WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB held at the Lakeside Lodge on Thursday 29th May 2025

PRESENT

D Brown (Chair)	D Fabb
T Noble (Vice-Chair)	I Johnson
J Armstrong	S Johnson
S Edgley	Ms L Munns
D Edwards	J Short
D England	H Whittome

Paul Burrows the Clerk was in attendance.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from J Carney, J German, M Heading and S Whittome.

B.1933 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. H Whittome declared an interest as a Middle Level Board Member.

B.1934 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 28th November 2024 and 24th February 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed, along with the minutes of the Finance Committee on 15th May 2025.

B.1935 Matters Arising

Womb Farm Development (Abbott's Walk, Chatteris)
The Chairman outlined the latest on the ground at the site. Adding that the situation is not ideal but may be the best the Board can achieve. There are areas Where there are a 7m Byelaw strip, mainly level enough for a digger but in locations potentially too high from the water level for effective maintenance.

Review of Easements (A Bartlett & Sons Ltd)
The Chairman outlined that he and the District Officer had met with the Bartletts and there was encouraging communications. He added that this needs to be followed up with a review with them of the pre-existing agreement.

In pursuance of Section1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Board decided to exclude the public from the meeting for two Matters Arising that are considered to be of a confidential nature.

B.1936 Constitution & Membership
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**4**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Current status

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	24/02/2025	28/11/2024	06/06/2024	30/11/2023
1	Jacob Armstrong	Present		Apologies	Present
2	Daniel Brown	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	David Cornwell	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
	Lord de Ramsey	N/A	N/A	N/A	
4	Stephen Edgley	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present
5	Daniel Edwards	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present
6	David England	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	Mark England	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
8	Daniel Fabb	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	James German	Present	Present	Present	Present
10	Marc Heading	Apologies		Present	
11	Ian Johnson	Present	Present	Present	Present
12	Sam Johnson	Present	Present	Present	Present
13	Charles Leadbetter		Present	Apologies	Present
14	Lucy Munns	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
15	Thomas Noble	Present	Present	Present	Present
16	Jonathan Short	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
17	Rupert Waters				Present
18	Hugh Whittome	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
19	Stephen Whittome	Present	Present	Present	Present
20					
21					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022
1	Dan Brown	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	25/02/2025	28/11/2024	06/06/2024	30/11/2023
1	James Carney (FDC)	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Apologies

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

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 The Election of members of the Board will take place this year. Members will receive an election notice during July/August and are requested to return their complete slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31st October 2025.

3.2 There are currently **2** vacancies on the Board

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

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

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

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

4. Composition and amalgamations

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

5. Training

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

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

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

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

The Chairman highlighted that R Waters had left his role at Abbots Ripton Farming and therefore there is an additional vacancy. It was also highlighted that the clerk’s office needs to review whether S or D Cornwell are the elected member.

B.1937 Clerk's Report
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**5**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 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. Charging for Planning & Consenting

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

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

The Board is asked to support the need to review our charging model to maximise income. The new model will be implemented from the 1st April 2025. This will be reviewed annually, and the Clerk invites feedback.

2. **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.

3. Insurance

Our insurance has been arranged using Towergate insurance brokers for the year to 31*st* 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

The Board considered the report and its content. P Burrows highlighted the improvement work that has been undertaken in terms of planning and consenting and the importance of the new fee model that has been launched. He added that the Middle level Board have now supported the creation of a new compliance and enforcement role to work in conjunction with the new fee model to better manage risks and bring in income for the IDBs and Middle Level Commissioners. He added that this need was informed by his observation of the Board's experience with the Womb Farm Development and the need to learn from this and develop the capability within the MLC Office. The Board were supportive of the measures.

<u>Fens Reservoir</u>
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**Under Clerks report**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FENS RESERVOIR**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Approve that the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.

B. Acknowledge that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

1. Latest position

1.1 On behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners and IDBs, we responded to the phase two public consultation and having worked closely with Anglian Water over the last 24-months, what is now clear within the proposals is that in terms of water source, water transfer, site flood resilience, emergency drawdown and downstream water transfer routes, the planning, construction and operation of the reservoir will be dependent upon the Middle Level Commissioners' and IDB infrastructure, our operations and our resources. These need to be ready and resilient for this enhanced future role.

1.2 Whilst the Middle Level has always been key within UK food security, the Fens Reservoir (see website) is a game-changer as our collective infrastructure and operations will also become critical for regional housing and economic growth beyond our catchment. This is arguably the boldest and most transformational investment in the Fens since the original great drainage schemes of the 1600s. It presents a great opportunity to bring resilience and investment into the Middle Level as we face the accelerated challenges of a changing climate as evidenced within the recent Future Fens Integrated Adaptation Programme's Climate Change Risk Assessment.

1.3 We will be prioritising input into the Fens Reservoir as the potential gains are significant and the stakes are high. Therefore, please be mindful that other service standards may be affected.

1.4 We have been recovering our staff time costs associated with many aspects of supporting Anglian Water develop the Fens Reservoir proposals through a Service level Agreement (SLA). The SLA is being updated to cover additional technical support we need to bring in, e.g. consultants. We are also finalising a separate agreement for reservoir project funded additional staff capacity.

1.5 By spring 2025 Anglian Water aim to have a whole scheme solution identified ahead of another design freeze and third non statutory public consultation.

2. IDB Interests

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

Organisation	Direct Interest areas	Notes
Middle Level Commissioners	Interaction with and impact on MLC infrastructure and operations: • Water sources • Emergency drawdown • Site design • Downstream transfer	

	Governance impacts of reservoir	
Curf & Wimblington Combined IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Site design (main site) • Downstream transfer Governance impacts of reservoir	
Commissioners for imbanking fen lands and low grounds within the Parishes of Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington, also known as the 'Imbanking Commissioners'	*Governance opportunities the reservoir may enable dissolve the Commissioners and redistribute assets*	
Nightlayers IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Site design (treatment works) • Downstream transfer Governance impacts of reservoir	
Sutton & Mepal IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Downstream transfer	
Warboys Somersham & Pixley IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Downstream transfer	
Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Downstream transfer	
Upwell IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Downstream transfer	
Bluntisham IDB	Interaction with and impact on IDB infrastructure and operations: • Downstream transfer	*From 1st April 2026 we are discontinuing MLC services to these IDBs. With them and their new service provider we'll need to consider what this means for the Fens Reservoir.*
Hundred Foot Washes IDB	Ouse Washes as a potential water source	

3. Legal approach

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

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

1. The drafting, negotiation and completion of any legal agreements for the protection of MLC's assets (as a result of the DCO).

2. The drafting, negotiation and completion of any legal agreements in relation to operational matters required to be agreed/formalised to allow the DCO to be implemented/operate.

3. The drafting and negotiation of any protective provisions on the face of the DCO.

4. Entering into, and review of, the Statement of Common Ground (SoCGs)

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

1. Review of consultation and other materials and the drafting/review of consultation responses

2. Drafting/review of relevant and written representations during the DCO examination.

3. Drafting of responses to Examining Authority posed questions directly to MLC.

4. Drafting/review of any other written submissions during the DCO examination (e.g. Principle Areas of Disagreement (PADSS)).

5. Attendance at hearings.

3.2 We approached several external solicitors with experience in DCOs and are due to get into contract with our preferred supplier in January 2025.

3.3 For the Fens Reservoir, if the Middle Level Commissioners (including their employees and consultants) are to act on behalf of the MLC and IDBs they administer in a manner that is legally robust for a scheme of this complexity and significance, it is prudent to secure specific delegations and authority from each organisation.

3.4 Acting as one will enable efficiencies, increase agility, improve responsiveness and help manage and mitigate conflict of interests that some individual MLC/IDB Board Members have with the Fens Reservoir.

3.5 Acting independently would mean each organisation may need different staffing and legal service arrangements to look after their individual interest, i.e. the MLC staffing structure would not be able to act for each IDB as well as the MLC. This is impractical. It is also unlikely we would be able to practically manage the terms of any security/non-disclosure requirements that come with a scheme of this type by acting independently.

3.6 As the Fens Reservoir Development Consent Order will disallow/overwrite exiting statutory powers held by the Middle Level Commissioners and IDBs, the Board is asked to acknowledge this need and delegate the decision-making authority to the Clerk engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chair as he sees fit.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Paul Burrows introduced the paper and outlined that the Board is likely to be directly affected by the pipework associated with the proposed reservoir. He referred to the government announcement this morning confirming that the project will be treated in planning terms as Nationally Significant Infrastructure. S Edgley added that there is still considerable uncertainty for landowners who may be affected.

RESOLVED

Approved that the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.

Acknowledged that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chairman/Vice Chairman as he sees fit.

B.1938 Environment Officer's Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 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 polices 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. Please contact the ecology team ASAP to book a survey of any trees that require felling or trimming this year as this is the best time of year to survey for bats.
E. 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
F. Be aware that you will require licenced supervision of certain works that take place around badger setts, which MLC can provide.
G. 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.
H. 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.
I. Report bank slips that require remedial works as soon as they occur or are noticed.
J. Review the water vole myth busting summary attached as an Appendix to the Board Report.

1) 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. This will take time and the ambition is to have a catalogue defined and ready to implement on 1st April 2026.

However, within all our service provision it is ecological and environmental compliance that carries greatest risk to Boards, Board Members, Board employees, the Middle Level Commissioners and their staff. A step-change in service is overdue and we have been building towards this over the last two-years as reflected in the 2024/25 fee adjustment. Therefore, 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.

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 <u>minimum statutory environmental compliance</u>. 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. You will also need to bear in mind the following:

- The additional Board members responsibilities and associated training and expertise required to become an intelligent client in commissioning ecological and environmental services. You need to know what service you are asking for and what standards are required.

- Alternative suppliers will likely still require inputs from Middle Level Commissioners staff which will be billed at an hourly rate and liaising with alternative suppliers may impact the cost, timeliness and quality of other services we provide your Board.

- Alternative suppliers will need to consider how they invest in the IDB sector locally, regionally and nationally and the myriad of partnership activity there is within and around the Middle Level.

Your clerk will need to be reassured that any alternative service provider will support and enable your environmental compliance to report on your behalf to Defra with due confidence.

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.

2) 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

3) 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

4) 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.

5) 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** - ***Water vole displacements cost a lot of money!*** **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*

	Cost of using external consultants for displacement per 150m	
	£4,810 - £9,810	**£32-65** *per metre*
2.	**Claim** ***– 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.*** **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** ***– 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.*** **Fact –** Protected species legislation is law an 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** ***– You can't do any bank works or maintenance where there are water voles anymore.*** **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 -** ***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.*** **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 –** ***If you fix a bank slip straight away it is unlikely to require a water vole displacement.*** **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** – ***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.*** **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 -** ***You can only repair one 150m length of bank where there are water voles.*** **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** ***– You can only displace water voles during a few specific weeks of the year.*** **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 15th Feb-15th April or 15th Sept to 31st Oct. You can also only survey for water voles between 15th Feb to 31st Oct as they are dormant during winter.
10.	**Claim** ***– 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*** **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.	

P Burrows introduced the report highlighting the new service package arrangement and increase fee, highlighting that this has been developed to help IDBs meet their minimum statutory compliance. He reported that the BAP was a legal requirement and meeting has been held with the Chairman as part of the review and update. He also advised the Board on the approach they ought to take regarding future bank-slips and the need for prompt action should piling be needed in order to reduce the likelihood of needing water vole displacement which add costs and working window constraint to such works.

B.1939 Consulting Engineers' Reports
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Confirm whether it wishes to create, adopt and issue standing advice notes for its district and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
B. **Consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
C. **Confirm that it wishes for MLC to investigate fitting of an additional slacker.**
D. **Confirm that it wishes for onsite overhaul of cleaner and the program modifications to allow surface clean options at Washways and High Fen.**
E. **Review pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.**

1. Summary

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

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

2. Summary of key planning issues

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

We will, when possible, seek the Board's input, rather than wait for Board meetings. This will be done via correspondence with the Chair, Vice Chair, District Officer and any appropriate sub-committees.

2.1 Engagement with the Local Planning Authorities (LPA)

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

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

Policies and processes are being reviewed and updated.

2.2 **MLC001: Middle Level System Flood & Drainage Infrastructure Capacity**

This is directly relevant to the Boards that drain and/or pump into the MLC system and will be of interest to others.
As you will be aware, 2023/24 broke records for rainfall and the amount of water pumped at St Germans. Over 227,000 million litres of water were safely pumped into the Tidal Great Ouse that would have otherwise been flooding homes, land, businesses, roads and other critical infrastructure, significantly affecting other vital public services.

Our station worked in combination with over 70 smaller Internal Drainage Board stations, hundreds of kilometres of drains and raised embankments, to keep our Fens relatively dry and protect local communities and the economy from flooding. We are hoping for a drier 2024/25 but need to plan for this being the new normal. This winter really helped highlight the importance of, and also the weaknesses, in our infrastructure and operations.

Alongside this, and within the constraints of our limited staff capacity, we are improving how we engage as non-statutory consultees in the planning process. We want to provide planning authorities, developers and others with an earlier, much clearer stance from us, to inform plans strategically (e.g. within Local Plan development) and tactically (e.g. within individual planning applications).

With these factors in mind, we have published our first 'standing advice note' which is included as Appendix 3 and is available on our website https://middlelevel.gov.uk/standing-advice-2/. Standing Advice Note MLC001 effectively declares our flood and drainage infrastructure 'at capacity'. The intent is to develop and publish further notes over the coming months.

This note was issued to local Councils and the Environment Agency on Wednesday 8th May 2024 for them to consider within their decision making. Boards will need to appreciate and plan for the limitations within the MLC receiving system within their own pumping station improvement schemes.

Boards may choose to create, adopt and issue similar standing advice notes for their districts.

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

3. **Strategic Issues**

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

3.1 **Fenland District Council**

Fenland District Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation

This high level document is currently the subject of a consultation.

It is a statutory requirement for Local Planning Authorities to carry out an appraisal of the sustainability of their Local Plan. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is an iterative process which forms an integral to the plan making process and is used to appraise the social, environmental, and economic effects of the Local Plan.

It should provide a sound evidence base for the plan, form an integrated part of the plan preparation process and will help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development.

The SA Scoping Report is the first stage in the SA process. Through an assessment of the current situation in Fenland, the SA Scoping Report identifies which issues need to be addressed and identifies objectives to test the Plan and policies against. This assessment will help to establish the Issues, Vision and Objectives of the emerging Local Plan.
The document is primarily aimed at Historic England, Natural England and The Environment Agency but comments are welcome from any organisation or individual.

At the time of writing the document is being considered with the intention of issuing a response by the deadline.

3.2 **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)**

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

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

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

3.3 **Cambridgeshire County Council**

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

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

a. Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme

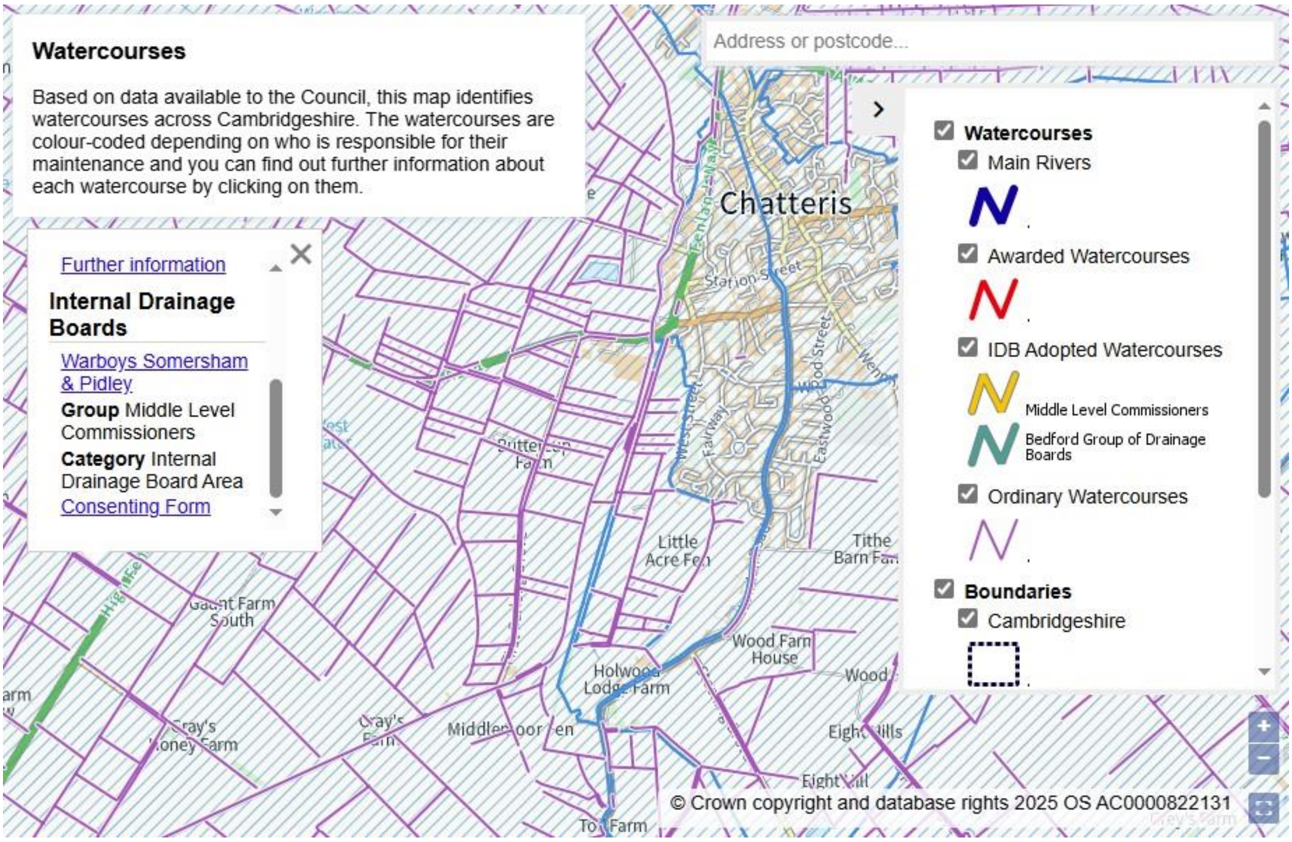
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action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

b. Community Flood Action programme

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

c. Watercourse Mapping Tool

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



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. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Funding allocations for Tranche 2 were confirmed in mid-November and work has now been completed including repairs to weed screens, pumps and controls and channel repairs.

Works were included in a second bid for Tranche 2B to be delivered be March 2026, but the bid was unsuccessful.

The criteria for bids were for the modernisation, innovation, and upgrade of IDB assets and waterways, making them more effective, sustainable, environmentally friendly for agricultural land, flood risk and rural communities.

5. Capital Programme

In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) there is currently an allocation identified for 2026/27 to progress a system study.

5.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. Pumping station replacement costs are included on the capital programme. Further investment will be needed in the interim and will be developed further in line with the Key Health Indicators.

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

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

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

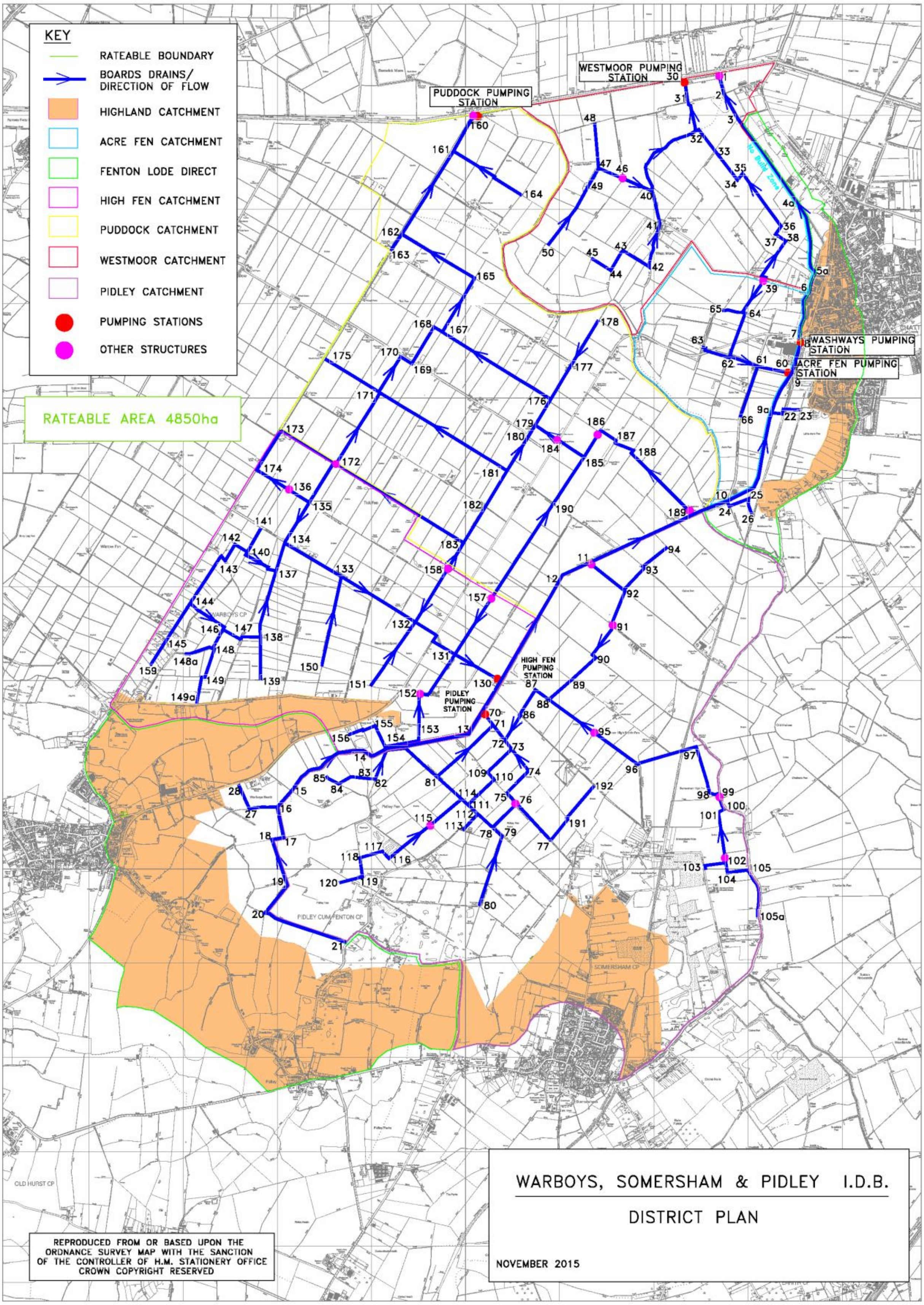
Appendix 1

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2025/2026)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Acre Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,400.0	1400.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	252.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	366.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	90.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
High Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	59.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pidley p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10,000.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	149.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Puddock p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7,500.0	7500.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	139.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	0.0	90.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Westmoor p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4,100.0	4100.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.0	135.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Washways p/s	Refurbishment of pumping station	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	239.0	239.0
	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23,860.0	23860.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	14.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	34.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	30.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Plant	Isuzu d-Max - AO17 WMW	0	0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Doosan DX140W Excavator - AU09 FEW	0	0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0
Property	Puddock pumping station bungalow	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels	Washways discharge channel piling replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	75.0
		27.6	**252.0**	**130**	**119**	**0**	**0**	**10,010**	**185**	**0**	**75**	**255**	**37,380**	**48,434**

Appendix 2


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

Appendix 3

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

MLC Ref.	*Council Ref*	*Applicant*	*Type of development*	*Location*
1305	F/YR24/0829/F	Mr J Wilcock	Residence (Self-build dwelling)	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris
1306	F/YR24/0939/F	Clarion Housing Group	Residence (Extension)	The Grove, Chatteris
1307	24/00425/FUL	Mr D Hopkins	Residence (Garage)	Fen Road, Pidley
1308	24/020286/HHFUL	Mr & Mrs Buckley	Residence (Extension)	Puddock Road, Warboys
1309	24/02362/FUL	Mr D Hopkins	Residence (2 x garages)	Fen Road, Pidley
1310	25/00027/CLPD	Mr D Margot	Residence (Extension & garage conversion to annexe)	Pasture Close, Warboys
1311	F/YR25/0024/F	Mr & Mrs D Newman	Residence (Extension)	The Hawthorns, Chatteris
1312	F/YR25/0034/F	Mr & Mrs Beesley	Residence (Extension)	Southampton Place, Chatteris
1313	24/02353/FUL	Qualitec Construction Ltd	Residential (4 dwellings)	Warboys Road, Pidley
1314	24/02116/FUL	Mr William McEwan	Change of use (Land to station 2 mobile homes & 4 touring caravans)	Parkhall Road, Somersham
1315	F/YR25/0066/F	Mr & Mrs Behagg	Residence (Extennsion)	Ronalds Way, Chatteris
1316	F/YR25/0083/F	Mr M Kerridge	Change of use (Land to builders yard with 2 sheds & 3 containers)	London Road, Chatteris
1317	Enquiry	Wilma Vaughan	Residence (Replacement porch)	Roundhouse Drove, Tick Fen, Warboys
1318	25/00139/HHFUL	Mr W Bellamy	Residence (Extension)	Cross Drove, Warboys
1319	25/00259/OUT	Mr D Hopkins	Residence (New dwelling)	Fen Road, Pidley
1320	25/00397/FUL	DRA Fabb Ltd	Commercial	Fenside Road, Warboys
1321	25/00548/PIP	Mr D Hopkins	Residential (Up to 4 x dwellings)	Pond Close, Pidley
1322	25/00543/PIP	Mr D Hopkins	Residential (Up to 2 x dwellings)	Fen Road, Pidley
1323	25/00544/PIP	Mr D Hopkins	Residential (Up to 3 x dwellings)	Fen Road, Pidley
1324	F/YR25/0253/F	Gary Smalley	Residence (Extension)	Fairway, Chatteris
1325	25/00582/P3JPA	Mr D Hopkins	Change of use (Unit to dwelling)	Fen Road, Pidley
1326	F/YR25/0302/F	Campa Portfolio Ltd	Residential (2 x dwellings)	High Street, Chatteris
1327	F/YR25/0308/F	Mr A Pritchard	Residential (Extension)	The Hawthorns, Chatteris

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

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Description of Works	Location	Date consent granted
333/1		WSP/BC/87	Cambridgeshire County Council	Installation of road signs affecting the 9m byelaw strip	Forty Foot Bank, Ramsey	19/12/2024

The following applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) have been granted since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Location	Date consent granted
281, 284, 514, 553, 890, 1020 & 1248	F/YR19/0152/O & F/YR23/0114/REM	WSP/DC/82	Burmor Construction	Fairbairn Way, Chatteris	04/11/2024

The following infiltration device applications have been acknowledged since the last meeting:

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Option 1 (Self-certification) or Option 2 (Checking Form)	Location	Date acknowledged
1310	25/00027/CLPD	Option 1	Pasture Close, Warboys	04/02/2025
1315	F/YR25/0066/F	Option 1	Ronalds Way, Chatteris	03/04/2025
1311	F/YR25/0024/F	Option 1	The Hawthorns, Chatteris	03/04/2025

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**7**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Dave Bantoft**

1. M&E key messages and advice

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

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

2. Minor Works

2.1 **Puddock**

As previously reported the pumps are at an age to consider overhaul or replacement. The inlet slacker is leaking which needs to be addressed and the outlet doors are not seating correctly which needs to be investigated. An additional slacker fitted on the discharge pipe near the weedscreen should be fitted as a precaution in case the main slacker fails, it would also be useful during repair of the main slacker.

Please confirm if you would like us to investigate fitting of an additional slacker.

2.2 **Westmoor**

Pump 2 has run well since the thrust bearing replacement. The weedscreen hose drums are starting to corrode and would benefit from recoating. This should be included in next WSC overhaul as it is a more cost effective to do it at that time.

2.3 **Acre Fen**

The Pump Cabinet is heavily corroded, and replacement should be considered. The control panel is from 1984 and the oldest of the WS&P control panels so should be replaced. This is likely to cost in the region of £10k

2.4 **High Fen**

Pump 2 insulation resistance has been fluctuating over the last few years routine inspections which may be an indication of water ingress into the motor. Pump 2 has been set to duty and will continue to be monitored. If pump 2 requires replacement the support frame will also need replacing as it is heavily corroded. Pump 2 discharge pipe is weeping which needs to be investigated to determine repair required.
The weedscreen traverse had been noisy, new wheels and shafts have been fitted and the trolley realigned which has cured this issue.

2.5 **Washways**

The weed screen cleaner at Washways would benefit from an overhaul before the 2025 pumping season as it has been worked heavily over the last 2 seasons. The weed screen cleaner has become less reliable. It is essential that this unit performs well as the station must deal with lots of weed and the pumps can not operate correctly without it. This is one of the hardest working weed screen cleaners in the whole MLC catchment.
An onsite overhaul is likely to cost c£7k where a full refurbishment which would require the trolley to be removed is likely to cost in the region of £20k to £25k. A full overhaul should be not needed at this time as the unit was overhauled in 2016. The surface clean modifications to Washways are likely to cost c£7k. To enable the modifications at Washways the main controller and screen need to be replaced as the units fitted are now obsolete, the program needs to be converted for the new model. This program can then be installed at High Fen for a further £750, as it already has the modern controller. Replacement of the controller will give more reliability going forward. These modifications would improve the weed cleaning capability which in turn would assist pump efficiency and reduce wear on both the pumping plant and weed screen cleaning equipment.

Please approve for onsite overhaul of this cleaner and the program modifications to allow surface clean options at Washways and High Fen. Total c£16k

Pumps 2 and 3 power faction correcting capacitors and main pump contactors have been replaced and were funded by the Storm and Recovery GiA.

Pump 4 gearbox overhaul was also funded by the GiA.

All 3 engines at Washways have been serviced and spare filters are now kept in stock onsite.

2.6 **Pidley**

Only routine inspections have been carried out this period. The weedscreen cleaner at Pidley is over 20 years old and due a complete overhaul to ensure its reliability.

3. Inspections

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

- High Fen – Noisy in Operation when traversing Left & Right – This has been rectified.
- Washways – Bump Stop Damaged/Missing - Trolley bump stops have been replaced and grab bump stops will be included in overhaul.

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

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

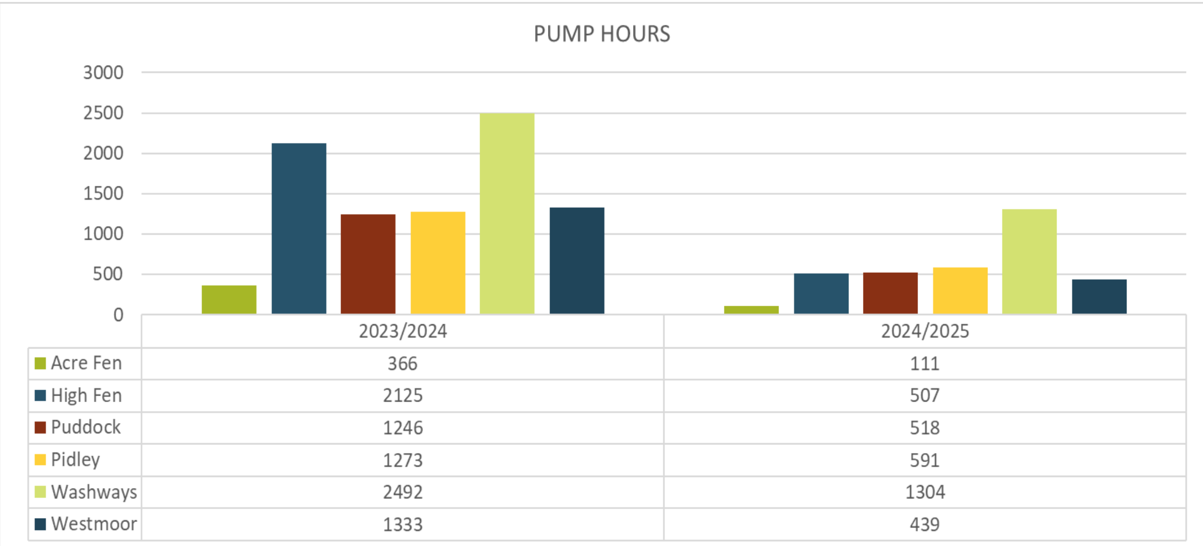
Westmoor	13-Dec-2023	13-Dec-2028

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

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

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

5. Pump Hours



Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

The Board reviewed and noted the reports. In terms of M&E the Chairman reported that the works at Washways Pumping Station were going ahead, circa £16k. H Whittome asked whether the development fund would be legitimate in terms of a contribution given the station receives much of the district's water from areas that have been developed. A £7k contribution from the fund was agreed.

The Chairman added that the Board is facing some hefty bills ahead looking at all the pumphouses. I Johnson reported that the gearbox at Washways was still weeping despite the repair and added that there may be little point in future repairs as it may be an inherent design fault.

B.1940 Health & Safety
Viz:

SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Warboys Somersham and Pidley IDB Complete

Name of organisation:	Warboys Somersham and Pidley IDB
Date of site visit	29.01.2025 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Washways Pumping Station PE16 6EG
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	28.01.2025 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Warboys Somersham and Pidley IDB

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Daniel Brown

Have there been any accidents since our last visit? No

None recorded.

Have there been any new starters since our last visit? No

None recorded.

1

Washways pumping station was visited and no significant issues were raised.

The remaining pump stations at Puddock, Westmoor acre, High Fen and Pidley were inaccessible due to poor ground conditions making vehicle access hazardous. However the stations were discussed and it was understood that no significant issues have occurred since the previous site visit by the author of this report. (Jan 2024) .


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3

2

As discussed all pumping stations have a requirement to be provided with additional signage to indicate, High voltage, automated machinery and the location and emergency contact details of persons responsible.

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) .

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature

Martin Clark
30.01.2025 20:23 GMT

Departure time	29.01.2025 11:23 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

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice Chairman had met with COPE on their visit and there was nothing to report.

He added that the District Officer had made a start on railing improvements and general site tidying at the Board's pumping stations. He asked that Members give suitable encouragement whenever they see the District Officer.

B.1941 District Officer's Report

The Chairman outlined that the District Officer was unable to attend today's meeting and summarised the following:

- The frustration that the pump at Somersham Pocket Park was operated without communications with the Board.
- The siphon at Washways is working well.
- The meter readings and provision of these to the MLC M&E team is working well.
- The flail mower is leaking oil and that given this is bio-oil it is expensive. They are getting process for a new pump and the option of addressing the seal. The Chair to resolve when options and prices are clear.
- Encourage members to engage with the DO when they see him. It's a remote and isolated role so important people give him encouragement and support.

B.1942 Governance

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**10**
Meeting:	**WARBYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
B. Review and approve the updated Policy included as appendix.
C. Review the Boards Policy Statement
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. Note the system of financial Internal Controls that are in place and consider whether additional controls are required within the running and decision making of the Board.
F. To review and approve the publishing of Exercise of Public Rights
G. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
H. To note and approve the submission of the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
I. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

1. Annual Return & Auditors Report 2023/2024

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

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

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

2. Internal Controls

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

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

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

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

3. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

3.1 The Board are asked to consider and approve their Risk Management Strategy.

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

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS & BUNGALOW

	As at 1st April 2025	
Puddock Pumping Station	1,001,000.00	
Pidley Pumping Station	1,170,000.00	
High Fen Pumping Station	954,200.00	
Acre Fen Pumping Station	598,000.00	
Washways Pumping Station	2,210,000.00	
Westmoor Pumping Station	1,007,500.00	
	6,940,700.00	Index linked
Puddock Bungalow	150,000.00	
	7,090,700.00	

4. 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 a Financial Regulations policy (Appendix 1).

The Board are asked to review and approve the Boards Policy Statement (Appendix 2)

5. IDB1

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

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

In summary:

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

5.2 To note and support the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf for the year 2023/24 is included as Appendix 3.

6. Annual Governance Statement:

6.1 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)

7. Exercise of Public Rights

7.1 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.

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

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

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

7.3 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.

7.4 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.

8. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

8.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Financial Regulations Policy
Appendix 2 Policy Statement
Appendix 3 IDB1
Appendix 4 Annual Governance Statement

Appendix 1

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB

Administered by:

middle level commissioners

Governance
Financial Regulations 2025 – 2035

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

A SUMMARY

1. These Financial Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Board’s, Standing Orders, Regulations as to proceedings, Schedule of Reserved Matters and Scheme of Delegations to ensure that its resources are properly managed, accounted for and controlled.

2. The level at which decisions relating to the finances and functions of the Board are to be taken are as set out in the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations

3. The Clerk shall be responsible for maintaining adequate and effective controls and procedures in the manner and format he/she considers to be best and shall where appropriate, prepare additional rules of procedure or guidance, supplementary to these Regulations.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for setting up and maintaining the financial and management accounting/reporting systems, processes, procedures and coding lists. Such systems shall be properly documented and shall not be changed without the approval of the Clerk. The Head of Finance (Treasurer) to the Middle Level Commissioners shall be the Board’s Responsible Financial Officer, as defined in and for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. The MLC finance team will support the Head of Finance in providing this function.

5. The Clerk shall advise the Board and carry out the 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:

Estimated Value of Goods/Services Quotes/	Quotation/Tenders to be sought
<= £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.

Appendix 2

Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Administered by:

Governance

Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management

1 Issued

1.1 This policy is issued and has been adopted by the Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board.

1.2 The policy was last reviewed and republished in May 2025 and will be reviewed at least every five years.

2 Introduction

Purpose

2.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board to provide a public statement of the Boards' approach to its management of water levels and flood risk within their District (the District). The Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board are constituted by order of Parliament operating under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and is designated as a flood risk and coastal erosion 'Risk Management Authority' (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

2.2 The Board serves the local community by managing water levels in ordinary watercourses and other water infrastructures within the District to mitigate against the risks from flooding and drought. In delivering its functions the Board will meet its environmental obligations and commitments and seek opportunities to enhance the environment. The Board recognises their responsibility for good governance, local accountability and financial security, achieving value for money from all its activities. As an independent public body the Board are committed to the pursuit of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

2.3 It should be noted that although this document refers to 'flood and coastal erosion risk management' (FCERM) the District is not affected by coastal erosion.

Background

2.4 The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. The Environment Agency is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. Lead Local Flood Authorities (unitary authorities or county councils) are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their areas. Delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood risk and coastal erosion "Risk Management Authorities" (RMA), which includes the Warboys Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board.

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

3. Governance and local accountability

3.1 The Board will ensure that its policies and procedures enable effective representation of and accountability to drainage rate payers and the occupiers of non-agricultural land within the district, including elections in line with the requirements of the Land Drainage Act 1991, and timely engagement with charging authorities to fill vacancies in seats allocated to appointed members.

3.2 Board members must take decisions objectively in their best interest and uphold the ethical standards expected of public officeholders. Board members must adhere to the Board's Members Code of Conduct, including the seven principles of public life (Nolan Principles). The Board will make sure that there is suitable training in place for board members and staff, including on financial and environmental matters as appropriate.

3.3 Board members must declare financial and other interests relevant to their function with the Board. Board members will recuse themselves as appropriate where conflicts of interest may occur in relation to procurement, contract management and decision making.

4. Delivering the National Strategy's policy aim and objectives

Aim

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

Objectives

4.2 The 2011 Strategy sets out five objectives in pursuance of the overall aim as follows.

- understand the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, working together to put in place long term sustainable plans to manage these risks and making sure that other plans take account of them;
- avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and being careful to manage land elsewhere to avoid increasing risks;
- build, maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society as well as achieving wider environmental benefits;

- increase public awareness of the risk that remains and engaging with people at risk to encourage them to take action to manage the risks that they face and to make their property mor resilient; and
- improving the detection, forecasting and issue of warnings of flooding, co-ordinating a rapid response to flood emergencies and promoting faster recovery from flooding.

4.3 The Board supports the national aim and objectives for the management of flood risk and water levels and the Board's policy and approach will be consistent with them.

5. Flood risk and water level management in the Board's District

5.1 The District has been determined to derive benefit, or avoid danger, as a result of drainage operations. As such the whole of the District is at some risk from flooding, but that risk is managed wherever it is practically, environmentally and financially viable[1].

5.2 The Board makes decisions regarding flood risk within the District taking into account the following:

- assets in place considering design standard and life;
- Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority flood risk strategies, plans and maps; and
- other information such as the history of flooding and land use impacts.

5.3 The following outlines the key details of the District:

- Total area of the drainage district: 4850 ha
- Catchment area draining to and including the District: 5830 ha
- Area of Agricultural Land: 4431 ha
- Area of other (non-agricultural) land: 419 ha

5.4 Assets for which the Board have operational responsibility:

- Water Level Control Structures: 17 No
- Watercourses (maintained): 78 km
- Raised embankments: 17 km
- Reservoirs: 0 ha
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): 0 no
- Pumping Stations: 6 no

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

- Main Rivers: 0 km
- Raised embankments/flood walls: 0 km
- Pumping Stations: 0 no

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

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

6.1 Through the operation, maintenance and improvement of watercourses and other water control assets within the District, the Board seeks to achieve a general standard of water level management that enables navigation, the drainage and irrigation of agricultural land, reduces flood risk to developed areas, and sustains environmental features throughout the District.

6.2 The Board monitors and reviews the condition of its watercourses and other assets, particularly those designated as critical, over-spilling from which could affect people and property. Consistent with the resultant needs established, a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards required. The programme is reviewed periodically by the Board to ensure it is delivering the appropriate condition.

6.3 Where standards are not at the desired level, improvement works will be sought where they are considered to be practical and financially viable by the Board. Where improvement works meet the criteria set by Defra, financial support will be sought from the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding. Where appropriate works will be undertaken in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and take opportunities to work with natural processes.

6.4 Work for and by the Board will be carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of local flood risk management requirements and strategies, opportunities for partnership working, environmental obligations and guidance available from Defra, the Environment Agency and other organisations.

6.5 The Board's powers to carry out water level and flood risk management works are permissive (i.e. the Board are not obliged to carry out works) and their resources are limited. The Board's policy is therefore to designate what they consider to be the most important watercourses in the District as "District Drains" and prioritise their resources to the appropriate maintenance and, where necessary, improvement of such channels and associated structures. The watercourses and structures so designated will change over time as necessary but the current designated watercourses and structures are shown on the plan attached to this Statement.

6.6 Other watercourses usually are the responsibility of other bodies or the adjoining owners. The Board will only take action in respect of these latter watercourses where resources are available and where it is in all the circumstances appropriate for the Board to becomes involved, bearing in mind the powers available to other persons or bodies.

6.7 The Board have a supervisory duty, under section 1(2)(d) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 over all matters relating to the drainage of land in their District and will, under this duty where appropriate advise others regarding the undertaking of works when it is not appropriate for the Board to exercise its own powers.

6.8 The Board will also seek to ensure, where possible that assets managed by other risk Management Authorities, which also reduce flood risk to the District, are maintained at a satisfactory standard and may enter into a Public Sector Co-operation Agreement with another Risk Management Authority to achieve better value for money when carrying out work to reduce flood risk.

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

7.1 The Board will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.

7.2 The Board will regulate as necessary, using available legislative powers and byelaws, the activity of others to ensure their actions within, alongside, and otherwise impacting its drainage system do not increase flood risk, prevent the efficient working of drainage systems, or adversely impact the environment.

7.3 The potential impact on flood risk from future development both within the District and the wider catchment draining into the District, is fully recognised by the Board. The Board will take an active role in the assessment of local plans, major development and, individual (planning) applications, to prevent inappropriate development and land use to ensure that flood risk is not increased. This will include, where appropriate, providing pre-application advice and checking of flood risk assessments.

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

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

8. Communication and transparency

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Working together

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

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

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

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

10. Environmental Measures

10.1 The Board have nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, the Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 and Amendments 2011, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, the Environment Act 2021, and as a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.

10.1.1 Further to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, the Board will review their Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans with reference to the local nature recovery strategy and relevant species conservation or protected site strategy for their areas.

10.2 Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work constitutes vegetation control and desilting and is often a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short-term impacts will arise, this management is often essential to maintain the distinct assemblage of aquatic habitat and species present in the District. Such work will be carried out in a way that manages the potential risks to the environment. The Board have access to environmental expertise from their Ecology and Environmental Services Manager and have a Biodiversity Action Plan, developed according to ADA and Natural England guidelines, which indicate the way in which their functions can be carried out in a way appropriate to the environment and how the environment can be enhanced. The Board maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the significant majority being the responsibility of the adjoining land owners or of other bodies.

10.3 When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:-

- Avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to agricultural interests and to natural habitats and species;
- Carry out the monitoring of any gains and losses of biodiversity and report annually to the Environment Agency; and
- Take appropriate opportunities to achieve multiple environmental outcomes and work with natural processes, wherever possible, including the enhancement of habitats and water bodies within the District.

10.4 The District encompasses no sites of national and international biological or geological interest.

10.5 The Board has no Water Level Management Plan.

10.6 The Board will play its full role in sustaining the Water Level Management Plans prepared for SSSIs to maintain, or bring sites into, favourable condition, in conjunction with Natural England and other interested parties and review the plans in accordance with guidance.

Appendix 3

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 idbfund@environment-agency.gov.uk
- The Chief Executives of:
  - all local authorities that pay special levies to the Board;
  - all County Councils or London Boroughs within which the Board is situated.

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

Please round all cash figures down to nearest whole £.

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

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

Special levies information for financial year 2024-25	
Name of local authority	**£**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	7,346
2. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	21,585
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	**28,931**

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		199,543
B. Special Levies		24,334
C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		24,957
D. Contributions received from developers/other beneficiaries		
E. Government Grants (includes capital grants from EA and levy contributions)		
F. PSCAs overall total Breakdown: from EA from other RMAs		
G. Loans		
H. Rechargeable Works		
I. Interest and Investment Income		12,964
J. Rents and Acknowledgements		
K. Other Income Write back of provisions Consents Rent		 100 50 6,600
Total income		**268,548**
EXPENDITURE		
L. New Works and Improvement Works		4,415
M. Total precept to the Environment Agency		22,984
N. Watercourse maintenance		36,204
O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		38,912
P. Administration		25,531
Q. PSCAs		

[1] https://saaa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide_2023.pdf

R. Rechargeable Works		
S. Finance Charges		
T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total Breakdown: General, across the whole region SSSI specific, where relevant	 708	708
U. Other Expenditure Insurance		5,351
Electricity costs – overall total Breakdown (if possible): Standing charge (per annum) Unit charge (per annum)	 15,520 181,961	197,481
Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total Breakdown: Pumping stations Fleet and plant machinery	 7,617 5,148	12,765
Total expenditure		**344,351**
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**(75,803)**
W. Developers Funds income not applied in year		411,386
X. Grant income not applied in year		164,011

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

1.542 %
£ 3,083.29

Value of special levies outstanding at year end?

0 %
£ 0

Notes:

K. Include all other Income, such as absorption account surpluses (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other income in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.

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

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

N. State all costs associated with the maintenance of watercourses, meaning work associated with open channels, pipelines, culverts, bridges, etc. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with delivery of the maintenance programme. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.

O. State all costs associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Plant, vehicle and labour charges should include a fair proportion of the overheads such as depot/workshop costs, employment on-costs, insurances and depreciation, etc. You should also include a fair proportion of the support costs directly associated with maintaining and operating the pumping stations, sluices and water level control structures. Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.

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

Q. State all costs associated with the PSCA.

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

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

T. State all costs associated with undertaking works – capital or maintenance – that are likely intended to help enhance and/or conserve biodiversity. These costs are likely to be incurred in implementing actions set out in an IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan or other conservation actions. If possible, you should identify the overall costs and break them down into two groups: general across the whole IDB area, and SSSI specific areas (in implementing actions set out in SSSI Water Level Management Plans or SSSI River Restoration Plans). Please do not include electricity or fuel costs as these are captured separately.

U. Include all other expenditure, such as a provision for bad/doubtful debts, write-offs, and absorption account deficits (for example plant and labour absorption accounts). Please include sub-total of all other expenditure in the first row and then a breakdown in separate rows below.

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

W. Total balance of developer fund year end.

X. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B – IDB Reporting

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

Policy Delivery Statement

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

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

2. What year was your statement last updated? 2019

Biodiversity

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

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

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

6. Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your website? .... Yes ☐ No ☒

7. When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)? 06/06/2024

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

SSSI water level management plans

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

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

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

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

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

Access to environmental expertise

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

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

If so, please list:

Public sector cooperation agreements (PSCAs)

21. How many active PSCAs are you working on? 0

22. Which risk management authorities are you working with on a PSCA?

Environment Agency	
Lead local flood authority	
Local authority (not a lead local flood authority)	
Internal drainage board	
Water company	
Other	

If other, please list:

23. Please indicate the type of work being undertaken.

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

If other, please list:

Asset Management

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

24. ADIS ☐

25. Paper Records ☐

26. Other Electronic System ☒

If so, please list:

Excel

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

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

78.4 kilometres

29. How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

6 pumping stations

30. How many pumps does the Board operate?

electric	12
diesel	1
renewable energy pumps (e.g. directly powered by wind, solar, hydro, etc)	
temporary / mobile pumps	
other type of pumps	

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)?

10.27 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?	22
60. Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	3
61. Number of elected members on the board at year end.	20
62. Number of appointed members on the board at year end.	3
63. Mean average number of elected members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	16

64. Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	1

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

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

Complaints procedure

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

68. Number of complaints received in the financial year?	0
69. Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?	0
70. Number of complaints referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?	0
71. Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

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

Published:

72. your completed IDB1 Form ☒

73. press release/s ☐

74. newsletter/s ☐

75. notice/s ☒

76. public consultation ☐

77. updated your IDB website ☒

Media engagement with:

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

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

80. trade media ☐

81. social media ☐

Public meetings:

82. Held public meeting/s ☒

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

Public events:

84. attended show/event/s e.g. county shows, fairs, etc ☐

85. attended trade event e.g. Flood and Coast, Flood and Water Live, etc ☐

86. hosted IDB open day ☐

Section B: NOTES

Guidance and Best Practice

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

Board membership and attendance

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

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

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

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

Section C – Declaration

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature	SAblett
Date	18/02/2025
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	MISS SAMANTHA ABLETT
Designation	ASSISTANT TREASURER
Email address	sam.ablett@middlelevel.gov.uk

Appendix 4

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

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a) Review of Internal Controls

Paul Burrows reported that the internal controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board that are available on the Board's web-page.

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

b) Policy Reviews

The Board considered the review of the policies.

RESOLVED

i) The Board considered and approved adoption of updated Finance Regulations covering the period 2025-2035.
ii) The Board reviewed and approved the update to their Policy Statement.
iii) The Board is comfortable with its Risk Management Strategy and agreed to continue to index link its asset valuations for insurance purposes.

c) IDB1 and Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

The Board noted and supported the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf.

The Board noted and approved the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

d) Exercise of Public Rights

Paul Burrows 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.

e) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1943 Finance Report – Looking Back
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
B. Note the Highland Water contributions
C. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 2.
D. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/2025 within Appendix 3.

Finance Officer's review 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 timeframe. A claim for £98,959.07 was submitted on behalf of the Board for excess winter pumping costs (Tranche 1) and £10,000 for Pumping Station repairs which were both successful and have now been paid.

Actual Expenditure against Budget

For 2024/2025 the Board had estimated expenditure for the year of £265,727. This was equivalent to a rate of 32.00p, to be raised through agricultural drainage rates and Special Levies. The rate setting process was centred around the new electricity contract and the uncertainty of the impact of a significant rainfall event. As members will be aware 2023/2024 became an ongoing rainfall event.

A budget monitoring exercise was carried out for the winter board meeting, and this was reviewed in November 2024 based on figures to September 2024 which at that point gave an indicative estimate that estimated net expenditure would be in line with the budget set.

Actual net Expenditure in 2024/25 was lower than the estimated budget because of several reasons. Drain works were approximately £9,000 below budget because of costs being less than original thought. The main savings during the year were Fuel costs which were approximately £56,400 lower than budget, following a relatively average year for pumping volumes. Administration cost was approximately £2,200 higher than budget due to higher Audit costs and additional administration fees in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant work. Other Improvement costs related to the works at Westmoor and Washways pumping stations respectively at a cost of £16,371, these works carried out was fully funded from the Storm Recovery Grant.

As outlined above following the setting of the rates for 2024/25 we received a grant for the excess pumping costs from 2023/24, the amount that was recognised to the general fund was £83,737 and is described in more detail below. In addition, £10,000 was received as part of the Tranche 1 grant in respect of improvement works.

Over-all this gives an increase in the Boards General Fund of £166,713 to a balance of £240,151.38 as of 31st March 2025, the balance on 1st April 2024 being £73,438.25. The current estimated for a year's expenditure is £257,422 and therefore the board now has the recommended 'year-in-hand' position.

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

1. Budgeting

1.1 The budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2025 is included as Appendix 1.

2. Payments for 2025

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2

3. Highland Water Contributions

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

3.2 When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2023/2024 and the budgeted expenditure for 2024/2025. The winter storm events gave claims significantly more than previous claims but following an understanding that the Environment Agency were able to switch funding within their revenue/capital programmes the full estimated claims were included in the rating proposals. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £44,880.45. Following an earlier Government announcement, details were eventually released concerning the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for the first trance (T1) was submitted in the sum of £98,959.07 (for excess Pumping Costs).

To adjust for this additional funding the relevant elements of the Storm Recovery Grant (T1) need to be adjusted against the highland water claims. The highland water calculation for these additional receipts amounts to £15,222.40, which will be adjusted from the Strom Recovery Grant.

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

4. Storm Recovery Grant – T2A

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

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Washways PS – Gearbox Overhaul & PFC Replacement	£13,245	1.60p
Westmoor PS – Pump 2 Thrust Bearing/Overhaul	£3,126	0.38p
	£16,371	1.98p

5. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

5.1 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 3

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett
Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Budget Review
Appendix 2 Payments for 2024/25
Appendix 3 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/25

Appendix 1

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

		Actual 2020/2021	Actual 2021/2022	Actual 2022/2023	Actual 2023/2024	Approved budget 2024/2025 £	Actual 2024/2025 £	Variance to budget £
1	District labour (including District Officer's salary)	35,077	36,089	65,747	37,145	42,500	42,449	51 A
2	Rates, insurances and telephones	4,430	4,452	4,616	5,614	6,300	6,557	(257) B
3	Repairs and renewals	16,700	19,401	17,122	29,494	37,000 C	37,509 C	(509) C
4	Drainworks	26,894	83,345	16,267	12,354	25,000 D	15,970 D	9,030 D
	Piling works							
5	Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	61,477	48,545	68,792	210,247	141,750	85,364	56,386 E
6	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	23,218	23,516	23,975	25,531	26,500	28,729	(2,229)
7	Environment Agency - Precept	21,877	21,877	22,314	22,984	23,673	23,673	(0)
8	Reinstatement of balances	0	0	0	0	27,066 F	-	27,066
9	Capital Reserve Fund	22,532	12,532	0	0	-	-	- G
		212,205	249,757	218,833	343,369	329,789	240,252	55,592
	Bad debt provision	0	0	0	0			
	Improvement works	99,562	10,632	28,361	0	-	16,371	(16,371)
	Washways improvement scheme	0	0	0	483	-		-
	LESS Interest on Deposit Accounts, private works, Highland water contributions, contributions from Development Charges Account etc	122,844	72,719	54,987	39,276	64,062 H	157,611 H	(119,189) H
	Net Expenditure	188,923	187,669	192,207	304,576	265,727	99,012	158,409
	Rate Requirement					*265,726*		
	Rate set	20.00p	21.00p	22.00p	27.00p	32.00 p		

Budget Monitoring 2024/2025

	Budget 2024/2025	Actual 2024/2025	Variance to Budget 2024/2025
Remarks			
A - Includes provision to increase by Middle Level pay award from anniversary of commencement of employment.			
B - Includes provision for increased insurances, telephones			
C - Includes provisions for:			
General provisions	13,000	16,822	(3,822)
Washways P/S - Screen Cleaner Overhaul and Power Cap:	15,000	2,774	12,226
Washways P/S Screen - Gear Box Repairs	-	5,143	(5,143)
Washways P/S - Weed Screen Overhaul	-	-	-
Acre Fen P/S - Controller Upgrade	-	-	-
Westmoor P/S - Bearing replacement	5,000	3,929	1,071
Washways P/S - Syphon	-	2,891	(2,891)
Truck	1,000	2,511	(1,511)
Digger	3,000	3,439	(439)
	37,000	37,509	(509)
Pump overhaul provision 2023/24 & 2024/25 not raised			
D - Includes contractors accounts:-			
Flail Mowing	-	-	-
Slubbing (machine hire)	15,000	9,300	5,700
Chemical weed control	500	-	500
	15,500	9,300	6,200
E - Provision based on 2 year average consumption and estimate for new contract rates from October 2025 (5% Increase)			
F - Provision for recovery of balances depleted in winter 2023/2024 pumping. Proposal to recover to balance at 31st March 2023 over a three year period.			
G - Does not include provision for future asset improvement fund			
H - Estimated income includes:			
Full calculated highland water claim	44,880	45,079	(199)
Storm recovery (T1) grnt - excess pumping costs		83,737	(83,737)
Storm Recovery T1/T2 Grant:			
Works at Washways and Westmoor p/s	-	16,371	(16,371)
Development account - works at Washways p/s	10,800	-	10,800

Appendix 2

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Payments 2024/2025 (1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025)

L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Manufacture of draw bar, 4 tine crome, ring pins, 25 litres of hydraulic oil, antifreeze and hand wipes	387.43
Middle Level Commissioners - Assisting insurance assessor	265.15
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)	600.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump and check levels (Puddock pumping station)	338.84
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition report for Westmoor pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)	180.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition report and fabrication of lock shroud at Acre Fen pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)	251.27
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,208.50
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Supply of district plans, planning and development applications)	578.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and traveling	12,934.92
Agri-mend - Repairs to excavator AU09 FEW	378.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Bow shackles, wire rope shackles, wire rope thimbles, D shackles and thimbles	37.86
Cambridgeshire County Council - Right of way (Warners Drove, Somersham)	30.00
FJS Manea Mains Ltd - Repairs to syphon system at Washways pumping station	3,468.95
Environment Agency - Precept	11,836.66
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges, derv, Roundup, Grazon Pro, screenwash, rear lamps & grid switch	617.69
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Mobile telephone charges and derv	267.03
Mastenbroek - Parts for Grenadier Herder mower	376.73
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 16" yellow chain and 1.2 metres of heavy yellow trawler chain	83.71
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024	1,170.00
Cole & Day - MOT and service of Isuzu D-Max AO17 WMW	2,603.89
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,864.08
Barrie Coulson Plumbing and Heating - Plumbing works at Puddock Bridge bungalow	85.00
Envirotyre UK Limited - Disposal of 281 tyres	632.28
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Track rod assembly for excavator AU09 FEW	654.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv and supply of 6,000 litres of gas oil	5,246.36
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 2 bags of postmix and long handle fork	68.88
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition reports for High Fen and Pidley pumping stations (Account from CMS Electrical)	372.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition report for Washways pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)	240.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Court costs	0.50
James Waters - Flail mowing	135.00
Agri-mend - 6,242 hours service of excavator AU09 FEW	891.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	245.81
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Parts for excavator AU09 FEW	366.18
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Repairs to excavator AU09 FEW	1,024.01
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 1 bag of 300 long cable ties	8.16
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners 2023-2024 accounts)	1,662.00
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Supply of parts for repair of excavator AU09 FEW	55.96
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Supply of parts for repair of excavator AU09 FEW	77.24
Mervyn Lambert Plant Ltd - Supply of parts for repair of excavator AU09 FEW	49.48
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	238.73

L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Box of grease cartridges, roll of strimmer line, 5 litres of brake clutch cleaner, pack of rags, grease nipples, ratchet straps, greas chucks and flexi hose	167.19
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit fee (2023-2024 accounts)	1,008.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges,	12,629.38
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,978.80
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	40.00
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Grease cartridges	64.13
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	130.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges for 5 years to June and September 2027	1,728.00
B J Plany Hire Ltd - Drain maintenance	11,143.80
Environment Agency - Precept	11,836.65
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	6,151.68
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of road tax for AO17 WMW and AU09 FEW, death in service insurance premium and insurance premium for increase in pumping station valuations (Account from Towergate)	1,065.43
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)	1,717.20
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fit power supply to level controller and repairs to pump panel at High Fen pumping station	541.10
Middle Level Commisssioners - Strip and replace thrust bearing on pump at Westmoor pumping station	2,314.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	310.32
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	8,160.71
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Box of grease cartridges and box of grease nipples	93.59
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv and supply of gas oil	4,097.94
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Burmor Construction)	68.14
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	215.85
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Alloy grain shovel, repairs to flail roller, muck fork, brush and Nylon nuts	572.05
William Gosney Ltd - Refund of direct debit raised on incorrec rates	233.05
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,962.67
IMServ - Electricity data collection charges	264.00
IMServ - Electricity data collection charges	576.00
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	502.55
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Barrel wipe wall mounting dispenser and derv	189.61
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Mouse traps	33.91
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	1,115.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,412.59
IMServ - Electricity meter operator agreement	196.05
IMServ - Electricity meter operator agreement	82.99
IMServ - Electricity meter adoption fee	216.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	142.94
Lakeside Lodge Golf Centre - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	140.00
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	197.11
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift	50.00
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, correspondence with Chairman, planning and development applications)	1,607.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to automatic weedscreen cleaner (High Fen pumping station) - (Account from CW Group)	145.21
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump control panel (Puddock pumping station) - (Account from RS Components)	1,524.05
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of legal services relating to land at Knobbs Farm, Somersham (Account from Frasers)	1,204.80
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - 1 long handle drone	106.68
L R Boon & Sons Ltd - Lock, WD40, hydraulic hose, gloves and impact hex sockets	221.18
Anglia Farmers Ltd - Derv	239.50
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (Acre Fen pumping station)	636.30
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (High Fen pumping station)	3,694.51
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (Pidley pumping station)	8,492.85
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (Puddock pumping station)	3,290.92
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (Westmoor pumping station)	2,183.22
Corona Energy - Electricity supply (Washways pumping station)	14,617.38
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Westmoor pumping station)	105.23
Anglia Farmers - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (High Fen pumping station)	105.23
Corona Energy - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (Westmoor pumping station)	(103.68)
Corona Energy - Electricity Meter Operator Charges (High Fen pumping station)	(103.68)
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - Paymnts on account	207,362.67
District Labour	45,950.58
	416,160.88

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 3

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025
GENERAL FUND

2025				2024		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	73,438.25
	Precept		23,673.31	2025		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,556.86		Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	265,725.56
	Repairs & Renewals	37,509.38			Interest	2,571.78
	Fuel	85,364.31			Consents	150.00
	Drainworks	15,970.15			Rent	6,600.00
	District Labour	42,449.32			Highland Water Contributions	45,079.32
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Flail Mowing	937.50
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	28,729.04	216,579.06		Write Back of Provisions	0.00
					Storm Recovery Grant - T1a	93,736.67
	Improvement works				Storm Recovery Grant - T2a	8,300.02
	Washways PS	13,245.26				
	Westmoor PS	3,126.09	16,371.35			
					By Development Fund	
	By Depreciation Charge		387.85		Pocket Park Improvements	236.00
	Balance carried forward		239,763.53			
			496,775.10			496,775.10

BALANCE SHEET
Capital Section

Liabilities			Assets		
Capital Provisions		5,139,791.00	Bungalow, Puddock Pumping Station	126,291.00	
			Pumping Stations	5,013,500.00	
			Plant Assets	501.49	
		5,139,791.00	Stock	8,980.76	5,149,273.25

Revenue Section

General Fund					
Revenue	230,281.28		Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		32,893.83
Capital	9,482.25	239,763.53	Sundry Debtors		9,888.95
			Value Added Tax		14,865.94
Development Charges Account		374,316.35	Balance in hand -		
Grant in Aid		164,011.21	Treasurer's Account	79,760.50	
Sundry Creditors		115,398.27	Business Premium Account	926,551.13	1,006,311.63
Capital Reserve Fund		129,331.16			
Contribution Holdings Account		622.08			
Low Level Restoration Fund		50,000.00			
		6,213,233.60			6,213,233.60

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025
DEVELOPMENT CHARGES ACCOUNT

2025			2024		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	361,385.74
	Middle Level Charges	56.78	2025		
	Transfer to General Fund		Mar-31	Receipts during the year	567.80
	Pocket Park Improvements Fees	236.00			
				Interest	12,655.59
	Balance carried forward	374,316.35			
		374,609.13			374,609.13

CAPITAL RESERVE ACCOUNT

2025			2024		
Mar-31			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	124,955.28
	General Fund	0.00			.
			2025	Interest	4375.88
	Balance carried forward	129,331.16			
		129,331.16			129,331.16

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025

Treasurers Account 2024/2025

1st April 2024			31st March 2025		
Balance brought forward		937,141.57	Payments made during the year	416,160.88	
			Returned Direct Debit	0.00	416,160.88
31st March 2025					
Receipts during the year					
Clerk's collection account	465,106.06				
Old cheque written back	14.07				
Interest on deposit accounts	20,210.81	485,330.94	Balance carried forward		1,006,311.63
		1,422,472.51			**1,422,472.51**

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	79,760.50
Less unpresented cheques:	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements:	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**79,760.50**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2025

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**79,760.50**
Business Premium Account	**926,551.13**
Treasury Deposit	**0.00**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**1,006,311.63**

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2025

					Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**				
	General Fund		109,447.62		
	Development charges account		361,385.74		
	Capital reserve account		88,056.57		
	Low level restoration fund		50,000.00		
				608,889.93	**608,890**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**				
	Agricultural rates		236,794.56		
	Special Levies		28,931.00		
	Penalty		0.00		
	Costs		0.00		
	Write-off		0.00		
				265,725.56	**265,726**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**				
	Interest				
		General fund	2,571.78		
		Development charges account	12,655.59		
		Capital reserve account	4,375.88		
	Consent applications		150.00		
	Rent		6,600.00		
	Vehicle Contribution		0.00		
	Highland Water		45,079.32		
	Grant in Aid		0.00		
	Discharge contributions		1,189.88		
	Land owners consent		0.00		
	Private Works		937.50		
	Write back of provisions		0.00		
	Storm recovery grant		93,736.67		
	Storm recovery tranche 2a claim		8,300.02		
				175,596.64	**175,596**
Line 4	**Staff costs**				
	Wages/salaries		36,655.81		
	National insurance contributions		4,327.31		
	Pension costs		1,466.20		
	Travelling expenses		0.00		
				42,449.32	**42,449**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**				
	PWLB - Principal		0.00		
	PWLB - Interest		0.00		
				0.00	**0**

Warboys Somersham & Pidley IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2025

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	23,673.31		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	6,556.86		
	Repairs and renewals	37,509.38		
	Fuel	85,364.31		
	Drainworks	15,970.15		
	Administration	28,729.04		
	Development charges fees	56.78		
	Bad Debt Provision	0.00		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
	Purchase of Asset	0.00		
	High Fen p/s Weedscreen Cleaner	0.00		
	Improvements	0.00		
	Tranche 2a Claim	16,371.35		
	Pocket Park Improvements : Low Level restoration	0.00		
			214,231.18	**214,231**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	276,160.75		
	Development charges account	374,316.35		
	Capital reserve account	92,432.45		
	Low level restoration fund	50,000.00		
	Contributions holding account	622.08		
			793,531.63	**793,532**

Reconciliation		
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6		793,531.63
Reconciliation to Accounts		
Balances carried forward per Annual Return - As above		793,531.63
Rounding adj previous year		
Add Back:-		
Restatement of Assets	889.34	
Depreciation	-387.85	
Assets acquired in year	0.00	
Assets disposed of in year	0.00	
Profit on disposal	0.00	
		501.49
Balances carried forward per Accounts		
General Fund	239,763.53	
Development charges account	374,316.35	
Capital reserve account	129,331.16	
Low level restoration fund	50,000.00	
Contributions holding account	622.08	
		794,033.12

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	684,194	608,890	*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	223,877	265,726	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	44,671	175,596	*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	37,145	42,449	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	306,707	214,231	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	608,890	793,532	*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	937,142	1,006,312	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	5,227,309	5,227,309	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 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

AJWool

Date 19-05-2025

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities* Page 5 of 6

P Burrows summarised the Responsible Finance Officer's key messages in terms of last year's expenditure. He highlighted how the Board had benefited by approximately £120,000 from the government's one-off IDB

Fund and that this has essentially re-floated the Board's reserves back to being at a comfortable year in hand level.

The Chairman passed his thanks to the MLC staff who successfully secured this funding on behalf of the Board and delivered key works using it at Washways Pumping Station.

RESOLVED

That all payments and develop contributions noted.
The Board considered and approved their annual accounts for 2024/25

B.1944 Finance Report – Looking Forward
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**12**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 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. Review Contributions from Developers (Confidential papers)
D. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
E. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2025/2026
F. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2025/2026

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

As a result of the Storm Recovery Grants being received in 2024/25 the General Fund sits at £240,151 which represents over a year in hand for expenditure.

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. Standard figures have been reviewed and approved by the finance committee.

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

A special meeting was held in February 2025 and at that meeting it was approved that a new excavator for the Board was to be purchased with a budget of £160,000 to £170,000 with the purchase to be funded with funds from the Development account. The finance committee approved the repayment of a proportion of the funds and an amount has been included in the budget – see finance committee minutes for further detail.
Members should note that the budget proposal includes for the full recovery of highland water claims of £27,850.

After fully reviewing the Estimates, the Boards Reserves, and likely future annual running costs, the Finance Committee recommend that for 2025/2026 the rate should be reduced to 31.00p together with a Special levy of £7,117 on Fenland District Council and a Special levy of £20,910 on Huntingdonshire District Council.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6.5%, from £975 to £1039 (+ vat) for 2025.

1.2 Consider the Clerk's fee.

1.3 Consider the District Officer's salary

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 £23,673.31.

3. Contributions from Developers – Confidential papers

4. Estimates for 2025/26

4.1 The estimated budget for 2025/26 is shown in Appendix 1.

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

5. Rate Requirements for 2025/26

5.1 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.

5.2 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: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Enclosure 1 Contribution from Developers (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2025/26
Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2025/26

Appendix 1

WARBOYS SOMERSHAM AND PIDLEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BUDGET PROPOSAL 2025/2026

		Actual 2020/2021	*Actual 2021/2022*	*Actual 2022/2023*	*Actual 2023/2024*	Approved budget 2024/2025 £	Actual 2024/2025 £	Proposed budget 2025/2026 £
1	District labour (including District Officer's salary)	*35,077*	*36,089*	*65,747*	*37,145*	42,500	42,449	47,000 [A]
2	Rates, insurances and telephones	*4,430*	*4,452*	*4,616*	*5,614*	6,300	6,557	7,000 [B]
3	Repairs and renewals	*16,700*	*19,401*	*17,122*	*29,494*	37,000 [C]	37,509 [C]	33,750 [C]
4	Drainworks	*26,894*	*83,345*	*16,267*	*12,354*	25,000 [D]	15,970 [D]	35,000 [D]
	Piling works							
5	Fuel (oil and electricity)-including District Officer's travelling	*61,477*	*48,545*	*68,792*	*210,247*	141,750	85,364	107,500 [E]
6	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	*23,218*	*23,516*	*23,975*	*25,531*	26,500	28,729	29,000
7	Environment Agency - Precept	*21,877*	*21,877*	*22,314*	*22,984*	23,673	23,673	24,147
8	Reinstatement of balances	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	27,066 [F]	0	0
9	Capital Reserve Fund	*22,532*	*12,532*	*0*	*0*	0	0	0 [G]
10	Internal Loan Repayment	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*			12,447 [H]
		212,205	*249,757*	*218,833*	*343,369*	329,789	240,252	295,844
	Bad debt provision	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*			
	Improvement works	*99,562*	*10,632*	*28,361*	*0*	0	16,371	0
	Washways improvement scheme	*0*	*0*	*0*	*483*	0		0
	LESS Interest on Deposit Accounts, private works, Highland water contributions, contributions from Development Charges Account etc	*122,844*	*72,719*	*54,987*	*39,276*	64,062 [I]	157,611 [I]	38,422 [I]
	Net Expenditure	*188,923*	*187,669*	*192,207*	*304,576*	265,727	99,012	257,422
	Rate Requirement					*265,726*		*31.00 p*
	Rate set	*20.00p*	*21.00p*	*22.00p*	*27.00p*	32.00 p		

Appendix 2

Warboys Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board

Rate and Special Levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector - 89.11%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to Councils:-

Huntingdonshire District Council -	8.12%	
Fenland District Council -	2.77%	10.89%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £7,400.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levies would raise £8,304.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2025 - £240,151.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2025/2026 is £257,422, this does not include for any future works funding and equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 31.00p

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £7,117 and

c) a Special levy on Huntingdonshire District Council of £20,910

In 2024/2025 a rate of 32.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £7,346 on Fenland District Council and a Special levy of £21,585 on Huntingdonshire District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk of the Board

May 2025

H Whittome asked whether there was a likelihood that the 2025/25 government IDB Fund may be underspent elsewhere and therefore funding may become available for some of the Board's investment needs. P Burrows said that initially a package of further IDB Pumps & Channel work was not supported for funding, however there was an indication that delivery issues elsewhere may enable us to secure further funding. He added that MLC were in communications with the Environment Agency about what could realistically be delivered locally but as yet there was no confirmation.

P Burrows summarised the key messages outlined by the Board's Responsible Finance Officer. The Chairman added that given the capital works needed at the Board's stations, he was nervous about bringing the rate down from 32p but would respect the decision of the Board. H Whittome proposed the recommended date of 31p, this was seconded by S Edgley and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

a) To continue to subscribe to be a member of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

b) District Officer salary to increase by 4.15% and to offer the NEST pension salary sacrifice option once available.

c) Drainage rates:

i) That a total sum of £257,422 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

ii) 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 89.11% and 8.12% respectively.

iii) That a rate of 31p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

iv) That a Special levy of £7,117 be made and issued to Fenland District Council and £20,901 to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

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

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

B.1945 Middle Level IDB Change

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**13**
Meeting:	**WARBOYS, SOMERSHAM & PIDLEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**MIDDLE LEVEL IDB CHANGE**
Date:	**Thursday 29th May 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows** **On behalf of the working group**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Recap

1.1 As previously reported to the MLC Board and IDBs administered by the MLC, on 15th February 2024 the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Board Members who sit on more than one IDB within the Middle Level (and those outside the catchment that we administer) had been invited to an informal session in Ramsey to share thoughts about the future IDB governance landscape within the Middle Level and whether action was needed to ensure this was resilient for the future. The consensus from those who attended was that we needed to act and a small working group has been identified to draft an initial case for change.

1.2 The working group met on 5th September 2024 and were joined by Innes Thomson, ADA Chief Executive. The group used the 'Geoff Beel' vision from 2009 as a starting point to discuss the primary drivers for change and the key concerns that any proposed new model would need to take account of. A summary note from the meeting was issued on 9th September 2024.

1.3 The Middle Level Board of the Middle Level Commissioners, recognising their leadership, convening and facilitating role, as well as their interest in the governance and operational health of IDBs within their catchment, approved £10k of seed funding used to commission an outline design report. Gradeas Consulting Limited was engaged to undertake this work.

1.4 The working group met on 16th January 2025 to review the draft report and agree the approach to crucial engagement with IDBs that is essential in moving forward with the work into a detailed design phase.

1.5 The outline design report has been made available to IDB Chairman and Board Members to be read in conjunction with this paper.

2. Case for Change – Key Messages

2.1 There are a variety of factors that contribute to the view that the current IDB governance model within the Middle Level is not sufficiently robust for future generations, with an increasing number of IDBs being in poor financial and membership health today.

a) Changes in agriculture and land-ownership, with fewer family farms reducing the scale of hands-on active IDB membership, along with a general aging demographic.

b) Degradation of pumping stations the majority of which are at the end of their reliable life, with insufficient funds and complex governance arrangements stifling proactive and efficient investment.

c) A steady increase in legislative and statutory responsibilities, along with increased societal and government expectations of IDBs meaning the resources and costs associated with these overheads have become a sizeable proportion of overall expenditure, particularly for smaller IDBs. This is set to increase further.

d) Increasing operational pressures as climate change accelerates and IDBs have to adapt to dealing with extremes of drought and high, intense rainfall, whilst being highly vulnerable to energy costs.

e) The inherent financial dependence upon eligibility, availability and leverage of government grant with responsible investment strategies being beyond the reach of many IDBs' rate and levy payer base.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) The option of one or two IDBs is not progressed to detailed design as it was felt that this would create an entity that is too big and would arguably be as cumbersome to govern and service as the existing model. There is little appetite for becoming the largest IDB in the country.

b) Options for five or six IDBs are not developed, supporting the view and rationale presented within the report (Section 7).

c) Options for three and four IDBs are progressed to detailed design.

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

a) Local Authorities, including Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)

b) Environment Agency

c) Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC)

d) Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)

e) Defra

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

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

4. Next steps and potential timescales

4.1 The aim is for feedback to be consolidated over summer and reviewed by the working group in September 2025.

4.2 If human and financial resources are available and the feedback corroborates the need to act, the detailed design will then be scoped and commissioned with the ambition to present the results and seek IDB approval to a preferred option at their 2026 meetings.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role:
Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners

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

P Burrows introduced the work undertaken so far and the report that had been issued to all Board members in February. He added that S Johnson and H Whittome were members of the working group overseeing this work.

The Board were generally supportive of the work progressing however felt that this Board already felt relatively large and complex and had concerns that being larger would be a challenge and potentially dilute the considerable volunteer efforts that are part of this Board's key strength. H Whittome agreed this needs to be a key consideration, however highlighted that only a few years ago this Board struggled to find a Chair so they are only a couple of health issues away from being vulnerable and thus need to think 5,10, 15 years ahead. P Burrows highlighted the challenges of getting a quorum for this very meeting. S Johnson highlighted the natural high ground presented challenges in aligning neighbouring districts.

P Burrows agreed that in his overview this Board is the most complex within the Middle Level and therefore ought to provide a useful 'stress test' within any detailed design. He added that there are larger and more complex IDBs elsewhere in the country that have been through larger scale amalgamations and not lost the local operational oversight and volunteer inputs.

RESOLVED

To prove a £300 contribution towards the costs of developing the detailed design.

B.1946 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next meeting of the Board will be 27th November 2025, 5:30PM at the Lakeside Lodge.

B.1947 Any Other Business

Digger hire cost.

I Johnson highlighted that the Board ought to review and update its hire our rate for the digger and flail.

RESOLVED

Digger and flail hire cost £80 per hour (£70 per hour without flail)

Point 175
The Chairman highlighted the need for works close to point 175 along Puddock Road in terms of silt build-up and culverts. It was agreed to secure pipework to have in stock should the culverts need replacing.

Ratepayer Communications
D England suggested that the Board add a note into the invoices to ratepayers to outline the reasoning for recent rate decisions. P Burrows outlined that if the Board produced a note then he could arrange for it to be included, however the MLC would not be producing these for individual IDBs therefore the Board would need to author. He added that the meeting paperwork and minutes are available and easy to digest for any ratepayer who wants to better understand, he added that the Board also had vacancies available for other ratepayers to get actively involved. S Edgley added that it should be fairly obvious to all farmers why the rate went up the previous year. It was left to the Board to decide if they wished to include further information and send to MLC office ahead of invoices going out in early July.

Fenton Way drain and Nightlayers IDB
S Edgley enquired about the latest regarding the drain along Fenton Way. I Johnson outlined that the MLC Lead Clerk was looking to see if there were any records of ownership or responsibilities. P Burrows outlined that given workloads and as we are currently in IDB meeting season that this may take a while and, given recent experience, its doubtful that any records will exist. P Burrows suggested a pragmatic option, given that machinery will soon be in the area addressing Nightlayers IDB's drain management works, therefore there was the opportunity to address the condition of the drain in a cost-effective way. He suggested that given both IDBs have benefitted significantly from the governments IDB Fund, that they move forward on the basis of a 50:50 split of funding to undertake these works, with ongoing responsibilities to be clarified at a later date once records have been found or otherwise. The Board agreed with this. S Edgley will discuss with A Edgley (Nightlayers IDB Chairman) and confirm with the Chairman and M Lakey the MLC Operations Manager who oversees Nightlayers IDB's maintenance operations.