

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	WALDERSEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Wednesday 18 th June 2025	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. **Acknowledge the revised approach to charges for responding to applicant's questions.**
- B. **Consider the need for future capital investment and how it will fund any works.**
- C. **Approve if the Board would prefer Middle Level to take quarterly meter readings.**
- D. **Review pumping station key dates and inform the Consulting Engineer of any discrepancies or additional information.**

1. Summary

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

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

2. Technical Services

- 2.1 Since Chris Bailey started as our new Head of Technical Services, we have been updating the catalogue of services which MLC could provide. Given the increasing frequency of complex cases where Boards consider there may be a need for regulation and enforcement dependent on the costs and benefits, we are reviewing and updating training, policies, and capacity to undertake enforcement and compliance regulation on behalf of the Boards we represent.
- 2.2 We are receiving an increased number of questions from developers ahead of planning applications/consent applications, with an expectation that we can provide the information freely. We have completed the review of our charging model and have introduced a new charging model for answering these questions if applicants do not enter into a pre-app agreement.

Please refer to item 4 in the Clerks report.

The Board is asked to acknowledge this approach.

3. Summary of Key Planning Issues

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

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

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

Following the change of government in July an open consultation was held between 30th July and 24th September 2024 on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system.

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

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

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

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

1. The advantages and disadvantages of restoring the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS).
2. Further supporting effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters.
3. The LPA's need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development on their special levy and future funding requests under Defra's Partnership Funding Policy. Under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is **not** included in FCERM government grant in aid calculations.
4. The need to consider the adoption of appropriate measures that consider the whole water cycle process such as rainwater harvesting and the re-use of as much water as possible.
5. The need for bodies involved in the planning process but which are not LPAs to be provided with suitable compensation, benefit and other incentives for contributing to and enabling the aspirational growth and local economy.

The opportunity was taken to raise some issues not covered by the reform consultation as a concern by many Boards, in the hope that these points are heard and acted upon. These included:

- A. The Fenland Situation – special requirements needed due to the low-lying topography, the managed flood risk and land drainage systems, the provision of enabling infrastructure to allow life to continue and also accommodate current growth aspirations.
- B. The flawed methodology used by LPAs and poor decisions made by the LPAs when considering and allocating sites often caused by the need to meet government targets.
- C. The impacts of growth and climate change and the need to revise nationally accepted design standards.

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

3.2 New developments and the use of SuDS

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

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

3.3 Engagement with the Local Planning Authorities (LPA)

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

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

Policies and processes are being reviewed and updated.

4. Strategic Issues

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

4.1 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.

4.2 Cambridgeshire County Council

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

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

a. Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme

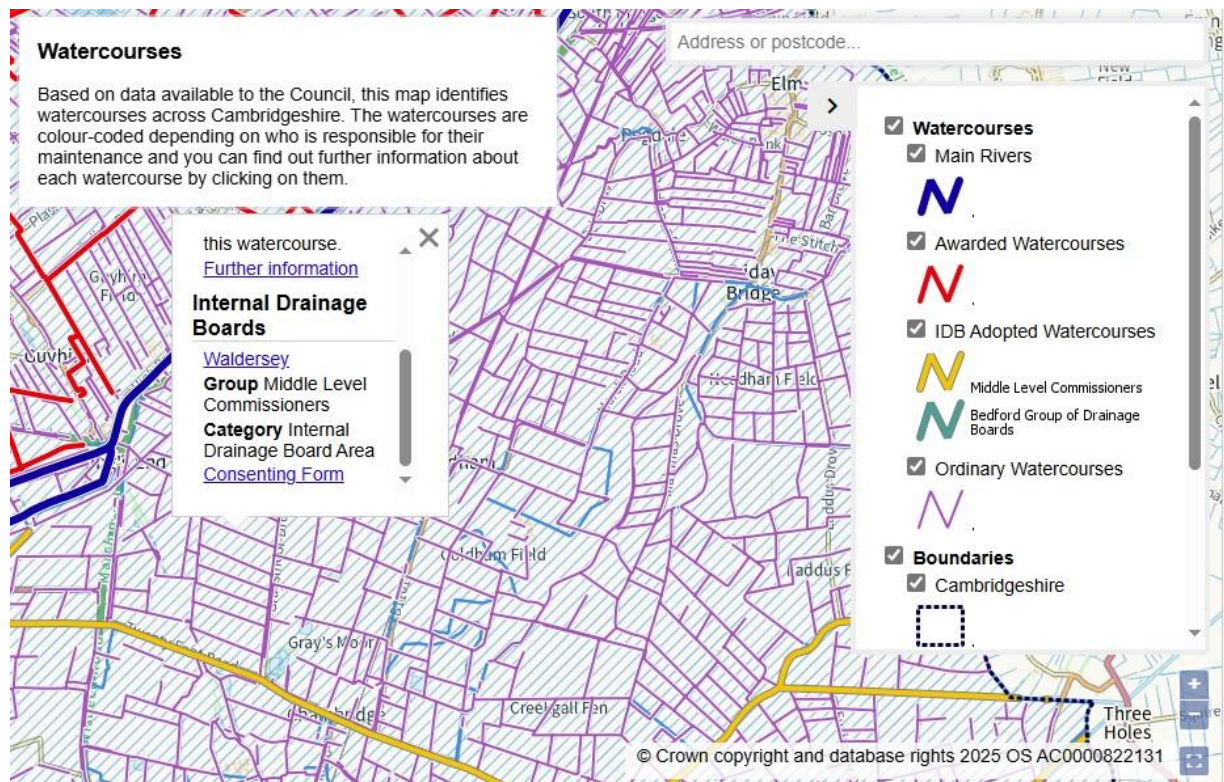
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action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

b. Community Flood Action programme

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

c. Watercourse Mapping Tool

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. **IDB Recovery Fund T2B**

Funding allocations for Tranche 2 were confirmed in mid-November and work has now been completed.

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

The criteria for bids were 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.

6. **Capital Programme**

6.1 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) a new FCERM grant in aid programme will start in 2026/27.

An initial bid for funding works arising from the Catchment Study will be captured in the new programme, to be refined once options have been appraised. However, it is uncertain what funding will be available.

The Board is advised to consider the need for future capital investment and how it will fund any works.

6.2 **Flood Alleviation Investigation (Project Ref 346/25): Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Waldersey IDB**

Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study

The joint Catchment Study is continuing with close collaboration between the Engineer, the Board’s Works Committee (User Group) and Royal Haskoning DHV. There was a delay to surveys being completed due to availability of surveyors. This has set back delivery of the study until autumn 2025.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme
Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting
Appendix 3: Operational Report
Appendix 4: M&E Report

Appendix 1

Waldersey Internal Drainage Board														
Capital Improvement Programme (2024/2025)		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
Rings End 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	5,000.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.7	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.7
	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
	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
South Bank 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	18,000.0	18000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	10.6	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	180.0	210.6
	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	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
Pumping Plant Fund		12.4	6.6	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	109.0
Eel Regulations	Eel Regulation implications	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
Drainage Channels	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
		27.7	6.6	10	70	10	60	10	10	10	10	10	23,210	23,444

Appendix 2

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

<i>MLC Ref.</i>	<i>Council Ref.</i>	<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Type of Development</i>	<i>Location</i>
135	F/YR24/0948/PNC04	Farmland Reserves UK	Change of use (Agricultural building to 4 dwellings)	Graysmore Drove, Elm March Road, Rings End, Guyhirn
136	F/YR25/0289/F	Bankside Nursery	Storage & Office	

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	WALDERSEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES
Date:	Wednesday 18 th June 2025	Officer Responsible:	Morgan Lakey

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Board at its last Annual Meeting.

At last year's annual meeting it was reported the shed on land owned by the Board at Crooked Bank, had begun to collapse and become unsafe. An inspection revealed the majority of the structure was only being supported by one railway sleeper that was concreted into the ground adjacent to the public highway. Due to the Health and Safety risk to the adjacent highway, it was agreed with the Chairman to demolish the building and remove it from site. An ecological survey was carried out prior to works commencing to ensure there was no protected species, like bats or early nesting birds present. The survey results also provided a safe system of work for the demolish, to ensure it remained compliant should any wildlife be identified during the works.



Northern Area

A recent joint inspection of the northern area has been undertaken with the District Officer. The inspection revealed the district drains in the northern area to generally be in a satisfactory condition and maintained to a good standard.

The inspection highlighted sporadic stands of reed and aquatic vegetation throughout the Coldham, Overstone drains (reach 33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42) and the adjacent Crooked Bank drains (reaches 6-7-8-9-10 and 8-26-27). It is therefore recommended that the aforementioned reaches are treated with an application of Roundup herbicide, followed by light machine cleansing, once the adjacent crops have been harvested thus allowing machine access.

Sporadic stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation are also evident in the Nettle Bank spur drain and it is recommended the affected reaches are included in this year's Roundup herbicide programme followed by a weed cutting bucket to remove the decaying vegetation. A sum for the completion of the herbicide application has been included in this year's estimated costs.

A further provisional sum has been included in the estimates to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance or bank reinstatement works that may be required in the district later in the year.

Southern Area

A recent joint inspection has also been undertaken, highlighting that several District drains in the southern area contain sporadic stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation. The Rifle Butts drains (reach 54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-64 & 79-83) are considered to be the most severely affected and it is recommended these reaches are treated with an application of Roundup herbicide and lightly machine cleansed following harvest this year.



Rifle Butts, reach 58-59

As with many other local Internal Drainage Boards, the Waldersey IDB catchment continues to suffer its fair share of fly tipping incidents, predominantly in the Graysmoor Drove area. The recent inspection highlighted another incident and the Board's contractor was instructed to remove the rubbish from the drain to allow FDC rapid response team to collect from the side of the Drove. A provisional sum has been allocated to allow any fly tipped debris to be cleared, on the basis that the Board's area has been targeted in past years and unfortunately is likely to be targeted again.



Fly tipping, Point 71, Graysmoor Drove

Historically the drain adjacent to Station Road, Coldham (reach 72-73) has been discussed and the question of how it connects to the Boards system. The drain is relatively small and would appear as more of a soak dyke than a flowing watercourse. The Board may wish to take this opportunity to discuss the matter and how it wishes to proceed in the future.

At the Board's last annual meeting it was agreed the flail mowing works were split between HAC for the Northern District and P.Lankfer Ltd for the Southern district. The Board is asked if they wish to proceed with the current arrangement and in anticipation of the Board's approval, a provisional sum has been allocated within the estimated costs to allow for flail mowing, basket work and herbicide application.

2. Estimated Costs of Anticipated Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme

The estimated costs of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance works follow, please refer to the plan at the end of this report for locations.

Northern Area

1. Machine cleanse

Reach 6-7-8-9-10	1700 m	@	1.50	2550.00
Reach 8-26-27	700 m	@	1.50	1050.00
Nettle Bank Spur Drain, Reach 16-17-18	500 m	@	1.30	650.00
Coldham Overstone Drains Reach 33-34-35-36-37	1000 m	@	1.30	1300.00
Reach 36-38-39-40-41-42	2000 m	@	1.30	2600.00

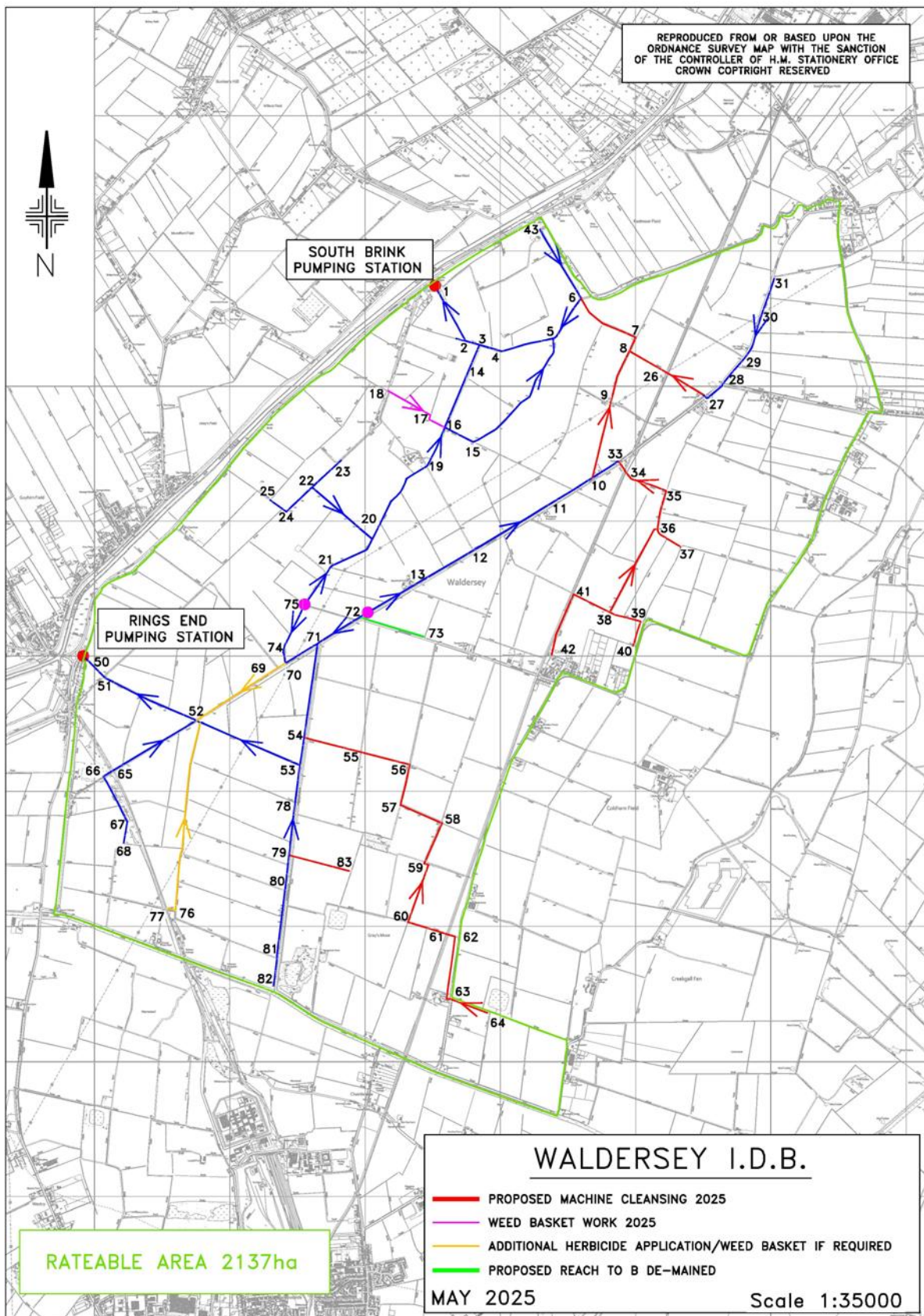
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				Brought forward	8150.00
2.	<u>Provisional sum</u>				
	Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance and bank reinstatement works	Item	Sum		800.00
3.	Flail mowing of drains in Northern Area	Item	Sum		5000.00
4.	Allow sum for Roundup herbicide application	Item	Sum		500.00
Southern Area					
5.	<u>Machine cleanse</u>				
	Rifle Butts Drain				
	Reach 54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64	3400 m	@ 1.30		4420.00
	Reach 79-83	500 m	@ 1.30		650.00
7.	Allow sum for Roundup application to control emergent weed and reed	Item	Sum		500.00
8.	<u>Provisional sum</u>				
	Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing culvert clearance or debris removal works	Item	Sum		800.00
9.	Flail mowing of Southern Area District Drains	Item	Sum		5000.00
10.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Board, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance	Item	Sum		1600.00
		TOTAL	£		27,420.00

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they will not be held responsible for the failure or efficacy of any treatment.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey

Role: Operations Manager



Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	WALDERSEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Wednesday 18 th June 2025	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

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

Other than the matters described below or previously reported, 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, pumps and control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern.

Future pumping station replacement costs have been included in the Capital Programme.

1.1 Pumping Stations

1.1.1 *Rings End*

The weed screen bars at Rings End were replaced with new galvanised units during autumn 2024 and were funded by the Storm and Recovery GiA. When dewatered the sump was found to have a large build up of reed and cot which was removed before fitting of the new screen. The concrete sump looked to be in very reasonable condition. The pump tubes have some corrosion as do the pump bolts.

The weed screen cleaner had several intermittent faults on the trolley during the season and the catenary cables to the trolley were replaced as the cores had started to breakdown.

The pump control panel is now in excess of 50 years old and should be replaced to ensure its reliability. A new control panel should incorporate ultrasonic level control. This is currently provided by the weed screen control panel via a bespoke program. For reliability and resilience, it is better that pump control and weed screen control are separated. The pump control panel is likely to cost c£20 to c£25k and the weed screen panel c£10k to £15k.

Both pumps are now more than 20 years since overhaul, they are working ok but their overhauls should be worked into the plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.

The internal and external lights have been replaced with LED

1.1.2 *South Brink*

Pump 2 drive motor was removed, overhauled and refitted during summer 2023 as the insulation resistance had dropped dramatically indicating water ingress. Pump 3 insulation resistance readings have dropped slightly at the last routine inspection and this will be monitored.

The flap doors that were repaired in 2022 are now inspected regularly and the discharge sump flushed of silt.

The weed screen cleaner trolley and control panel replacement have been part funded by the Storm and Recovery GiA.

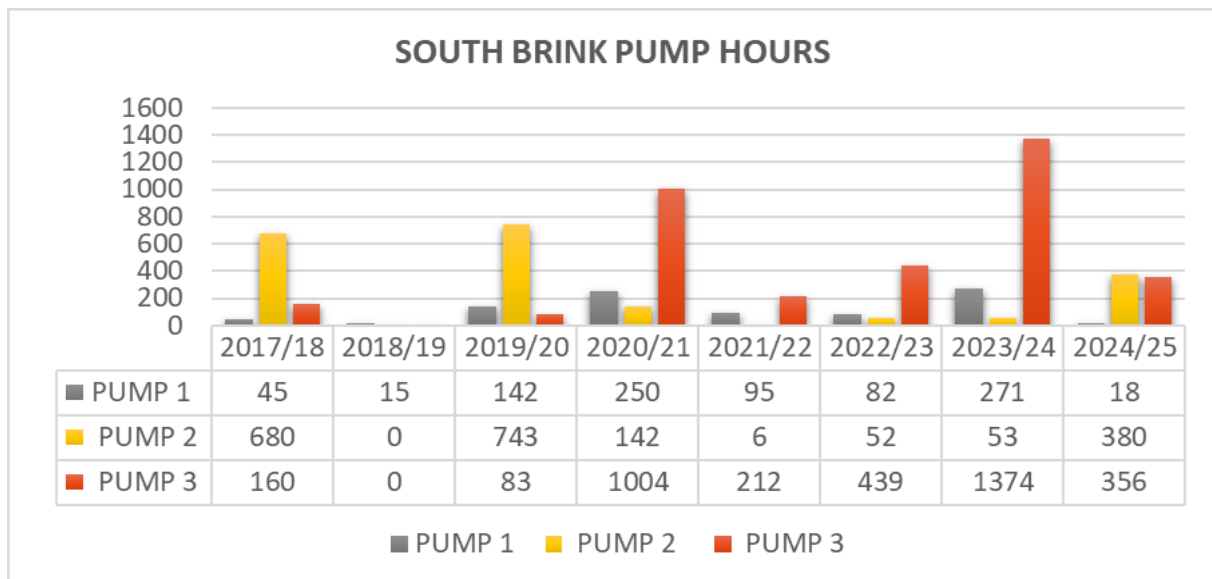
1.2 Electricity Readings

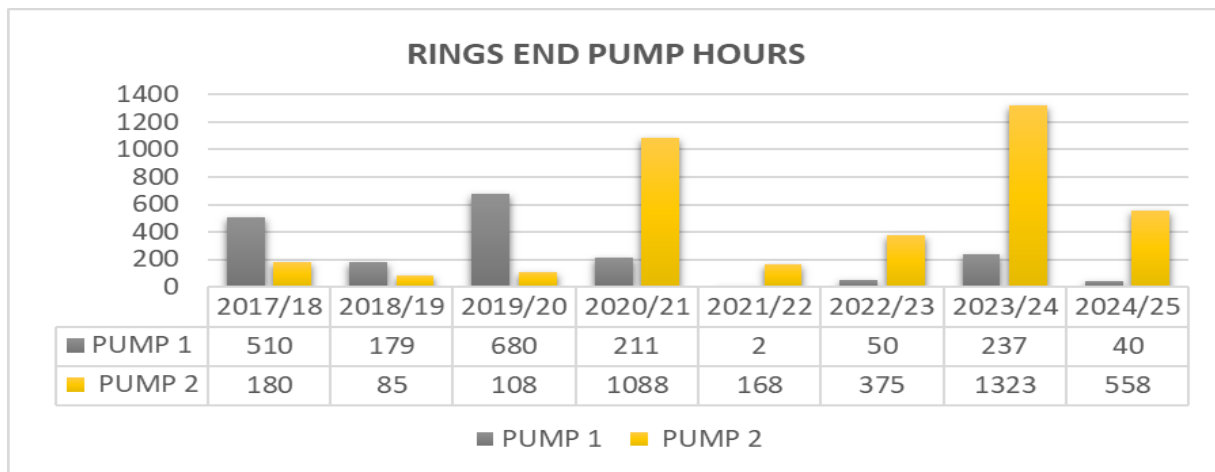
Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting usage.

Last year we were able to successfully challenge 93000 kWh of incorrectly invoiced electricity; this would not have been possible without the manual readings.

If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved. Please approve this if it is required. Approximate cost will be £30 per station per quarter.

2. Pumping summary





3. Inspections

3.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report (due every 5 years) are in date.

EICR Date	EICR Due
23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029
29-Mar-2024	29-Mar-2029

3.2 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out in September 2024.

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

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

Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Motor Overhaul	Controls	Weedscreen Bars	WSC	WSC Overhaul	WSC Controls
Rings End	1971	1971	2004 (1)	tbc	1971	2025	1998	2017	1998
			2005 (2)	tbc					
South Brink	1999	1999	1999 (1)	1999 (1)	1999	2001	2025	2025	2001
			1999 (2)	2023 (2)					
			1999 (3)	1999 (3)					

Author Name: Dave Bantoft

Role: M&E Engineer