

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey on Friday 30th May 2025.

PRESENT

A Roberts (Chair)	L Butler
R Blackhurst (Vice—Chair)	J Clarke (HDC)
S Bedford	J Edwards
T Bedford	M Lambert
A Butler	A Wagstaffe

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk was in attendance.

B.1450 District Inspection

Mr Richard Wilmer, Middle Level M&E Services Department Assistant, joined the Board for the District Inspection.

Reach 2

The Board viewed the bank slip at on Reach 2 where Lattenbury Services have been carrying out repair works. However, the bank has been subject to a further slip and piping this section is now being considered. The Board discussed the cost implications of piping this stretch, and the works already completed were discussed. The Board agreed to install a 1000mm diameter pipe over a length of approximately 50m (5 pipe lengths) and covering the top. The biodiversity impact of the decision was discussed.

Upwood Common Pumping Station.

The Chair reported that an upgrade of the panel has been considered. Mr Wilmer advised that the panel is 20 years old, but that parts can still be sourced. He added that an upgrade would be beneficial, but that his opinion would be that the Green Dyke Pumping Station panel be prioritised over this one. Mr Blackhurst added that if funds are available, they could look at doing the work in the next few years, and that work has already been carried out on this pumping station, with the thrust bearing replacement being carried out last year. Mr Clarke thought that they had a contingency plan in place, with it being possible to use a PTO. Mr A Butler thought that it would not be easy to run in this way due to someone needing to keep a constant watch on the equipment, but Mr L Butler thought that it was possible, and he saw carrying out this type of work as part of his District Officer role. Mr Blackhurst agreed that they would not want to have to run this way. The Chair asked if the Board were concerned about getting too far behind with improvement works to the Board's infrastructure, and Mr Wilmer advised that the M&E Engineer had recommended overhauling the Control Panel. Some discussion followed, with the Chair concluding that the Board were currently happy with the station and that as the panel is working effectively, and that there are currently no issues with sourcing parts, that the panel replacement/refurbishment be pushed back within the investment programme but will be reconsidered annually.

The Chair recorded concerns that the power supply to the station is the biggest risk and that the overhead cables are not effectively supported by the posts, although despite concerns being raised by local landowners the power supply companies are not unduly concerned.

Green Dyke Pumping Station

The Chair thought that the Board all understood that this pumping station is coming to the end of its serviceable life, but the replacement costs are escalating. He wondered if the state of the pumping station is as bad as they thought. The Panel may last another 20 years, but the pump has not been overhauled for many years. Mr L Butler thought that spending money on the pumping station would be worthwhile. Mr

Blackhurst reminded the Board that previously Iain Smith had advised that the piles were degrading and pump was cavitating. Mr L Butler advised that they will continue to pump down as low as they can and empty the district when required.

Some discussion followed on the condition of the piles, and the Board viewed them from outside at the intake. The Chair reminded the Board that the piles are also across the base of the building and that the outfall has been temporarily repaired. It was understood that the piles under the station could be expected to be in a similar condition to those outside, and with the pump sitting in water it was noted that the condition may be the same.

It was agreed that should the pumping station fails it would be unexpected but catastrophic. Mr A Butler advised that when the bolts were changed the condition of the piles was noted. The Chair asked the Board to think about lifting the pump and refurbishing it, but Mr Blackhurst was concerned that this could create a problem. The District Officer ran the pump, and it was noted that it sounded quiet and ran effectively. The Chair thought that the only way the pumping station could be replaced is with GiA funding. Mr L Butler thought that the Board should refer to a piling specialist to look at the piles, and that the roof and gutters both need to be looked at. There is a concrete plinth at the bottom of the station, but he does not think there are any concerns with its condition. The Board discussed works that could be required but decided not to carry out any works at present.

New Fen Pumping Station

The Chair advised that no recommendations have been made for this pumping station, and that it is in good condition. Mr Blackhurst added that in terms of flooding houses this station is more strategic. The Board discussed ways in which the sides of the surge chamber could be shored, considering filling the void with earth, strapping the surge chamber to the inlet chamber, and removing the vegetation alongside the chambers. Mr L Butler advised that the Board would need to consider the consequences of any actions on the surrounding equipment, and that he is currently adjusting the bolts to relieve the pressure on the pipes. The Chair thought that since they last cut back the vegetation, the subsidence had reduced and so he proposed removing the remaining vegetation although they would need to carry out an Environmental Screening Report first. The Board agreed to this proposal.

The Board also discussed brining in a mini digger to remove weed from the screen, to avoid doing this manually. However, the Chair said that it has been difficult to find a machine that would do what they need, and they really need an automated weedscreen cleaner.

The Board then viewed the pulsar level controller that had recently been fitted.

RESOLVED

That 50m of 1000mm diameter pipe be installed at Reach 2 in the area of the bank slip.

That the Upwood Common Pumping Station panel replacement/refurbishment be pushed back within the investment programme and reconsidered annually.

That vegetation clearance will be undertaken at New Fen Pumping Station following environmental screening.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

An apology for absence was received from S Cornwell.

B.1451 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.

Mr L Butler and Mr A Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to E. M. Butler Ltd.

Mr A Roberts declared an interest in any matters relating to D. C. Roberts and Son,

Mr L Butler declared an interest in any matters relating to the District Officer.

B.1452 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The Chair asked if there were any updates on Tesco Pumped Outfall debt management, and Mrs Martin advised on the progress to date but that the consent fee still remains unpaid.

The Chair advised that the third section of the Catchwater would be addressed this year.

There were no other matters arising and the Minutes of the Last Meeting were agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 9th January 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1453 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Friday 30 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Polly Tombleson
RECOMMENDATIONS The Board is asked to: A. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board. B. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary. C. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress. D. Reinforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos. E. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.			

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	12	N/A		6
Actual	12	2 HDC	14	
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	Stuart Bedford	Ratepayer	
2	Thomas Bedford	Ratepayer	
3	Richard Blackhurst	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair
4	Ashley Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	
5	Stuart Cornwell	Ratepayer	
6	Jason Edwards	Ratepayer	
7	Michael Lambert	Ratepayer	
8	Mike Mckenna	Nominee of Ratepayer (AG Reserves)	
9	Andrew Roberts	Nominee of Ratepayer (D C Roberts)	Chairman
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Ratepayer	
11	Christopher Wilkinson	Ratepayer	
12	Leo Butler	Nominee of Ratepayer (J&H Edwards)	District Officer

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	J Clarke	HDC	Councillor
2	S Corney	HDC	Councillor
3			

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	10/2/2025	08/05/2024	04/01/2024	11/5/2023
1	Stuart Bedford	Apologies	Present	Present	Attended
2	Thomas Bedford	Present	Apologies	Apologies	apologies
3	Richard Blackhurst	Present	Apologies	present	attended
4	Ashley Butler	Present	Apologies	Present	apologies
5	Stuart Cornwell	Apologies	Present	Present	attended
6	Jason Edwards	Present	Present	Present	attended
7	Michael Lambert	Present	Apologies	Apologies	
8	Mike Mckenna	Apologies	Present	Present	n/a
9	Andrew Roberts	Apologies	Present	Apologies	attended
10	Andrew Wagstaffe	Present	Apologies	Present	attended
11	Christopher Wilkinson	Apologies	Apologies	Present	attended
12	Leo Butler	Present	Present	Present	attended

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022
1	Andrew Roberts	Present	apologies	attended	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	9/1/2025	08/05/2024	04/01/2024	11/5/2023
1	J Clarke (HDC)	Present	Present	Apologies	apologies
2	S Corney (HDC)	Present	Apologies	Present	
3					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

- 3.1 Next Election of the Board will be 2026.
- 3.2 Appointment of District Officer
- 3.3 Appointment of Clerk

4. Composition and amalgamations

- 4.1 The Board is encouraged to continually monitor and review its membership, financial and climate resilience, along with assessing its influence locally, regionally and nationally. These are all factors that may lead the Board to consider changing its composition and/or amalgamation with (an)other Board(s).
- 4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

5. Training

- 5.1 All Members are asked to digest the Good Governance Guide for Internal Drainage Boards published by the Association of Drainage Authorities and view the five accompanying videos intended to bring the guide to life. They are available via <https://middlelevel.gov.uk/about/idb-governance/>
- 5.2 To date 1 of 14 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 3 of 14 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.
To date 2 of 14 Board members have reported viewing 3 of the 5 videos.
- 5.3 Members are asked to identify any topics areas they would value further training on as well as any site inspections that would help them undertake their role on the Board more effectively.
- 5.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson**Role: Senior Business Support Officer**Amalgamations

The Chair discussed with the Board the question of amalgamation, as the Board were close to tipping the scale between Agricultural (52.2%) and Special Levy (49.8%) funding. He suggested that it would be good to amalgamate with a neighbouring Board such as Ramsey 4th (Middlemoor) in order to reinforce the Agricultural status of the Board. More development within the Boards district will mean that the Board will have more Appointed (or Council) members. Mr Blackhurst thought that at present there is no immediate danger of this happening but the Agricultural members could soon be outweighed by Special Levy members, and the Chair added that the Board need to be on this and think they should seriously consider their options.

The Board discussed the implications of amalgamating with other Boards, with a suggestion of Woodwalton being made, but the Chair wondered if there was the different land management interests across these Boards would create a challenge. The size of the Ramsey 4th (Middlemoor) Board was also discussed, and the

situation of the Ramsey IDB considered, with observations made on the number of pumps maintained by these other Boards, and that differential rating may be an issue for some.

It was subsequently agreed that the Chair would make approaches to Ramsey IDB and Ramsey 4th (Middlemoor) IDB to gauge their feelings.

Elections, Vacancies and Appointments

Mrs Martin advised that there are currently no vacancies on the Board, and that the next election of the Board will be in 2026.

Appointment of District Officer and Clerk

The Chair proposed that Mr L Butler continue as District Officer, and Mr L Butler accepted the proposal. This was seconded by Mr Wagstaff and unanimously agreed.

The Chair proposed that the Board continue to engage the Middle Level Commissioners services, and this was seconded by the Vice Chair and agreed by all present.

RESOLVED

That Mr L Butler be appointed as District Officer of the Commissioners.

That the Middle Level Commissioners be appointed as Clerk to the Board.

Training

Mrs Martin advised that the updated version of the ADA Good Governance Guide has now been printed and copies were handed to Board members. She advised that it is not yet clear what supporting training material will follow, but that the original training videos are still available to view.

Board members were asked to complete the training matrix as circulated at the meeting, and to advise the office if any further training is undertaken.

B.1454 Clerk's Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	CLERK'S REPORT
Date:	Friday 30th 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 31st March 2025. AXA offered a 2-year extension of the tripartite agreement we had previously signed and this was accepted as they offered to keep our business combined policy premium at the same rate for 2025-2026, subject to there not being any changes to the existing cover, i.e. increase in valuations.

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

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows

Role: Clerk

Mrs Martin advised that the Clerks Report would be taken largely as read, asking for further consideration to be made of the following points.

Planning and Consenting Charging Model

The new planning and consenting charging model has been implemented and been in use since 1st April. Mrs Martin reported that it is planned to review the fees every year, and that the Clerk invites feedback.

Mr Clarke observed that he would like to see a more proactive response to planning applications, and Mrs Martin reported that there have been changes made that should improve the service provided. She reminded the Board that Drainage Boards are not statutory consultees in the planning process. The Vice Chair added that there have been issues with developers not submitting applications which has caused delays.

Highland Water and IDB Precept

Mrs Martin outlined the issues detailed in the Clerks Report, and that after being advised that claims would not be paid in full, a formal appeal was narrowly avoided after the shortfall was met by the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC). Following this the Clerk has written 'The Highland Water Conundrum' document which has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the EA and our local authorities, and also circulated to all Board members.

Mrs Martin advised that the IDB Precept had increased by 2% this year, and that the Clerk was considering whether an appeal should be lodged, and if this would have greater gravitas if this were on behalf of all the Boards that he administers. The Board agreed to delegate this decision to the Clerk acting with the Chair.

RESOLVED

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

That the report be noted.

B.1455 Environment Officers' Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELY IDB	Subject:	ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT
Date:	Friday 30 th 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 policies are being drawn up for acceptance. Please make interim provision for the new BAP to be reviewed, agreed and adopted prior to the next Board meeting.
- C. Note that the new Hedgerow Regulations 2024 prohibits the cutting of any hedge growing on agricultural land between the 1st March - 31st 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 minimum statutory environmental compliance. The details of the new package are set out below:

Environmental Services Package

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

5.	Training	Attendance for up to 2 candidates at 1 environmental training day per year.	1
Total:			6.25 days p.a.
Cost (2025/26)			£2,375
Notes: *Any surveys or mitigations that follow on from preliminary surveys, including licenced work such as water vole displacement, will be charged on a time and materials basis or can be contracted out if MLC staff are fully booked. ** Any unused consultancy balance can be used to cover the recommended annual 1-day BAP ditch survey, with any shortfall charged separately. If any pre-works surveys (ESRs) are undertaken in the year, they will be extended so that they count as the BAP ditch survey for efficiency. ^ For activity not rechargeable to developers/consent applicants. Unused category balances can be used to cover shortfalls in other categories within the financial year as mutually agreed. Unused balances cannot be carried forward outside the financial year but its use can be discussed with MLC with potential for it to be used to contribute towards assisting the IDB to progress a BAP objective instead if capacity allows. For IDBs who also contract operational services from MLC (via Morgan Lakey, Operations Manager), there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995 (2025/26).			

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

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

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

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

Benefits of a service provided by MLC

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

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

IDB ecology and the IDB industry is quite niche (e.g. bespoke ecological and environmental licenses and permits). Our ecologists specialise in and represent the local and national IDB industry interests and challenge local and national policy where it is not enabling of our work. We have strength of voice in representing the largest number of IDBs in the country. An example of this is the successful legal challenge made to Natural England last year to clarify and amend the conditions within the IDB-specific badger licence (CL27) to make it more enabling of our routine maintenance work taking place around badger setts. This was not something that ADA, our national representative was able to progress for us, despite the implications for IDBs nationally.

Our ecologists also hold multiple IDB-relevant protected species licences and can carry out licenced activities most commonly required by IDBs for a much-reduced cost compared to an external ecological consultancy.

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

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

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

We hope that this has provided you with sufficient information regarding the new service package from 1st April 2025. I appreciate that the step-change in fee may not be universally well received by Board Members that are less engaged and aware of their personal and collective environmental liabilities and risks. We will work on the premise that your Board will opt in and engage with the Environmental Service Package. Indeed, it's success and your compliance requires a two-way relationship and input.

You may choose to benchmark this package against other service providers and opt-out. If so, please feel free to use the information above to secure comparable quotes. 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 – <i>If you are undertaking flood risk management work, you are exempt from needing to displace water voles as you are keeping land and property safe from flooding.</i> Fact – Protected species legislation is law and no-one is exempt so routine and regular bank works must be undertaken compliantly. Urgent has a different legal meaning to emergency. Urgent works are those that require prompt action to resolve an expected but not imminent threat to public health and safety such as a bank slip. It is not likely that a repairing a bank slip after harvest to avoid damaging crops, that had originally occurred months previously will be seen legally as either an emergency or urgent works because sufficient time would have passed to allow for the works to be planned compliantly with a displacement if necessary. An emergency would be where an unexpected event requires immediate works to prevent or alleviate a significant threat to public health and safety, such as the sudden collapse of a bank and flood water threatening surrounding residential or developed areas. In an emergency it may be necessary to fix the problem first but be confident that you can provide evidence of threat to public health and safety to the Regulator as soon as possible after the works, as is legally required. The emergency declaration must always be made in partnership with a range of professionals including an ecologist.
4.	Claim – <i>You can't do any bank works or maintenance where there are water voles anymore.</i> Fact – There are safe standard operating procedures that allow routine work such as desilting and flail mowing to be undertaken compliantly where there are water voles which help to avoid or minimise the risk of committing an offence. Any invasive work that breaks ground on the bank toe or bank face should be informed by a water vole survey, undertaken in the right season, well before works begin. For small areas of impact, for example a field drain or headwall installation, of a metre or so wide, it may be possible to reposition the works away from burrows under ecological supervision so a licenced displacement is not required. For longer lengths of bank impacts such as culvert installation or bank reprofile or repair, if a survey showed that water vole were present a displacement under licence would be required.
5.	Claim - <i>You can get rid of water voles to avoid the need for a displacement if you flail all the banks and marginal vegetation before a survey or dewater a channel.</i> Fact – Dewatering a channel where water voles were known to be present is a licensable activity could be classed as an offence if it were not for specific and very short-term purposes or where a survey had not taken place to determine their presence or absence. Cutting bankside vegetation alone would be unlikely to displace water voles but could be classed as an offence if it damaged burrows or disturbed water voles in their burrows.
6.	Claim – <i>If you fix a bank slip straight away it is unlikely to require a water vole displacement.</i> Fact – A survey would still be needed but it is likely that water vole burrows would have been destroyed or damaged during the slip in many cases and they may have therefore left the damaged areas. If the survey proved this to be the case, then the slip could be repaired as usual without the need for a licenced displacement.
7.	Claim – <i>Water voles are still in our ditches and we have done bank works before without displacing them so it can't bother them that much.</i> Fact – Regardless of this, damaging water vole burrows or disturbing them in their burrows is unlawful and carries a custodial sentence and/or a fine if found guilty. The law is based on huge volumes of scientific evidence which demonstrates that habitat damage and loss is a key factor in the drastic decline in water vole populations. The displacement approaches are shown to conserve and enhance water vole populations.

8.	Claim - <i>You can only repair one 150m length of bank where there are water voles.</i> Fact - The IDB water vole licence states that you can only legally displace from 150m at a time when you are displacing from both banks. You have to leave a 150m bank length for refuge in-between repaired sections. If only one bank is being repaired, theoretically you could displace from an unlimited length but only if an ecologist calculated that the opposite and adjacent habitat was suitable to take an increased number of water vole from the impacted area, which in most cases is unlikely. The usual maximum licensable displacement length for IDBs in all cases is 150m.
9.	Claim – <i>You can only displace water voles during a few specific weeks of the year.</i> Fact – This is true as licenced displacements during these weeks are shown to impact the water vole population the least and it avoids their dormant and breeding seasons. Displacement licence periods are from 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 – <i>It is best not to tell anyone that you have water voles as they can stop you doing the work that you want to do, and don't allow surveys</i> Fact – It is assumed that water voles are everywhere in IDB ditches and drains so a survey would always be required ahead of any invasive works. Demonstrating transparency and competence in supporting biodiversity is likely to be attractive to potential funding partners and sources whereas having a lack of biodiversity data and evidence or being evasive can be conspicuous and can attract scrutiny.
NOTE! Water Vole displacement are only needed where there are water voles! If a survey shows they are not, then bank works can go ahead.	

Mrs Martin referred to the Environment Officer's Report, advising that the report would be taken as read. She reminded the Board of the revised Environmental Services Package and the associated fee increase.

The Biodiversity Action Plan review is in progress, and Mrs Martin reminded the Board of the advice included in the report. This included the changes in the Hedgerow Regulations, and that the Ecology Team can now check if any works affecting trees may impact on bats. She reminded the Board that any non-routine maintenance works will require a survey before works commence, and the Ecology Team have an environmental screening form that needs to be completed. It was requested that any bank slips should be reported as early as possible, as the slip will most likely displace any water voles that may have been present and so will not prevent any repair works being carried out. Alternatively leaving the slip and dealing with it later may give water voles chance to re-establish themselves and therefore prevent works being carried out. The Board were referred to the 'Water Voles – Myth Busting' part of the report. The Board are invited to send a representative to attend a biodiversity training day.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Report be approved.

B.1456 Chairmans Items

The Chair advised that the issue with the Horse Gate has now been resolved and this item can now be removed from the agenda.

The Chair advised he had no other issues to report.

B.1457 Consulting Engineers' Reports

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Friday 30th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
- B. Approval for the control panel to be overhauled or replaced at Upwood Common Pumping Station.**
- C. Approve for the control panel to be replaced at Green Dyke Pumping Station.**
- 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. 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.

3. Strategic Issues

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

3.1 **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)**

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

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

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

3.2 **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

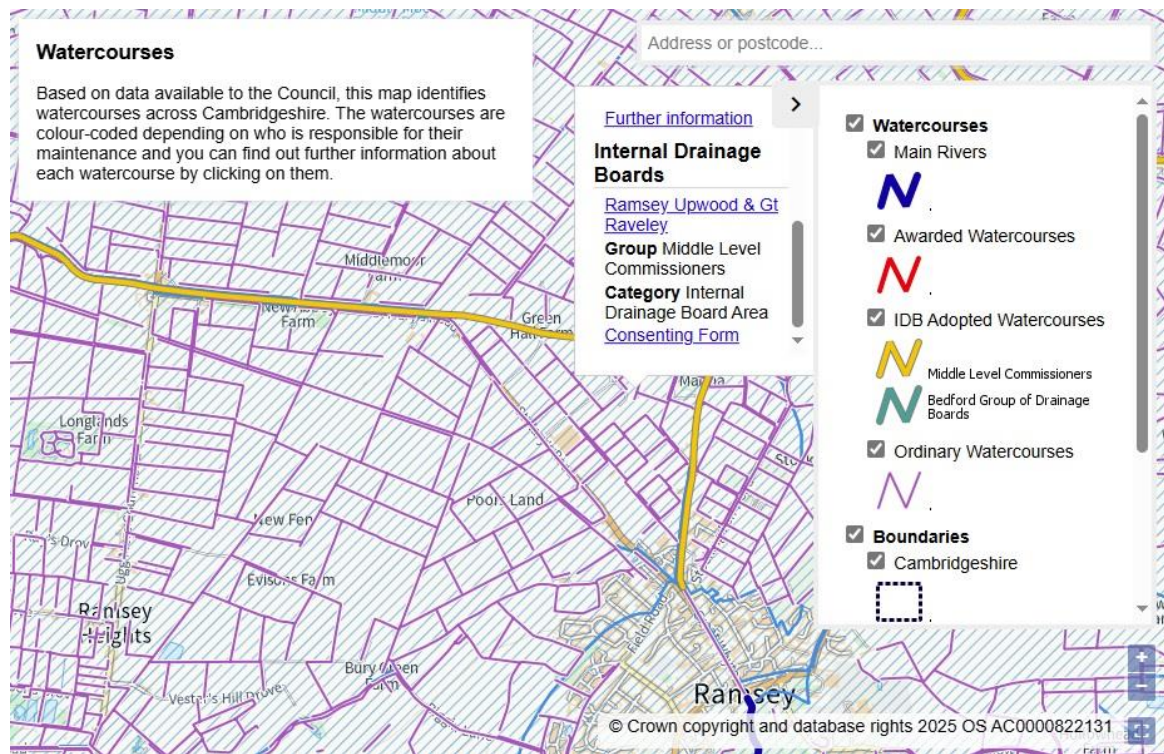
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action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

- 4.1 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.

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

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Improvement Programme

Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting

Appendix 3: M&E Report

Appendix 1

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley 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
	System Study (100% GiA funded)*			40	0									
Green Dyke p/s	Pumping station replacement (includes surveys, detailed design, construction)	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	300.0	2,500.0	2,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5300.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	15.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	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
New Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement (includes surveys, detailed design, construction)	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	700.0	5,000.0	5,000.0	0.0	0.0	10700.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment 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 automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	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
Upwood Common p/s	Pumping station replacement (includes surveys, detailed design, construction)	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6,000.0	6000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0.4	0	0.0	14.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.4
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipment	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	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
	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
Drainage Channels	Upwood Common/Green Dyke catchment	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
		0	0	0	49	65	0	310	3,200	7,500	5,000	0	6,000	22,124

Appendix 2

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

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Friday 30 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

- 1.1 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 to operate but the stations, pumps and control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern.

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

1.2 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.

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

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 £60 per station per quarter.

2. Maintenance and minor works

2.1 Upwood Common Pumping Station

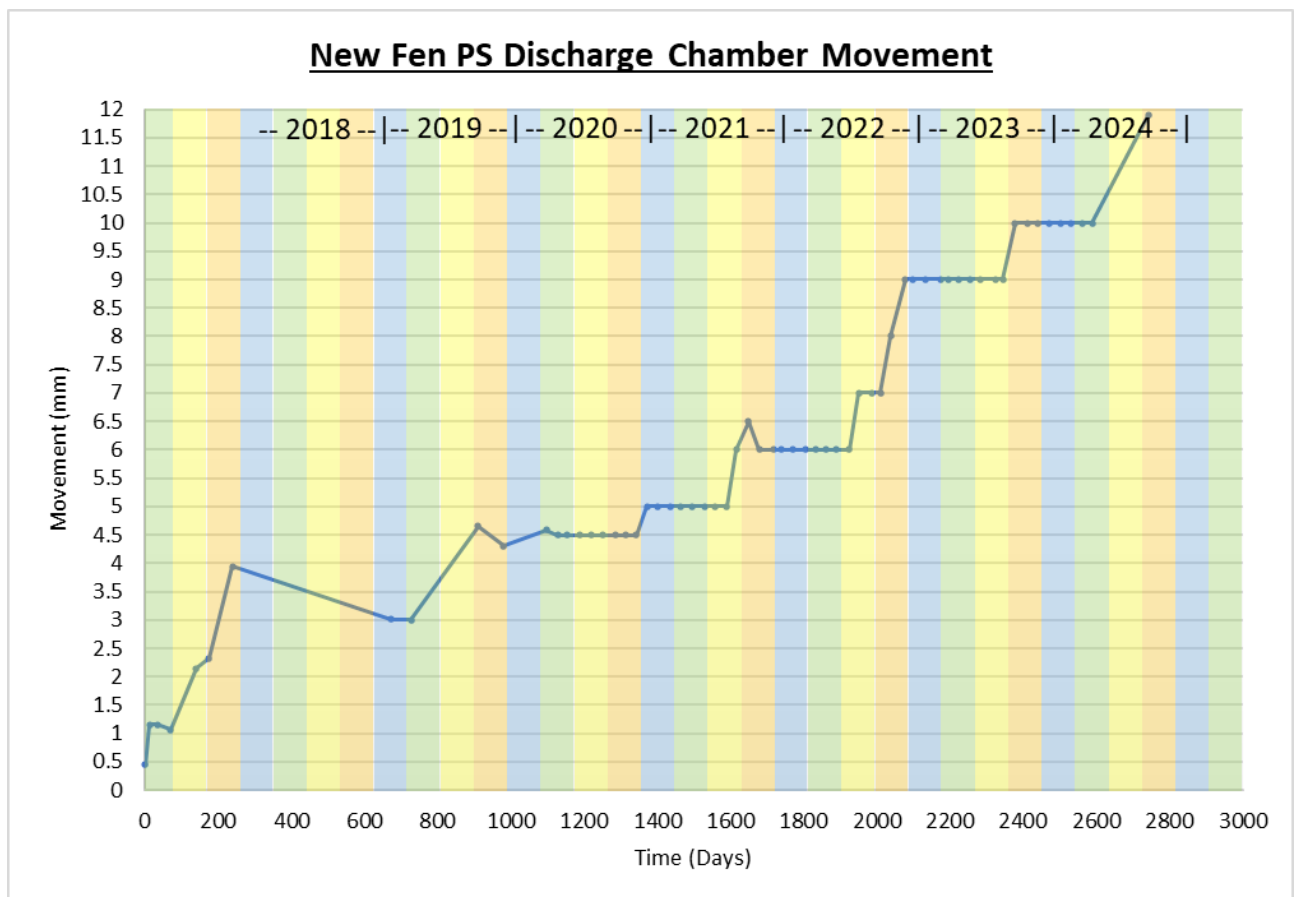
The pump has run well since the thrust bearing replacement last year.

The electrical controls are now over 20 years old and the control panel would benefit from overhaul or replacement, which is likely to cost in the region of £8k to £14k.

2.2 New Fen Pumping Station

The pumps have run well so far through the current pumping season.

The ground stability is a major concern at this site as there is movement of the surge chamber and the slab for the control room. No movement was recorded over winter this year, the majority of movement has normally been during spring summer.



2.3 Green Dyke

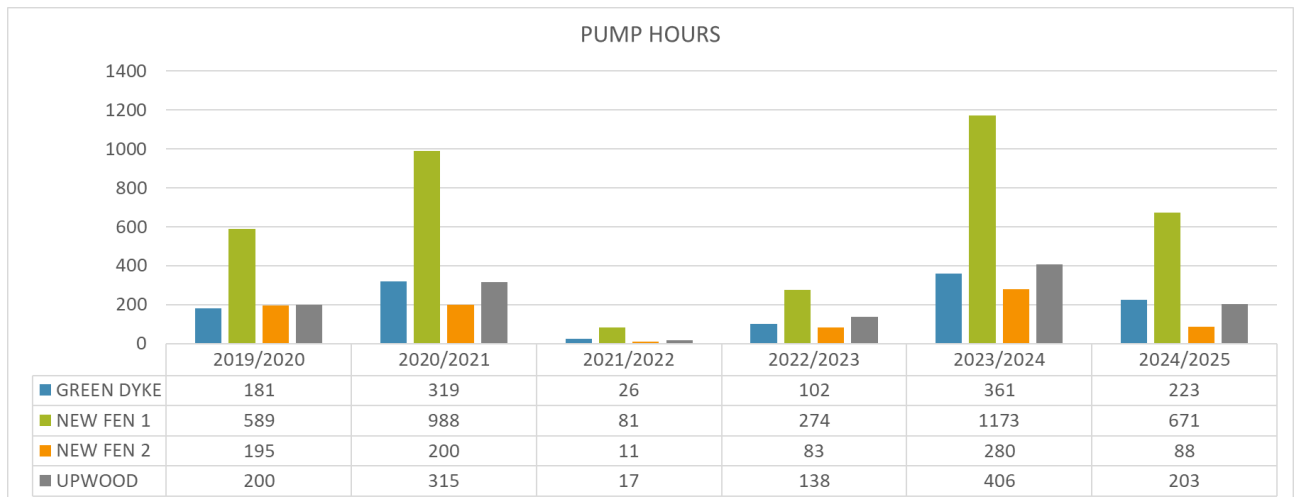
There have been several issues with the control panel over the last few years, many components have been replaced but the unit is over 45 years old and should be replaced. The replacement is likely to cost in the region of £10k to £15k.

Please approve for the control panel to be replaced.

The last recorded overhaul of the pump is 1986. It had issues with noises and vibration which are thought to have been caused by something trapped within the pump. This vibration had caused loosening of the motor and gearbox connecting bolts. The pump has been checked over above ground, all connections checked and tightened as necessary and the control reset to allow a smoother start. **The pump is currently running ok, due to age is due for complete overhaul which is likely to cost in the region of £40k to £60k.** This depends on the amount of wear and how complexity of the removal and reinstallation.

The discharge flap door is noisy which to be investigated fully will need the discharge area to be dammed to allow full inspection and plan for repair.

3. Pumping summary



4. Inspections

- 4.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) are in date as shown below.

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	Green Dyke	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	New Fen	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027
Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley	Upwood Common	12-Jul-2022	12-Jul-2027

5. Pumping Station Key Dates

- 5.1 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, District Studies and development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement.

	Station			
Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls
Green Dyke	1954	1977	1986	1977
New Fen	1949	1964 (1) 2005 (2)	2021 (1) 2005 (2)	2005
Upwood Common	1966	1966	2014	1994

Author Name: Dave Bantoft

Role: M&E Engineer

The Board considered the report of the Consulting Engineer and it was taken as read.

Following the earlier District Inspection, the Board were reminded that they had resolved to remove the vegetation from alongside New Fen Pumping Station following the completion of an Environmental Screening Report (ESR) by the Ecologist.

Capital Programme

Following the District Inspection, the Board agreed that the Capital Programme should be reviewed with the Consulting Engineer. It was agreed that Chair and District Officer should do this on the Boards behalf.

RESOLVED

That the Chair and District Officer arrange to meet with the Consulting Engineer in order to update the Board's Capital Programme.

That the reports are noted.

B.1458 Health & Safety

Viz:



Site Safety Inspection Record

Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB
SSI 240225

Complete

Name of organisation:	Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB
Date of site visit	24.02.2025 09:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	Upwood Pumping Station Green Dyke Pumping Station New Fen Pumping Station.
Name of Advisor	Simon Cross
Time of arrival at site:	24.02.2025 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Ramsey Upwood and Great Graveley IDB SSI 240225

Audit**An opening meeting was held with**

Andrew Roberts

1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2

Upwood Pumping Station. This small brick built building contains the electrical control panel for the external pump. A small weedscreen is cleared manually using a rake/crome when necessary. Access to the site, which has no perimeter security fencing provided, is along a private farm track.

* Signage. There is currently limited signage displayed on the side of the building with just a site name, contact details and faded warning wording. It is recommended that appropriate, relevant, signage is displayed in a prominent location including the location and contact details, together with multi hazard warning signs. Consistent signage across all locations, applicable to each site, has been recommended as detailed in the section above.

* Pedestrian access. Appears suitable with easy access from the farm track, and a planings pathway provided, including steps up the bank side.

* Vehicle access. Access to the weed deck and weed pile is partly restricted due to the width available.

* Weedpile management. A large weedpile was observed, this was placed on the ground of the weedscreen deck on the opposite side to the access point and would reportedly be removed by mini digger, manually, or burnt once dried, as required.

* Lighting. There appeared to be external lighting provided on the building to illuminate the access and weed deck area, however this is reportedly required to be switched on from inside the building. It is recommended that appropriate external lighting is provided, such as a PIR light, to replace or supplement the existing unit(s) to illuminate the access and external work area(s) on approach during the infrequent occasions when access is required during

darkness.

* Fire extinguisher. A previously provided fire extinguisher had been removed, however the associated sign and bracket remained. It is recommended that these are removed to avoid confusion. It was reported that the operative would carry a serviced fire extinguisher in their vehicle, if required in an emergency.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4

3

Green Dyke Pumping Station. This large brick built building contains the electrical control panel for the internal pump and a diesel engine. A small weedscreen is cleared manually using a rake/crome when necessary. Access to the site, which has no perimeter security fencing provided, is along a farm track. It is understood that the area is sometimes frequented by unauthorised persons.

* Signage. There is currently no signage displayed on the side of the building. It is recommended that appropriate, relevant, signage is displayed in a prominent location including the location and contact details, together with multi hazard warning signs. Consistent signage across all locations, applicable to each site, has been recommended as detailed in the section above.

* Pedestrian access. Appears suitable with easy access from the farm track and relatively level grassed area from the building entrance to the weed deck.

* Vehicle access. Access to the weed deck and weed pile appears to be suitable.

* Weedpile management. A large weedpile was observed, this was placed on the ground to the side of the weedscreen deck.

* Lighting. There appeared to be external lighting provided on the building rear to illuminate the weed deck area, and also a pump operating warning light, however these had been damaged, reportedly by unauthorised persons using a air rifle. In addition, the light is required to be switched on from inside the building. It is recommended that appropriate external lighting is provided, such as a PIR light, to replace or supplement the existing unit(s) to illuminate the access and external work area(s) on approach during the infrequent occasions when access is required during darkness. If practical provide a suitable protective cover to prevent malicious damage.

* Escape ladder. As previously observed, due to the height of the weedscreen, an escape ladder has been provided on the side wall which is accessible from the top. See photo below. It is recommended that as far as practical, measures are taken to restrict access to the top of the ladder whilst still enabling its use in an emergency, such as a removable chain, and/or provide additional safety signage at that point. An ideal long term solution could be to provide security fencing around the site.



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

4

New Fen Pumping Station. This small GRP cabin contains the electrical control panel for the external pumps. A large weedscreen is cleared manually using a rake/crome when necessary. Access to the site, which has perimeter security fencing provided, is alongside a main road. It is understood that the entrance area is sometimes frequented by unauthorised persons, see observation below.

* Litter. It was reported previously and also noted on this visit that significant litter was accumulating at the front gate due to its proximity to the roadway and pull-in area. It should be ensured that care is taken if

there is a requirement to remove litter or waste in the future to reduce the risk of accidental exposure to contamination, needles, etc.

* Signage. There is currently limited signage displayed on the side of the building with just a site name, contact details and faded warning wording. Nothing is displayed on the perimeter fence or gate. It is recommended that appropriate, relevant, signage is displayed in a prominent location including the location and contact details, together with multi hazard warning signs. Consistent signage across all locations, applicable to each site, has been recommended as detailed in the section above.

* Pedestrian access. Appears suitable with easy access from the gate and relatively level planings pathway to the cabin entrance and the weed deck. A set of steps, with handrail, is also provided between the cabin and weed deck.

* Vehicle access. Access to the weed deck and weed pile appears to be suitable from the gate.

* Weedpile management. A large weedpile was observed, this was placed on the ground to the side of the weedscreen deck and would be removed by vehicle as required.

* Lighting. There appeared to be external PIR lighting provided on the cabin front to illuminate the weed deck area, in the event of access being required during darkness, and also a pump operating warning light. It should be ensured that the light operates as required and is effective at illuminating the area.



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14

5

General Comments.

* Electrical testing. A programme of testing of the electrical panels is undertaken, with testing appearing to have been undertaken between 2022 and 2025, this is repeated every 5 years.

* Employer's Liability Insurance. The mandatory requirement for the provision of this insurance also necessitates the issue of a valid certificate indicating the cover and expiry date. Whilst it is a legal requirement to display the certificate, this could be a hard copy or digitally, as long as employees can see it or have access to it. There is no specific requirement to have a copy in each pumping station location, however, if this is continued it should be ensured that the latest certificates are displayed.

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature

Simon Cross
24.02.2025 18:37 GMT

Departure time

24.02.2025 11:30 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

No PRAs

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments

0
From 0 to 99

Media summary



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14

The Chair advised that he attended the visit by Cope Safety Management in February, and was joined by the District Officer. There are only small items outstanding, and they are waiting for the delivery of the signage from the Middle Level.

It was agreed that the current agreement with Cope is working well.

B.1459 District Officers Report

The District Officer reported that most things were discussed during the District Inspection and that he did not have much more to add. The map of proposed works for 2025 was available for review. There is some work to do at Middle Drove, and someone has culverted without permission. This has previously been cleared but it has now been refilled.

Mr Blackhurst asked if the Board should increase the number of times they dredge areas, with areas on a 4 yearly rotation at present. The Chair advised that the 3 yearly rotation they currently use is working well but if specific areas are problematic, they can be visited more often. Following a discussion on ditch cleansing, it was agreed to monitor the ditch levels before making any changes.

B.1460 Governance

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	GOVERNANCE
Date:	Friday 30th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Paul Burrows
RECOMMENDATIONS The Board is asked to: A. Note the continued appointment of Whittings as Internal Auditor. B. Review and approve the updated Policy included as appendix. 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 Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and Internal Auditor

- 1.1 The AGAR provides the framework by which the governance of the Board is assessed. The Board's last AGAR is available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk
- 1.2 The Board are reminded that Whittings LLP were appointed as internal auditor for a five-year period commencing 1st April 2023 (financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28).
- 1.3 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 Note the Financial Code for the Board is included within its 'Governance Documents' also available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk
- 2.3 The Board needs to ensure there is adequate separation of duties within its running and decision making. Members are asked to refresh themselves as to the Member Code of Conduct (available within the Governance Documents on the Board's webpage) and ensure their declarations of interests are clear and up-to-date.
- 2.4 If a Board Member (or their business) undertakes contracted work (or bids for such work) for the Board it is recommended that they be excluded from any decision making as a matter of course and that appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.
- 2.5 If the Member also has a lead role for the Board (eg Chairman/Vice Chairman) then it is important that the Board puts in place safeguards to ensure a separation of duties, particularly being clear on who is acting as lead client for the contractor.

3. 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:

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB **INSURED VALUES OF PUMPING STATIONS**

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2025
New Fen Pumping Station	2,000,000.00
Upwood Common Pumping Station	1,000,000.00
Green Dyke Pumping Station	1,000,000.00
	4,000,000.00 Index linked

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 the Financial Regulations policy (Appendix 3).

The Board are asked to review and approve the Board's Policy Statement. (Appendix 4)

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 5.

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 6)

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 assertion the authority needs to have taken the following actions in respect of the previous annual return:

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

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

- 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 2	IDB1 2023/24
Appendix 4	Annual Governance Statement 2025

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley IDB

Administered by:



middle level
commissioners

Governance Financial Regulations 2025 – 2035

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

A SUMMARY

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

10. Failure to comply with any aspect of these Regulations may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual(s) concerned. Serious breaches by Board Members may result in action being taken against them, in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

B SCHEME OF BUDGET DELEGATION

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

C MANAGING BUDGETS & REPORTING

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

material adverse variances to any of their budgets that are anticipated. Approval shall be sought in accordance with the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations.

6. The Clerk may convene a meeting of the Board or a Committee. The Chairman or any 3 other Board members shall also have the power to convene such a meeting.
7. The Consulting Engineer shall prepare a Report for each Board meeting at which such items appear on the agenda detailing amongst other things the progress made on approved capital schemes in respect of which he/she has been instructed during the reporting period as compared to approved budgeted costs, and, when appropriate, will propose new capital schemes for consideration. Such Report will also detail any maintenance work which he/she has organised for the Board during the reporting period and the cost of such work.
8. The Clerk shall also prepare Financial Report(s) for each Board meeting and, shall prepare any other management accounting/financial report that may be required by the Board.
9. In considering its financial health, estimates, rates and investment strategy, the Board will consider as a minimum:
 - I. Whether it has sufficient General Fund Reserves to cater for above average annual expenditure due to, for example, excessive pumping or urgent works.
 - II. Whether it is utilising and planning for use of any Development Charges account appropriately for future capital works.
 - III. Whether it has sufficient Asset Improvement/Future Works budget taking account of its asset base, asset age/reliability, capital programme requirements and likely grant eligibility.
 - IV. Its financial ability to secure and pay off a suitable value Public Works Loan to bridge any gap between its Asset Improvement/Future Works budget and likely value of works.

D PURCHASING GOODS & SERVICES (INCLUDING PLANT)

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

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

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

2. The budget holder shall be responsible for ensuring that quotations or tenders are sought when required by the above table. Where it is not possible to get the required quotations or tenders, the Chairman's written approval must be obtained prior to awarding any contract.
3. Any agreed contractors, consultants or suppliers list shall be maintained and kept up to date by the Clerk.

4. A budget holder must never agree to permit a third party to provide them with goods/services where tenders or quotations are required without obtaining a copy of their terms of business beforehand.
5. Budget holders shall fully comply with all Competition Law, the Bribery Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and shall so far as is reasonable, satisfy themselves as to the insurance policies of contractors, and their systems of work before awarding works contracts.
6. Budget holders shall not enter into any contract that has been reserved to the Board or delegated to a Board Committee without obtaining the Clerk's approval beforehand. The Clerk shall not permit any budget holder to enter in to such a contract if he/she considers it to be inappropriate or that the required approval has not been given.
7. The relevant budget holder is responsible for ensuring that the procurement of all goods and services is authorised by the Board or in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations. All emergency work must be approved by the Chairman.
8. All procurement of goods and services shall be authorised by the signing and dating of an official purchase order or purchase instruction. On so authorising the procurement of goods or services the budget holder will have satisfied themselves that the Financial Regulations have been complied with and that any approval required by the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations has been obtained. The Clerk shall be authorised to raise, sign and date a purchase order or purchase instruction where the procurement has been authorised by resolution of the Board.
9. The budget holder must never break down a job and string a number of purchase orders or authorisations together simply to avoid having to get 3 written quotations/tenders.
10. The following information must be clearly stated on each purchase order or instruction:
 - i. The name of the supplier.
 - ii. The agreed price of the goods/services required, other than in an emergency or where impractical to do so.
 - iii. The Unique Order No as approved by the budget holder.
11. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for establishing when goods or services, have been charged, allocated or otherwise expenditure has been committed against an unauthorised budget.
12. All quotes/tenders, delivery notes, invoices for payment and credit notes shall be matched to the official purchase order or instruction, examined and coded before they are proposed for payment or set off. If the budget holder or the Clerk deems any invoice/credit note to be incorrect they shall not process such invoices/credit notes for payment or set off until satisfied that payment or set off is properly due. The quotes/tenders, purchase orders and delivery notes where required to be signed or where amended, shall all be filed together with the invoices/credit notes as otherwise directed by the Clerk
13. The Clerk shall ensure that all Invoices which have been approved for payment are duly scheduled for payment.
14. All Invoices shall be authorised by the Chairman and checked by the Clerk prior to making payment.
15. Where it is considered that there are valid reasons for departing from these procedures the approval of the Chairman shall be obtained. Any such departure shall be reported to the Board.

E BANK MANDATE AND INVESTMENTS

1. No changes shall be made to the Board's bankers or the bank mandate without the prior consent of the Board.
2. Approved signatories for the Board's bank accounts are as follows:
 1. The Chairman
 2. Such other member(s) as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board
 3. Such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board
3. All cheque books, deposit books, banking cards, online access and other documentation or materials relating to the Board's bank accounts shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.
4. All payments, bank transfers and Investments shall be made in the most efficient/secure manner as determined from time to time by the Clerk
5. The Clerk shall maintain Contact Details relating to financial transactions. All bank accounts shall be reconciled monthly and checked at regular intervals by separate officers of the Clerk.

F INVESTMENTS AND BORROWINGS STRATEGY

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

G COLLECTING MONEY

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies received are properly recorded in the accounting records.
2. Electronic copies of all receipts issued shall be retained for at least six years.
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Drainage Rates and Special Levies are substantially collected by **1 November** each year. Outstanding Rates/Levies shall be pursued in a timely manner after that date.

4. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for all debts to be substantially collected within 30 days from the Debtor Invoice tax point date and for when a debt becomes 3 months overdue or whenever a debt becomes doubtful or is disputed.

H FUNDING APPLICATIONS

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

I SUNDRY DEBTORS

1. Each budget holder shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with the necessary information to enable rechargeable work to be properly accounted for and invoiced, and, any other debts due to be properly invoiced. The budget holder shall advise the Clerk whenever an Invoice is to be raised for goods provided or services rendered, under their control.
2. The Clerk shall ensure that all such Invoices are properly raised as soon as practicable after being authorised.
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all other debts due to the Board are properly raised when required and collected appropriately.
4. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Board consider whether any rents payable to them should be reviewed by a Chartered Surveyor at least once every 5 years.
5. The Clerk shall calculate any claims for Highland Water payments from the Environment Agency and send such claims to the Agency by the dates specified by the Agency.
6. Any refunds due to debtors for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.
8. The Clerk shall be empowered to collect all sundry debts due.
9. The Clerk shall obtain the Chairmans approval for instigating legal proceedings to collect outstanding amounts in excess of the County Court Small Claims limit.

J EMPLOYING/MANAGING STAFF

1. The Chairman shall be responsible to the Board for all matters regarding any employees, including employment policies, procedures, terms and conditions. The Chairman acts as the employee's line manager. This includes taking capability and disciplinary action against Board employees having followed due process.
2. The Board's approval shall be required for the employment of additional permanent staff.
3. The Chairman shall have the authority to employ temporary staff and replace permanent staff provided the employment costs are contained within the Expenditure Estimates/Budgets approved by the Board.
4. Subject to the above paragraphs and to the terms of any employee's contract, Board members shall not individually have the power to formally offer anyone any form of employment or to

dismiss a Board employee, or otherwise take disciplinary action against any of the Board's employees unless the Board has specifically authorised such action by resolution.

5. Board members other than the Chairman and the District Officer shall not individually give instructions to any of the Board's employees, unless delegation has been approved by the Board.
6. The Chairman and the District Officer shall be responsible for managing the day-to-day activities of employees and for determining the nature and extent of these activities.

K ASSET ACCOUNTING/MANAGEMENT

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

L AUDIT

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

M SALARIES AND WAGES

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

N INSURANCES

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

O SECURITY

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

P REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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

Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley 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 Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley 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 Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley 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 Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley 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 Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley 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 summarises 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 more 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 viable¹.

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: | 1295 ha |
| • Catchment area draining to and including the District: | 1900 ha |
| • Area of Agricultural Land: | 1220 ha |
| • Area of other (non-agricultural) land: | 75 ha |

5.4 Assets for which the Board have operational responsibility:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| • Water Level Control Structures: | 2 No |
| • Watercourses (maintained): | 27 km |
| • Raised embankments: | 1.3 km |
| • Reservoirs: | 0 ha |
| • Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS): | 0 no |
| • Pumping Stations: | 3 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

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

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

- 6.1 Through the operation, maintenance and improvement of watercourses and other water control assets within the District, the Board seeks to achieve a general standard of water level management that enables navigation, the drainage and irrigation of agricultural land, reduces flood risk to developed areas, and sustains environmental features throughout the District.
- 6.2 The Board monitors and reviews the condition of its watercourses and other assets, particularly those designated as critical, over-spilling from which could affect people and property. Consistent with the resultant needs established, a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the assets is commensurate with the standards required. The programme is reviewed periodically by the Board to ensure it is delivering the appropriate condition.
- 6.3 Where standards are not at the desired level, improvement works will be sought where they are considered to be practical and financially viable by the Board. Where improvement works meet the criteria set by Defra, financial support will be sought from the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding. Where appropriate works will be undertaken in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and take opportunities to work with natural processes.
- 6.4 Work for and by the Board will be carried out in accordance with best practice and to deliver best value for money taking due regard of local flood risk management requirements and strategies, opportunities for partnership working, environmental obligations and guidance available from Defra, the Environment Agency and other organisations.
- 6.5 The Board's powers to carry out water level and flood risk management works are permissive (i.e. the Board are not obliged to carry out works) and their resources are limited. The Board's policy is therefore to designate what they consider to be the most important watercourses in the District as "District Drains" and prioritise their resources to the appropriate maintenance and, where necessary, improvement of such channels and associated structures. The watercourses and structures so designated will change over time as necessary but the current designated watercourses and structures are shown on the plan attached to this Statement.
- 6.6 Other watercourses usually are the responsibility of other bodies or the adjoining owners. The Board will only take action in respect of these latter watercourses where resources are available and where it is in all the circumstances appropriate for the Board to become involved, bearing in mind the powers available to other persons or bodies.
- 6.7 The Board have a supervisory duty, under section 1(2)(d) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 over all matters relating to the drainage of land in their District and will, under this duty where appropriate advise others regarding the undertaking of works when it is not appropriate for the Board to exercise its own powers.

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

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

- 7.1 The Board will take appropriate steps to help riparian owners understand their responsibilities for maintenance, byelaw compliance and environmental regulations.
- 7.2 The Board will regulate as necessary, using available legislative powers and byelaws, the activity of others to ensure their actions within, alongside, and otherwise impacting its drainage system do not increase flood risk, prevent the efficient working of drainage systems, or adversely impact the environment.
- 7.3 The potential impact on flood risk from future development both within the District and the wider catchment draining into the District, is fully recognised by the Board. The Board will take an active role in the assessment of local plans, major development and, individual (planning) applications, to prevent inappropriate development and land use to ensure that flood risk is not increased. This will include, where appropriate, providing pre-application advice and checking of flood risk assessments.
- 7.4 Where appropriate the Board will seek contributions from developers to cover the cost of consultations and advice and for both immediate and longer term works necessary to mitigate against any resultant increase in flood risk. Such contributions will be recorded in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and associated technical guidance.
- 7.5 The Board will where appropriate designate structures or features affecting flood risk using Section 30 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

8. Communication and transparency

- 8.1 The Board will publicise the local risks from flooding, the reasons for managing water levels within the District and articulate the efforts being undertaken by the Board to manage water levels and flood risk as well as the steps the local community and land managers can take to assist in its management.
- 8.2 The Board will be open and transparent in its actions and decisions. The Board will comply with the requirements set out in the relevant Local Government transparency code.
- 8.3 The Board will provide an overview of the objectives and costs of its water level management operations by publishing on its website:-
- A record of the watercourses it periodically maintains;
 - A statement of the types of general maintenance activities it routinely undertakes and why;
 - Its Annual Report to Defra (IDB1 Form); and
 - Approved Board minutes and papers.
- 8.4 The Board will seek views and respond to enquiries from the local general public in this regard and work with local partners to build a culture within which watercourses are seen as vital to managing flood risk, and enhancing habitat and amenity. Every effort will be made to dissuade abuse of watercourses.

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

9. Working together

- 9.1 The Board will co-operate and share information with other relevant authorities in the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion flood risk management function. The Board will contribute to strategies, plans and consultations relevant to its catchment and functions.
- 9.2 The Board will assist the Environment Agency wherever possible in its provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems, and assist Risk Management Authorities where necessary during flood emergencies. The Board will participate as necessary in exercises to develop and test emergency response procedures.
- 9.3 The Board have provided the Environment Agency and other local Risk Management Authorities with information on the major flood defence assets for which they are responsible. The information is available from the Environment Agency.
- 9.4 The Board will seek to work with all relevant local organisations, in carrying out its flood and coastal erosion risk management functions and environmental obligations.

10. Environmental Measures

- 10.1 The Board have nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017, the Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009 and Amendments 2011, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, the Environment Act 2021, and as a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.
- 10.1.1 Further to the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, the Board will review their Water Level Management Plans and Biodiversity Action Plans with reference to the local nature recovery strategy and relevant species conservation or protected site strategy for their areas.
- 10.2 Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work constitutes vegetation control and desilting and is often a vital and routine requirement. Whilst inevitably some short-term impacts will arise, this management is often essential to maintain the distinct assemblage of aquatic habitat and species present in the District. Such work will be carried out in a way that manages the potential risks to the environment. The Board have access to environmental expertise from their Ecology and Environmental Services Manager and have a Biodiversity Action Plan, developed according to ADA and Natural England guidelines, which indicate the way in which their functions can be carried out in a way appropriate to the environment and how the environment can be enhanced. The Board maintain only a small proportion of the total watercourse length in the District, the significant majority being the responsibility of the adjoining land owners or of other bodies.
- 10.3 When carrying out work, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, the Board will aim to:-
- Avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to agricultural interests and to natural habitats and species;

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

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

10.5 The Board has no Water Level Management Plan.

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

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 £.

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial Information

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

Special levies information for financial year 2024-25	
Name of local authority	£
1. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	42,365
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	42,365

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		39,614
B. Special Levies		38,884
C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		7,189
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		4,381
J. Rents and Acknowledgements		
K. Other Income		
Wayleave		102
Consents		50
Total income		90,220
EXPENDITURE		
L. New Works and Improvement Works		
M. Total precept to the Environment Agency		5,493
N. Watercourse maintenance		20,617
O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		6,801
P. Administration		8,368

¹ https://saas.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PractitionersGuide_2023.pdf

Q. PSCAs		
R. Rechargeable Works		
S. Finance Charges		
T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total		421
Breakdown:		
General, across the whole region	421	
SSSI specific, where relevant		
U. Other Expenditure		
Insurance		1,252
Write back of provisions		50
Electricity costs – overall total		44,126
Breakdown (if possible):		
Standing charge (per annum)	3,416	
Unit charge (per annum)	40,710	
Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total		
Breakdown:		
Pumping stations		
Fleet and plant machinery		
Total expenditure		87,128
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		3,092
W. Developers Funds income not applied in year		3,373
X. Grant income not applied in year		

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

2.751 %

£ 1,089.48

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?.....

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?.....
6. Have you reported progress on BAP implementation on your website?..... Yes ☐ No ☒
7. When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?.....
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?

27.3 kilometres

29. How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

3 pumping stations

30. How many pumps does the Board operate?

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

4

31. If other, please list:

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

2.233 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?

14

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

12

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

12

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

2

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

9

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?

1

69. Number of complaints outstanding in the financial year?

1

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

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Signature

Date

Name in BLOCK LETTERS

Designation

Email address


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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

	Agreed		‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to secure 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:

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

and recorded as minute reference:

Chair

Clerk

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Mrs Martin went through the Governance report and the various Resolutions that the Board had been asked to make.

RESOLVED

a) Internal Auditor

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whittings as Internal Auditor

b) Policy Reviews

Mrs Martin referred to the Boards Financial Regulations Policy which has been reviewed and updated by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The Board also reviewed the Boards Policy Statement.

RESOLVED

That the Board reviewed and approved the publication of the Financial Regulations policy.

That the Board reviewed and approved the publication of the Boards Policy Statement.

c) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Board did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Board's Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website), noted the system of financial Internal Controls (as published on website) and no additional controls were highlighted as required.

d) Insured Values

The Board reviewed the Insured Values and expressed their satisfaction at the insured levels, and that they remain index linked.

e) Exercise of Public Rights

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

f) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mrs Martin 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. She confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

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

g) DEFRA IDB1 ReturnRESOLVED

Mrs Martin referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2023/2024 which the Board noted and approved.

h) Annual Governance StatementRESOLVED

The Board approved that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

B.1461 Finance Report – Looking Back

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK
Date:	Friday 30 th May 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Note the Budgeting review.
- B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
- C. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2023/2024 within Appendix 2.

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 £21,645.03 was submitted on behalf of the Board for excess winter pumping costs (Tranche 1) which was successful and has now been paid.

Actual Expenditure against Budget

For 2024/2025 the Board had estimated expenditure for the year of £84,410 and set a rate of 26.00p to raise this through agricultural drainage rates and Special Levies. Included in the estimated expenditure was £5,487 to be raised to reinstate balances following the events of 2023/24.

Net Expenditure in 2024/25 was lower than the estimated budget because of several reasons. Telephone and Insurances were higher than budget because of higher insurance premiums. Repairs and Renewals was over budget, however this included £3,308 for repairs to the level controller power supply at New Fen Pumping Station. Fuel costs were approximately £7,750 lower than budget, following a relatively average year for pumping volumes. Administration cost was approximately £700 higher due additional administration fees in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant work.

Other Improvement costs relating to the pump overhaul at Upwood Common Pumping Station completed in the year at a cost of £2,992, the work carried out was fully funded from the Storm Recovery Grant Tranche 2.

As outlined above funded following the setting of the rates for 2024/25 we received a grant for the excess pumping costs from 2023/24, the amount that was recognised to the general fund was £17,552 and is described in more detail below.

A full District Wide catchment study was programmed for this financial year. Due to uncertainty with funding this did not happen and therefore no costs have been incurred.

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

1. Budgeting

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

2. Payments for 2024

- 2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

3. Highland Water Contributions

- 3.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Board can make a claim for funding to the Environment Agency for the additional costs of the onward management of water from the district's highland. It is at the Environment Agency's discretion if they pay the contribution and it is accounted for within the local team's annual maintenance budget.
- 3.2 When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2023/2024 and the budgeted expenditure for 2024/2025. The winter storm events gave claims significantly more than previous claims but following an understanding that the Environment Agency were able to switch funding within their revenue/capital programmes the full estimated claims were included in the rating proposals. The highland water claim included within the rating estimates was £17,263.82. Following an earlier Government announcement, details were eventually released concerning the Storm Recovery Grant and a claim for the first tranche (T1) was submitted in the sum of £54,645.03.

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 £4,092.61, which will be adjusted from the Storm Recovery Grant.

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

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:

<u>Work Done</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Penny rate equivalent</u>
Upwood Common Fen PS - Pump Overhaul	£2,992	0.91p
	£2,992	0.91p

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 2

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

Role: Responsible Officer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Payments for 2024/25

Appendix 2 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2024/25

Appendix 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDPayments 2024/2025 (1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025)

Masons Agriforestry Contracting - Drain maintenance	5,295.36
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)	408.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Taking electricity meter reads for start of new contract	209.99
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to pump panel at Green Dyke pumping station	200.08
Middle Level Commissioners - Grease pump bearing, reposition coupling and test at New Fen pumping station	188.98
Middle Level Commissioners - Grease pump bearing, reposition coupling and test at Upwood Common pumping station	188.99
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply land registry searches (Account from Land Registry)	18.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	570.33
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, site visit to check possible byelaw infringement, planning and development applications)	806.09
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges and stationery	3,973.97
D C Roberts & Son - Culvert replacement work	1,053.00
Environment Agency - Precept	2,828.93
S Ablett - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	206.15
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	563.88
Middle Level Commissioners - Insurance premium for increase in pumping station valuations (Account from Towergate)	401.74
Middle Level Commissioners - Court fees	0.50
Lattenbury Services Limited - Drain maintenance	2,376.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2023-2024 accounts)	618.00
D C Roberts & Son - Unblocking culvert at point 13	300.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2023-2024 accounts)	378.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, site visit to check possible byelaw infringement, planning and development applications)	1,638.58
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges	3,776.76
L C Butler - District Officer's fee (1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024)	2,462.40
T A Chittenden - Refund of drainage rates	8.51
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	1,440.49
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Work in connection with the monitoring of the discharge chamber, planning and development applications)	824.32
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,549.66
Environment Agency - Precept	2,828.93
Abbots Ripton Farming Ltd - Refund of overpayment of drainage rates	41.40
T A Chittenden - Refund of drainage rates	17.02
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	590.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)	663.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	900.60
D C Roberts & Son - Removal and disposal of weed from drain at Points 12-32 and 30-33 and from the pumping station	591.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Initial survey to identify burrows and planned ecological supervision for vegetation clearance as part of the displacement of water voles (Account from Greenwillows Associates)	1,643.10
Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift	75.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, investigate and draft report regarding slips at Point 2, planning and development applications)	576.30
Mason's Agriforestry Contracting - Tree shear all vegetation from IDB drain and flail mowing	3,750.00
Anglia Farmers - Meter operator agreement - (Upwood Common pumping station)	105.24
Anglia Farmers - Meter operator agreement - (Green Dyke pumping station)	105.23
IMServ - Data collector agreement - (Upwood Common pumping station)	117.17
IMServ - Data collector agreement - (Green Dyke pumping station)	117.16
IMServ - Meter operator agreement - (Upwood Common pumping station)	41.38
IMServ - Meter operator agreement - (Green Dyke pumping station)	41.37
Corona Energy - Meter operator agreement - (Upwood Common pumping station)	(103.68)
Corona Energy - Meter operator agreement - (Green Dyke pumping station)	(103.68)
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Green Dyke pumping station)	3,776.91
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (New Fen pumping station)	3,002.77
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Upwood Common pumping station)	1,327.11
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - Payments on account	48,219.14
	100,662.06

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 2

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025
GENERAL FUND

2025			2024		
Mar-31	Payments made during the year:-		Apr-01	Balance brought forward	175,427.51
	Precept	5,657.86	2025		
	Rates and Insurances	1,951.40	Mar-31	Rate income & Special levy	85,612.98
	Repairs & Renewals	6,991.26		Interest	4,367.90
	Fuel	22,243.30		Development charges account	171.00
	Drainworks	14,848.66		Highland Water contributions	17,337.16
	Administration charge, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising etc	9,488.62		Wayleave rental	102.97
		55,523.24		Consents	-
	Improvement works	2,991.72			107,592.01
	<u>Transfer to Future Works Account</u>			Storm Recovery Grant - Tranche 1a	17,552.42
	Surplus 2024/2025	62,804.15		Storm Recovery Grant - Tranche 2a	2,991.72
	Balance carried forward	176,586.69			
		<u>303,563.66</u>			<u>303,563.66</u>

BALANCE SHEETCapital SectionLiabilities

Capital Provisions	1,770,000.00
	<u>1,770,000.00</u>

Assets

New Fen Pumping Station & Store	745,000.00
Upwood Common Pumping Station	455,000.00
Green Dyke Pumping Station	<u>570,000.00</u>
	1,770,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	176,586.69
Sundry Creditors	52,422.98
Development Charges Account	3,286.40
Future Works Account	165,139.54
	<u>2,167,435.61</u>

Ratepayers' Account - Arrears	6,247.44
Value added tax - Refunds due	3,061.80
Sundry Debtors	37,151.92
Balance in hand -	
Barclays - Treasurer's Account	25,003.57
Barclays - Business Premium	<u>325,970.88</u>
	350,974.45
	<u>2,167,435.61</u>

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage Board**Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2025****Treasurers Account 2024/2025**

1st April 2024		31st March 2025	
Balance brought forward	311,799.80	Payments made during the year	100,662.06
		By returned direct debit/bounced cheque	0.00
31st March 2025			
Receipts during the year			
Clerk's collection account	132,746.82		
Interest on deposit accounts	7,089.89		
	<u>139,836.71</u>	Balance carried forward	350,974.45
	<u>451,636.51</u>		<u>451,636.51</u>

Barclays Bank PLCCurrent Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	25,003.57
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	<u>25,003.57</u>

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

Current Account	25,003.57
Business Premium Account	325,970.88
Treasury Deposit	0.00
<u>Total reconciled cash balances per accounts</u>	<u>350,974.45</u>

Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley 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	175,427.51		
	Development charges account	3,373.41		
	Future works account	99,849.28		
		278,650.20		278,650
Line 2	Rates and Special Levies			
	Agricultural rates	42,864.38		
	Special Levies	42,365.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	425.00		
	Write-off	-41.40		
		85,612.98		85,613
Line 3	Total other receipts			
	Interest			
	General fund	4,367.90		
	Development charges account	83.99		
	Future Works	2,486.11		
	Consent applications	0.00		
	Wayleave	102.97		
	Highland Water	17,337.16		
	Discharge contributions	0.00		
	Storm Recovery Grant	17,552.42		
	Storm Recovery Tranche 2a Claim	2,991.72		
		44,922.27		44,923
Line 4	Staff costs			
	Wages/salaries	0.00		
	National insurance contributions	0.00		
	Pension costs	0.00		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
		0.00		0
Line 5	Loan repayments			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
		0.00		0
Line 6	All other payments			
	Precept	5,657.86		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	1,951.40		
	Repairs and renewals	6,991.26		
	Fuel	22,243.30		
	Drainworks	14,848.66		
	Administration	9,488.62		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
	Improvements	2,991.72		
		64,172.82		64,173
Line 7	Balances carried forward			
	General Fund	176,586.69		
	Development charges account	3,286.40		
	Future works account	165,139.54		
		345,012.63		345,013

Reconciliation

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

345,012.63

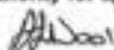
Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	275,558	278,650	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	78,498	85,613	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	11,721	44,923	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	87,127	64,173	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	278,650	345,013	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	311,800	350,974	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	1,770,000	1,770,000	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWWB).
For Local Councils Only			
	Yes	No	N/A
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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



Date

23-05-2025

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

as recorded in minute reference:

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

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the payments detailed for 2024/25. The Board noted the Storm Recovery Grant Fund bids and that the Board received £21,645.03 for excess winter pumping costs, and £2,992 was received to fund the Upwood Common Pump overhaul.

Payments for 2024

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Highland Water Contributions

The Board noted the Highland Water contributions.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025

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

RESOLVED

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

B.1462 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	13
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD
Date:	Friday 30 th 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 & approve Determination of land for rating purposes & Rate arrears (Confidential papers) D. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency E. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2024/2025 F. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2024/2025			

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known.

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.

The engineer has identified several works likely to be required during the year:

Green Dyke Pumping Station

As reported in the Consulting Engineers report there has been problems with the control panel. It has been recommended that this be replaced at a cost of between £10,000 to £15,000. No provision has been included in the budget, if approved this could be funded through the Future Works Fund.

Members should note that the budget proposal includes for the full recovery of highland water claims of £12,973 which is an adjustment to the 2024/25 claim and the 2025/26 estimated claim.

When considering the rate for 2025/2026 members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping stations.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

- 1.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 6.5%, from £636 to £678 (+ vat) for 2025.
- 1.2 To consider the fee of the Clerk

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 £5,657.86.

3. Estimates for 2025/26

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

4. Rate Requirements for 2025/26

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

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2025/26

Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2025/26

Appendix 1

RAMSEY UPWOOD AND GREAT RAVELEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2025/2026

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2024/2025</u> £	<u>Actual to</u> <u>31st March 2025</u> £	<u>Proposed Budget</u> <u>2025/2026</u> £	<u>Remarks</u>
1 Rates and Insurances	1,550	1,951 ^A	2,150 ^B	A - Premiums higher due to increased Pumping Station Valuation B - Includes a 5% uplift on 2024/25
2 Repairs and Renewals	5,875	6,991 ^C	4,750	C - Includes £3,308 for repairs to level controller power supply at New Fen Pumping Station
3 Fuel	29,000	22,243	30,000 ^D	D - Provision based on 2 year average consumption plus estimate for new contract rates from October 2025 (5% Increase)
4 Drainworks (including District Officer's Fee)	27,000	14,849 ^E	30,250 ^F	E - Includes for :- Flail mowing & tree cutting 3,275 Slubbing & Weed clearance 2,723 5,998
5 Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit Fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions Etc.	8,800	9,489	9,700	F - Forecast Includes for :- Flail mowing & tree cutting 8,100 Slubbing 12,000 20,100
6 Environment Agency Precept	5,658	5,658	5,771	G - Future works at pumping stations
7 Plant Refurbishment Funding	20,581 ^G	0 ^G	20,581 ^G	H - Catchment Study Consultancy not carried out
8 Improvement Works	75,000 ^H	2,992 ^I	0	I - Pump Overhaul at Upwood Common
9 Reinstatement Of Balances - Yr 1 of 3	5,487 ^J	0	0	J - Provision for recovery of balances reduced by winter 2023/24 pumping. Recover over 3 years
	178,951	64,173	103,202	K - Includes: Storm Recovery Grant - T1a 17,552 Storm Recovery Grant - T2a 2,992 Bank interest 4,368 Highland Water 17,337
LESS: Government Grant, Revenue Income Etc.	94,541	42,523 ^K	15,515 ^L	L - Includes for: Highland Water Claim 12,973 Bank interest 2,250
	84,410	21,650	87,687	
<u>Estimated General Fund</u>				
Opening balance	175,428	175,428	176,587	
Rates raised	85,613	85,613	87,687	
Net expenditure	84,410	21,650	87,687	
Transfer to Future Works Fund		62,804		
Closing balance	<u>176,631</u>	<u>176,587</u>	<u>176,587</u>	

Appendix 2Ramsey Upwood & Great Raveley Internal Drainage BoardRate and levy requirements

UNDER SECTION 37 OF THE LAND DRAINAGE ACT 1991, THE APPROPRIATE PROPORTIONS IN WHICH THE NET EXPENDITURE OF THE COMMISSIONERS MUST BE BORNE FOR 2025/2026 IS:-

- a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 50.29%
- b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Huntingdon District Council – 49.71%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £1,649.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £3,278.

Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2025 - £239,391

The estimated net expenditure of £87,687, which does not include provision for refurbishment works at pumping stations, in 2025/2026 is equivalent to:-

- a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 26.75p and
- b) a Special levy on Huntingdon District Council of £43,587

In 2024/2025 a rate of 26.00p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £42,365 on Huntingdon District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

May 2025

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Board considered and noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions :

a) ADA subscription

The Clerk reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £636 to £ 678 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

b) District Officers Fees

The Board gave consideration to the District Officers Fee for 2025-2026. It was observed that previously the Board had used the Middle Level pay award as an indicator, which had been set at 4.15%. Mr Clarke proposed that an increase of 4.15% be given and this seconded by Mr Edwards. This was agreed by the Board.

RESOLVED

That the Board agree that the District Officers Fee allowance increase to £4,274 for 2025/2026.

c) Clerks Fees

The Board gave consideration to the fee paid to the Clerk and Mr Clarke proposed that an increase 4.15% also be applied.

Mrs Martin advised that an increase from £6031 to £6483 had been included in the budget and the Board agreed with this figure.

The Chair asked the Clerk to establish why this item had to be agreed by the Board, and if appropriate remove from future agendas.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks fee increase from £6031 to £6483 for 2025/2026.

d) Precept

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

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

The precept for 2024 was £5,657.86.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full unless a decision to appeal against the Precept is made.

e) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/26.

The Board reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

f) Rate Requirement for 2025/26

The Chair advised the Board that a rate of 26.75p in the £ will keep the Board ticking over. There are already unbudgeted costs of £8-10k for the repairs to the slip that was viewed during the District Inspection, and that needs to be funded. Mr Clarke responded that following a 5% increase the previous year, should they not look to rate at the same level this year? The Chair disagreed, adding that adding a further 5p onto the rate would fund the repairs. Mr Blackhurst proposed a rate of 31p.

Mr Edwards said that when touring the district it could be seen from the bank that several fields were not being farmed. He advised that these are his, and the reason they have not been farmed is because they have been flooding. He does not wish to pay more drainage rates for a service he is not receiving. The Chair asked what was going wrong and what could the Board do to put that right. Mr Blackhurst added that his field drains were below the ditch levels and this had caused him some issues, but this was relatively easily resolved. Mr Edwards advised that his land was low lying. Mr Clarke said that a precedent was set in the early days to remove land from drainage rates. If a landowner puts this forward, then the Board has to have a survey carried out and then the land can be taken out of the rate. The Chair added that this is one of the lowest areas in the district. Mr Clarke suggested that there was 3ft of freeboard in the drain. The Chair continued to suggest that the Board need to review this issue, and Mr Blackhurst added that they need to make sure that Mr Edwards' drains discharge above the water level.

Mr Edwards said that he had been talking to the Environment Officer about options for Carbon Offsetting within the district. If he were to use the land for an environmental scheme he could offer it to the Board for Carbon Offsetting, but the Chair and Mr Clarke advised that this is not something the Board has to do. However, the Chair thought they did need to carry out a survey to establish the levels near to Mr Edwards' yard and asked if the Board were happy that MLC's Engineers be instructed to carry out a level survey in the area. The Board agreed that this would be an acceptable way forward.

Mr Blackhurst returned to the rate and again proposed a rate of 31p. Mr Clarke said as he was representing the householder, thought that they should pay more as development is causing more problems. He would like the Board to investigate making householders pay more and asked that this be taken back to the Clerk, asking if there is any room to change the calculation of Special Levy allowing the Board to charge more. The Chair also agreed to send a letter to the Middle Level suggesting that Huntingdonshire District Council increase their contributions. Mr Clarke then seconded a rate of 31p.

Mr A Butler and Mr McKenna both disagreed with the rate and thought that the increase was too big. Mr A Butler was concerned that ratepayers would not be able to afford the increase. The Chair reminded the Board that they had just viewed a slip that will cost the Board £15k to resolve and asked if they felt this should be funded from the Board's reserves. He was concerned that last year they had rated too low, but they had been very lucky with the winter levels.

Mr A Butler said that it is not necessarily the Agricultural Rate Payers overloading the system, but that they are being asked to fund this. The Chair again asked if the Board were prepared to fund the works from their reserves, and Mr Wagstaffe added that 5 years ago the Board had agreed to build up the reserves but that they were no further forward with this. Mr A Butler proposed a rate of 29.5p and this was seconded by Mr Edwards.

With two rate proposals, it was agreed that the proposal would be voted upon.

The rate of 29.5p in the £ which was proposed by Mr A Butler and seconded by Mr Edwards. Four members voted in favour, six against and one abstention.

The rate of 31.0p in the £ which was proposed by Mr R Blackhurst and seconded by Mr Clarke. Six members voted in favour, four against and one abstention.

With the majority voting for a rate of 31.0p, the rate was set at 31.0p in the £.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026. and were informed by the Clerk that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 50.29% and 49.71%.

RESOLVED

- i) That the estimates be approved.
- ii) That a total sum of £101,619 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.
- iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £51,108 and £50,512.
- iv) That a rate of 31.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.
- v) That a Special Levy of £50,512 be made and issued to Huntingdonshire District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.
- vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies referred to in resolution v).
- vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.
- viii) That MLC be instructed to carry out a level survey on Mr Edwards' land.

B.1463 Middle Level IDB Change

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	14
Meeting:	RAMSEY UPWOOD & GREAT RAVELEY IDB	Subject:	MIDDLE LEVEL IDB CHANGE
Date:	Friday 30 th 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 data. Collectively we need to add the operational view and Middle Level knowledge to focus and scope the next stage of detailed design.
- 3.2 Having reviewed the draft outline design report the working group debated the outline options and despite a range of differing views, they suggest that:
 - a) The option of one or two IDBs is not progressed to detailed design as it was felt that this would create an entity that is too big and would arguably be as cumbersome to govern and service as the existing model. There is little appetite for becoming the largest IDB in the country.
 - b) Options for five or six IDBs are not developed, supporting the view and rationale presented within the report (Section 7).
 - c) Options for three and four IDBs are progressed to detailed design.
- 3.3 Alongside seeking the views of IDBs via this paper the working group suggested that an online form be made available for individual Board Members to also submit their views and that in parallel to this engagement we write to the following seeking their view and steer:
 - a) Local Authorities, including Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)
 - b) Environment Agency
 - c) Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC)
 - d) Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)
 - e) Defra
- 3.4 Questions for IDBs to consider and feedback via the Chairman to the MLC Chief Executive by close on Friday 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 <i>eg specific boundaries, differential rates, ringfencing accrued budgets, operational districts, employee and the service delivery model.</i> Which of these is most important to you and why? Have you any specific issues or observations you would like to be assessed?
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)

Mrs Martin referred to the Clerks Report relating to the Middle Level IDB Change and updated the Board on the process to date. Mr Clarke asked why this was being driven forward now, and Mrs Martin advised that the Boards within the Middle Level Catchment are as strong as their weakest link and that Boards need to be aware of this and plan for the future. Mr Blackhurst said that all Boards need investment that they cannot afford. Mr A Butler thought that this Board is better as a small enterprise and that they should keep themselves to themselves. He asked if amalgamation is viable. Mr Wagstaffe thought that amalgamation with a neighbouring Board would be viable, but Mr A Butler thought that this would only help with management fees and not with the work of the Board.

The Chair thought that going forward there will have to be some amalgamations but would prefer to see these kept smaller. Mr Blackhurst added that the Board need to make their decision with consideration and not just making changes for the sake of it. Some questions were asked of this Boards constitution, and the Board asked the Clerk to clarify the Boards constitution at the next meeting.

The Board reviewed the questions and provided their answers which would be fed back to the Clerk as requested. However, the Board recorded that they do not believe in the process and are not happy to provide a financial contribution towards the detailed design report.

RESOLVED

That no contribution be made by the Board towards the cost of developing the detailed design.

That the Clerk clarify the content of the Boards constitution at the next meeting.

B.1464 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Board be held on 9th January 2026 at 2pm at the Old Nene Golf Club, Ramsey.

B.1465 Any Other Business

With no other items being raised by the Board, the meeting was closed at 4.15pm.

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Chair

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Date