WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Waldersey Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Middle Level Offices, March on 18th June 2025.

PRESENT

N Harrison (Chair)	A Miscandlon (FDC)
M Mottram (Vice-Chair)	B Wales
M Humphrey	R Young
H Lankfer	

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk and Mr Morgan Lakey (MLC Operations Engineer) representing the Chief Engineer was in attendance.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed Ms Sallyanne Jeffery from the Water Management Alliance to be the meeting, who was attending as a guest.

Apologies for absence were received from S Flint and P Hayes.

B.1313 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.

The Chair and Mr H Lankfer declared interests as contractors carrying out works for the Board.

The District Officer declared an interest in any matters concerning and payments for the services of District Officer.

Mr Miscandlon as a Middle Level Commissioners Board member declared an interest in any matters concerning Middle Level Commissioners, and in all planning matters as a member of Fenland District Council.

The Chair, Mr Miscandlon and Mr Wales declared interests (as members of Hundred of Wisbech IDB) in any matters concerning Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

B.1314 Minutes of last meeting and

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 19th June 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.1315 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

B.1316 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 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. There are currently **2** vacancies
D. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
E. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
F. 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		5
Actual	9	2 FDC	11	
Vacancies	3		3	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
	Bernard Darlow	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr P Lankfer)	Resigned from the Board 27/1/2025
1	Samuel Flint	Nominee of Ratepayer (J S Flint & Son)	
2	Nigel Harrison	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr P Lankfer)	Chair
3	Paul Hayes	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr P Lankfer)	
4	Henry Lankfer	Nominee of Ratepayer (W H Lankfer & Sons)	
5	Andrew Lensen	Nominee of Ratepayer (AG Reserves)	
6	Michael Mottram	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr P Lankfer)	Vice-Chair
7	James Smith	Ratepayer	
8	Rebcca Young	Nominee of Ratepayer (Waldersey Farms Ltd)	
9	Ben Wales	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mr P Lankfer)	District Officer
10			
11			
12			

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	Michael Humphrey	FDC	Councillor
2	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
3			Councillor

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	19/6/2024	11/3/2024	12/10/2023	21/6/2023
	Bernard Darlow	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
1	Samuel Flint	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
2	Nigel Harrison	Present	Present	Apologies	Present
3	Paul Hayes	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Apologies
4	Henry Lankfer	Present	Apologies		Present
5	Andrew Lensen	Apologies	Apologies	Apologies	N/A
6	Michael Mottram	Present	Present	Present	Present
7	James Smith		Apologies		
8	Rebecca Young	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
9	Ben Wales	Present	Present	Present	Present
10					
11					
12					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022	12/4/2022
1	Nigel Harrison	Apologies	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	19/6/2024	11/3/2024	12/10/2023	21/6/2023
1	Michael Humphrey (FDC)	Apologies	Present	Apologies	
2	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	Present
3					

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 Annual appointment of Chairman & Vice-Chairman

3.2 To consider filling of **3** vacancies

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.

4.3 Update on the amalgamation of Hundred of Wisbech & Waldersey.

5. Training

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

5.2 To date 0 of 12 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 5 of 12 Board Members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.

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

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

Author Name: Polly Tombleson
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Vacancies and Elections

Mrs Martin advised that there were three vacancies on the Board following the last meeting. Attendance by members at Board meetings was discussed, but the Board resolved not to take any action in this regard at this time.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Board agreed that Mr N Harrison be appointed as Chair of the Board. This was proposed by Mr Miscandlon and seconded by Mr Wales.

The Board agreed that Mr M Mottram be appointed as Vice Chair of the Board. This was proposed by Mr Miscandlon and seconded by Mr Harrison.

RESOLVED

That Mr N Harrison be appointed as Chair of the Board.

That Mr M Mottram be appointed as Vice Chair of the Board.

Banking Arrangements – Change of signatories

The Chairman reported it was necessary to update the bank signatories following his appointment as Chairman to the Board.

RESOLVED

That P Burrows, as Clerk to the Board, and Mr N Harrison, as Chairman, be authorised signatories of the National Savings and Investment Account in the name of 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.1317 Clerk's Report
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	5
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 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. MLC Services to IDBs

We have made the business decision to focus our clerking and technical services offer to IDBs within the Middle Level where there is water management connectivity with the Middle Level Commissioners' catchment.

The continued service offer to IDBs is contingent on their open-mindedness, support and leadership within the reform/amalgamation agenda, as this is needed to create a more sustainable medium- long term business model between the MLC and IDBs. It also contingent on IDBs taking active decisions to manage their risks appropriately to sustain and/or improve their health.

Therefore, the following eight IDBs have been provided with notice that our service offer will be discontinued:

- Bluntisham IDB
- Over & Willingham IDB
- Haddenham Level Drainage Commissioners
- Swavesey IDB
- Hundred Foot Washes IDB
- Hundred of Wisbech IDB
- Waldersey IDB
- Feldale IDB (administered by the Whittlesey Consortium of IDBs)

This covers all the services offered by MLC, i.e. clerking (admin, governance and finance), environment, M&E, planning & consenting, operations, survey, GIS and capital works.

The 'consultancy agreement' for clerkship services between the MLC and each IDB requires no less than 6-months' notice by either party expiring on 31st March in any year. Therefore, notice must be given by the end of September in any year. To provide each IDB with sufficient time to source alternative suppliers and to enable us to work with those suppliers and the IDB on a transition plan, the termination of services will come into force on 1st April 2026 at the latest. We will however conclude the year-end accounts and annual returns for 2025/26 which happens after 1st April 2026.

It is likely that there will be certain activities or pieces of work that may need to be continued beyond this date until a suitable milestone is reached. This will be agreed as part of a transition plan and a bespoke fee arrangement will be agreed for each of these.

Our service offer to Sutton & Mepal IDB and Manea & Welney DDC will continue given:

- The Old Bedford River interrelationship and potential future amalgamation with Upwell IDB.
- The Fens Reservoir proposal and Cranbrook/Counterdrain strategy may change the water management connectivity between these districts and the Middle Level Commissioners' system.

We are in discussion with Ramsey IDB with a view to taking on their clerkship.

We are refocussing because:

- There has been significant incremental change over the last 10-20 years in terms of IDB governance standards, financial requirements, health & safety, and environmental legislation.
- The scale of M&E and capital works is increasing as a generation of assets deteriorate and come to the end of their reliable life.
- Development pressures and the squeeze on Byelaws have intensified over the last 15 years.
- There is now much more of a need than in the past to work in partnership with a wider range of bodies across an increasingly diversifying suite of agendas.
- The active member inputs around many IDBs have reduced given the changes in farming and age demographic and some Boards are now struggling for attendance.
- The scale of strategic issues facing the Middle Level catchment has and will continue to increase exponentially and will require more focussed working with a broader range of partners locally, regionally and nationally than ever before (e.g. scale and impact of development, pressure on water resources, Fens Reservoir, scale of MLC capital works, impact of climate change on our system, lowland peat, environmental enhancement).
- We are not exploiting the opportunity to maximise sources of income beyond the drainage rate and special levy funding base.

All of the above means that MLC staffing resource is currently spread far too thinly and has been for some time. We consider that the organisation broadly has the staff capacity to provide a good level of service for the Middle Level Commissioners' responsibilities alone. Many staff are working well beyond their contracted hours to provide as good a service as possible for the MLC and the IDBs we currently have a service provision relationship with.

This all means that our service provision to IDBs is now having a direct impact on the delivery of the Middle Level Commissioners' responsibilities, therefore increasing their risks, liabilities and costs. The quality of service provided to all IDBs is also not where we feel it needs to be, which affects all IDBs.

The shorter-term measures to mitigate this are:

- Focussing our service provision
- Creating a new MLC Service Catalogue, including a review of fee arrangements, targeted improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and productivity.
- Introducing Key Health Indicators to better enable IDBs to manage their risks and enable comparison across the Middle Level.
- Targeted increase of staff capacity and use of 'bought in service'.
- Developing a 'case for change' in terms of IDB reform/amalgamation across the Middle Level (this needs resourcing).
- Ongoing amalgamation of March East & Euximoor IDBs and reconstitutions of Conington & Holme IDB and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB.

The medium-term measures to mitigate this are:

- IDB reform/amalgamation across the Middle Level, including a review of the business model between the MLC and IDBs.
- Increasing and diversifying income, including a review of our charges associated with planning and consenting.

In terms of developing a new catalogue and associated fee structure, this is underway but not yet as developed as hoped given workload challenges. New staff are also bringing a new perspective to this. There are a few significant gaps in service provision emerging that need to be explored with the IDBs and would require resourcing (finance and people) and training. These include:

- Consent compliance

- Enforcement (inc complex cases and legacy issues)
- Major development and sites of concern (inc, multi-agency working)
- Authorisations and powers of entry
- Proactively formalising land registry, easements and agreements
- Communications and engagement

To ensure no conflict of interests within our service provision to IDBs, we will not undertake private work for ratepayers, landowners, developers, or any prospective consent applicant. It is particularly important that ratepayers' and Board Members understand and respect this position within any works they plan or are involved in that may need consent from the IDB or MLC. This will support Board Members in managing their own conflict of interest and within their code of conduct. There may be exceptions to this that will need to be reviewed and agreed between the MLC Chief Executive/Clerk and IDB Chairman.

2. The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fens

As previously reported to the MLC Board and IDBs, on 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 was identified to draft an initial case for change. 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 of the discussion:

- Change is not new within the Middle Level and there has been ongoing evolution of IDBs.
- We need to locally design and drive future change, proactively taking control of our own collective future. IDBs are the decision makers.
- We need to agree what we need to look like in 5-15 years to be sustainable and efficient for the subsequent 25 years.
- Do Nothing and Do Minimum (continued incremental change) are not considered as options as amongst other risks they increase the likelihood of reform being directed upon us.
- The scope is to develop options and then identify a preferred option for the future IDB model of IDBs within the Middle Level catchment ie where we have two tiers of land drainage.
- Similar discussions are happening elsewhere and currently the new government is in supportive and listening mode. We need to develop our approach very much with the Minister (plus Defra and Environment Agency) not for the Minister.
- We risk becoming more of an anomaly if other IDB landscapes drive reform and we do not.
- Amalgamating IDBs into the Middle Level Commissioners or becoming one very large two tier IDB has been ruled out and will not be recommended to the MLC Board (see below for rationale).
- We think options for one, two, three, four and maybe five IDBs need to be developed to an outline design stage. The management and operational delivery model may change for each of these.
- Any preferred option would need to ensure and ideally enhance value for money and make sense from a business point of view.
- Private Districts are an added complexity that ought to be considered within a detailed design phase, once a core IDB preferred option has been determined.
- There is a recognition that additional resources are needed to develop and deliver a case for change. IDBs will need to make a provision/contribution for this and in doing so increase the likelihood of securing funding from others. Seed funding to get us moving is needed ahead of asking 24 IDBs for funds.

- There is a recognition that implementation of a preferred option would need to be resourced, managed and led as a change programme.

The Middle Level Commissioners, whilst having the responsibilities and functions of an Internal Drainage Board under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and Floods & Water Management Act 2010, have functions and responsibilities beyond a 'normal' IDB that are specified and catered for within a suite of primary legislation, predominantly the Middle Level Acts.

Amalgamating 24 IDBs into the Middle Level Commissioners would likely need new primary legislation and similarly becoming one large two tier Middle Level IDB (solely acting under the Land Drainage Act) would mean repealing a suite of primary legislation. Both approaches would be significantly more complex, costly time-consuming and controversial than recent experience with the Middle Level Act (2018) that introduced navigation licensing.

Repealing the Middle Level Acts and becoming a Middle Level IDB would mean new legislation and a new body would be needed to take over the MLC's navigation authority role (or the Environment Agency subsume these) and potentially our water transfer role. This would add unwelcomed additional complexity to water level management within the Middle Level given how the system and infrastructure serves and balances a variety of interests and is likely to be largely unsupported by many of beneficiaries of our system.

The next steps identified:

- Paul Burrows and Innes Thomson to pitch for seed funding from the Environment Agency's Fens2100+ programme. Paul Burrows to ask the MLC Board to consider a financial contribution at their meeting on 7th November 2024.
- MLC to then act as lead client bringing in local knowledgeable extra hands to develop the scoping and outline design. A scope for this will need to be developed.
- The ambition would be to present outline design options via IDB 2025 meetings. This ambition is subject to funding, resources and not having an exceptionally wet winter to contend with again.
- Working Group to meet again in January 2025 (dependent upon the above).

3. Electricity

3.1 **Electricity Service**

In terms of standing charge policy, our appearance on BBC Countryfile has contributed to ofgem consulting on a revised approach. They have no definite timescales as yet unfortunately but have reiterated that IDBs remain an important case study for them and one they will continue to raise with decision-makers within government.

A group made up of nominated IDB Chairs along with the MLC Chairman and Vice Chair reviewed the electricity contract. Having reviewed options, it was agreed by all to enter into a 12 month fully fixed, 100% renewable power electricity contract with EDF Energy, together with a service level agreement with Green Energy Advice Bureau (GEAB), who will manage the contract and validate invoices.

New Unit Rates are within the range of 21-29p. Following the last TCR in 2023/2024 the annual standing charges amounted to £155,662.32, these now stand at £130,467.61 before adding St. Germans, which at present equates to £49,122.50, being a total of £179,590.11, an annual increase of £23,927.79 across the portfolio. The St. Germans quote does not include the Targeted Charging Review (TCR) charges, which is not down to GEAB nor EDF, but a supplier wide decision due to the EH1V type of meter, which means suppliers will charge the TCR as they are charged from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO).

We have been advised that the standing charges will continue to increase due to the TCR charges as these are going up year on year. The DUoS (Distribution) and TNUoS (Transmition) charges are set each year, and this is the distribution and transportations costs and will be affected by such things as oil prices and demand for dealing with Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) shipments.

4. Charging for Planning & Consenting

As previously reported, we have for a long time been reactive and had insufficient resources to cater for the amount and range of planning and consenting workload for the Commissioners and IDBs with an inability to step back and identify and implement improvements. Our reputation has suffered, and we receive regular complaints.
With new leadership capacity and capability within Technical Services, we are now in a healthier position to identify and drive improvements. A key foundation of improvement is a review and implementation of our charging approach for developers and consent applicants. We have identified that we are significantly out of sync with neighbours and have likely been missing out on substantial income over many years. This is income that could in part be reinvested into developing our capacity and capability to improve our service, as well as contributing to asset improvement budgets.

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

5. Rating

As previously reported the Water Management Alliance's (WMA) support for their rating software (DRS2005) which we use to manage and issue circa 4000 drainage rates on behalf of the Commissioners and administered IDBs will be discontinued on 31 March 2025. ADA subsequently decided not to lead on the redevelopment of DRS.

The WMA have re-written DRS for their members IDBs in Access 365, which will be made available for other IDBs to use under licence. This software is known as DRS365 and runs on their Terminal Server, which will be securely operated, maintained and supported remotely.

Upgrading to DRS 365 (the software licence, training and transitioning work) will cost circa £10k per site (ie covering MLC and our administered IDBs) and the annual support charge will be circa £5k per site. This covers their costs and provides a more robust, sustainable and better supported system than we currently have, reducing risk to MLC and our administered IDBs. These costs will be reviewed next on 1 April 2025 and annually thereafter. The existing DRS2005 maintenance fee is £1k per annum.
The only other options we have would be to create our own software (which is impractical) or revert to a paper-based system (which would be a retrograde and resource intensive step). In these circumstances the WMA would offer a year extension to the DRS2005, hosted on their server, but at our risk should Microsoft decide to turn off the Access 2003 platform upon which the existing DRS is dependent.

6. Debt Management

Having had limited success with previous bailiffs, we are trialling a new approach to debt management. We have issued a suite of legacy drainage rate and developer charges debt held by the Commissioners and some IDBs to Glenwood debt management company. They operate on a no win no fee basis, and if they prove successful there is opportunity to issue them cases much earlier on in the process, at non-payment stage. This could be significantly more efficient in terms of staff time and hopefully more effective.

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

A formal appeal to the Minister under Section 57 (4) of the Land Drainage Act 1991 was thankfully narrowly avoided in 2024/25 given that the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal

Committee (RFCC) agreed a one-off approach to covering the shortfall in the Environment Agency's budget to ensure highland water claims (HWC) to local IDBs were met.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Insurance

Our insurance has been arranged using Towergate insurance brokers for the year to 31*st* March 2025. AXA offered a 2-year extension of the tripartite agreement we had previously signed and this was accepted as they offered to keep our business combined policy premium at the same rate for 2025-2026, subject to there not being any changes to the existing cover, i.e. increase in valuations.

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

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

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

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. It is intended that Recovery and Enforcement will form part of the new model.

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.

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 Clerk's report be approved.

B.1318 Transfer of Service Provision
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**5a**
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**TRANSFER OF SERVICE PROVISION**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows** **Clerk to the IDB and MLC Chief Executive**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Confirm their approval of their future service provider arrangements by minute at a quorate board meeting.

B. Review and approve the resolutions in Section 3 of this paper to enable the effective transfer of services to the nominated future service provider(s).

1. Recap

1.1 In July 2024, the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) provided notice of a re-focussing of their service provision to local Internal Drainage Boards.

1.2 As a result, they issued notice to this Board that their service offer would discontinue and that the IDB would need to source an alternative service provider(s) to come into effect from 1st April 2026 at the latest. This covers all the services currently provided by MLC, i.e. clerking (admin, governance and finance), environment, M&E, planning & consenting, operations, survey, GIS and capital works.

1.3 The Middle Level Commissioners will conclude the year-end accounts and annual returns for the IDB for 2025/26, which happens after 1st April 2026. It should be acknowledged that there may be certain pieces of work or activities that need to continue after this date as part of a transition plan.

1.4 This Board have now confirmed that the following service provider(s) will be managing board affairs moving forward and they have agreed the service provider(s) relevant terms of engagement.

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

2. Transition

2.1 Transition arrangements are to be completed by the 1st of April 2026 and will include elements set out in section 3 of this report. MLC and new service provider will work together to deliver these throughout the 2025/2026 financial year.

2.2 A year end/start handover is preferable to an in-year handover. However, an in-year transfer of some aspects of service provision may be practical.

3. Resolutions

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

Ref	Theme	Resolution
A	Clerkship	That the position of clerk to the IDB transfer from Middle Level Commissioners to the approved future service provider at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date.
B	Finance	That the RFO from the approved future service provider be added to the Barclays Bank PLC Mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board. Once handover of Financial services is complete, then MLC staff are resolved to be removed from the mandate and authorisations. The Board also approve to change banks, if required, by the new service provider.
C	Finance	That the RFO from the approved future service provider be added as an additional administrator to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform and once handover of Financial services is complete, they will become the primary administrator and MLC staff are resolved to be removed as administrators.
D	Finance	That the position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to the IDB in transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners' Head of Finance to the RFO of the approved future service provider at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date. At this point the Board will need to adopt new Financial Regulations and Internal Controls.
E	Finance	That at the point of handover, the IDB are removed from the Middle Level Commissioners group banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC.

F	Finance	That the Middle Level Commissioners will finalise and submit accounts for 2025/26 and the IDB1 return.
G	Finance	That the preparation of 2026/27 budget estimates and rate assessment be developed by both parties, but any meetings and decisions made after the position of clerk has been handed-over be led by the approved future service provider. The issuing and collection of drainage rates for 2026/27 along with collection of past debt will be undertaken by the new service provider after handover of banking arrangements and the RFO role.
H	Finance	That the Board's internal audit services move from the Middle Level Commissioners' group arrangements with Whitings LLP to that as agreed with the approved future service provider as of April 2026.
I	Clerkship	That the approved future service provider provides a named person who becomes a shadow Data Protection Officer on behalf of the Board alongside the Lead Clerk of the Middle Level Commissioners and that both parties are considered as 'Data Handlers' on behalf of the Board who is 'Data Controller'.
J	Clerkship	Once handover of all data and information for all areas of service provision has been completed, then the person nominated in I above becomes the Board's sole Data Protection Officer.
K	Clerkship	That the Board authorise their 'Data Handlers' to transfer all relevant data and information, including personal data and any operational information held.
L	Clerkship	Authorise the approved future service provider to develop a shadow webpage for the Board and the removal of the MLC hosted webpage once clerkship services have transferred. At this point the Board approve to adopt their new supplier's Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure with the new supplier being the new public and partner point of contact for the Board at this point for all incoming/outgoing correspondence.
M	Clerkship	Other than the Board's Financial Regulations, Internal Controls, Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure, the Board's other existing policies will remain in place until new or adapted policies are proposed by their new suppliers.
N	Clerkship	That the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners Group insurance policy until they are included within their new suppliers' arrangements.
O	Clerkship	Where relevant the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners group approach to electricity contract arrangements (current contract ends Sept 2025) until they are included within their new suppliers' arrangements. The Board recognise this may be before or after 1st April 2026.
P	Governance	The Board will adopt the model Reserved Matters, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation of the new service provider from 1 April 2026.
Q	H&S	The IDB H&S lead and the new service provider will let the MLC know, if appropriate to the IDB, whether the current services of COPE Safety Management as advisors to the Board (within MLC Group arrangements with COPE) will continue or whether there will be a new approach. The IDB H&S lead will inform the new service provider of all details relating to any near miss, learning events, or other relevant Health and Safety related events or information pertaining to the IDB and its operation.
R	Capital Works	The MLC will provide transfer all details and IPR relating to capital projects and their management and admin underway or in a medium-term plan for the IDB and will inform the Environment Agency and DEFRA of the change of service provider where required.
S	Other Services	That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the approved future service provider to the transition arrangements (including timescales and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.

T	Finance	That payroll functions for the Board's employee will transfer and their pension arrangements will transfer from MLC to the new service provider. As the employee is employed by the Board and not the MLC, the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) – TUPE – does not apply.

4. Next steps

4.1 With resolutions in place, existing and approved future service provider(s) can undertake the transition and handover with confidence and with risk managed.

4.2 Timescales, handover dates and associated issues will be reported to the Chairman and tabled at future meetings of the Board. Special meetings of the Board may be required.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role:
Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners
Clerk to Waldersey IDB

Mrs Martin asked the Board to confirm their approval of their future service provider. The Chair advised that the Board intend to transfer to the Water Management Alliance from 1st April 2026.

Mrs Martin asked the Board to acknowledge that certain pieces of work or activities may need to continue after 1st April 2026. She advised the Board of the minor revisions made by the Hundred of Wisbech IDB, and the Board agreed with their thoughts. Mrs Martin advised that the year-end accounts and IDB1 would need to be completed by MLC, but that MLC and WMA would work together on the 2026/7 budget forecasting, and that items by exception would be presented to the Board on a case-by-case basis.

The Board were asked to consider the Resolutions as listed in the agenda document. They Board reviewed and discussed the resolutions. The Board agreed with all resolutions excepting item T which would not be included, and item S would be amended to include the word 'information'.

RESOLVED

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

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

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

A That the position of clerk to the IDB transfer from Middle Level Commissioners to the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date.

B That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added to the Barclays Bank PLC Mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board. Once handover of Financial services is complete, then MLC staff are resolved to be removed from the mandate and authorisations. The Board also approve to change banks, if required, by the Water Management Alliance.

C That the RFO from the Water Management Alliance be added as an additional administrator to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform and once handover of Financial services is complete, they will become the primary administrator and MLC staff are resolved to be removed as administrators.

D That the position of Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to the IDB in transferred from the Middle Level Commissioners' Head of Finance to the RFO of the Water Management Alliance at or as close to 1st April 2026 as possible and the provision of clerkship services begin from that date. At this point the Board will need to adopt new Financial Regulations and Internal Controls.

E That at the point of handover, the IDB are removed from the Middle Level Commissioners group banking arrangements with Barclays Bank PLC.

F That the Middle Level Commissioners will finalise and submit accounts for 2025/26 and the IDB1 return.

G That the preparation of 2026/27 budget estimates and rate assessment be developed by both parties, but any meetings and decisions made after the position of clerk has been handed-over be led by the Water Management Alliance. The issuing and collection of drainage rates for 2026/27 along with collection of past debt will be undertaken by the Water Management Alliance after handover of banking arrangements and the RFO role.

H That the Board's internal audit services move from the Middle Level Commissioners' group arrangements with Whitings LLP to that as agreed with the Water Management Alliance as of April 2026.

I That the Water Management Alliance provides a named person who becomes a shadow Data Protection Officer on behalf of the Board alongside the Lead Clerk of the Middle Level Commissioners and that both parties are considered as 'Data Handlers' on behalf of the Board who is 'Data Controller'.

J Once handover of all data and information for all areas of service provision has been completed, then the person nominated in I above becomes the Board's sole Data Protection Officer.

K That the Board authorise their 'Data Handlers' to transfer all relevant data and information, including personal data and any operational information held.

L Authorise the Water Management Alliance to develop a shadow webpage for the Board and the removal of the MLC hosted webpage once clerkship services have transferred. At this point the Board approve to adopt their new supplier's Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure with the new supplier being the new public and partner point of contact for the Board at this point for all incoming/outgoing correspondence.

M Other than the Board's Financial Regulations, Internal Controls, Privacy Policy and Complaints Procedure, the Board's other existing policies will remain in place until new or adapted policies are proposed by the Water Management Alliance.

N That the Board will remain within the Middle Level Commissioners Group insurance policy until they are included within the Water Management Alliance arrangements.

O Not adopted

P The Board will adopt the model Reserved Matters, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation of the Water Management Alliance from 1 April 2026.

Q The IDB H&S lead and the Water Management Alliance will let the MLC know, if appropriate to the IDB, whether the current services of COPE Safety Management as advisors to the Board (within MLC Group arrangements with COPE) will continue or whether there will be a new approach.

R

The MLC will provide transfer all details and IPR relating to capital projects and their management and admin underway or in a medium-term plan for the IDB and will inform the Environment Agency and DEFRA of the change of service provider where required.

S That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the Water Management Alliance to the transition arrangements (including timescales and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.

T That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the board are authorised to agree with the MLC Chief Executive and/or Chief Engineer and the approved future service provider to the transition arrangements (including timescales, information and fees) associated with the transition of M&E, Environmental, Planning & Consenting, Capital Works and other Technical Services.

B.1319 Environment Officers' Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY IDB**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the updated Environmental Services Package will take effect from April 2025.
B. Be informed that an environmental review and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) update meeting has taken place and the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and polices are being drawn up for acceptance. Please make interim provision for the new BAP to be reviewed, agreed and adopted prior to the next Board meeting.
C. Note that the new Hedgerow Regulations 2024 prohibits the cutting of any hedge growing on agricultural land between the 1st March - 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 <u>minimum statutory environmental compliance</u>. The details of the new package are set out below:

Environmental Services Package

Ref:	Category:	Details:	Days Equivalent:
1.	**General Consultancy** *(inc. retained service)*	Up to 2 days general consultancy which can be used for: • Screening and assessment of non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process. • Preliminary habitat and species surveys & reporting* • Ad-hoc advice and guidance. • Initial advice & communications for pollution incidents • INNS identification and advice.	**2**

		• Biodiversity Action Plan BAP ditch survey & reporting**	
2.	**Environmental Compliance Health Checking**	• One environmental review with MLC Env. & Ecol. staff per year & subsequent reporting. • Review must include budget setting & expenditure recording for reporting to Defra (IDB1). • Review & assessment of proposed annual programme of works prior to Board approval. • BAP report & review for Board.	**1.25**
3.	**Planning Ecology Services**	• Up to 1 day for consent applications advice & guidance^ • Over 1 day will be charged on a time and materials basis. This includes responses to Local Plans and Strategies on the IDBs behalf.	**1**
4.	**Keeping up-to-date**	• Communication of relevant updates in policy, legislation, regulation and best practice.	**1**
5.	**Training**	• Attendance for up to 2 candidates at 1 environmental training day per year.	**1**
Total:			**6.25 days p.a.**
Cost (2025/26)			**£2,375**

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

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

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

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

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

Benefits of a service provided by MLC

Our commitment is that our fees will remain not for profit and will be very competitive compared with peer IDBs and those of qualified external profit-making environmental consultants.
It is our intention that from 1st April 2025, the service package fees will be charged. For IDBs who also contract their operational services from us via Morgan Lakey, there will be a 16% reduction in fees, reflective of the efficiency gained from being able to integrate your environmental compliance procedures into our operational processes and communicate freely with your other service providers, taking the annual charge down to £1995.

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

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

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

- Assessment of all relevant consent applications on behalf of many IDBs to ensure their statutory duties in relation to the environment are discharged and evidenced. This sometimes includes site visits, meetings and reports. It also includes the development and publication of new pre-application environmental guidance for consent applicants, for all IDBs.

- Influencing and contributing towards national, regional and local policy and strategy development. This includes wildlife licencing, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, which IDBs have a statutory duty to consider, Local Plans, Fens Reservoir planning and Environmental Stewardship options which will benefit IDBs.

- New templates, processes and services available to all IDBs to help them deliver and evidence their environmental compliance in relation to non-routine works using the ESR (Environmental Screening Report) process.

- Development and launch of compliant standard operating procedures for routine works including flail mowing and desilting. Associated training provided to a number of IDB contractors.

- A retained ecological consultancy service (which you may have chosen not to use)

- Monitoring, influencing and communicating legislative changes that affect IDBs such as badger licenses and Hedgerow Regulations
- A scheduled environmental review and BAP refresh visit (the BAP is required to deliver an IDBs statutory biodiversity duty)

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

You may choose to benchmark this package against other service providers and opt-out. If so, please feel free to use the information above to secure comparable quotes. You will also need to bear in mind the following:

- The additional Board members responsibilities and associated training and expertise required to become an intelligent client in commissioning ecological and environmental services. You need to know what service you are asking for and what standards are required.
- Alternative suppliers will likely still require inputs from Middle Level Commissioners staff which will be billed at an hourly rate and liaising with alternative suppliers may impact the cost, timeliness and quality of other services we provide your Board.
- Alternative suppliers will need to consider how they invest in the IDB sector locally, regionally and nationally and the myriad of partnership activity there is within and around the Middle Level.

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

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

2) The Management of Hedgerows (England) Regulations 2024

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

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

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

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

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

3) Licensing of IDB works around badger setts.

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

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

5) **Water Vole Displacement Myth Busting**

   A number of recent, licenced IDB water vole displacements have taken place throughout the MLC area, which have enabled some of the DEFRA-funded improvement works to be completed. There appears to be some mis-information circulating amongst some IDBs around the need for and cost of water vole displacements which is causing some concern and confusion. To help all stakeholders to be better informed, we have produced a myth-busting document, attached as an Appendix to the Board report. We will also circulate a pamphlet summarising what activity, presence and timescales landowners and farmers can expect when a water vole displacement is taking place on their land along with the notice of entry for all future displacements to help to set expectations correctly. Please contact us should you have any further questions.

Author Name: Sofi Lloyd Role: Ecology and Environmental Services Manager

Water Voles - Myth Busting

1.	**Claim** - ***Water vole displacements cost a lot of money!*** **Fact -** Water vole displacements do add some additional costs to bank works but if MLC services are used, this is much less than some may think. It is most certainly an incalculable amount less than

	legal, financial and reputational costs if criminal proceedings were progressed in relation to a water vole offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.	
	Approx. cost of bank repair per 150m (no water voles):	
	£4,680 – 5,140	**£31-34** *per metre*
	Additional cost of MLC-progressed water vole displacement per 150m	
	£2,110 - £2,260	**£14-15** *per metre*
	Cost of using external consultants for displacement per 150m	
	£4,810 - £9,810	**£32-65** *per metre*
2.	Claim – ***Other IDBs and RMAs and farmers etc. just get on with bank work without surveying for or displacing water voles and they aren't getting into trouble.*** Fact – Other IDBs and RMAs do displace water voles under licence before bank works as our ecologists have worked with them to do so. Where bank works take place without water vole displacements, it is likely that no water vole have been found in the works area to displace. There are also an increasing number of investigations and prosecutions where water vole offences have been committed in areas of bank works.	
3.	Claim – ***If you are undertaking flood risk management work, you are exempt from needing to displace water voles as you are keeping land and property safe from flooding.*** Fact – Protected species legislation is law an no-one is exempt so routine and regular bank works must be undertaken compliantly. Urgent has a different legal meaning to emergency. Urgent works are those that require prompt action to resolve an expected but not imminent threat to public health and safety such as a bank slip. It is not likely that a repairing a bank slip after harvest to avoid damaging crops, that had originally occurred months previously will be seen legally as either an emergency or urgent works because sufficient time would have passed to allow for the works to be planned compliantly with a displacement if necessary. An emergency would be where an unexpected event requires immediate works to prevent or alleviate a significant threat to public health and safety, such as the sudden collapse of a bank and flood water threatening surrounding residential or developed areas. In an emergency it may be necessary to fix the problem first but be confident that you can provide evidence of threat to public health and safety to the Regulator as soon as possible after the works, as is legally required. The emergency declaration must always be made in partnership with a range of professionals including an ecologist.	
4.	Claim – ***You can't do any bank works or maintenance where there are water voles anymore.*** Fact – There are safe standard operating procedures that allow routine work such as desilting and flail mowing to be undertaken compliantly where there are water voles which help to avoid or minimise the risk of committing an offence. Any invasive work that breaks ground on the bank toe or bank face should be informed by a water vole survey, undertaken in the right season, well before works begin. For small areas of impact, for example a field drain or headwall installation, of a metre or so wide, it may be possible to reposition the works away from burrows under ecological supervision so a licenced displacement is not required. For longer lengths of bank impacts such as culvert installation or bank reprofile or repair, if a survey showed that water vole were present a displacement under licence would be required.	
5.	Claim - ***You can get rid of water voles to avoid the need for a displacement if you flail all the banks and marginal vegetation before a survey or dewater a channel.*** Fact – Dewatering a channel where water voles were known to be present is a licensable activity could be classed as an offence if it were not for specific and very short-term purposes or where a	

	survey had not taken place to determine their presence or absence. Cutting bankside vegetation alone would be unlikely to displace water voles but could be classed as an offence if it damaged burrows or disturbed water voles in their burrows.
6.	**Claim –** ***If you fix a bank slip straight away it is unlikely to require a water vole displacement.*** **Fact –** A survey would still be needed but it is likely that water vole burrows would have been destroyed or damaged during the slip in many cases and they may have therefore left the damaged areas. If the survey proved this to be the case, then the slip could be repaired as usual without the need for a licenced displacement.
7.	**Claim** – ***Water voles are still in our ditches and we have done bank works before without displacing them so it can't bother them that much.*** **Fact –** Regardless of this, damaging water vole burrows or disturbing them in their burrows is unlawful and carries a custodial sentence and/or a fine if found guilty. The law is based on huge volumes of scientific evidence which demonstrates that habitat damage and loss is a key factor in the drastic decline in water vole populations. The displacement approaches are shown to conserve and enhance water vole populations.
8.	**Claim -** ***You can only repair one 150m length of bank where there are water voles.*** **Fact -** The IDB water vole licence states that you can only legally displace from 150m at a time when you are displacing from both banks. You have to leave a 150m bank length for refuge in-between repaired sections. If only one bank is being repaired, theoretically you could displace from an unlimited length but only if an ecologist calculated that the opposite and adjacent habitat was suitable to take an increased number of water vole from the impacted area, which in most cases is unlikely. The usual maximum licensable displacement length for IDBs in all cases is 150m.
9.	**Claim** ***– You can only displace water voles during a few specific weeks of the year.*** **Fact –** This is true as licenced displacements during these weeks are shown to impact the water vole population the least and it avoids their dormant and breeding seasons. Displacement licence periods are from 15th Feb-15th April or 15th Sept to 31st Oct. You can also only survey for water voles between 15th Feb to 31st Oct as they are dormant during winter.
10.	**Claim** ***– It is best not to tell anyone that you have water voles as they can stop you doing the work that you want to do, and don't allow surveys*** **Fact –** It is assumed that water voles are everywhere in IDB ditches and drains so a survey would always be required ahead of any invasive works. Demonstrating transparency and competence in supporting biodiversity is likely to be attractive to potential funding partners and sources whereas having a lack of biodiversity data and evidence or being evasive can be conspicuous and can attract scrutiny.
NOTE! Water Vole displacement are only needed where there are water voles! If a survey shows they are not, then bank works can go ahead.	

Mr Lakey referred to the Environment Officers Report and advised the Board on the updated Environmental Services package. The Board accepted the increase in fee as detailed in the report.

He advised that the BAP meetings have taken place, and the report is currently being updated. He drew the Boards attention to the changes in the Hedgerow Regulations and advised the Board that the Ecology Team can now check if any works affecting trees may impact on bats. He reminded the Board that any non-routine maintenance works will require a survey before works commence and asked 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 delay any works, with further displacement works likely to be required. Mr Lakey referred the Board to the 'Water Voles – Myth Busting' part of the report. Mr Lakey also reminded the Board of their culverting policy, and that culverts should be seen as the last resort. Loss of habitat needs to be considered when installing any culverts.

Mr Wales added that it is easier to see slips at different times of the year, and not as soon as they occur. Mr Lakey said that the Boards are reliant on landowners to report these, as dealing with them as soon as possible after they happen can be hugely beneficial to the Board. Mr Wales suggested that the flail mowing contractors be advised of all of the information given, and the Chair agreed, asking the Board to spread the message.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Report be approved.

B.1320 Consulting Engineers' Reports
Viz:

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

1. Summary

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

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

2. Technical Services

2.1 Since Chris Bailey started as our new Head of Technical Services, we have been updating the catalogue of services which MLC could provide. Given the increasing frequency of complex cases where Boards consider there may be a need for regulation and enforcement dependent on the costs and benefits, we are reviewing and updating training, policies, and capacity to undertake enforcement and compliance regulation on behalf of the Boards we represent.

2.2 We are receiving an increased number of questions from developers ahead of planning applications/consent applications, with an expectation that we can provide the information freely.

We have completed the review of our charging model and have introduced a new charging model for answering these questions if applicants do not enter into a pre-app agreement.

Please refer to item 4 in the Clerks report.

The Board is asked to acknowledge this approach.

3. Summary of Key Planning Issues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The advantages and disadvantages of restoring the 5-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS).

2. Further supporting effective co-operation on cross boundary and strategic planning matters.

3. The LPA's need to understand, consider and acknowledge the impact of new development on their special levy and future funding requests under Defra's Partnership Funding Policy. Under this policy housing built or converted after January 2012 is **not** included in FCERM government grant in aid calculations.

4. The need to consider the adoption of appropriate measures that consider the whole water cycle process such as rainwater harvesting and the re-use of as much water as possible.

5. The need for bodies involved in the planning process but which are not LPAs to be provided with suitable compensation, benefit and other incentives for contributing to and enabling the aspirational growth and local economy.

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

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

C. The impacts of growth and climate change and the need to revise nationally accepted design standards.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Policies and processes are being reviewed and updated.

4. Strategic Issues

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

4.1 **Fenland District Council**

Fenland District Council Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report Consultation

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

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

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

The SA Scoping Report is the first stage in the SA process. Through an assessment of the current situation in Fenland, the SA Scoping Report identifies which issues need to be addressed and identifies objectives to test the Plan and policies against. This assessment will help to establish the Issues, Vision and Objectives of the emerging Local Plan.

The document is primarily aimed at Historic England, Natural England and The Environment Agency but comments are welcome from any organisation or individual.

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

4.2 **Cambridgeshire County Council**

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

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

a. Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Programme

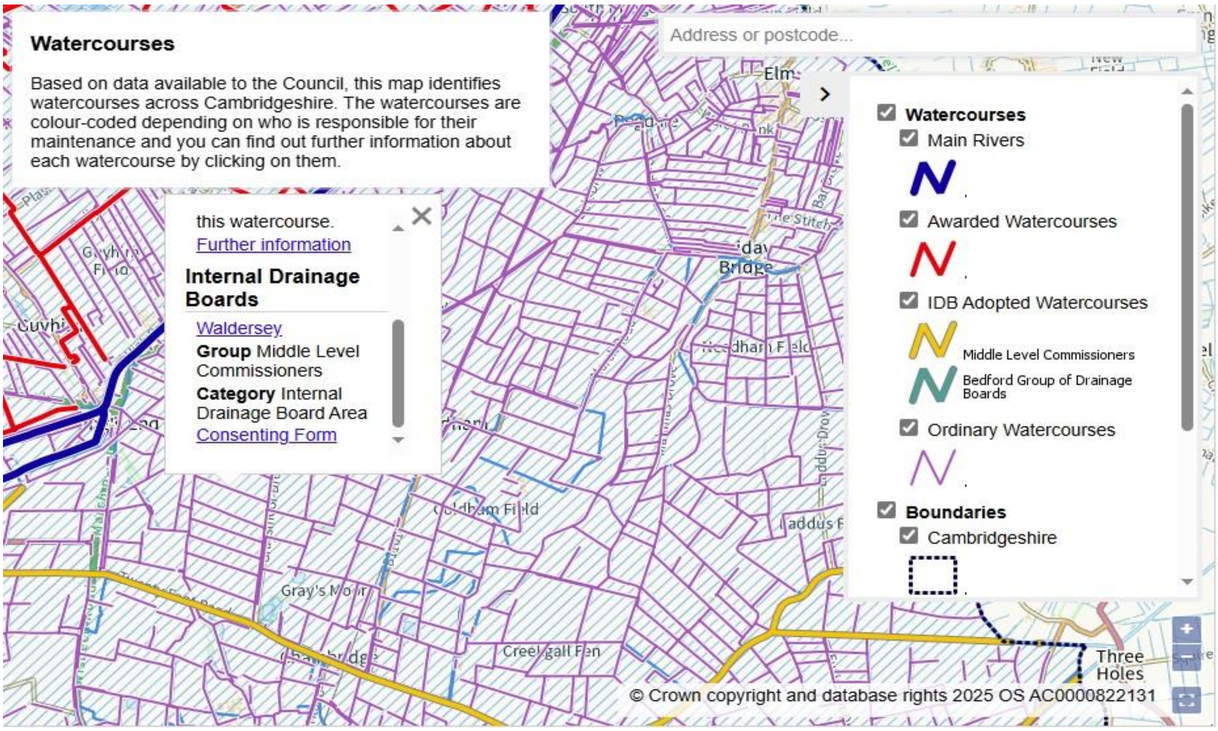
Given that a year has passed since the workshop and no meaningful correspondence or outcomes appear to have been received, the Commissioners requested an update on this programme. However, it is understood that these sites are included in the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy: 2024 Action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

b. Community Flood Action programme

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

c. Watercourse Mapping Tool

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



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

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

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

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

> *"Progress has already been made against 54 of the 58 actions with 6 actions now having been completed. There are several obstacles that impede progress in some areas, these are outlined below. Despite that and the persisting wet weather conditions, headway has been made across most actions and by multiple partners.*
>
> *The importance of clear communication remains in focus, whilst the impactful action led by community groups and local landowners continues to provide positive results.*
>
> *There is still some uncertainty from external factors that influence the work we do. In response to this we take an adaptive approach so we can be prepared for the changing circumstances."*

5. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

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

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

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

6. Capital Programme

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

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

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

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

Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study

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

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

Capital Improvement Programme (2024/2025)

		PREVIOUS YEARS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
Rings End p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5,000.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.7	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	79.7
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Bank p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18,000.0	18000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	10.6	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	180.0	210.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping Plant Fund	12.4	6.6	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	109.0
Eel Regulations	Eel Regulation implications	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	15.0
Drainage Channels														
		27.7	**6.6**	**10**	**70**	**10**	**60**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**10**	**23,210**	**23,444**

Appendix 2

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

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

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

Appendix 3

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

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

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

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

Northern Area

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

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

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

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

Southern Area

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

Rifle Butts, reach 58-59

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

Fly tipping, Point 71, Graysmoor Drove

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

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

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

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

Northern Area

1. Machine cleanse

Reach 6-7-8-9-10	1700	m	@	1.50	2550.00
Reach 8-26-27	700	m	@	1.50	1050.00
Nettle Bank Spur Drain,					
Reach 16-17-18	500	m	@	1.30	650.00
Coldham Overstone Drains					
Reach 33-34-35-36-37	1000	m	@	1.30	1300.00
Reach 36-38-39-40-41-42	2000	m	@	1.30	2600.00
	Carried forward				**8150.00**
	Brought forward				**8150.00**

2. Provisional sum

Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance and bank reinstatement works	Item	Sum	800.00

3. Flail mowing of drains in Northern Area — Item — Sum — 5000.00

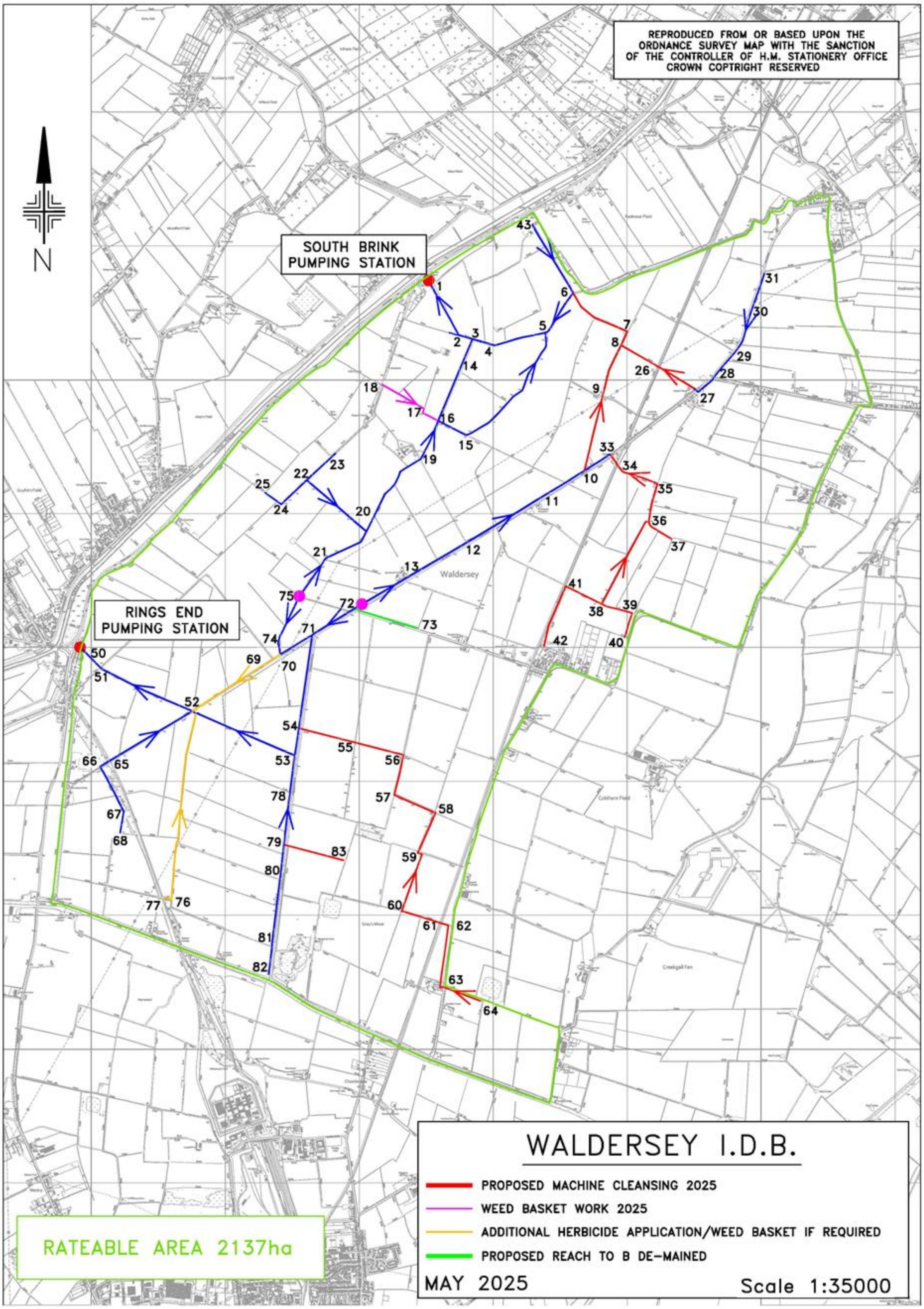
4. Allow sum for Roundup herbicide application — Item — Sum — 500.00

Southern Area

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

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

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager


REPRODUCED FROM OR BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE CROWN COPTRIGHT RESERVED
N
SOUTH BRINK PUMPING STATION
RINGS END PUMPING STATION
Waldersey
WALDERSEY I.D.B.
PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING 2025
WEED BASKET WORK 2025
ADDITIONAL HERBICIDE APPLICATION/WEED BASKET IF REQUIRED
PROPOSED REACH TO B DE-MAINED
RATEABLE AREA 2137ha
MAY 2025
Scale 1:35000

Appendix 4

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

1. M&E key messages and advice

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

Other than the matters described below or previously reported, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The stations, pumps and control panels are at an age where reliability is a concern.

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

1.1 Pumping Stations

1.1.1 ***Rings End***

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

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

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

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

The internal and external lights have been replaced with LED

1.1.2 ***South Brink***

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

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

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

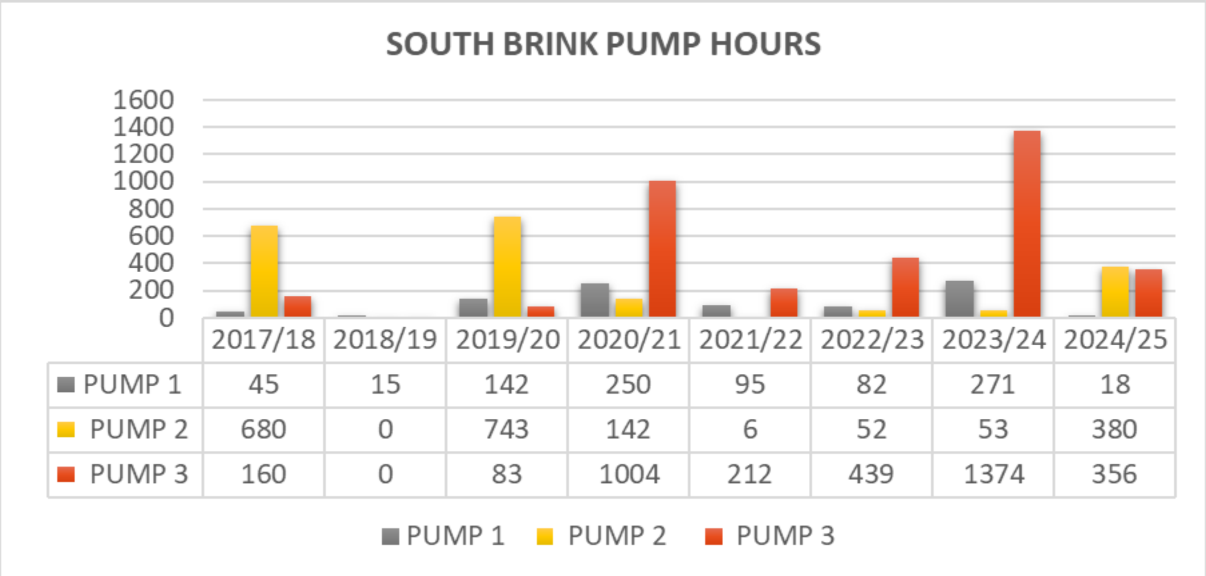
1.2 Electricity Readings

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

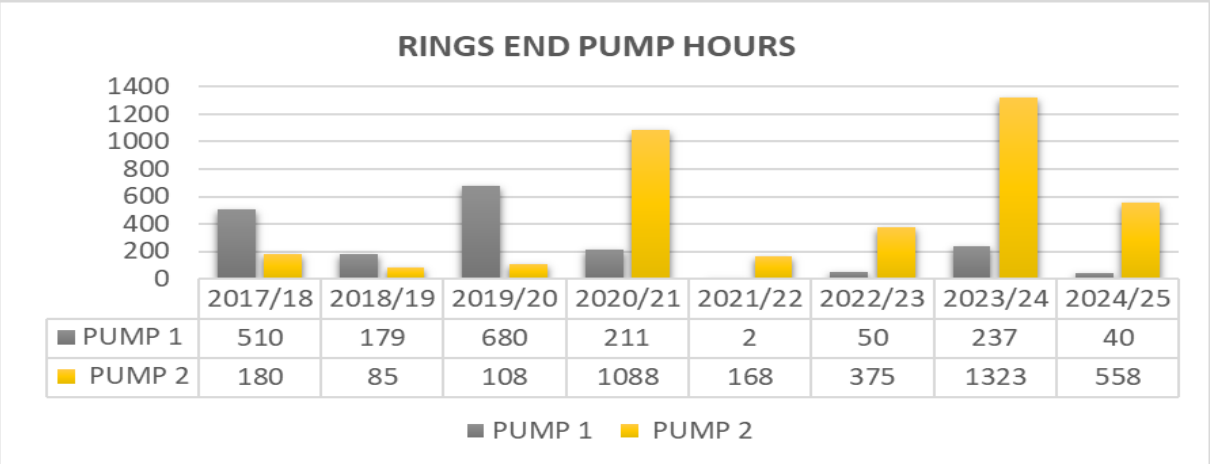
Last year we were able to successfully challenge 93000 kWh of incorrectly invoiced electricity; this would not have been possible without the manual readings.

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

2. Pumping summary



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
PUMP 1	45	15	142	250	95	82	271	18
PUMP 2	680	0	743	142	6	52	53	380
PUMP 3	160	0	83	1004	212	439	1374	356



	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
PUMP 1	510	179	680	211	2	50	237	40
PUMP 2	180	85	108	1088	168	375	1323	558

3. Inspections

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

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

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

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

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

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

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

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

Capital Programme

The Board were advised that any funding for works arising from the Catchment Study will need to be captured in the new Capital Programme. The Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study is continuing, and the Board's Works Committee remain actively involved.

The Board noted that the Capital Programme will be developed in conjunction with Water Management Alliance.

The Board acknowledged the report.

Operational Services Report

Mr Lakey referred the Board to his report. He advised that the shed at the Old Pumping Station site has been removed following a survey of the building and a protected species survey. The work was funded by Storm Recovery Grant funding, which also allowed for district wide drain maintenance to be carried out.

An inspection of the District has been carried out and shows the district is in good order. The Board reviewed the maintenance plans for the year as detailed in Mr Lakey's written report and acknowledged the requirement of a provisional sum for ongoing fly tipping.

A section of drain at Station Road, Coldham was discussed, shown as reach 72-73 on the Board's District Plan, and it has been established that this is a section of soak dyke which is not connected to the Board's system. It has been cleared recently, but it is unclear why this section had been adopted by the Board, and it would be unlikely to be of use to the Board in the future. Following some discussion the Board resolved to unadopt the length and remove from the Board's District Plan.

The Board's flail mowing was discussed, and the Chair and Mr H Lankfer both declared and interest and left the room. The Vice Chair took the meeting and lead the discussion. He advised that the prices received from the two contractors were £74/hr and £65/hr, which had created a much larger difference between the two than the previous year. Ideally the Board would like to have seen them both offer the same rate, but it was accepted that the Board did not know if the rates reflected the differing equipment and speed of work of the two contractors. After much discussion the Board agreed to split the work as the previous year, but on the understanding that records would be kept of when each reach was cut and how long it took to cut. The Board also agreed that they would advise both contractors that it would be likely that they would both be asked to tender for the works in the following year.

The Chair and Mr Lankfer returned to the room and were advised of the decision. Mr Lakey added that having a plan of what was cut and when it was cut would show the impact of the regime on the ecology, giving useful information to guide future cutting regimes. Mr Mottram explained that the Board have to be able to justify their decisions to the ratepayers, but that local knowledge cannot be undervalued although he would like to see the prices come together.

With no further questions from the Board on Mr Lakey's report, he advised that he would provide plans showing previous years maintenance works for WMA's use.

Mechanical & Electrical

Mr Lakey drew the Board's attention to the report. He advised that the Storm Recovery Grant funding allowed for works to be undertaken at both Rings End and South Brink pumping stations, and these were detailed in the written report.

Mr Wales was thanked for providing regular electricity meter readings.

RESOLVED

> That flailing services are to be provided by both HAC and P Lankfer Ltd.
>
> That the reports are approved.

B.1321 Health and Safety
Viz:

Cope
SAFETY MANAGEMENT

Site Safety Inspection Record

Waldersey IDB

Complete

Name of organisation:	Waldersey IDB
Date of site visit	12.02.2025 08:00 GMT
Address of inspected premises	South Brink Pumping Station Nettle Bank Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE14 0SA
Name of Advisor	Martin Clark
Time of arrival at site:	12.02.2025 09:00 GMT
Audit Name	Waldersey IDB

Audit

An opening meeting was held with

Ben Wales

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

1

South Brink pumping station was visited and no significant changes from the previous site visit were noted. It was understood that the damaged fencing is scheduled for replacement in due course.


Photo 1


Photo 2


Photo 3


Photo 4

2

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

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

3

The pumping station at rings end was sited and it was understood that a new hardstanding under the weed screen cleaner is planned as noted at para 2 several signs are showing significant weathering and it is recommended that these are replaced.


Photo 5


Photo 6


Photo 7

Photographic Risk Assessment

Advisor's signature

Martin Clark
16.02.2025 22:08 GMT

Departure time	12.02.2025 10:08 GMT

Photographic Risk Assessments closed out during the visit.

Nil

Number of outstanding Photographic Risk Assessments	0 From 0 to 99

Media summary

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

The Chair advised that following the visit by Cope in February, the biggest issue identified was with the damaged fence at South Brink pumping station. The Chair advised that he had tried to contact the people that had damaged the fence but had not been successful in securing a repair to date. It was agreed that the Board should arrange for the repairs to be carried out and then consider recovering the cost.

Mr Lakey asked if the Board would like HAC to carry out the works, or if they would prefer another contractor to do the work. The Chair declared an interest at this point. Mr Miscandlon suggested that HAC carry out the works and the Board agreed this would be their preferred way forward if Mr Harrison would accept the works, which he indicated he would.

Mr Lakey advised that the outstanding signage has now been delivered and that he would make arrangements with the District Officer for it to be fitted.

The District Officer advised that he was going to put in some hardstanding at the Rings End pumping station, and the chair advised that he has contacted the Gas company and has a meeting on 30th June to resolve the issues.

B.1322 District Officers Report

The District Officer gave a verbal report. He advised that he was really happy with the new rain gauges, and that they have been low maintenance and it has been interesting to see the differences between the two. He can also look at other gauges in the network. He only has to clean them on a yearly basis. The gauge at Lamb Weston also requires cleaning.
He has met with Morgan Lakey and Sofi Lloyd to carry out the Biodiversity Action Plan review, and that this will be passed on to WMA on completion as this will cover the next 5 years.
He has spoken to Dave Bantoft (MLC) and Matthew Philpott (WMA) and is keen for MLC to provide M&E services after the transition to WMA is complete. From a Board point of view he felt it would provide the best outcome for the Board. The Board agreed with this approach.

The Chair asked about the proposed start date for flail mowing, and Mr Lakey advised that this should not be before 15th August although some areas could potentially start earlier which could include gravel based areas, but these could not start before 15th July. The Board agreed not to make any changes to the plan from the previous year, but to review next year if needed.

RESOLVED

That the Board wish for MLC to continue with the M&E Service provision after 1st April 2026.

B.1323 Governance

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**10**
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the Internal Audit Return for 2023/2024
B. Consider and approve the Auditors Report for 2023/2024
C. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
D. Consider and approve of authorised officers for operational/regulatory roles
E. Consider and approve resolutions regarding new Responsible Finance Officer
F. Review and approve the updated Policies included as appendix.
G. Review & approve their updated Policy Statement
H. Consider and approve the Data Protection Officer
I. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
J. Note the system of financial Internal Controls that are in place and consider whether additional controls are required within the running and decision making of the Board.
K. To review and approve the publishing of Exercise of Public Rights
L. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments
M. To note and approve the submission of the IDB1 return made on its behalf to Defra.
N. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2025 and authorising the Chairman and Clerk to sign the statement.

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

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

1.2 The Board/Commissioners to consider:

- the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2024. (Appendix 1)
- the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2024. (Appendix 2)

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

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

2. Internal Controls & Banking

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. Authorisations

We have undertaken a review of how we enact our powers of entry and are introducing new identification badges for all MLC employees alongside training in conflict resolution and creation of a violence and aggression at work policy. Contractors working on our behalf are issued with a letter of authorisation. This is an approach that administered IDBs would also benefit from.

The Board are asked to confirm the stance that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

The Board are asked to confirm the stance that their Chairman, Vice Chairman, District Officer(s), pump attendants and employees (if applicable) are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Board's powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

4. Responsible Finance Officer

Robert Hill the MLC Treasurer leaves at the end of January 2025 and Andrew Wool has been appointed as MLC Head of Finance. There are a number of resolutions recommended to the Board to manage the transition and improve resilience, thus reducing risk to the Board.

The Board are requested to approve, that while there is a Service Level Agreement for the provision of clerking services in place between the Board and the Middle Level Commissioners:

i) That the role of the position of Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners is to include the appointment as Responsible Financial Officer to the Board.

ii) That the person appointed as Head of Finance for the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board.

iii) That the person appointed as clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and be authorised to sign cheques and to authorise payments on behalf of the Board.

iv) That the person appointed as Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners will be appointed as the administrator on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Middle Level Commissioners.

v) That following Mr Robert Hill leaving the employment of the Commissioners that the Head of Finance of the Middle Level Commissioners be delegated the authority to appoint a member of the finance team to be an additional administrator on the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Board.

5. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

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

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

WALDERSEY IDB
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATIONS

	As At 1st April 2025	
Rings End Pumping Station	2,000,000.00	
South Brink Pumping Station	2,000,000.00	
	4,000,000.00	Index linked

6. Policy Reviews

We have an ongoing review and update of policies. Within this we are also improving our management of Freedom of Information requests. The update to the Privacy Policy has identified some area of Data Protection that require further attention. It is timely to schedule a Data Audit, which will help to identify any further areas that require updating. Additional staff and Board/IDB training will be a likely result, along with some other strengthening of procedures across the business.

The Board are asked to note the update and re-publication of their Complaints Procedure and Privacy Policy.

The Board are asked to review and approve the publication of an Anti-Bribery (which includes the need to log offers of gifts and hospitality) & Financial Regulations policies (Appendix 3).

The Board are asked to review and approve their updated Policy Statement (Appendix 4)

The Board are asked to approve that the MLC Lead Clerk, currently Ruth Martin, acts as their Data Protection Officer and acknowledge that this role will be associated within the incumbent employee role of MLC Lead Clerk.

7. IDB1

7.1 Defra Reporting

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

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

In summary:

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

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

8. Annual Governance Statement:

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

9. Exercise of Public Rights

9.1 For completion of the Annual Governance Statement the Board is required to confirm that they provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

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

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

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

9.3 In addition, a notice of the conclusion of the external auditor's limited assurance review of the annual return, together with relevant accompanying information, has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. We also display the 'Local Authority Accounts – A Summary of Your Rights' with the notice.

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

10. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

10.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1	**Annual Return 2023/2024**
Appendix 2	**Audit Report 2023/2024**
Appendix 3	**Anti-Bribery & Financial Regulations Policies**
Appendix 4	**Policy Statement**
Appendix 5	**IDB1 2023/24**
Appendix 6	**Annual Governance Statement 2025**

Appendix 1

Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2024

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
Section 16 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015 /234)

1 The Audit of accounts for the Waldersey Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2024 has been completed and the accounts have been published.

2 The Annual Governance & Accountability Return including the auditor's certificate and opinion is available for inspection and copying by any local government elector of the area of Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
Waldersey Internal Drainage Board
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AH

between the hours of 9.00am and 4.00pm on Mondays to Fridays (excluding public holidays), when any local elector may make copies of the Annual Return.

3 Copies will be provided to any local elector on payment of £2.40 for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by: P Burrows - Clerk to the Board

Date of Announcement: 12th September 2024

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)*.	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes)*.	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
O. **(For local councils only)** Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 21/06/2024 24/06/2024 25/06/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: WHITINGS LLP

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: G. BEECH – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 25/06/2024

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

19/06/2024

and recorded as minute reference:

B. 1308

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

Chair

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	233,294	240,419	*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	74,851	98,579	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	33,054	95,643	*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	100,780	236,410	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	240,419	198,231	*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	200,805	251,104	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,545,000	2,545,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

Date 31/05/2024

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

19/06/2024

as recorded in minute reference:

B. 1309

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

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of **Waldersey Internal Drainage Board – DB0118**

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature PKF Littlejohn LLP Date 09/09/2024

Appendix 2

Whitings
Chartered Accountants LLP
Fenland House, 158 Hostmoor Avenue
March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AX
t: 01354 652304
e: march@whitingsllp.co.uk
w: whitingsllp.co.uk

BB/MM053
30 June 2024

Messrs. P Burrows, R Hill and S Ablett
Middle Level Offices
85 Whittlesey Road
March
Cambs.
PE15 0AH

Dear Messrs. P Burrows, R. Hill, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2023-2024

Having completed the internal audit work for the various Internal Drainage Boards administered by the Middle Level Commissioners officers for the year ended 31 March 2024, we are pleased to provide you with the following recommendations to be considered for implementation. We have included some general points and some points which are related to specific boards.

<u>**General points**</u>

1. **Asset Valuations and Insurances – mainly for residential properties.**

   It is noted that, whilst a large proportion of boards took the option to revalue for insurance purposes their pumping station and residential assets during recent years, there are still some boards that have not followed suit. We have seen elsewhere that such revaluations have sometimes resulted in significant uplifts in value, and as such we would suggest that any remaining boards that have yet to carry out such an exercise do so at the earliest convenience. It should be noted that this is largely in relation to residential property. Should a complete rebuild following an unforeseen catastrophic event be required, current valuations may no longer be appropriate given today's prices which may lead to a shortfall in funds which would have to be drawn out of surplus funds if other financial arrangements were not available.

   We would recommend that in the absence of specific information to the contrary suggesting need for earlier review, that a revaluation exercise be performed for insurance purposes at least every 5 years on all major board assets. This is especially important given the significant increase in material and labour costs seen in recent times as a result of rising inflation and global material shortages. However, we are pleased to note that boards are being asked whether they wish for insurance to be index linked going forward and would strong suggest that all boards agree to this proposal.

Client comment:

While we have put it to Boards to review pumping station valuations for insurance purposes, as separate statutory authorities it is up to each Board to review and approve what they consider to be an appropriate valuation and your point concerning possible under-insured amounts having to be funded directly by the Board following an event has been highlighted previously. We are recommending that Boards should look to index link valuations and we will continue in asking all Boards again to consider this at subsequent meetings, along with consideration of current valuations. Valuation of residential property is an area we have and will continue to focus on for future meetings.

A number of Boards have recognised the potential impact of increased costs on valuations and have taking steps to re-value, however, the consulting engineer is currently reviewing the methodology for valuation of pumping stations, to ensure there is a robust process, which will be then used going forward.

This is an area already programmed to be reviewed every five years and hopefully with indexing we may not require such individual valuations going forward.

2. Employee Benefits

Following HMRC's announcement that double cab pickups would be treated as cars rather than vans for benefit in kind purchases from 1st July 2024 this was swiftly reigned in following a backlash from affected parties, largely from the construction and agricultural sectors. Given the new Labour governments need to increase the tax receipts into the Treasury this could be a measure that is revisited and we would advise that you be mindful of any changes that arise in the forthcoming Autumn Budget, although nothing has been confirmed at this stage.

With regards to other employee benefits, we note that where applicable these are being recognised as benefits in kind and disclosed on the form P11d, we would encourage the value of these benefits to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that these are reflective of what the employee receives, especially where some boards providing the living accommodation to their employees.

Client comment:

We are aware of the case and potential implications to employees of classification of vehicles, and for this and other areas will be following the autumn budget closely. Generally, we do not make changes concerning additional passenger/load capabilities to that of the original manufacturer's specification, which are relied upon alongside the HMRC guidance when designating vehicles for taxation/benefits in kind.

The benefit charge for living accommodation is calculated in accordance with HMRC recommended valuations. We have started payrolling any standard benefits but are currently unable to do this for accommodation and use of vehicles.

3. Provisions

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

Client comment:

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

4. Budget figures

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

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

Client comment:

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

It is not policy to update budgets depending on levels of expenditure as there is no ability to increase revenue through rates and special levy once they have been set. The original budget is therefore used as comparative to analyse variances of actual expenditure against.

We have started to use a 5-year average for pumping volumes, calculating these against actual/anticipated electricity unit rates. For the 2024/2025 rate setting process we started to build in a 'climate change factor' into the 5-year average calculation, which will be refined for future years. While aware of the need to hold sufficient balances, this was highlighted during the 2023/2024 storm events and as well as having climate change awareness in the budget setting process Boards also were required to take steps concerning the reinstatement of balances depleted during the year.

It is intended to introduce a range of Key Health Indicators for all boards, part of which will be taking into account the impact of climate change on budgets and relevant level of balances required.

5. Surplus Funds

In previous years we have communicated the importance of investing cash assets that are not required to fund operational needs, to combat the erosion of these liquid assets through inflation. We are pleased to see that the organisation have taken heed of this advice and made a number of deposits with Barclays, in addition to discussing the potential pooling of cash resources with IDB's under their administration to gain access to higher rates of interest. Whilst inflation has now fallen back to 2%, the lowest level in nearly three years, it is important to continue to reinvest and "sweat" these assets going forward.

Client comment0:

We are currently making treasury deposits for individual Boards within the mandated authority given by each authority but need to manage this with specific cash flow requirements while also making consideration to having balances available for potential event situations requiring immediate cash. We will be monitoring additional staff time required to manage this while discussing matters further with our bankers.

6. Rental of Land

It was previously noted that some IDB's were renting out land to tenants at lower than market rate and that this should be reviewed to ensure value for money principles were being applied.

We are happy to note that some IDB's have increased the rental values of land to market rates, although there are still some IDB's where the rental value is significantly below market value and we advise that the market values are increased for these boards to ensure value for money principles are applied going forwards.

Client comment:

Boards which have land holding for rent generally review rents in accordance with tenancy agreements and use local land agents for guidance. A number of Boards have small holdings of land which are let at reasonable rates with a view to keep the land tidy and in good order as they are not necessarily commercially viable. A number of Boards have slamp land, which cannot be considered the same as general agricultural land for rental purposes. All Boards look to get the best rents available, but these are relevant to the size and type of land being let.

7. Financial Regulations

Last year we noted that the Financial Regulations were due to be updated by the end of the year, following a delay due to the retirement of the Chief Executive and appointing of the new Chief Executive/Clerk in February 2023. We are pleased to see that during 2024 the boards are reviewing and approving the updated Financial Regulations and Financial Code and look forward to considering this area during the course of the 2024/25 internal audit.

Client comments:

There will be a full review of the provision of clerking services and will be, as has been mentioned reviewing these regulations for presentation to boards for the 2025 meeting season.

8. Bank Transfers

We are satisfied with the accuracy of bank and cash balances and have successfully reconciled these to the underlying accounting records. We note that transfers between bank accounts are being recorded as movement per-month in the accounting records, on enquiry this was due to time constraints experienced within the finance department during the financial year. Whilst we are satisfied that reconciliations have been carried out manually correctly, we would recommend that all bank movements are fully reflected in the postings to the accounting software of the board.

Client comment:

Concerning audit point 5 – surplus funds, to maximise returns within the mandated authority with Barclays we are required to operate linked accounts, with receipts/payments being made from the standard current account. This account has a fixed balance which is adjusted following receipts/payments to it – surplus balances above the fixed limit transferred to the Business Premium account, deficit balances below the fixed amount transferred from the Business Premium account to the current account. These transfers are adjusted through the accounting software in relation to the statement frequency, with both accounts being fully reconciled – a credit in one account being matched with a debit in the other. Current staff resources do not allow for additional time to be spent transferring individual values, the net transfer for the statement being made – as we are doing this for around 28 accounts this currently provides the best value for money to the boards.

9. National Saving & Investment bank accounts

We understand that a formal complaint has been lodged with National Savings & Investments. Firstly in relation to the organisation and its administered entities desire to change the signatories on the investment accounts held with this organisation and secondly due to the fact that bank statements for the period to 31 March 2024 have not been received for the majority of boards. As a result interest receivable has had to be estimated, we have considered the estimations and are happy that these are reasonable by reference to the last received statement and the applicable interest rate. We look forward to reviewing the position in the 2024/25 financial year.

Client comment:

This was an unfortunate situation but to recognise the interest in the correct accounting period estimates were made. Differences between estimates and actuals will be adjusted through the 2024/2025 accounting statements.

10. Website Publication

We note that there has been, for a number of years, significant information available to the public. We note that for some boards the latest information does not appear to have been updated, for example the JPAG practitioner guide on the website across all the boards has not been updated since the 2018/19. An updated version of JPAG guide is made available each year.

The same situation related to the Annual Return Form (DEF-IDB1), which appeared have not been updated since year ended 31 March 2022.

We would recommend that all items are updated on the website for applicable boards as soon as practicable, or remove if regulations do not require such information to be published on the website.

Client comment:

Every effort is made to update the relevant pages of all authorities in an efficient and timely manner and in accordance with the regulations.

Your comment is noted and procedures are being amended concerning this for the future.

11. Outstanding old cheques and unreconciled transactions

We are pleased to note that the majority of old outstanding cheques and unreconciled transactions are being written off across all Board in the timely manner. However, there was the isolated cases where this has not occurred. We would suggest that concerted effort is made to ensure all old and unreconciled transactions are written off as soon as it is clear that such transactions will not be paid in or received.

Client comment:

Bank reconciliations should be looked at and cleared for older unpresented transactions, however, these will initially be transferred to debtor/creditor until their statutory standard life has expired. For 'house-keeping' these will be looked at as part of the year-end processes.

12. Fees for the service of District Officers and Pump Attendants

We have noted that not all boards are approving payment rates for the services rendered by District Officers and/or Pumping Attendant during the board meetings, instead approval is confirmed as a percentage increase, generally being in line with the Middle Level Commissioners award.

We appreciate that the board is approving the payment lists, where the amount is specified. However, we would suggest to include the amount to the discussion during the meeting and confirm the approved sum in the minutes as per prior years.

Client comment:

District Officer/pump attendants are contracted services and the boards are approving an amount for the provision of these services, however, the point is noted and the actual amount payable discussed at the meeting should be recorded in the minutes.

Specific Points

Nightlayers IDB

During our review it was noted that land sold during the year was not recorded on the fixed asset register. Our subsequent enquiries found that as the land was considered of minimal value individually this was included within the adjoining pumping station's valuation and was within the footprint of the old pumping station site. The consideration achieved is higher than would generally be expected due to its importance to a local developer.

We would suggest that you consider whether any other parcels of land held by administered boards could be sold in similar circumstances and if so, whether the valuation individually or as part of the overall pumping station valuation is appropriate.

Client comment:

While we are aware of these circumstances the Nightlayers position was rare. We will monitor sites which could have areas with potential for re-sale, substantial value can only be attached after developers make applications and this proves to be the only access. Unless these circumstances arise an uplift in valuation will not be possible.

Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB – Joint Pumping Arrangement

As in previous years it is noted that there is a discrepancy between debtor held in Waldersey IDB and the creditor held in Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

Waldersey IDB – Debtor	£92,912.67
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£93,919.96
Difference	**£1,007.29**

We are pleased to note that this difference is insignificant for the current year. The difference arises due to the accounts of Hundred of Wisbech IDB being completed before Waldersey IDB, leading to a provision being required in the former's books in the absence of more accurate information being available. The difference is adjusted in the following year's Accounts for Hundred of Wisbech.

We note that there have been discussions to potentially amalgamate the two boards, this would eradicate the anomaly. However, in the absence of this, we suggest that meetings and account preparation periods be brought into line, if possible, to eradicate this issue.

Client comment:

These costs relate to the contribution for the costs of the shared pumping facility and at the time of production of the year end accounting statements discussions were taking place concerning potential changes to the contribution as a result of changes in land use. A new proposal had been put forward which was broadly approved by both Boards.

There are no current plans to change meeting dates so as one set of accounts is finalised before the other there is likely to remain creditor/debtor position in both sets of accounts although now that all older balances have been cleared, any in-year balance should be cleared, generally a year in arrears.

At the 2024 meetings for both Boards amalgamation was discussed and both Boards have approved to enter into discussions concerning a potential amalgamation between the Boards.

March East IDB

During our review it was noted that the pumping station attendants' payments were not all authorised during the year. This included an additional payment to the Binnimoor pumping station's attendant following him taking over from the previous attendant. We understand following discussion with the board that this was the result of an error in the minutes as the fees' amount was not specified, but the payments were clearly approved by the board. We would suggest that the board considers their internal processes for ensuring the accuracy of minutes.

Client comment:

The services of pump attendant are carried out by contractors and the Board approves the payment for these services. Procedures have been looked at to ensure proper recording in the minutes.

Hundred of Wisbech

We noted that a parcel of land has been transferred to the board during the 2023-24 year with the attenuation pond, sized at approximately 1 acre. This land was estimated by the Chairman and District Officer to have a value totalling £5,000, a value approved by the Board. We have not been provided with any professional valuation or justification with regards to this valuation. We understand that the land cannot be used for development or agriculture, making it difficult to value due to the lack of specific use.

We understand that the consideration of land valuation has conducted after the year end and details should be included in the next published minutes related to June 2024 meeting.

We look forward to reviewing this in due course.

Client comment:

This area is designated as an attenuation pond, holding surface water to discharge at a controlled rate into the District System. The valuation takes into account its use and therefore limited value. In view of this and to maintain value for money for the Board it was agreed by the officers of the Board not to engage professional valuers.

Manea & Welney

During our review, it was noticed that the Debtors Report showed a significant unallocated amount of £1,456,606.99. Following discussion with the client, we understand that this is an isolated incident related to software issue and not down to the human error. We are satisfied that balance showing on the Debtors Report is correct and no difference was identified.

We take this opportunity to thank your staff involved in our audit for their assistance and cooperation in achieving substantial completion by the stated target deadlines. We trust that the engagement team have not caused significant disruption during the execution of their procedures.

Yours sincerely,

Whitings LLP

Whitings LLP

Appendix 3

And administered IDBs

Governance

Anti Bribery Policy

(includes gifts, hospitality & donations)

2024 - 2029

The Bribery Act 2010 is the legislation relating to bribery. Very generally, this is defined as giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so. This could cover seeking to influence a decision-maker by giving some kind of extra benefit to that decision maker rather than what can legitimately be offered as part of a tender process.

Government guidance summarises that it is illegal to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes – and highlights that organisations should have an anti-bribery policy if there is a risk that someone who works for you or on your behalf might be exposed to bribery.

An anti-bribery policy should be appropriate to the level of risk the organisation faces and should include:

- your approach to reducing and controlling the risks of bribery
- rules about accepting gifts, hospitality or donations
- guidance on how to conduct your business, eg negotiating contracts
- rules on avoiding or stopping conflicts of interest

Risk Assessment

The Middle Level Commissioners and administered Internal Drainage Boards are considered as at minimal risk of bribery given that business is undertaken almost entirely within the UK.

As there is very little risk of bribery being committed on behalf of the organisation it is considered that there is no need for extensive written documentation or policies.

The most likely area of MLC or IDB business with a bribery risk are outlined below and these already have adequate controls:

- Bribery by others to secure business from the MLC/IDB
- Bribery by others to secure regulatory decisions from MLC/IDBs
- Bribery by others to secure operational benefits from MLC/IDBs
- Bribery by MLC/IDB employees or MLC Board/IDB members of others to influence an advantage

Control Measures

- MLC/IDB Board Member declarations of interest and the application by the clerk of these within meetings and decision making.
- Boards, their delegated Committees and/or MLC employees as service providers making key procurement and regulatory decisions rather than individuals.
- Application and review of Internal Controls
- Within the MLC staff structure there are no procurement/regulatory decisions made without more than one employee being involved
- Application of Member Code of Conduct and employee performance and disciplinary procedures
- Offers of gifts, hospitality and donations to be reported to the Chief Executive/Clerk.

Gifts, Hospitality and/or Donations

Employees and members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing or seeking to do business with the MLC/Board or may be applying to the MLC/Board for some decision to be taken in his favour or someone with whom he is connected.

There are no hard and fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality or tokens of goodwill. For example, working lunches may be an appropriate way of doing business provided they are approved by the Chief Executive/Clerk and provided no extravagance is involved. In the same way it may be reasonable for staff/members to represent the MLC/Board at a social function or sporting event organised by outside persons or bodies. Persons attending such functions or events as part of an official MLC/Board delegation are exempt from the above registration requirement, providing their attendance has been approved by the Chief Executive.

Each member or employee is personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding risk of damage to public confidence. The receipt and detail of gifts and hospitality should always be reported to the Chief Executive/Clerk.

When gifts and/or hospitality have to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operated by the MLC/Board and told why hospitality cannot be accepted. This should be logged within the register in order to track any patterns.

Members and employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although the Board will allow members and employees to keep insignificant items of token value such as pens, calendars and diaries of an estimated value below £20. These insignificant items do not require recording in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Acceptance by members and employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where the member or employee is satisfied that any purchasing decisions will not be compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, supplies or services are required, employees and members should ensure that the MLC/Board meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

Procedure

MLC/IDB Board Members and Employees are required to log the offer and acceptance/rejection of a gift, hospitality or donation within the Gifts and Hospitality Register by emailing details of the offer to chiefofficers@middlelevel.gov.uk

Dealing with Bribery

Bribery committed by an employee will be considered a disciplinary issue and likely to be treated as gross misconduct.

Bribery or attempted bribery committed by a third party may lead to the termination of the business relationship.

Bribery committed by an MLC or IDB Member will be considered as a breach of the Member Code of Conduct.

Waldersey IDB

Administered by:

middle level commissioners

Governance
Financial Regulations 2025 – 2035

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

A SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

5. The Clerk shall advise the Board and carry out the Boards instructions in securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and for ensuring that value for money is provided.

6. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board's Financial Statements for each Financial Year ending 31 March are prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities and, so far as may be appropriate, the Practitioners' Guide to the Preparation of Financial Statements for IDBs (and any subsequent requirements) applicable at the time of preparation.

7. The Clerk shall ensure that the Board considers and approves its Financial Statements for a Financial Year in accordance with the provisions of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

8. All employees and members have a responsibility for health and safety, compliance with policies and legislation, procedures and codes of practice, for the general security of the Board's property, and, for economy efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

9. All members and employees shall familiarise themselves with and observe the Schedule of Reserved Matters, the Scheme of Delegations and these Regulations.

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

B SCHEME OF BUDGET DELEGATION

1. The Clerk shall be a budget holder and is responsible to the Board for the overall management of the Board's Finances, the Expenditure Estimates and all Budgets.

2. The Board's Consulting Engineer is responsible to the Board to the extent that he/she is so authorised by the Board and is allocated funds for the purpose of preparing and managing the Board's Capital Works Budget.

3. The Board's Consulting Engineer and/or the Chairman and/or the District Officer are responsible to the Board to the extent that they are so authorised by the Board and are allocated funds for the purpose of preparing and managing where applicable the Board's Maintenance Works Budget, the Plant/Labour Operating Accounts, the Plant Renewals Budget, the Stock Control Account and the Rechargeable Works Budget and any other matter in respect of which they are authorised under the Scheme of Delegations.

4. Other than as set out in the Scheme of Delegations or where authorised to do so by a resolution of the Board, no other person shall be empowered to enter contracts on behalf of the Board unless authorised to do so by a budget holder. Nor shall any other person commit the Board to a particular course of action or provide an undertaking or assurance to any third party without the prior consent of the Clerk and/or Responsible Finance Officer and/or the Chairman.

5. No budget holder other than the Chairman shall procure goods and services, charge, allocate or otherwise commit expenditure against a budget that they have no budgetary responsibility for.

C MANAGING BUDGETS & REPORTING

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for preparing the Board's Estimates/Budgets, for monitoring income and expenditure during the course of the year, for alerting the Chairman to any material variances, and, for providing budget holders with the financial information that they require and assisting them as necessary to enable them to properly prepare/manage their budgets. The Clerk shall further ensure that the Board are presented with and consider the proposed expenditure estimates in order that the Rates and Special Levies can be determined for each financial year in due time in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 and it is the individual budget holder's responsibility to provide him/her with their detailed budgets and supporting information in order that this may be done.

2. Any drainage rate refunds due for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.

3. All correcting journal entries shall always be authorised and approved by the Clerk.

4. The Clerk shall ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for alerting the Chairman immediately should a Local Authority fail to make their Special Levy payment at the agreed time, or where Drainage Rates are outstanding following reminder. The Clerk and Chairman will agree a course of action and whether a special meeting of the Board is required.

5. Every budget holder is responsible for seeking to ensure that actual expenditure on each of their budgets does not exceed the budget as approved and shall regularly monitor income/expenditure to this end. Budget holders shall, whenever practicable, get approval for material adverse variances to any of their budgets that are anticipated. Approval shall be sought in accordance with the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations.
6. The Clerk may convene a meeting of the Board or a Committee. The Chairman or any 3 other Board members shall also have the power to convene such a meeting.

7. The Consulting Engineer shall prepare a Report for each Board meeting at which such items appear on the agenda detailing amongst other things the progress made on approved capital schemes in respect

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

8. The Clerk shall also prepare Financial Report(s) for each Board meeting and, shall prepare any other management accounting/financial report that may be required by the Board.

9. In considering its financial health, estimates, rates and investment strategy, the Board will consider as a minimum:
   I. Whether it has sufficient General Fund Reserves to cater for above average annual expenditure due to, for example, excessive pumping or urgent works.
   II. Whether it is utilising and planning for use of any Development Charges account appropriately for future capital works.
   III. Whether it has sufficient Asset Improvement/Future Works budget taking account of its asset base, asset age/reliability, capital programme requirements and likely grant eligibility.
   IV. Its financial ability to secure and pay off a suitable value Public Works Loan to bridge any gap between its Asset Improvement/Future Works budget and likely value of works.

D PURCHASING GOODS & SERVICES (INCLUDING PLANT)

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

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

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

2. The budget holder shall be responsible for ensuring that quotations or tenders are sought when required by the above table. Where it is not possible to get the required quotations or tenders, the Chairman’s written approval must be obtained prior to awarding any contract.

3. Any agreed contractors, consultants or suppliers list shall be maintained and kept up to date by the Clerk.

4. A budget holder must never agree to permit a third party to provide them with goods/services where tenders or quotations are required without obtaining a copy of their terms of business beforehand.

5. Budget holders shall fully comply with all Competition Law, the Bribery Act 2010 and the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and shall so far as is reasonable, satisfy themselves as to the insurance policies of contractors, and their systems of work before awarding works contracts.

6. Budget holders shall not enter into any contract that has been reserved to the Board or delegated to a Board Committee without obtaining the Clerk’s approval beforehand. The Clerk shall not permit any budget holder to enter in to such a contract if he/she considers it to be inappropriate or that the required approval has not been given.

7. The relevant budget holder is responsible for ensuring that the procurement of all goods and services is authorised by the Board or in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations. All emergency work must be approved by the Chairman.

8. All procurement of goods and services shall be authorised by the signing and dating of an official purchase order or purchase instruction. On so authorising the procurement of goods or services the budget holder will have satisfied themselves that the Financial Regulations have been complied with and that any approval required by the Schedule of Reserved Matters and the Scheme of Delegations has been obtained. The Clerk shall be authorised to raise, sign and date a purchase order or purchase instruction where the procurement has been authorised by resolution of the Board.

9. The budget holder must never break down a job and string a number of purchase orders or authorisations together simply to avoid having to get 3 written quotations/tenders.

10. The following information must be clearly stated on each purchase order or instruction:

    i. The name of the supplier.
    ii. The agreed price of the goods/services required, other than in an emergency or where impractical to do so.
    iii. The Unique Order No as approved by the budget holder.

11. The Clerk shall ensure that procedures are in place for establishing when goods or services, have been charged, allocated or otherwise expenditure has been committed against an unauthorised budget.

12. All quotes/tenders, delivery notes, invoices for payment and credit notes shall be matched to the official purchase order or instruction, examined and coded before they are proposed for payment or set off. If the budget holder or the Clerk deems any invoice/credit note to be incorrect they shall not process such invoices/credit notes for payment or set off until satisfied that payment or set off is properly due. The quotes/tenders, purchase orders and delivery notes where required to be signed or where amended, shall all be filed together with the invoices/credit notes as otherwise directed by the Clerk

13. The Clerk shall ensure that all Invoices which have been approved for payment are duly scheduled for payment.

14. All Invoices shall be authorised by the Chairman and checked by the Clerk prior to making payment.

15. Where it is considered that there are valid reasons for departing from these procedures the approval of the Chairman shall be obtained. Any such departure shall be reported to the Board.

E BANK MANDATE AND INVESTMENTS

1. No changes shall be made to the Board’s bankers or the bank mandate without the prior consent of the Board.
2. Approved signatories for the Board’s bank accounts are as follows:

    1. The Chairman
    2. Such other member(s) as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board
    3. Such officers of the Middle Level Commissioners as shall from time to time be authorised by the Board

3. All cheque books, deposit books, banking cards, online access and other documentation or materials relating to the Board's bank accounts shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

4. All payments, bank transfers and Investments shall be made in the most efficient/secure manner as determined from time to time by the Clerk

5. The Clerk shall maintain Contact Details relating to financial transactions. All bank accounts shall be reconciled monthly and checked at regular intervals by separate officers of the Clerk.

F INVESTMENTS AND BORROWINGS STRATEGY

1. All investments made by the Board are made within guidance received from CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants) Guidance for the Public Sector, and relevant legislation:

   - The Board's investment activities are limited by statute
   - The Board may invest with major Banks and/or Building Societies
   - The Board's investments are to be regarded as low/medium risk
   - The Board's investments must be made in the name of the Board and not any named individual

2. All investments shall be negotiated by the Clerk and reported to the Board. They must be for an appropriate period.

3. All borrowings shall be effected in the name of the Board and shall be from the Public Works Loans Board. In an emergency there may be an exception.

4. No borrowings shall be taken out without a resolution of the Board.

5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the Clerk.

G COLLECTING MONEY

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies received are properly recorded in the accounting records.

2. Electronic copies of all receipts issued shall be retained for at least six years.

3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Drainage Rates and Special Levies are substantially collected by **1 November** each year. Outstanding Rates/Levies shall be pursued in a timely manner after that date.

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

H FUNDING APPLICATIONS

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

I SUNDRY DEBTORS

1. Each budget holder shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with the necessary information to enable rechargeable work to be properly accounted for and invoiced, and, any other debts due to be properly invoiced. The budget holder shall advise the Clerk whenever an Invoice is to be raised for goods provided or services rendered, under their control.

2. The Clerk shall ensure that all such Invoices are properly raised as soon as practicable after being authorised.
3. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that all other debts due to the Board are properly raised when required and collected appropriately.

4. The Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring that the Board consider whether any rents payable to them should be reviewed by a Chartered Surveyor at least once every 5 years.

5. The Clerk shall calculate any claims for Highland Water payments from the Environment Agency and send such claims to the Agency by the dates specified by the Agency.

6. Any refunds due to debtors for whatever reason shall be approved by the Clerk prior to being paid or otherwise accounted for.

8. The Clerk shall be empowered to collect all sundry debts due.

9 The Clerk shall obtain the Chairmans approval for instigating legal proceedings to collect outstanding amounts in excess of the County Court Small Claims limit.

J EMPLOYING/MANAGING STAFF

1. The Chairman shall be responsible to the Board for all matters regarding any employees, including employment policies, procedures, terms and conditions. The Chairman acts as the employee's line manager. This includes taking capability and disciplinary action against Board employees having followed due process.

2. The Board's approval shall be required for the employment of additional permanent staff.

3. The Chairman shall have the authority to employ temporary staff and replace permanent staff provided the employment costs are contained within the Expenditure Estimates/Budgets approved by the Board.

4 Subject to the above paragraphs and to the terms of any employee's contract, Board members shall not individually have the power to formally offer anyone any form of employment or to dismiss a Board employee, or otherwise take disciplinary action against any of the Board's employees unless the Board has specifically authorised such action by resolution.

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

K ASSET ACCOUNTING/MANAGEMENT

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

2. The Clerk shall be responsible for documenting and maintaining the records of the Board's Assets.

L AUDIT

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

M SALARIES AND WAGES

1. The Board shall, where appropriate, seek independent advice before making significant changes to terms and conditions of employment and, save where such changes are as a result of legislative change, no changes shall be made to terms and conditions of employment (deliberately or otherwise) without the prior consent of the Board.

2. The Clerk shall be responsible for the proper compilation of the payroll(s) and for the final determination of pay, as approved by the Board.

3. All annual holiday entitlements (including any carried forward provisions) shall be agreed with the Chairman and/or the District Officer at the beginning of every financial year and signed off by him/her as such, in accordance with the Board's terms and conditions of employment.

4. All time-off in lieu, sick leave, working-from-home arrangements and other absences from work or the work place shall be approved in writing by the Chairman and/or the District Officer.

5. All proposed payments of salaries and wages shall be authorised by the Clerk prior to being made.

N INSURANCES

1. The Clerk shall be responsible for expeditiously submitting all insurance claims that the Board agrees should be pursued. The Board shall be responsible for providing the Clerk with all of the necessary information he/she deems necessary in order to successfully make an insurance claim.

2. The Chairman and/or the District Officer shall immediately notify the Clerk of any loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to a claim on any of the Board's insurance policies and shall, where appropriate, notify the police of the relevant circumstances.

O SECURITY

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

P REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

1. The Board and Clerk reserves the right to make reasonable changes to these Regulations at any time in future.

2. Failure to take action against any employee or Member following a breach of the Financial Regulations does not constitute a waiver of the Board's right to take disciplinary action on any future breaches of the Financial Regulations and no single or partial action taken shall prevent any further disciplinary action being taken or other action being taken against any employee or Member.

Appendix 4

Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

Administered by:

middle level commissioners

Governance

Policy Statement on Water Level and Flood Risk Management

1 Issued

1.1 This policy is issued and has been adopted by the Waldersey Internal Drainage Board.

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

2 Introduction

Purpose

2.1 This policy statement has been prepared by the Waldersey 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 Waldersey 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 Waldersey Internal Drainage Board.

2.5 This Policy Statement sets out the Board's approach to meeting the national policy aims and objectives in this area, as stated in the *National flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy for England*

2020 (the National Strategy); the statement will be revised to reflect future revisions of the National Strategy. It summaries what plans the Board have in place to manage water levels and reduce flood risk, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment, and ensuring good governance and local accountability. Copies of this Policy Statement are available from the Board's office at Middle Level Offices, 85 Whittlesey Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AH. Digital copies can be downloaded from the Middle Level Commissioners website: www.middlelevel.gov.uk.

3. Governance and local accountability

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

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

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

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

Aim

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

Objectives

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

- understand the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, working together to put in place long term sustainable plans to manage these risks and making sure that other plans take account of them;
- avoid inappropriate development in areas of flood and coastal erosion risk and being careful to manage land elsewhere to avoid increasing risks;
- build, maintain and improve flood and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems to reduce the likelihood of harm to people and damage to the economy, environment and society as well as achieving wider environmental benefits;
- increase public awareness of the risk that remains and engaging with people at risk to encourage them to take action to manage the risks that they face and to make their property mor resilient; and
- improving the detection, forecasting and issue of warnings of flooding, co-ordinating a rapid response to flood emergencies and promoting faster recovery from flooding.

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

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

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

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

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

5.3 The following outlines the key details of the District:

- Total area of the drainage district: 2137 ha
- Catchment area draining to and including the District: 2137 ha
- Area of Agricultural Land: 2032 ha
- Area of other (non-agricultural) land: 105 ha

5.4 Assets for which the Board have operational responsibility:

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

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

- Main Rivers: 5 km
- Raised embankments/flood walls: 5 km
- Pumping Stations: 0 no

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. Communication and transparency

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Working together

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

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

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

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

10. Environmental Measures

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

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

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

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

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

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

10.5 The Board has no Water Level Management Plan.

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

Appendix 5

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Internal drainage boards in England

Annual Report for the year ended

31 March 2024

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

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

- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Division, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs via flood.reports@defra.gov.uk
- 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 £.

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Section A – Financial information

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

Special levies information for financial year 2024-25	
Name of local authority	**£**
1. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL	18,645
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Total	18,645

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		84,126
B. Special Levies		14,453
C. Higher Land Water Contributions from the Environment Agency		
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		2,470
J. Rents and Acknowledgements		
K. Other Income Write back of provisions Consents Rent Joint pumping costs		 50 50 160 92,913
Total Income		**194,222**
EXPENDITURE		
L. New Works and Improvement Works		5,272
M. Total precept to the Environment Agency		2,633
N. Watercourse maintenance		34,808
O. Pumping Stations, Sluices and Water level control structures		7,733

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

P. Administration		15,645
Q. PSCAs		
R. Rechargeable Works		
S. Finance Charges		
T. Biodiversity enhancement and conservation – overall total Breakdown: General, across the whole region SSSI specific, where relevant	 498	498
U. Other Expenditure Insurance		 2,109
Electricity costs – overall total Breakdown (if possible): Standing charge (per annum) Unit charge (per annum)	 11,435 156,277	167,712
Fuel (petrol and diesel costs) – overall total Breakdown: Pumping stations Fleet and plant machinery		
Total expenditure		**236,410**
EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS		
V. Profits/(losses) arising from the disposal of fixed assets		
Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		**(42,188)**
W. Developers Funds income not applied in year		1,517
X. Grant income not applied in year		

Value of drainage rates outstanding at year end?

7.966 %
£ 6,609.03

Value of special levies outstanding at year end?

0 %
£ 0

Notes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Q. State all costs associated with the PSCA.

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

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

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

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

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

W. Total balance of developer fund year end.

X. Unspent grant at year end.

Section B – IDB Reporting

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

Policy Delivery Statement

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

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

2. What year was your statement last updated?.. 2019

Biodiversity

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

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

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

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

7. When was biodiversity last discussed at a Board meeting (date)?............................... 19/06/2024

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

SSSI water level management plans

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

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

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

If so, please complete the following table:

Name	Partners	Date of last review	Date of last update

11. Area of SSSI with IDB responsible for water level management plan/s......... 0 hectares

12. Area of SSSI with IDB contribution towards water level management plan/s......... 0 hectares

13. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management activities are contributing to recovering or favourable condition?......... 0 hectares

14. Area of SSSI where IDB water level management actions are needed to achieve recovering or favourable condition?......... 0 hectares

Access to environmental expertise

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

15. Appropriately skilled Board Members (e.g. Board member from an Environmental Body/Authority) ☐

16. Co-opted members ☐

17. Directly employed staff ☐

18. Contracted persons or consultants ☒

19. Environmental Partners/NGOs ☐

20. Other ☐

If so, please list:

Public sector cooperation agreements (PSCAs)

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

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

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

If other, please list:

23. Please indicate the type of work being undertaken.

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

If other, please list:

Asset Management

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

24. ADIS ☐

25. Paper Records ☐

26. Other Electronic System ☒

If so, please list:

Excel

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

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

29.5 kilometres

29. How many pumping stations does the Board operate?

2 pumping stations

30. How many pumps does the Board operate?

electric	5
diesel	
renewable energy pumps (e.g. directly powered by wind, solar, hydro, etc)	
temporary / mobile pumps	
other type of pumps	

31. If other, please list:

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

4.6 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?	12
60. Seats available to appointed members under the Land Drainage Act 1991.	2
61. Number of elected members on the board at year end.	10
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.	4
64. Mean average number of appointed members in attendance at each board meeting over the last financial year.	2

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

66. If you have held elections, did they comply with the requirements specified by the Secretary of State under Regulation 28 of the Land Drainage (Election of Drainage Boards) Regulations 1938?...........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?	0
70. Number of complaints referred to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?	0
71. Number of complaints upheld by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman?	0

Public Engagement

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

Published:

72. your completed IDB1 Form ☒

73. press release/s ☐

74. newsletter/s ☐

75. notice/s ☒

76. public consultation ☐

77. updated your IDB website ☒

Media engagement with:

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

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

80. trade media ☐

81. social media ☐

Public meetings:

82. Held public meeting/s ☒

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

Public events:

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

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

86. hosted IDB open day ☐

Section B: NOTES

Guidance and Best Practice

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

Board membership and attendance

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

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

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

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

Section C – Declaration

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

Appendix 6

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

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

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

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

and recorded as minute reference:

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

Chair

Clerk

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

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

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

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

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

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor

b) Review of Internal Controls

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

RESOLVED

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

c) Approval of authorised officers for operational/regulatory roles

RESOLVED

The Board confirm that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised offices and therefore able to use the Boards' powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

The Board confirm that their Chair, Vice Chair, District Officer(s), pump attendants and employees (if applicable) are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Boards' powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

d) Responsible Finance Officer

Following the retirement of Robert Hill, the MLC Treasurer and the appointment of Andrew Wool as the new MLC Head of Finance, the Board approved the relevant resolutions to manage the transition.

RESOLVED

The Board considered and approved the recommendations that:

vi) That the role of the position of Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners is to include the appointment as Responsible Financial Officer to the Board.

vii) That the person appointed as Head of Finance for the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and authorised to sign cheques and authorised to make payments on behalf of the Board.

viii) That the person appointed as clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners be added to the Barclays Bank PLC mandate and be authorised to sign cheques and to authorise payments on behalf of the Board.

ix) That the person appointed as Head of Finance to the Middle Level Commissioners will be appointed as the administrator on behalf of the Middle Level Commissioners to the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Middle Level Commissioners.

x) That following Mr Robert Hill leaving the employment of the Middle Level Commissioners that the Head of Finance of the Middle Level Commissioners be delegated the authority to appoint a member of the finance team to be an additional administrator on the Barclays Bank PLC internet banking platform as used by the Board.

e) Insured Values

The Board reviewed the Insured Values and were pleased that they continue to be index linked.

f) Policy Reviews

Mrs Martin referred to the Boards' Finance Regulations and Finance Code Policy which has been reviewed and updated by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The Board also reviewed the Complaints Procedure, Privacy Policy and Anti-Bribery policy, reviewed and approved the Boards Policy Statement, and approved the Data Protection Officer.

RESOLVED

That the update and re-publication of the Complaints Procedure and Privacy Policy is approved.

That the Board reviewed and approved the publication of an Anti-Bribery policy, and the Financial Regulations policy.

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

That the MLC Lead Clerk, currently Ruth Martin, acts as the Board Data Protection Officer and acknowledges that this role will be associated within the incumbent employee role of MLC Lead Clerk.

g) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Board did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Boards' 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.

h) 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.

The Board confirmed that they have provided property opportunity for the exercise of electors rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the documents listed have been published.

i) 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.

j) DEFRA IDB1 Return

RESOLVED

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

k) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

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.1324 Finance Report – Looking Back
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**11**
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Storm Recovery Grant

Following the setting of the rates for 2024/2025 details concerning the Storm recovery Grant were released and claims had to be submitted within an incredibly tight timeframe. A claim for £82,734.42 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 £123,230 and set a rate of 37.50p to raise this through agricultural drainage rates and Special Levies. Included in the estimated expenditure was £13,908 to be raised to reinstate balances following the events of 2023/24.

Actual expenditure during the year was lower than the budget set. Repairs and Renewals included Overhaul/Replacement of the Weedscreens at South Brink and Rings End respectively. These works were to be funded through the Pumping Plant Fund and Contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB. These works were completed but were 100% funded through the Storm Recovery Grant and have been shown separately under Improvement Works. Fuel costs were £42,967 lower than budget, this is following a relatively average year for pumping volumes. Administration cost was £1,708 higher due additional administration fees in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant work. The contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB was significantly lower than Budget. At the time of setting the rates the outcome of the Storm Recovery Grant was unclear, and we had to assume that we would not receive any funding. As a result of the funding the contribution was far less than originally forecast. In addition, as the Weedscreen works were also 100% funded from the Storm Recovery Grants no contribution was necessary. Generally other areas of expenditure have been generally in-line with budget provisions.

The estimates against which the rate income was raised included the sum of £6,600 for Future Improvement Works and this has been transferred out of the General fund and into the Future Improvement Works.

As outlined above following the setting of the rates for 2024/25 we received a Grant for the excess pumping costs from 2023/24, the amount that was recognised to the general fund was £82,734.42.
Over-all this gives an increase in the Boards General Fund of £80,385.45 to a balance of £146,715.42 on 31st March 2025, the balance on 1st April 2024 being £64,298.33.
These balances are reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested to review and approve.

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

1. Budgeting

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

2. Payments for 2024

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2

3. Storm Recovery Grant – T2A

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

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
South Brink PS – Weedscreen Overhaul	£49,975	15.15p
Rings End – Weedscreen Overhaul	£29,223	8.86p
District Wide Drain Works	£20,352	6.17p
	£99,550	30.18p

4. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2024/2025:

4.1 Annual Return 2024/2025:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2025 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 3

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

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

Appendix 1

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2024/2025

		Approved budget 2024/2025 £	Actual to 28th February 2025 £	Forecast to 31st March 2025 £
1	Rates, insurances and telephones	2,300 [A]	2,585	2,585 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	61,000	3,464	82,500 [B]
3	Fuel	104,500	26,957 [C]	57,490 [D]
4	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	32,750	18,778 [E]	32,750
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscription etc	13,750	6,364	15,250
6	Environment Agency - Precept	2,633	2,633	2,633
7	Reinstatement of balances	13,908	0	13,908 [F]
8	Future Works	106,600	0	106,600 [G]
		337,441	60,781	313,716
	LESS Contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB (Joint Plant maintenance)	74,457	(38,700)	64,350
		262,984	99,481	249,366
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest,	139,755	1,501	197,254 [H]
		123,230	97,980	52,112

Remarks

A -	Increased premiums	
B -	Includes for:	
	Weedscreen Overhaul - South Brink P/S	49,240
	Weedcsreen replacement - Rings End p/s	28,479
C -	Includes accounts to September	
D -	Account to Sept and based on Meter reads to February March Estimated	
E -	Includes:	
	Slubbing	6,021
	Flail mowing	4,680
	District Officer	6,100
		16,801
F -	Provision to restore general fund balances	
G -	Distrct wide study	100,000
	Provision for future works funding	6,600
H -	Includes: Grant funding - District study	100,000
	Storm Recovery T2 - Works at Rings End p/s	28,479
	Storm Recovery T2 - Works at South Brink	49,240
	Plant Fund - Works at South Brink	18,000

Appendix 2

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Middle Level Commissioners - Remove tyres and rubbish from drains at Stags Holt and Graysmoor Drove		478.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace hydraulic ram seals and test - South Brink pumping station (Account from L R Boon)		623.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Easement arrangement at Rings End - To be recovered from Cadent Gas on completion of easement (Account from Brown & Co)		1,800.00
Middle Level Commissioners - IDB Health & Safety Re-charge 2023-2024 (Account from COPE Safety Management)		408.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Assisting insurance assessor		132.57
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2023/24, planning and development applications)		1,626.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace hydraulic hose and reset limits and clear weed pile - South Brink pumping station		967.52
Middle Level Commissioners - Connect generator and check operation of pump with UK Power Networks - Rings End pumping station		256.27
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and travelling		6,942.34
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry installation at pumping stations (net of 50% graant-in-aid)		
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)	368.06	
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Rings End pumping station)	266.98	635.04
Peter Lankfer - Flailmowing for 2023		13,881.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		110.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		110.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Limited - Removal of rubbish from drains		156.76
Environment Agency - Precept		1,316.50
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		110.00
Water Resources East - Contribution to operating costs 2024-2025		180.00
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2024		763.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition report for Rings End pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)		144.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of electrical installation condition report for South Brink pumping station (Account from CMS Electrical)		180.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)	368.06	
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Rings End pumping station)	266.98	635.04
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		110.00
Sencrop - Supply of rain gauge for South Brink pumping station		526.80
The Crown Lodge Hotel - Expenses in connection with Board meeting		435.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Clear silt from outlet and check flap operation at South Brink pumping station		129.38
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		150.00
Bank charges		21.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2023-2024 accounts)		1,023.00
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)		711.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2023-2024 accounts)		756.00
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		150.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages and telephone charges		6,229.19
G & R Easton - Refund of drainage rates		513.75
Environment Agency - Precept		1,316.50
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		150.00
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Refund of joint pumping costs		20,787.63
Middle Level Commissioners - Telemetry charges		576.00

Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances		2482.14
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)	98.97	
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Rings End pumping station)	98.98	197.95
Middle Level Commissioners - Increased insurance premium due to pumping station valuation		197.61
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Limited - Drain maintenance and flailmowing		12,840.76
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		150.00
G R & P Easton - Refund of drainage rates		23.81
G R & P Easton - Refund of drainage rates		489.94
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)	387.26	
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Rings End pumping station)	281.38	668.64
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)		196.46
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution (Environmental Officer)		783.50
B Wales Services - District Officer's fee (2024-2025)		6,100.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District drains		565.02
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Limited - Flailmowing and emergency ditch cleaning		277.50
Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration		52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Contribution towards retirement gift		100.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (South Brink pumping station)	281.38	
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance (Rings End pumping station)	387.26	668.64
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Planning and development applications)		36.60
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations		150.00
Anglia Farmers - Electricity metering charges - (Rings End pumping station)		105.23
Corona Energy - Electricity metering charges - (Rings End pumping station)		(103.68)
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (Rings End pumping station)		8,396.69
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - (South Brink pumping station)		22,489.60
Corona Energy - Electricity supply - Payments on account		169,628.73
EDF Energy - Electricity supply - (Rings End pumping station)		6,829.28
EDF Energy - Electricity supply - (South Brink pumping station)		18,804.86
IMServ - Electricity metering charges - (Rings End pumping station)		41.37
IMServ - Electricity metering charges - (South Brink pumping station)		52.95
IMServ - Electricity data collection charges (Rings End pumping station)		117.16
IMServ - Electricity data collection charges (South Brink pumping station)		170.43
		317,555.06

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

Appendix 3

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025
GENERAL FUND

2025				2024		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	64,298.33
	Precept		2,633.00	2025		
				Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	125,261.24
	Rates, insurances, telephone	2,584.75			Interest on Deposit Accounts	1,126.22
	Repairs & Renewals	4,762.55			Joint Pumping Account -	
	Fuel - South Brink	16,322.31			Hundred of Wisbech IDB	37,696.50
	Rings End	45,211.17			Rents - Land	160.00
	Drainworks	32,539.36			Consents	250.00
	Administration charge, Audit fee,					
	printing, stationery, advertising etc	15,457.85	116,877.99		Storm Recovery Grant - T1a	82,734.42
					Storm Recovery Grant - T2a	99,550.26
	Write Back of Provisions		38,700.30			
	Improvement Works					
	Drainworks - District Wide	20,352.50				
	Weedscreen Cleaner Overhaul-South Brink PS	49,974.87				
	Weedscreen Cleaner Overhaul-Rings End PS	29,222.89	99,550.26			
	Transfer to plant replacement fund		6,600.00			
	Balance carried forward		146,715.42			
			411,076.97			411,076.97

BALANCE SHEET
Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
Capital Provisions	2,545,000.00	Rings End Pumping Station	1,195,000.00	
		South Brink Pumping Station	1,350,000.00	2,545,000.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	146,715.42	Ratepayers Account		28,730.48
Sundry Creditors	140,048.24	Value added Tax - Refunds due		8,669.83
Pumping plant replacement fund	44,792.14	Sundry debtors		101,950.89
Capital Realisation Account	96,542.01	Joint Pumping Account -		
Development Charges Account	1,544.06	Hundred of Wisbech IDB		37,696.50
		Balance in hand:-		
		Barclays - Treasurer's Account	45,000.00	
		Barclays - Business premium Account	204,569.24	
		National Savings - Treasurer's Account	3,024.93	252,594.17
	2,974,641.87			2,974,641.87

Waldersey 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		248,106.95	Payments made during the year	317,555.06
31st March 2025				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	315,556.05			
Interest on deposit accounts	3,444.10	319,000.15	Balance carried forward	249,569.24
Cheque Written Back		17.20		
		567,124.30		**567,124.30**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2024/2025

1st April 2024		31st March 2025	
Balance brought forward	2,996.91	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2025			
Interest on deposit accounts	28.02	Balance carried forward	3,024.93
	3,024.93		**3,024.93**

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2025	45,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**45,000.00**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2025

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**45,000.00**
Business Premium Account	**204,569.24**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**3,024.93**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**252,594.17**

Waldersey 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	64,298.33		
	Development charges account	1,517.48		
	P/S House fund	94,880.13		
	Pumping Plant replacement	37,534.70		
			198,230.64	**198,231**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	105,085.84		
	Special Levies	18,645.00		
	Penalty	1,402.81		
	Costs	150.00		
	Write-off	-22.41		
			125,261.24	**125,261**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	1,126.22		
	Development charges account	26.58		
	P/S House fund	1,661.88		
	Pumping plant replacement	657.44		
	Discharge consent applications	0.00		
	Rent	160.00		
	Consents	250.00		
	Joint pumping	37,696.50		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
	Storm Recovery Grant	82,734.42		
	Tranche 2a Claim	99,550.26		
			223,863.30	**223,864**
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	2,633.00		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	2,584.75		
	Repairs and renewals	4,762.55		
	Fuel	61,533.48		
	Drainworks	32,539.36		
	Administration	15,457.85		
	Improvements	99,550.26		
	Over provision in previous year - Joint pumping	38,700.30		
			257,761.55	**257,762**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	146,715.42		
	Development charges account	1,544.06		
	P/S House fund	96,542.01		
	Pumping Plant Replacement fund	44,792.14		
			289,593.63	**289,594**

Reconciliation
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 289,593.63

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	240,419	198,231	*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	98,579	125,261	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	95,643	223,864	*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	236,410	257,762	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	198,231	289,594	*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	251,104	252,594	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,545,000	2,545,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

DLWool

Date 03/06/2025

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. The Board noted the Storm Recovery Grant Fund bids and that the Board received £82,734.42 for excess winter pumping costs, and was successful in securing further Grant Funding totalling £99,550.

The Budget Comparison was noted.

Payments for 2024

The Chair and Mr Lankfer declared interests in this item.

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

B1325 Finance Report – Looking Forward
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 18th June 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Robert Hill/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

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

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2025/2026 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known, the engineers estimates for the drain maintenance programme has been included.

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

A provision of £6,600 has been included to future works funding.

When considering the rate for 2024/2025 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 Agricultural Rental – to consider whether any change is appropriate in the level of rental obtained for the Board's land;

Current charges;

4 acres of arable land at Green Drove (OS 796) – Let to Mr J P Smith

Present rent - £40 per acre plus drainage rate.

5.794 acres of land at Crooked Bank – Let to Mr G W Lankfer

Present rent - £40 per acre plus drainage rate.

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 Clerk will report that the precept for the financial year 2025/2026 has been fixed at £2,633.00. The precept for 2024 was £2,633.00.

3. Outstanding Rates – Confidential papers

4. Estimates for 2025/26

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

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

5. Rate Requirements for 2025/26

5.1 Appendix 2 details the rate requirement that needs to be set and approved by the Board in order to raise sufficient rate and special levy income to cover the budget estimate.

5.2 Board Members are welcome to propose alternative rate requirements and invite these for consideration by the Board along with their supporting rationale and proposed mechanism for catering within the budget estimate and/or the Board's investment strategy.

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

Enclosure 1 Rates Outstanding (CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS)

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

Appendix 1

WALDERSEY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET 2025/2026

		Approved budget 2024/2025 £	Actual to 31st March 2025 £	Proposed Budget 2025/2026 £
1	Rates, insurances and telephones	2,300	2,585	2,714 A
2	Repairs and renewals	61,000	4,763	5,500
3	Fuel	104,500	61,533	67,750 B
4	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	32,750	32,539 C	37,750
5	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscription etc	13,750	15,458	15,750
6	Environment Agency - Precept	2,633	2,633	2,633
7	Reinstatement of balances	13,908	0	0
8	Improvement works	0	99,550 D	0
9	Future Works	106,600	6,600	6,600 E
		337,441	225,661	138,697
	LESS Contribution from Hundred of Wisbech IDB (Joint Plant maintenance)	74,457	(1,004)	41,852
		262,984	226,665	96,845
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest,	139,755	183,821 F	1,160
		123,230	42,844	95,685

Remarks

A -	Includes estimate for increased premiums	
B -	Provision based on 2 year average plus increase in rates of 5% from October 2025	
C -	Includes:	
	Slubbing	11,452
	Flail mowing	11,777
	District Officer	6,100
D -	Includes for:	
E -	Weedscreen Overhaul - South Brink P/S	49,975
	Weedcsreen replacement - Rings End P/S	29,223
	District Wide Drain works	20,352
E -	Provision for future works funding	6,600
F -	Includes for:	
	Storm Recovery Grant - T1a	82,734
	Storm Recovery Grant - T2b	99,550

Appendix 2

Waldersey Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

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

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 84.93%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 15.07%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £2,802.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £3,299.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2025 - £146,715.

The estimated net expenditure for the Boards Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2025/2026 is £95,685 and equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 29.00p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £14,419.

In 2024/2025 a rate of 37.50p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £18,645 on Fenland District Council to raise £105,086.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Board

June 2025

Finance officer’s review and key messages

The Board reviewed the key finance messages and no further questions were raised.

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) Agricultural Rentals

The Board reviewed the rental values and agreed that they were satisfied with the figures. The Board agreed that the tenancy agreement with the late Mr G W Lankfer did not require amendment.

c) 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 Region (Northern) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will not increase for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £2,633.

RESOLVED

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

d) Rate Arrears

The public were excluded from this item in pursuance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.
The confidential papers were reviewed and discussed. Mr Lankfer declared an interest in the item and left the room. The Board resolved that the Chair and Vice Chair could make any decision on behalf of the Board in resolving the issue.

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

Mrs Martin advised that in order to raise sufficient income to cover the budget estimate, that a rate of 29.00p in the £ would be required. Mr Mottram reported that in view of how the rate went up in 2024, some rate payers have shown some concern. The Board have benefitted from the Storm Recovery Grants and now have a good General Fund. With this in mind Mr Mottram proposed a rate of 28.0p in the £ but on the proviso that it is made clear to ratepayers that the Board may have to use the General Fund should emergency works be required, and increase rates to replenish the funds, especially if the winter causes high levels of pumping.

The Chair agreed with the statement, and Mr Miscandlon seconded the proposal. The Board agreed unanimously to set a rate of 28.0p 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 84.93% and 15.07%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.

ii) That a total sum of £92,386 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 of £78,464 and £13,922.

iv) That a rate of 28.0p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special Levy of £13,922 be made and issued to Fenland 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.

B.1326 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Board be held on 17th June 2026 at 5.30pm at The Crown Lodge, Outwell.

B.1327 Any Other Business

With no other items being raised by the Board, the meeting was closed at 7.00pm.

…………………………………………
Chair

……………………………
Date