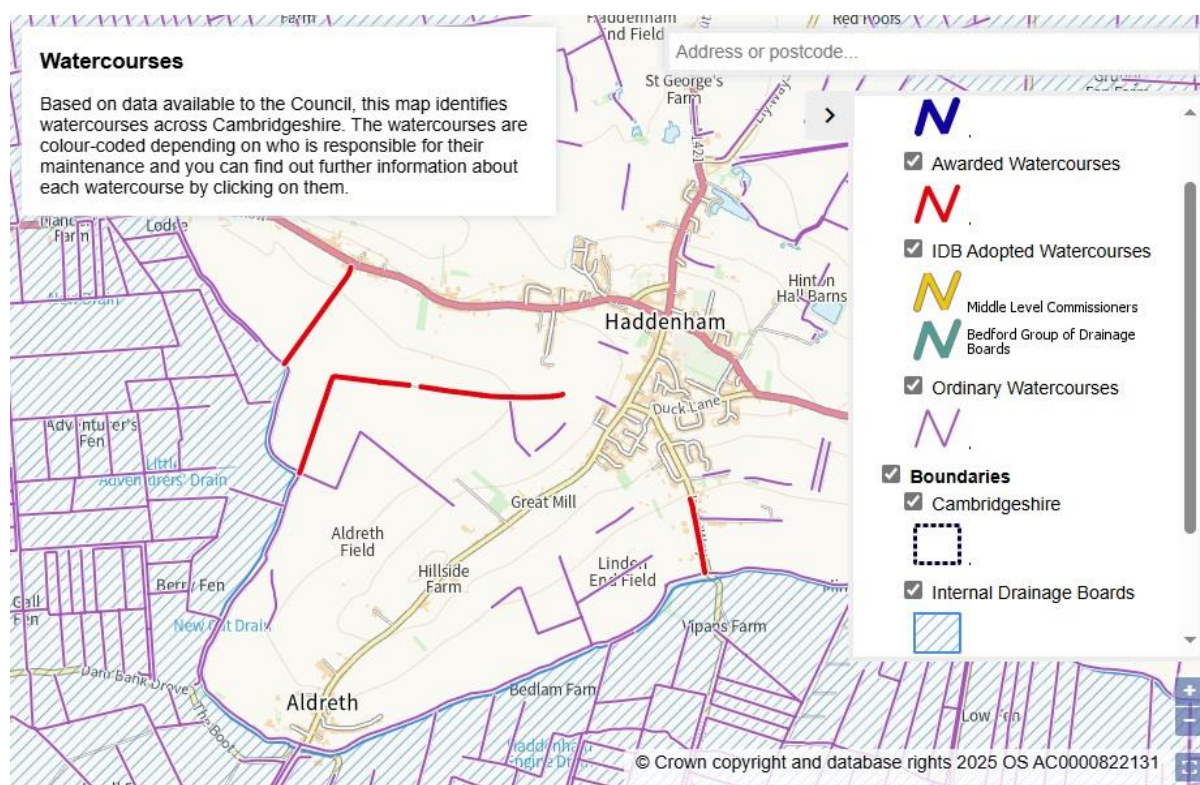
The Flood Risk team has published a Watercourse Mapping Tool - [Watercourse management | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

The tool was driven by feedback from local communities, landowners, and other stakeholders who wanted to understand more about watercourse responsibilities. It aims to provide a

public tool that can be used to identify location of and responsibility for different watercourses. The watercourses are colour-coded depending on type/maintenance obligations and you can find out further information about each watercourse by clicking on them. The map includes the following details in Cambridgeshire:

- Ordinary watercourses
- Awarded watercourses
- Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) Adopted watercourses
- Main rivers
- Internal Drainage Board boundaries

It is acknowledged that there will be some watercourses, particularly the smaller ones, that are not yet included on the map. It is intended to expand on this map, adding more information wherever possible. If there are watercourses in your area that satisfy the definition above but are not currently included in the mapping, please contact the Flood Risk Team so that these can be discussed and added where appropriate.



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

D. 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.”

4. Capital Programme

- 4.1 There is no allocation of funding in the current FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) programme.

The Board is advised to consider what funding is needed from next year for submission to the Environment Agency.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: M&E Report
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting

APPENDIX 1

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E Key Messages

- 1.1 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.

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

1.2 Minor Works

1.2.1 **Sutton Gault**

The pump slip ring repair has operated well through the pumping season.

The weed screen control system refurbishment has been ordered and will be booked in for installation once all parts are in stock.

1.2.2 **Haddenham**

Only routine inspections have been carried out at Haddenham this period.

1.3 Inspections

- 1.3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out at Haddenham and Sutton Gault Pump Stations on 10th September 2024.
- 1.3.2 EICR Test and Due dates as below. Inspections were successfully completed at Sutton Gault and Haddenham Bungalow in March 2024.

LOCATION		EICR	
Board	Station	EICR Pass Date	EICR Due
Haddenham	Haddenham Bungalow	29-Mar-24	29-Mar-2027
Haddenham	Haddenham PS	19-Mar-21	19-Mar-2026
Haddenham	Sutton Gault	29-Mar-24	29-Mar-2029

1.4 Pumping Station Key Dates

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	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Motor O/H	Thrust Bearing	Controls	Telemetry
Haddenham PS	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	Y
Sutton Gault	1971	1971	1990	1990	1990	2016	Y

	Weedscreen			
Station	Bars	WSC	WSC O/H	Controls
Haddenham PS	2011	2011	2011	2011
Sutton Gault	1998	1998	1998	1998

Author Name: Dave Bantoft

Role: M&E Engineer

Appendix 2

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

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
019	Enquiry	Client of MTC	Conversion (Agricultural to Industrial)	Upper Delph Drove, Haddenham

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.

The Commissioners considered the reports of the Consulting Engineers and agreed to take the reports as read.

Technical Services

Miss Ablett reminded the Commissioners they had previously approved to support the need to review the charging model and she reported this had been implemented and been in use since 1st April. She added the charges would be payable by the applicant and not the Commissioners and it was hoped this would encourage applicants to enter into a pre app and therefore reduce costs to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners acknowledged and approved the interim charges approach.

Capital Programme

Miss Ablett reported that current indications were that there was no allocation of funding within the current FCRM Grant-In-Aid programme and it was not known what funding would be available from the Environment Agency or what the process for application would be.

Miss Ablett asked the Commissioners to consider what funding was required for capital works so when the process and funding availability was known a submission to the Environment Agency could be made promptly.

RESOLVED

That the reports be approved.

C.566 Health & Safety

Viz:



Site Safety Inspection Record

Haddenham IDB

Complete

Name of organisation:	Haddenham IDB
Date of site visit	04.02.2025 09:30 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Highland House 80 Aldreth Road Haddenham Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3PN
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	04.02.2025 09:30 GMT
Audit Name	Haddenham IDB

Audit**An opening meeting was held with**

Michael Church/ David Jordan

Have there been any accidents since our last visit?

No

01.05.24 Injured Person (IP) sustained minor bruising when the digger being operated slid and tipped over as a result of the rear tyre suddenly deflating. IP returned to work. Digger replaced.

IP was wearing a seat belt and the incident occurred mid day and no unusual circumstances / changes to normal procedure were reported.

No further action required.

Have there been any new starters since our last visit?

No

None recorded

1

It was understood that as of April 2026 Middle Level Commissioners will no longer oversee the IDB, the likelihood is that another managing body will become the overseer of the IDB however this has not yet been confirmed.

2

The Haddenham pumping station was visited and no significant issues were identified.

It was observed that signage indicating the presence of high voltage, automated machinery were in place in serviceable condition.

As discussed it is recommended that additional signage giving the what 3 words location and emergency contact details of persons responsible is also displayed.

It is recommended that Middle Level Commissioners provide a suitable standard format site sign that can be amended to provide site specific details (location in what 3 words etc).



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

Photographic Risk Assessment	
Signature of person informed	
Signature of person informed 1	
Signature of person informed	
	Signed by David Jordan. 04.02.2025 13:56 GMT
Advisor's signature	
	Martin Clark 04.02.2025 13:56 GMT
Departure time	04.02.2025 13:56 GMT
Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.	
Nil	
Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	0 From 0 to 99

Media summary

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

The Chairman gave a verbal update following his meeting with COPE Safety Management on 4th February 2025 and reported the visit had gone well and no further concerns or recommendations had been raised.

He added the only matter which remained outstanding was that warning signage for the pumping stations had not yet been fitted. He advised the Middle Level Commissioners were going to source the signage, but this had not yet been supplied.

Miss Ablett advised that the Middle Level Commissioners could supply the signage at a cost in the region of £110 per sign and showed Members an example of the signage suggested, which would require an email address as a contact.

It was agreed by Members that as contact details were required and in view of the Commissioners transferring to Water Management Alliance next year, that the Commissioners would obtain the signage themselves.

C.567 District Officers Report

The Chairman gave a verbal report.

He reported the pumps had worked well during the year and the pumping hours had reduced considerably compared to the previous year due to less rainfall. He advised that following the accident involving the Commissioners' excavator, a hired machine had been used to undertake the necessary drain maintenance, giving rise to additional costs.

He further reported that £69,112 had been received in the form of a storm recovery grant during the year and advised Members that repairs to the weedscreen cleaner at Haddenham Pumping Station, had been completed at a cost of £6,880 net of VAT.

C.568 Governance

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS	Subject:	GOVERNANCE
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the continued appointment of Whittings as Internal Auditor.
- B. Review and approve the updated Policy included as appendix 1.
- C. To review and approve their updated Policy Statement appendix 2.
- D. 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.
- E. To note and support the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf. Appendix 3.
- F. 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 4.
- G. To review and approve the publishing of Exercise of Public Rights
- H. To give consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

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
- 1.2 The Board are reminded that Whittings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28).
- 1.4 The Board is asked to act on the advice of the Auditor within its decision making.

2. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

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

INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS AND BUNGALOW

	As At 1st April 2025
Haddenham Pumping Station	1,842,392.00
Sutton Gault Pumping Station	1,048,466.00
Bungalow	181,815.00

3,072,673.00 Index linked

2. 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 review and approve the publication of the Financial Regulations Policy (Appendix 1)

The Board is to review and approve their updated Policy Statement (Appendix 2)

3. IDB1

3.1 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.

3.2 To note and support the IDB1 return to Defra for the year 2023/24 submitted on their behalf as Appendix 3.

4. Annual Governance Statement:

4.1 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 4)

5. Exercise of Public Rights

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

- 5.4 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.
6. **Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:**
- 6.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows

Role: Clerk

Appendix 1	Financial Regulations Policy
Appendix 2	Policy Statement
Appendix 3	IDB1 2023/2024
Appendix 4	Annual Governance Statement 2025

Haddenham Level DC

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 Boards 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.

Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners

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 Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners.
- 1.2 The policy was last reviewed and republished in April 2025 and will be reviewed at least every five years.

2 Introduction

Purpose

- 2.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners to provide a public statement of the Commissioners approach to its management of water levels and flood risk within their District (the District). The Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners 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 Commissioners serve 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 Commissioners will meet its environmental obligations and commitments and seek opportunities to enhance the environment. The Commissioners recognise their responsibility for good governance, local accountability and financial security, achieving value for money from all its activities. As an independent public body the Commissioners 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 Haddenham Level District Drainage Commissioners.

- 2.5 This Policy Statement sets out the Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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.

3. Governance and local accountability

- 3.1 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners. 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 Commissioners support the national aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels and the Commissioners policy and approach will be consistent with them.

5. Flood risk and water level management in the Commissioners 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 viable¹.

5.2 The Commissioners make 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: | 3035 ha |
| • Catchment area draining to and including the District: | 4360 ha |
| • Area of Agricultural Land: | 2995 ha |
| • Area of other (non-agricultural) land: | 40 ha |

5.4 Assets for which the Commissioners have operational responsibility:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • Water Level Control Structures: | 6 No |
| • Watercourses (maintained): | 30 km |
| • Raised embankments: | 0 km |
| • Reservoirs: | 0 ha |
| • Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): | 0 no |
| • Pumping Stations: | 2 no |

5.5 Assets within or adjacent to the District that are maintained by the Environment Agency:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| • Main Rivers: | 19 km |
| • Raised embankments/flood walls: | 13 km |
| • Pumping Stations: | 0 no |

¹ It should be noted that the Land Drainage Act 1991 provides the Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners seek 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 Commissioners monitor and review 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners. 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners powers to carry out water level and flood risk management works are permissive (i.e. the Commissioners are not obliged to carry out works) and their resources are limited. The Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners to become involved, bearing in mind the powers available to other persons or bodies.
- 6.7 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners to exercise its own powers.
- 6.8 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.
- 7.2 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners. The Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners will publicise the local risks from flooding, the reasons for managing water levels within the District and articulate the efforts being undertaken by the Commissioners 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 Commissioners will be open and transparent in its actions and decisions. The Commissioners will comply with the requirements set out in the relevant Local Government transparency code.
- 8.3 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners invite any comments regarding the condition of its system, which could assist with the management of water levels.

9. Working together

- 9.1 The Commissioners will co-operate and share information with other relevant authorities in the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion flood risk management function. The Commissioners will contribute to strategies, plans and consultations relevant to its catchment and functions.
- 9.2 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners will participate as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.
- 9.3 The Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners will fulfil these in a positive way.
- 10.1.1 Further to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, the Commissioners 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 Commissioners' 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners 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 Commissioners have no Water Level Management Plan.

10.6 The Commissioners 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



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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
- Asset Management and Engineering, Environment Agency via ldbfund@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 £.

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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. EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	90,441
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	90,441

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*¹

	Notes	Year ending 31 March 2024 £
INCOME		
A. Drainage Rates		143,877
B. Special Levies		79,588
C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		11,217
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		8,327
I. Interest and Investment Income		3,456
J. Rents and Acknowledgements		
K. Other Income		
Write back of provisions		440
Consents		50
Recharge of expenses		4,281
Insurance claim		681
Metered discharge		42,906
Total income		294,823
EXPENDITURE		
L. New Works and Improvement Works		
M. Total precept to the Environment Agency		37,773
N. Watercourse maintenance		48,978
O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		31,094

¹ http://saaa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide_2023.pdf

P. Administration		14,005
Q. PSCAs		
R. Rechargeable Works		
S. Finance Charges		42,964
T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total		493
Breakdown:		
General, across the whole region	493	
SSSI specific, where relevant		
U. Other Expenditure		
Insurance		3,979
Electricity costs – overall total		162,102
Breakdown (if possible):		
Standing charge (per annum)	11,473	
Unit charge (per annum)	150,629	
Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total		8,628
Breakdown:		
Pumping stations		
Fleet and plant machinery	8,628	
Total expenditure		350,016
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(55,193)
W. Developers Funds income not applied in year		3,626
X. Grant income not applied in year		

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

0.105 %

£ 151.36

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.

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)? 25/04/2024

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?

29.5 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

4

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)?

4.47 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 ☒

39. Finance ☒

40. Environment ☒

41. Health, safety and welfare ☐

42. Communications and engagement ☐

43. Other

☐

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?

26

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

13

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

24

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

2

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

15

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

2

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?..N/A.....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

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

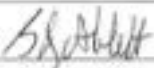
Signature

Date

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

Designation

Email address


18/02/2025
MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
ASSISTANT TREASURER
sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

Appendix 4

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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 charities. 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

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

Miss Ablett referred to the recommendations and resolutions the Commissioners had been asked to make.

a) Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Commissioners – 2023/2024

i) The Commissioners considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024.

ii) The Commissioners considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2024.

The Commissioners noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.

b) Policy Reviews

The Commissioners considered and reviewed the policies.

RESOLVED

i) The Commissioners approved the publication of the Financial Regulations policies.

ii) The Commissioners approved their updated policy statement.

c) Risk Management Assessment & Insured Values

The Commissioners considered their Risk Management Strategy and insured sums.

RESOLVED

i) The Commissioners approved the sums insured.

ii) The Commissioners did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Commissioners Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website).

d) Review of Internal Controls

Miss Ablett reported that the internal controls the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Commissioners are available on the Commissioner's webpage.

The Commissioners considered and expressed satisfaction with the current system of internal controls and did not highlight the requirement for any additional controls.

e) DEFRA IDB1 Return

Miss Ablett referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2023/2024 which the Commissioners noted and approved.

f) Annual Governance Statement

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

g) Exercise of Public Rights

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

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Miss Ablett reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Commissioners 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. She confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

That there are no such events that would have an adverse financial impact on the Commissioners that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.569 Finance Report – Looking Back

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DC	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
- B. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/2025 within Appendix 2.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages**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 time-frame. A claim for £72,509.44 was submitted on behalf of the Commissioners for excess winter pumping costs (Tranche 1) which was successful and has now been paid.

1. Payments for 2024

- 1.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

2. Highland Water Contributions

- 2.1 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.

When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2023/2024 and the budgeted expenditure for 2024/2025. The winter storm events gave claims significantly in excess of previous claims but following an understanding that the Environment Agency were able to switch funding within their revenue/capital programmes the full estimated claims were included in the rating proposals. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £19,171.98. 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 £72,509.44.

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 £3,397.25, which will be adjusted from the Storm Recovery Grant.

Payment of the submitted highland water claims are currently outstanding although the Environment Agency has recently been in contact seeking additional information concerning submitted claims. The forecast has been completed using the submitted claims.

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. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

3.1 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

Appendix 2 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/25

Appendix 1

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**Payments 2024/2025 (1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025)**

	<u>Paid</u>	<u>VAT</u>	<u>Goods</u>
East Cambridgeshire District Council - Council tax for 2024/2025	1,762.62	0.00	1,762.62
Environment Agency - Rent	1.00	0.00	1.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and travelling	5,745.86	1,149.17	6,895.03
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,156.52	231.30	1,387.82
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	992.42	198.48	1,190.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of a pair of wear blocks (Account from C W Engineering)	60.25	12.05	72.30
Michael Church - District Officer's Fees for 6 months to 31st March 2024	1,558.60	0.00	1,558.60
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)	340.00	68.00	408.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Manufacture and fit rain gauges (Account from March Electrical) - Haddenham pumping station	672.45	134.49	806.94
Middle Level Commissioners - Manufacture and fit rain gauges, supply and fit new motor brushes (Accounts from March Electrical and Shoebridge Engineering) - Sutton Gault pumping station	1,167.85	233.57	1,401.42
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 2,102 litre barrel of adblue (Account from Watsons)	184.80	36.96	221.76
A G Wright & Son - Diesel	309.40	61.88	371.28
Environment Agency - Advice regarding water transfers	525.00	105.00	630.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	168.93	33.78	202.71
N L Hydraulics - 10 metres of 1/4" R8 hose and inserts	94.06	18.81	112.87
B A Bush & Son Ltd - Fitting of 2 new tyre and wheel balancing to Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator and disposal of tyres	218.26	43.65	261.91
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024	724.00	144.80	868.80
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs for 2024-2025	150.00	30.00	180.00
Npower - Meter operator agreement 12/4/2024 - 11/04/2025	195.00	39.00	234.00
Rampton Motors - MOT and service of AK16 WNC	1,039.43	196.91	1,236.34
TDL Equipment - Repairs to Atlas 140W Wheeled Excavator	1,037.10	207.42	1,244.52
Environment Agency - Precept	19,452.91	0.00	19,452.91
Haddenham Baptist Church - Room hire for meeting of Commissioners	45.00	0.00	45.00
Fenland Fire Appliance LLP - Servicing of fire extinguishers	113.75	22.75	136.50
FRA Projects Ltd - Site survey and design works in connection with the replacement of the culvert at Cracknell Drove	1,355.00	271.00	1,626.00
Wave - Water supply charges 9th February 2024 to 8th May 2024	1,571.81	0.00	1,571.81
British Telecom - Telephone charges	169.05	33.81	202.86
Environment Agency - Advice regarding water transfers	600.00	120.00	720.00
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - "Private Road" Signage	16.00	3.20	19.20
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Signage	5.00	1.00	6.00
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Repayment	21,481.93	0.00	21,481.93
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,577.12	315.43	1,892.55
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condituion reports for pumping stations (Account from CMS Electrical)	270.00	54.00	324.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	201.95	40.39	242.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Fit new handrail at Sutton Gault pumping station	431.72	86.35	518.07
Middle Level Commissioners - Road fund licence for AK16 WNC (Account from DVLA)	335.00	0.00	335.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Court Fees	0.50	0.00	0.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2023-2024 accounts)	852.50	170.50	1,023.00
L A Burton - Flail mowing	2,040.00	408.00	2,448.00
HN Plant Hire - Hire of Excavator	482.00	96.40	578.40
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2023-2024 accounts)	840.00	168.00	1,008.00
British Telecom - Telephone charges	165.80	33.16	198.96
Wave - Water supply charges 9th May 2024 to 8th August 2024	1,440.92	0.00	1,440.92

Sutton Poor Lands Charity - Refund of overpayment of drainage rates	290.84	0.00	290.84
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - WD40 Spray, nuts and bolts	10.55	2.11	12.66
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Repair and weld excavator bucket	317.50	63.50	381.00
L A Burton - Flail mowing	3,900.00	780.00	4,680.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report)	366.75	73.35	440.10
H N Plant Hire - Hire of Excavator	2,068.00	413.60	2,481.60
British Telecom - Telephone charges	183.74	36.74	220.48
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	5,954.27	1,190.85	7,145.12
H N Plant Hire - Hire of Excavator	1,974.00	394.80	2,368.80
Michael Church - District Officer's Fees for 6 months to 30th September 2024	1,478.50	0.00	1,478.50
Environment Agency - Precept	19,452.91	0.00	19,452.91
H N Plant Hire - Hire of Excavator	1,880.00	376.00	2,256.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	6,306.00	1,261.20	7,567.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Road fund licence for AD19 OJO and supply of 5,000 litres of gas oil (Account from Watson Fuels)	3,581.25	683.25	4,264.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	2,699.36	539.87	3,239.23
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	5,616.56	186.50	5,803.06
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges	480.00	96.00	576.00
Wave - Water supply charges 9th August 2024 to 8th November 2024	1,041.09	0.00	1,041.09
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	550.52	110.10	660.62
Haddenham Baptist Church - Room hire for meeting of Commissioners	45.00	0.00	45.00
H N Plant Hire - Hire of Excavator	2,174.00	434.80	2,608.80
M N Jones Digger Services Ltd - Repairs to culvert at Cracknell Drove	24,416.69	4,883.34	29,300.03
Public Works Loan Board - Loan Repayment	21,481.88	0.00	21,481.88
British Telecom - Telephone charges	165.80	33.16	198.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	264.80	52.96	317.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	775.75	0.00	775.75
British Telecom - Telephone charges	184.93	36.98	221.91
NWF Fuels Ltd. - Supply of 2,400 litres of gas oil	1,738.56	347.71	2,086.27
British Telecom - Telephone charges	165.80	33.16	198.96
TDL Equipment - Supply of new Atlas 165W Wheeled Excavator	165,000.00	33,000.00	198,000.00
A G Wright & Son - Diesel	1,204.58	240.92	1,445.50
Wave - Water supply charges 9th November 2024 to 8th February 2025	1,735.74	0.00	1,735.74
B A Bush & Son Ltd - Puncture repair	62.24	12.45	74.69
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Bond It contact adhesive	16.00	3.20	19.20
Rampton Motors - Repairs to AK16 WNC	696.89	139.38	836.27
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning & development applications)	220.25	44.05	264.30
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift	100.00	0.00	100.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	550.52	110.10	660.62
Information Commissioners - Renewal of Data Protection registration	52.00	0.00	52.00
Littleport & Downham IDB - Drain maintenance	1,150.00	0.00	1,150.00
L A Burton - Flail mowing	2,010.00	402.00	2,412.00
Environment Agency - Rent	1.00	0.00	1.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety, public works loan application and storm recovery tranche 1 claim	7,311.82	1,462.36	8,774.18
David Harrison Handling Solutions Limited - Adjust pin to 60mm diameter	65.00	13.00	78.00
District labour	51,597.50	0.00	51,597.50
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Haddenham pumping station)	16,655.92	3,098.72	19,754.64
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Sutton Gault pumping station)	4,592.55	380.01	4,972.56
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - Payments on Account	132,750.78	26,315.63	159,066.41
Bank Charges	4.25	0.00	4.25
	<u>566,893.60</u>	<u>82,021.06</u>	<u>648,914.66</u>

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 2

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

GENERAL FUND

2025			2024		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	148,893.41
	Precept	38,905.82			
	Rates, Insurances, Telephones	15,107.86	2025	Rate Income & Special Levy	253,712.71
	Repairs & Renewals	15,111.62	Mar-31	Interest	3,657.79
	Fuel	60,461.63		Highland Water Contributions	15,374.99
	Contractors Charges	3,144.20		Water Recharge	5,146.35
	District Labour	49,778.29		Private Works	6,650.00
	Drainworks	25,859.66		Development Charges	186.00
	Administration charge, printing, stationery			Telephone Charges	42.20
	advertising, Association of Drainage			Metered Discharge	58,534.60
	Authorities subscription	17,807.84		Insurance Claim	75,490.00
				Write Back Of Provisions	1,863.31
	Culvert replacements	25,771.69		Loan Advance	50,000.00
	Purchase of asset	165,000.00		Storm Recovery Grant	71,679.17
	Public Works Loan Repayment -			Asset Replacement Fund	25,771.69
	Principal	35,297.32			
	Interest	7,666.49			
	Balance carried forward	257,089.80			
		717,002.22			717,002.22

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025
BALANCE SHEET

<u>Liabilities</u>		<u>Capital Section</u>		<u>Assets</u>	
Capital Provisions	2,281,718.83			Pumping Stations	2,225,000.00
Public Works Loan Board -				Bungalow	114,920.00
Loan outstanding	217,557.81			Heavy Plant	158,125.00
				Motor Vehicles	1,200.40
				Computer Equipment	31.24
	<u>2,499,276.64</u>				<u>2,499,276.64</u>
<u>Revenue Section</u>					
General Fund	257,089.80			Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	76.31
				Sundry Debtors	39,320.84
Asset Replacement Fund	23,908.20			Value added Tax - Refunds due	45,170.28
				Stock	1,589.60
Development Contribution Fund	3,529.09			Balance in hand -	
				Barclays - Current account	80,000.00
Sundry Creditors	68,599.51			Barclays - Business Premium	184,937.63
				Barclays - Treasury Deposit	0.00
				Lloyds Accounts	2,031.94
	<u>2,852,403.24</u>				<u>266,969.57</u>
					<u>2,852,403.24</u>

Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners**Treasurers Account 2024/2025**

1st April 2024		31st March 2025	
Balance brought forward	339,223.04	Payments made during the year	648,914.66
31st March 2025			
Receipts during the year			
Clerk's collection account	571,660.11		
Interest on deposit accounts	5,001.08	Balance carried forward	266,969.57
	576,661.19		
	<u>915,884.23</u>		<u>915,884.23</u>

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025**Barclays Bank Plc**Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	80,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>80,000.00</u>

Lloyds Bank PlcCurrent Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	2,031.94
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>2,031.94</u>

Cash balances as at 31st March 2025**Barclays Bank PLC**

Current Account	80,000.00
Business Premium Account	184,937.63
Treasury Deposit	0.00

Lloyds Bank Plc

Current Account	2,031.94
-----------------	----------

<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>266,969.57</u>
---	--------------------------

Haddenham Level DC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2025****Per Annual
Return**

<u>Line 1</u>	<u>Balances brought forward</u> General Fund Asset replacement fund Development charges	148,893.41 48,488.69 3,626.01 201,008.11	201,008
<u>Line 2</u>	<u>Rates and Special Levies</u> Agricultural rates Special Levies Penalty Costs Write-off	162,783.50 90,441.00 363.21 125.00 0.00 253,712.71	253,713
<u>Line 3</u>	<u>Total other receipts</u> Interest General fund Asset replacement fund Development charges Write Back of Provisions Metered Discharge Discharge Contribution Consent Telephone Charges Recoverable Highland Water Hire of Excavator Re-charge of Expenses Storm Recovery Grant Insurance Claim Loan Advance	 3,657.79 1,191.20 89.08 1,863.31 58,534.60 0.00 0.00 42.20 15,374.99 6,650.00 5,146.35 71,679.17 75,490.00 50,000.00 289,718.69	289,718
<u>Line 4</u>	<u>Staff costs</u> Wages/salaries National insurance contributions Pension costs Travelling expenses	 38,049.31 4,309.31 7,419.67 0.00 49,778.29	49,778
<u>Line 5</u>	<u>Loan repayments</u> PWLB - Principal PWLB - Interest	35,297.32 7,666.49 42,963.81	42,964

Haddenham Level DC**Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return****Financial year ended 31st March 2025****Per Annual
Return**

<u>Line 6</u>	All other payments		
	Precept	38,905.82	
	Rates, insurances, telephones	15,107.86	
	Repairs and renewals	15,111.62	
	Fuel	60,461.63	
	Drainworks	25,859.66	
	Administration	17,807.84	
	Contractors charges	3,144.20	
	Write back of provisions	0.00	
	Improvements	25,771.69	
	Purchase of asset	165,000.00	
		367,170.32	367,170
<u>Line 7</u>	Balances carried forward		
	General Fund	257,089.80	
	Asset replacement fund	23,908.20	
	Development charges	3,529.09	
		284,527.09	284,527

Reconciliation

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

284,527.09

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	256,201	201,008	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	223,465	253,713	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	71,357	289,718	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	44,438	49,778	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	42,964	42,964	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	262,613	367,170	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	201,008	284,527	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	339,223	266,970	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,493,805	2,521,030	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	202,855	217,558	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

ADool

Date

11-04-2025

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

The Commissioners reviewed and noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

The attention of the Commissioners was drawn to the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for £72,509.44 being received.

Payments 2025.

The Commissioners considered and approved the Payments for 2024/2025.

(NB: The Chairman declared an interest in the payments made to him as District Officer.)

Highland Water Contributions

Miss Ablett referred to the Highland Water Contributions received for 2024/2025, noting the adjustment against the claim as a result of the Storm Recovery Grant.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025.

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2025, as required in the Audit regulations.

RESOLVED

That the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.570 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	HADDENHAM LEVEL DC	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD
Date:	Thursday 24 th April 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
- B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
- C. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
- D. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2025/2026
- E. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2025/2026

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The Clerk to report

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

- 1.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6.5%, from £724 to £772 (+ vat) for 2025.
- 1.2 To review the District Officer's Fee.
- 1.3 To review the District Engineer's wages.
- 1.4 To review the charges for hire of plant when engaged in private work re the Atlas excavator.

Last review - April 2024 : Atlas 360 Wheeled Excavator

Present charges inclusive of operator's wages and travelling time:

- £30.00 per hour in the District
- £45.00 per hour outside the District

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 £38,905.82.

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

APPENDIX 1

HADDENHAM LEVEL DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET 2025/2026

	<u>Approved Budget</u> <u>2024/2025</u>	<u>Actual to</u> <u>31st March 2025</u>	<u>Proposed Budget</u> <u>2025/2026</u>		
1 <u>CHANNEL MAINTENANCE</u>	16,800	25,860 ^A	18,000 ^B	A - Includes for:	
				Flail mowing - Contractor	7,950
				Excavator hire- Contractor	8,578
					<u>16,528</u>
2 <u>LABOUR</u>	52,000	52,922	56,250	B - Includes provision for Flail Mowing	8,000
3 <u>REPAIRS AND RENEWALS</u>	13,000	15,112 ^C	13,500 ^D	C - Includes Weedscreen Cleaner Repair	6,880
4 <u>FUEL</u>	92,000	60,462	88,000 ^E	D - Includes Weedscreen Cleaner Repair - Sutton Gault	6,000
5 <u>RATES, INSURANCES & TELEPHONES</u>	12,425	15,108	16,000 ^F	E - Based on 2 Year Average Usage and current rate, assume 5% increase in rates from October 2025	
6 <u>ADMINISTRATION</u>	14,750	17,808	17,000	F - Increased Insurance Premium	
7 <u>ASSET REPLACEMENT</u>	0	0	10,000	G - First repayments for addition loan for excavator replacement	
8 <u>E. A. PRECEPT</u>	38,906	38,906	39,684	H - General Fund reinstated as a result of Storm Recovery Fund	
9 <u>LOAN REPAYMENT</u>	42,964	42,964	41,458 ^G	I - Includes Metered Discharge	58,534
10 <u>IMPROVEMENT WORKS</u>	21,000 ^H	25,772	0	Includes Calculated Highland Water Claim	15,374
11 <u>REINSTATEMENT OF BALANCES</u>	15,389 ^I	0.00	0 ^H	Includes Asset Fund for New Culverts	25,772
	319,234	294,912	299,892	Includes Insurance Claim receipt	75,490
				Includes Storm Recovery Grant	69,112
				Includes Public Works Loan	<u>50,000</u>
					294,282
<u>INCOME</u>	66,010	314,396 ^I	56,798 ^J	J - Includes Metered Discharge	33,000
Net Expenditure	253,224	(19,484)	243,095	Includes calculated Highland Water Claim	<u>9,669</u>
Rate set/Rate Requirement	50.00 p		48.00 p		42,669

Haddenham Level Drainage CommissionersRate and levy requirements 2025/2026

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 are:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 64.28%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council - 35.72%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £3,256

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £5,064.

Revenue cash balance in hand as of 31st March 2025 is - £257,090

Asset replacement fund as of 31st March 2024 is £23,908.

The estimated net expenditure of £243,095 in 2025/2026 is equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 48.00p
- b) a Special levy on the East Cambridgeshire District Council of £86,823

In 2024/2025 a rate of 50.00p in the £ was set together with a Special levy of £90,440 on East Cambridgeshire District Council.

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Commissioners

April 2025

Finance officer's summary and key messages

Miss Ablett advised that when considering the rating estimates and the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2025/2026, the Commissioners should note that as a result of the Storm Recovery Grant being received in 2024/2025 the General Fund balance at the year-end amounted to £257,090, which represented just over a year in hand for expenditure.

She further advised that estimates for pumping costs were as problematical as last year in that an 'average' pumping year needed to be factored in, as well as considering the impact of climate change. She added that a new electricity supply contract would be entered into from October 2025 with no indications of potential unit rates. The budget is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimated unit rate being a 5% increase on the 2024-2025 rates.

She advised that Members should also consider the impact of any proposed development within the District and the impact this could have on the drainage system and pumping stations.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:i) ADA subscription

Miss Ablett reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £724 to £ 772 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

ii) District Officer's Fee

The Commissioners gave consideration to the District Officer's fee for 2025-2026.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree that the sum of up to £3,080 be allowed for the services of the District Officer for 2025/2026.

(NB) – The Chairman declared an interest in this item as District Officer.

iii) District Engineer's Wage Increase 2025/2026

Miss Ablett reported the District Engineer's wages would increase in accordance with the Middle Level Commissioners pay award.

iv) Charges for hire of plant when engaged on private work

Consideration was given to whether any revisions were necessary in the Commissioners' charges for hiring plant for private work (last reviewed – April 2024): -

Atlas 360 Wheeled Excavator

Present charges inclusive of operator's wages and travelling time:

- £30.00 per hour in the District
- £45.00 per hour outside the District

RESOLVED

That no change be made to the hire charges.

Precept to the Environment Agency

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

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £38,905.82.

Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/2026

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026 and were informed by Miss Ablett that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 64.28.% and 35.72%.

Miss Ablett reported the rate required to meet the estimated net expenditure for 2025-2026 was 48p, which the Chairman advised was a 2p reduction compared to the rate set for 2024-2025.

Mr Andrew Lensen proposed a rate of 48p be set to meet the estimated net expenditure for 2025/26, which was seconded by Mr Toby Chambers.

Miss Ablett enquired whether there were any other proposals.

Mr Nick Wright proposed the rate should remain at 50p, the same as last year, as there were a lot of unknown factors facing the Commissioners and they needed to have sufficient funds to run efficiently. This was seconded by Mr Tim Hughes.

Miss Ablett advised that two rates had been proposed, both of which had been seconded so a vote was required. Following a vote on the proposals a rate of 50p was set.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £253,224 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £162,783 and £90,441 respectively.
- iv) That a rate of 50.00p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special levy of £90,441 be made and issued to the East Cambs District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution v).

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

C.571 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Commissioners be held on Thursday 6th November 2025 at 7pm at the Baptist Hall, Haddenham.