HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Hundred of Wisbech IDB
Held at the Middle Level Offices on Thursday 13th November 2025.

PRESENT

M Day (Chair)	S Imafidon
N Buttress (Vice-Chair)	Ms D Laws
F Leach (Vice-Chair)	J Leach
Ms B Barber	A Miscandlon
Ms J French	N Pooley
Ms L Foice-Beard	D Roy
N Harrison	C Seaton

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk, Mr Andrew Wool (Head of Finance) and Mr Graham Moore representing the Consulting Engineer were in attendance.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and particularly welcomed Matthew Philpott from the Water Management Alliance to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from C Boden, G Booth, S Clark, Ms M Davies, Ms S Hoy, J Leach, C Marks, M Summers and B Wales.

B.2162 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the importance of declaring an interest in any matter included in today's agenda that involved or was likely to affect any individual on the Board.

Mr Miscandlon and Mr Harrison as members of Waldersey IDB declared interests in any matters involving Waldersey IDB.

Mr Miscandlon as a Middle Level Commissioners Board member declared an interest in any matters concerning Middle Level Commissioners.

Mr Leach and Mr Buttress declared interests in items concerning the District Officers and related fees.

Mr Harrison declared interests in any matters involving Harrison Agricultural Contracting.

Mrs French, Mr Imafidon and Mrs Laws declared an interest in Planning issues as Fenland District Councillor Planning Committee members.

B.2163 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed, and no matters arising were raised.

RESOLVED

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

B.2164 Constitution & Membership
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IBD**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 13th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Polly Tombleson**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Election notice
B. Note the current status of its membership and the role they each play as members serving the interests of the Board.
C. Review attendance records and identify any resolutions as necessary.
D. There are currently **6** vacancies on the Board.
E. Determine whether there are composition changes and/or amalgamations it wishes to progress.
F. Reenforce the need for members to view all five 'Good Governance' videos.
G. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	14	N/A		8
Actual	8	14 FDC	22	
Vacancies	6		6	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
	J Bunning	Co-opted member – Hutchinsons – removed 2025	Hutchinsons do not wish to appoint another representative
1	N Buttress	Nominee of rate payer (DG Bullard)	Vice-Chair & District Officer
2	M Day	Ratepayer	Chairman
3	H Duncalfe	Ratepayer	
4	N Harrison	Ratepayer	
	G Lake	Ratepayer	Resigned June 2025
5	F Leach	Nominee of rate payer (W Norman)	Dep Vice-Chair & District Officer
6	J Leach	Nominee of rate payer (W Norman)	
	A Pinder	Ratepayer	Stepped down during election 2025
	C Smart	Ratepayer	Passed away March 2025
7	B Wales	Co-opted member to vacancy – non-ratepayer	
8	N Pooley	Co-opted member to vacancy – non-ratepayer	
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

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

No	Name	Appointing Council as at June 2024	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	B Barber	FDC	Councillor
2	C Boden	FDC	Councillor
3	G Booth	FDC	Councillor
4	M Davis	FDC	Councillor
5	J French	FDC	Councillor
6	L Foice-Beard	FDC	Councillor
7	S Hoy	FDC	Councillor
8	S Imafidon	FDC	Councillor
9	D Laws	FDC	Councillor
10	C Marks	FDC	Councillor
11	A Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
12	D Roy	FDC	Councillor
13	C Seaton	FDC	Councillor
14	M Summers	FDC	Councillor
15		FDC	Councillor

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

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

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	09/06/2025	14/11/2024	10/06/2024	16/11/2023
	J Bunning				
1	N Buttress	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	M Day	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	H Duncalfe	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	N Harrison	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
	G Lake	N/A	Apologies	Present	Present
5	F Leach	Present	Present	Present	Present
6	J Leach	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
	A Pinder		Apologies	Present	Present
	C Smart	N/A	Apologies		Present
	P Tegerdine – no longer on the board			N/A	Present
7	B Wales		Apologies	Present	Apologies
8	N Pooley			n/a	n/a
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	M Day		Apologies	Present	Present

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	09/06/2025	14/11/2024	10/06/2024	16/11/2023
1	B Barber	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	C Boden	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	G Booth	Apologies		Apologies	Present
4	M Davis	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
5	J French	Present	Present	Present	Present
	R Gerstner				Present
6	S Hoy	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
7	S Imafidon	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
8	L Foice-Beard	Present	Present	Present	n/a
9	C Marks	Apologies	Apologies		Present
10	A Miscandlon	Present	Present	Present	Present
	H Nawaz		Present	Apologies	Present
	D Oliver			Apologies	Present
11	D Roy	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
12	C Seaton	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
13	D Laws	Apologies	Present		
14	M Summers		-	n/a	n/a

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

(ADA Good Governance Guide - 3.8.3 – The Chair of your IDB should, withstanding exceptional circumstances, follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments 2016, which states that there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve more than two terms of three years or serve in any one post for more than ten years.)

3.1 The Clerk will report that as the number of candidates for membership did not exceed the number of persons to be elected (8), the following candidates were elected as Members of the Board for a period of three years from 1st November 2025, viz:-

BUTTRESS	Neil	LEACH	Francis D
DAY	Michael G	LEACH	Jonathan
DUNCALFE	Henry	POOLEY	Nick
HARRISON	Nigel J	WALES	Ben

3.2 Appointment of Chair & Vice-Chair(s)
(If there are any changes in Chair or Vice-Chair, the Bank mandates will be changed to match the current Chair or Vice-chair)

3.3 Current vacancies – Oct 2025 – **6** elected

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 Joint working agreement - HW & W – amalgamation update

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 6 of 22 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 3 of 22 Board members have reported viewing 2 of the five videos
To date 1 of 22 Board members have reported viewing 4 of the five 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

Mrs Martin reported that there are currently 6 elected member vacancies on the Board. Following the last meeting, Hutchinsons were contacted and advised the Mr Bunning would no longer represent Hutchinsons on the Board, and that they do not wish to put forward any alternatives. Ms Pinder stepped down from the Board during the Elections.

Mrs Martin confirmed the eligibility to become a member of the Board, in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991, that Board members must be over 18, and should good be in good standing in respect of the payment of drainage rates.

Ms Foice-Beard asked if any progress had been made in advertising for new Board members, with Mr Miscandlon suggesting that advertisements could be placed in suitable publications, listing suitable criteria for membership. The Chair suggested that as the Board are now moving towards amalgamation, it would not be a suitable time to recruit new Board members that may subsequently be asked to stand down, but after amalgamation should it be necessary to seek to recruit additional members, these approaches could be considered. Mrs Laws also suggested that a notice could be included when issuing demands to ratepayers.

Elections

Mrs advised the Board that the triennial elections had taken place during October and the following candidates were duly elected:

BUTTRESS	Neil	LEACH	Francis D
DAY	Michael G	LEACH	Jonathan
DUNCALFE	Henry	POOLEY	Nick
HARRISON	Nigel J	WALES	Ben

The Chair and Vice Chairs agreed to continue in their roles, and this was unanimously agreed by the Board.

Training

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. Board members were reminded of the importance of watching all five of the ADA produced training videos.

B.2165 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin delivered a verbal report on behalf of the Clerk.

Data Provision

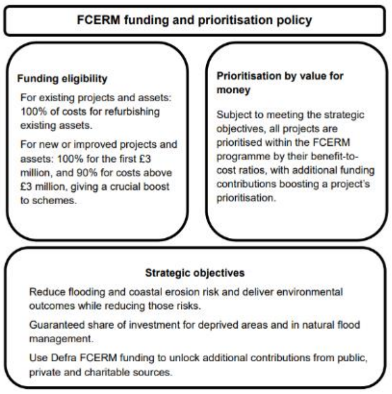
We are receiving an increasing number of data requests from a variety of sources. These can be complex and time consuming to service, sometimes for projects or purposes with little to no direct benefit to the Commissioners and our administered IDBs (where we act as their data controller).

To better protect our interests, we have developed and are now using a formal data sharing agreement with third parties. We will introduce a cost recovery approach to servicing such requests.

Defra Flood Funding Policy

Following consultation earlier in the year, Defra has finalised its new funding policy and responded to the consultation. We provided and published a comprehensive response.

This policy is for capital flood grant and goes live from 1st April 2026.



Key points for MLC and IDBs:

a) Refurbishment is a significant fix on an asset that can't be addressed by routine maintenance alone. Further guidance is expected on this aspect.

b) When applying for Defra FCERM funding for refurbishment of existing assets, asset owners will need to demonstrate that they have undertaken whole life asset management and routine maintenance.

c) As partnership contributions increase, the amount of Defra FCERM funding needed decreases, leading to higher project prioritisation. The more significant the partnership contribution, the larger the likelihood of boosting prioritisation.

d) The '2012' rule has been removed meaning new development can be included within benefit assessments. We will commission an economic and benefits refresh across the Middle Level to update our base information.

e) The need to demonstrate a reduction in flood risk band as a result of works has been removed.

f) Defra acknowledge concerns from other risk management authorities that they are at a disadvantage compared to the Environment Agency. The policy states that all risk management authorities should have equal access to FCERM funding.

IDB Funding & Costs Research

A joint Defra and MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) IDB funding and costs research project is now underway. It is being led by ICF, a consultancy with expertise in economic and financial analysis, particularly in evaluating the costs and benefits of environmental and regulatory policies in the water and land use sector. Supporting ICF is Logika, a consultancy specialising in flood risk management, drainage, and sustainable development and valuable experience from the water sector. The project is scheduled to conclude by July 2026.

The overarching goal of the project is to conduct a comprehensive review of IDBs' operations, focusing on financial efficiency and value for money, with the aim of assessing whether changes are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of IDBs. The research is structured around three core objectives:

1. Funding and Financial Review: To analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs and financial pressures over the past decade and explore future funding options.
2. Benefit Evaluation: To assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally.
3. Data Modernisation: To explore how the annual IDB1 Form can be improved and modernised for better data collection and reporting.

The project will include:

- an evidence review,
- analysis of financial information and IDB1 reports,
- interviews with selected IDBs and stakeholders,
- an IDB survey to identify any gaps in the data, and
- case studies.

We have been in touch with the consultants leading the work and provided them with information to get them started. Whilst this research is an opportunity to highlight and influence much needed policy change for collective benefit, there is equally the likelihood that it will draw out some uncomfortable truths.

One of the key issues the research will be assessing is the impact that special levies to IDBs is having on Local Authorities. This issue is being promoted by a Local Government Association 'IDB Levey Special Interest Group'.

Around 40 councils across England are working together to lobby the Government for reform to the funding system that supports the vital work of Internal Drainage Boards. IDBs are primarily funded through drainage rates charged directly on the occupiers of agricultural land within each drainage district and a special levy on district and unitary councils on behalf of the non-agricultural land within each district. Each council primarily funds the cost of the special levy through a combination of central government grants, their share of business rates and revenue from council tax levied on local properties. Due to rising costs in such things as electricity that power the pumping stations at times of flooding and sustained heavy rain, the special levy amount has been increasingly significantly in recent years.

On the evening of Tuesday 2nd September 2025 there was a parliamentary meeting of the LGA's IDB Levy Special Interest Group. The meeting was attended by the leaders and portfolio holders from a number of special levy paying local authorities at the House of Commons alongside several members of parliament. ADA and IDBs were also represented by Robert Caudwell, Michael Sly, Daniel Withnall (Black Sluice IDB), and Paul Burrows (Middle Level Commissioners).

Reflecting on the meeting within the ADA Gazette, Paul Burrows said:
"It's pleasing that Local Authorities and MPs appreciate the criticality of the work the Internal Drainage Board sector play in enabling prosperous local communities. After all, every other Council service relies on keeping homes, business, land and infrastructure dry. We need to be mindful of potential unintended consequences within any call for funding reform, particularly the special levies that Councils raise on our behalf. It is important that the IDB Costs & Funding Research commissioned by Defra gets under the skin of the issues and makes considered and well-evaluated recommendations."

<u>IDB1</u>
There is another step-change in reporting expectations on us all both in terms of financial and non-financial information we provide annually to Defra within the 2024/25 IDB1. This will take additional time to pull together and is an indication as to the increased expectations Government have on us in terms of governance and responsibilities.

Whilst we can derive the majority of the financial and non-financial information on behalf of our administered IDBs, there are questions where we require information from the Boards directly. Board Chairman are being asked to reply to Sam Ablett by 1st January 2026 in order to assist her in preparing the form for return. This Board's Chair has already provided this which is appreciated. The questions posed include providing details around watercourse maintenance, Health and Safety, Board members training, and public and press engagement.

B.2166 Transfer of Services – Planning & Consenting

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**6**
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB**	**Subject:**	**TRANSFER OF SERVICE PROVISION**
Date:	**Thursday 13th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows** **Clerk to the IDB and MLC Chief Executive**

1. Transition of Services

1.1 The Board has now confirmed that the Water Management Alliance (WMA) will be managing board affairs moving forward and they have agreed the relevant terms of engagement. We previously reported that an in-year transfer of some aspects of service provision may be practical ahead of a full 1st April 2026 handover.

1.2 With the Water Management Alliance and Board Chair/Vice Chair agreement, we are recommending an earlier transition of planning and consenting services. We feel this is needed to better manage the transition and reduce the risk to all parties.

1.3 In order to transition planning and consenting services, the Board will need to approve a set of resolutions and the intent is for those resolutions to take effect from 5th January 2026.

2. Resolutions

2.1 The Board is asked to resolve that from 5th January 2026 they:

a) Enter into Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the King's Lynn IDB (Water Management Alliance) from 5 January 2026 to cover provision of planning and consenting services only.

b) Adopt the Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document (Sections 1 and 2 only) - Appendix 1.

Note: The WMA will recommend the full document is adopted when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

c) Adopt the terms of reference for the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee - Appendix 2.

d) Adopt the WMA's Development Control Charges and Fees Policy – Appendix 3

e) That the Middle Level Commissioners are no longer authorised to sign and issue consents on behalf of the Board and respond to planning applications on behalf of the Board.

f) Approve the following statement to added to their Schedule of Reserved Matters

Note: The WMA will recommend a fully updated schedule when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

a. Approval of non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent (any prior written consent required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws), other than urgent applications. Non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent include the following application types:

i. All applications for consent that are from applicants or agents related to or associated with a member or employee of the Board.

ii. All appeals against a previous determination of an application for consent (the application having first been determined under delegated authority by the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee)

iii. Applications for consent that are against the Board's policies as set out in Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.

iv. Applications to permanently discharge surface water from a new impermeable area greater than 5 hectares.

v. Applications for permanent structures within 9 metres of an arterial (Board maintained) watercourse as defined by Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document

vi. Applications where the proposed works include the permanent alteration of over 18 metres of arterial watercourses, which are those watercourses for the time being under the control of the Board (the Board maintained network)

g) Approve the following statements within their Scheme of Delegation

Note: The WMA will recommend a fully updated scheme of delegation when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

a. The authority to consider and determine applications for Land Drainage Consent (any prior written consent required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws), is delegated to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee with the exception of non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent (unless urgent). Non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent include the following application types:

i. All applications for consent that are form applicants or agents related to or associated with a member or employee of the Board.

ii. All appeals against a previous determination of an application for consent (the application having first been determined under delegated authority by the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee)

iii. Applications for consent that are against the Board's policies as set out in Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.

iv. Applications to permanently discharge surface water from a new impermeable area greater than 5 hectares.

v. Applications for permanent structures within 9 metres of an arterial (Board maintained) watercourse as defined by Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.

vi. Applications where the proposed works include the permanent alteration of over 18 metres of arterial watercourses, which are those watercourses for the time being under the control of the Board (the Board maintained network)

b. The authority to approve plans of specified work received in accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 11 of the The Medworth Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power Facility Order 2024 is delegated to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee.

c. The authority to engage with Local Planning Authorities in accordance with Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document is delegated to officers within the WMA's Catchment Services Department.

3. Practicalities

3.1 The Middle Level Commissioners will forward any incoming planning consultations or land drainage consent applications to the WMA on receipt. The WMA will send planning responses and land drainage consents to the relevant applicant / planning authority directly on behalf of the Board. The WMA will produce a report for the Board on request, detailing works undertaken under delegated authority.

3.2 Ahead of 5th January 2026, we will write on behalf of the Board to all active planning and consenting customers to inform them of the transition.

3.3 The Water Management Alliance will charge the Board for any planning and consenting services from 5th January 2026 in line with their schedule of charge out rates. The Middle Level Commissioners will not charge the Board for minor transition time inputs between 5th January 2026 and 1st April 2026. If time input is not considered minor, then this will be charged having been discussed with the Chairman/Vice Chair.

4. Specific Sites

4.1 There are two major developments where there are cost recovery agreements in place between the developers, Middle Level Commissioners and the Board.

- Medworth CHP Facility
- The Free School

4.5 Both of these developments have byelaw consent applications submitted that will continue to be assessed and processed by the Middle Level Commissioners. These will hopefully be concluded before 5th January 2026.

4.6 The Water Management Alliance is likely to need to enter into new agreements with the developers and then the current agreements be varied or terminated. The Board is asked to delegate to the Chairman any decisions on the transition arrangements for these sites.

4.7 In terms of the ongoing system study, the contract for this is between the suppler and the Middle Level Commissioners and cannot be transferred to another party. MLC staff will therefore remain involved until completion of the contract at which point the final products will be handed over to the Board and Water Management Alliance for subsequent steps.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role:
Chief Executive, Middle Level Commissioners
Clerk to Hundred of Wisbech IDB

Appendix 1 CS Policies (WMA)
Appendix 2 Committee TOR (WMA)
Appendix 3 Charges & Fees (WMA)

Appendix 1

Water Management Alliance

Catchment Services Department

Strategy and Policy Document (Sections 1 and 2 only)

Draft for adoption by the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board from 5 January 2026

October 2025

MEMBER INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS
Broads (2006) IDB, East Suffolk WMB, King's Lynn IDB, Norfolk Rivers IDB, Pevensey & Cuckmere WLMB, South Holland IDB, and Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland IDB

www.wlma.org.uk

Constructionline

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Section 1: Introduction

This policy document has been compiled to confirm how the Board will achieve the following (including specific policy positions where appropriate):

- Process applications for Land Drainage Consent.
- Engage with planning applications and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.
- ~~Investigate and react to non-compliance with the regulatory framework established by the Land Drainage Act 1991 (including Byelaws).~~
- ~~Engage with enquiries relating to use or disposal of land owned by the Boards.~~
- ~~Protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity.~~

In adopting this document, the Board confirms that officers within the 'Catchment Services Department' at the Water Management Alliance (WMA) are instructed to act on behalf of the Board in accordance with the information within this document. The aims and functions of the teams / workstreams within the WMA's Catchment Services Department are further explained throughout this document.

Notes:

Throughout this document, reference to 'the Board(s)' means one or more of the Boards who have adopted this document, and/or officers within the WMA Catchment Services Department who working on behalf of the Board.

Although this is a public document, the intended audiences are the Boards who have adopted this document. The WMA website will disseminate the same information in a user friendly format for other audiences.

Section 2: Sustainable Development

The key aims of the Sustainable Development Team are:

- To regulate proposed third party works to ensure that developments and other third party works are carried out sustainably within the Boards' Drainage Districts and upland catchment areas.

- To ensure that new developments will not increase flood risk within the Internal Drainage District and that applicants are aware of the Board's regulatory controls and requirements.

2.1. Introduction

The Board will utilise powers available under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (including the Board's Byelaws) to regulate proposed third party works, to ensure that developments and other third party works are carried out sustainably within the Boards' Drainage District and upland catchment area.

The Board will also provide advice to Planning Authorities by commenting on planning applications within (or near to) each Board's District. The aim of this activity is to ensure that new developments will not increase flood risk within the Internal Drainage District and that applicants are aware of the Board's regulatory controls and requirements.

2.2. Engagement with Local Planning Authorities

The Board will engage with Local Planning Authorities and in doing so will seek to fulfil the following aims:

- Reduce flood risk to communities within its Internal Drainage District and highland catchment.
- Promote sustainable development in sustainable locations by supporting sound planning decisions that can be implemented by applicants and developers.
- Reduce the potential for conflict between the planning process and an Internal Drainage Board's (IDB's) regulatory process.
- Develop an understanding within other authorities and third parties of the flood risk and capacity issues within IDB areas so they can be considered through the planning process.
- Make a contribution towards the achievement of Sustainable Development, as per Section 27 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Although IDBs are not a statutory consultee in the planning process, the Board will aim to proactively review and comment on applications which may impact on flood risk and water management within the Board's Internal Drainage District (IDD). The Board will usually comment on the following applications:

		Householder Application	Minor Development	Major Development
Within IDD	Adjacent to arterial watercourse or works are proposed to alter a watercourse	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Not adjacent to arterial watercourse and no works proposed to any watercourse	No	Yes	Yes
Outside IDD	Within Watershed Catchment	No	No	Yes
	Outside Watershed Catchment	No	No	No

2.3. Land Drainage Consents

IDBs have permissive powers to regulate (consent and enforce) third party activities effecting watercourses within their district. The Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Board's Byelaws require applicant's to obtain the Board's prior written consent prior to undertaking certain types of activities within a Boards Drainage District. If the Board grant consent for proposed works, this is known as a 'Land Drainage Consent'.

Applications for Land Drainage Consent will be considered in accordance with the policies outlined within this document. Guidance on how to apply for Land Drainage Consent is available on the relevant Board's webpage. Applications will not be deemed valid unless they are accompanied by the correct application fee. In accordance the Board's Scheme of Delegation, some applications may only be determined by the Board (rather than by officers).

The IDB consenting process is independent of the need for planning permission and the granting of planning permission does not necessarily imply that consent will be granted by the Board. Likewise, obtaining Land Drainage Consent does not imply that proposed works will comply with the requirements of any other interested parties or regulators.

The main types of activity which require Land Drainage consent are listed in the following pages alongside the applicable policies.

2.4. Environmental Considerations

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) have obligations under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended) to further the general biodiversity objective. The Board therefore must and will consider the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when determining applications for Land Drainage Consent and must and will ensure that consent is not provided when environmental harm cannot be mitigated

Although it is the applicant's ultimate responsibility to determine the presence of a protected species or impact on designated sites (and for proposing mitigations and enhancements), the Board will screen applications for these impacts and may:

- Request that surveys are undertaken prior to considering consent (especially where the IDB suspects the works could impact upon a protected species).
- Request evidence that works will not impact upon protected species or a designated site, or cause a significant impact upon the environment.

Where proposed works may result in an impact on a designated site the Board will undertake a Habitat Regulations Assessment and/or a Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) assessment and may consult Natural England prior to granting consent.

2.5. Conditions of Consent

The Board may issue Land Drainage Consent subject to conditions as per byelaw 25 of each Board's Byelaws. Conditions may cover technical requirements, legal requirements, environmental matters and the need for financial payments. All conditions specified as part of any consent must be met in their entirety before the Board's formal consent will be deemed valid.

Approval of certain consents may be given subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement such as a Deed of Indemnity. A Deed of Indemnity is an agreement between two or more parties, the purpose of which is to specify the actions and consequences which will result should a particular event or events occur. Deeds of Indemnity are subject to an administration fee (see the Boards Development Control Charges and Fees document) along with the fee charged by Land Registry for lodging the document with them (see Land Registry website). Where a Deed is more complex than usual then the administration fee will be increased to reflect the additional costs to the Board.

Conditions of consent may include the requirement to make financial contributions to the Board as per the Boards Development Control Charges and Fees Policy Document.

2.6. Right of Appeal

Where an applicant believes that consent has been unreasonably withheld by the Board then under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the applicant will have a right of appeal to an independent arbitrator. Ahead of any formal appeal to an arbitrator, the Board will afford the applicant a right of reply to the Board. This should take the form of a written statement setting out why the application should be considered favourably. The matter will then be taken to the next Board meeting where it will be re-considered.

2.7. Other Bodies requiring the Board's Consent

As per Byelaw 26* of the Board's Byelaws, nothing in the Byelaws shall restrict, prevent, interfere with or prejudice the exercise of any statutory rights or powers of a number of organisations (listed within Byelaw 26*). Where an organisation listed by Byelaw 26* requires the Board's Consent the Board will liaise and negotiate with that organisation to ensure the Board's requirements are not in Breach of Byelaw 26**.

** Byelaw 27 for Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB*

2.8. Specific Policy Statements

This section details the policies that the Board will apply when seeking to regulate activities. These policy statements guide how applications made to the Boards will be determined.

Discharging Treated Foul Water (Treated Effluent)

The discharge of treated foul water (via an appropriate treatment plant) requires consent in accordance with Byelaw 3. The Board will determine applications received seeking to discharge treated foul water in accordance with the policy below.

Policy: Discharge of Treated Foul Water

The Board will only approve an application to discharge treated foul water where the watercourse can be evidenced as being connected to the wider watercourse network.

Applications may be refused if the Board's Officers consider that the proposals may increase flood risk, cause environment harm which cannot be mitigated, negatively impact the efficiency of local drainage or if the receiving watercourse will not be capable of accepting the planned additional flows.

Where the discharge is to an open watercourse, the discharge pipe should be installed through a pre-cast concrete outfall unit dug in flush with the drain batter. Suitable erosion protection should be installed below the headwall down to the toe of the watercourse and also dug in flush with the drain batter.

Where the discharge is to a piped watercourse, the discharge pipe should be connected into an existing inspection chamber, or a new inspection chamber should be constructed to the Board's specification to accommodate the outfall.

If consent is granted by the Board, this may be conditional.

The Board's consent does not replace the applicant's obligation to seek an Environment Permit from the Environment Agency for the treatment plant and outfall or meet the general binding rules published by DEFRA.

Scheme of Delegation: The Board's Scheme of Delegation / Scheule of Reserved Matters state that applications can be determined by officers under delegation if they meet the requirements of the above policy, unless the applicant is associated with a Board Member.

Discharging Surface (Rain) Water

The discharge of surface water from an impermeable area requires consent in accordance with Byelaw 3. The Board will determine applications received seeking to discharge surface water in accordance with the policy below.

Applications for consent to discharge surface water run-off into any watercourse within the Board's Internal Drainage District will be considered against the capacity of the receiving watercourse to accept the proposed surface water flows (rate and volume). To assist in determining the application, the Board may require the applicant to undertake hydraulic modelling work.

Policy: Discharge of Surface Water

The Board will only approve an application to discharge surface water where the watercourse can be evidenced as being connected to the wider watercourse network.

For systems serving impermeable areas greater than 0.25ha the proposed discharge rate should be no higher than 2/l/s/ha or annual average flood flow rate (QBar or QMed), whichever is higher. Exceptions may be allowable when it is evidenced that to achieve this rate would require a static flow control device (vortex flow control or fixed orifice plate) with an orifice smaller than 50mm* in diameter (or 100mm where debris control is not possible). Systems with a static flow control devices with an orifice smaller than 100mm in diameter should be designed to prevent debris entering the flow control device.

Applications may be refused if the Board's Officers consider that the proposals may increase flood risk, cause environmental harm which cannot be mitigated, negatively impact the efficiency of local drainage or if the receiving watercourse will not be capable of accepting the planned additional flows.

If consent is granted by the Board, this may be conditional, including the payment of a Surface Water Development Contribution as outlined by the Board's Development Control Charges and Fees Policy.

Notably it is the Board's preference that systems are adopted by statutory authorities / bodies whenever possible.

**75mm for the Pevensey and Cuckmere WLMB*

The requirement for consent to discharge surface water may be waived in writing at the officer's discretion where the impermeable area is less than 50m2 and is an extension of an existing impermeable area with a satisfactory surface water outfall.

Scheme of Delegation: The Board's Scheme of Delegation / Schedule of Reserved Matters state that applications can be determined by officers under delegation if they meet the requirements of the above policy, unless the applicant is associated with a Board Member or the impermeable area is greater than 5ha.

Altering a Watercourse

The alteration of an ordinary watercourse requires consent in accordance Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, and Byelaws 4, 6 and 15. The Board will determine applications received seeking to discharge surface water in accordance with the policy below.

Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act prohibits the installation or alteration of a culvert, the installation of a mill, dam, weir or similar obstruction to flow without the prior consent of the Board. Byelaw 4 further restricts the reconstruction, reduction, repair and removal of these structures, as well as the operation or alteration of bridges, headwalls and water control structures.

Furthermore, Byelaw 6 restricts the stopping up or diversion or alteration of flow / water level of a watercourse and Byelaw 15 restricts the dredging or raising of any material from the bed or bank of an arterial watercourse.

As part of any application to alter a watercourse the applicant has the responsibility to prove that the proposed works would not increase flood risk or negatively impact the efficiency of local drainage.

Policy: Watercourse Alterations

The Board will only approve an application to culvert or infill a watercourse if;

- There is no reasonably practicable alternative (including health and safety considerations).
- The proposal is for a replacement culvert or bridge.
- Any culverting is for the sole purpose of providing access (and the total length is the minimum required for the access).
- The proposal forms part of a drainage, agricultural or environmental improvement scheme.

Applications for the installation or alteration of mills, dams, weirs, flow controls, headwalls, bridges and other structures regulated by Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, and Byelaws 4/6/15 will be considered on a case by case basis.

Applications may be refused if the Board's Officers consider that the proposals will increase flood risk or negatively impact the efficiency of local drainage, cause environmental harm that cannot be mitigated or negatively impact the ability of the Board to carry out its operations.

Scheme of Delegation: The Board's Scheme of Delegation / Schedule of Reserved Matters state that applications can be determined by officers under delegation if they meet the requirements of the above policy, unless the applicant is associated with a Board Member or a permanent alteration over 18 metres in length is proposed to an arterial watercourse.

Undertaking Works near Arterial Drainage Infrastructure

Consent is required for all works within 9* metres of the edge of arterial drainage and flood risk management infrastructure (arterial watercourses and water management structures such as pumping stations) in accordance with Byelaw 10**. The Board will determine applications received seeking to discharge surface water in accordance with the policy below.

Maps on the Board's webpages clearly show which watercourses are designated as arterial watercourses. The 9* metre distance is measured from the edge of the drain (whether open or piped). In the case of an embanked drain this is 9* metres from the landward toe of the embankment.

Policy: Works within 9* metres of Arterial Drainage Infrastructure

The Board will only approve applications for consent for works (including replacement works) within 9* metres of arterial drainage infrastructure (as required by Byelaw 10**) if the Board's officers consider that the proposed works will not increase flood risk, negatively impact on the ability of the Board to carry out its operations (including but not limited to the Board's usual way of working, current access arrangements, available resources and the risks posed to Board employees, now or in the future) or increase the liabilities of the Board. Permanent Structures (any building which is not demountable, including any extension to a previous structure) are unlikely to be approved within 9* metres of the brink of any arterial drainage infrastructure.

Although all cases will be considered on a case by case basis, the following table represents common works and their likely acceptable distance. This table is for guidance only.

Works	Likely Acceptable Distance	
	Open Watercourse	Culverted Watercourse
Permanent Structures	9m* from brink	9m* from outside edge
Trees	9m* from brink	9m* from outside edge
Ground Surfacing	7m from brink	1m from outside edge
Demountable Fencing	7m from brink	1m from outside edge
Demountable Structures	7m from brink	3m from outside edge
Hedging	7m from brink	3m from outside edge

**7 metres within the Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland IDD*
*** Byelaws 10 and 17 for Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB*

Scheme of Delegation: The Board's Scheme of Delegation / Schedule of Reserved Matters state that pplications can be determined by officers under delegation if they meet the requirements of the above policy, unless the applicant is associated with a Board Member or the application is for a permanent structures (any building which is not demountable, including any extension to a previous structure).

Appendix 2

Water Management Alliance

WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee

Terms of Reference

Draft for adoption by the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board from 5 January 2026

October 2025

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1: Introduction

The Hundred of Wisbech IDB has delegated authority to officers within the Water Management Alliance (WMA), specifically the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee, to take certain decisions as part of the service provision being handed over in a phased manner to the Water Management Alliance from January 2026.

The nature and extent of this decision making is set out in the Board's Scheme of Delegation an in these terms of reference. These terms of reference also explain what this Committee does and how it works.

2: Role of the Committee

The WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee shall support the Board's in fulfilling their functions as outlined in Sections 1 and 2 of the WMA Catchment Services Policy Document.

3: Delegated authority from the Board

The Board hereby delegates the following plenary powers and authority to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee in accordance with the Board's Scheme of Delegation.

1. The authority to consider and determine applications for Land Drainage Consent (any prior written consent required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws), is delegated to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee with the exception of non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent (unless urgent).

   Non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent include the following application types:

   i. All applications for consent that are from applicants or agents related to or associated with a member or employee of the Board.
   ii. All appeals against a previous determination of an application for consent (the application having first been determined under delegated authority by the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee)
   iii. Applications for consent that are against the Board's policies as set out in Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.
   iv. Applications to permanently discharge surface water from a new impermeable area greater than 5 hectares.
   v. Applications for permanent structures within 9 metres of an arterial (Board maintained) watercourse as defined by Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.
   vi. Applications where the proposed works include the permanent alteration of over 18 metres of arterial watercourses, which are those watercourses for the time being under the control of the Board (the Board maintained network)

2. The authority to approve plans of specified work received in accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 11 of the The Medworth Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power

Facility Order 2024 is delegated to the Water Management Alliance's Chief Executive's Planning Committee.

4: Membership of Committee

The Committee shall comprise of two Members, namely the WMA's Chief Executive and an officer within the WMA's Catchment Services Department.

The Board shall appoint its Chairman and Vice Chairman as Advisors to support the WMA's Chief Executive and to help advise the Committee.

Any casual vacancy that arises among the Members or Advisors of the Committee for whatever reason shall be filled by the Board as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the vacancy, in accordance with the Board's casual vacancy procedures.

5: Chairman of the Committee

The WMA's Chief Executive shall be the Chairman of the Committee.

6: Quorum

No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Committee unless both Members of the Committee are present, i.e., the WMA's Chief Executive and at least one officer within the WMA's Catchment Services Department. For the avoidance of doubt a member is considered to be present if they participate in the meeting by telephone, teleconference or through an exchange of email (as is specified in the notice of the meeting).

7: Voting entitlement

Each Member of the Committee shall have one vote:

WMA Chief Executive: 1

Officer within the WMA's Catchment Services Department: 1

Decisions must be carried unanimously. For the avoidance of doubt the Advisors will not be entitled to vote.

8: Number of meetings per year

The Committee shall meet at such dates and times as is necessary. Meetings can be convened by the WMA's Chief Executive or an officer within the WMA's Catchment Services Department.

9: Notice, minutes and meeting reports

Where a meeting is proposed to take place physically or by telephone or teleconference to determine a matter:

- A minimum of four hours' notice shall be given to Members in advance of all meetings (minimum notice period). The notice must clearly state where/how the meeting is to take place; be it at a physical location, by telephone conversation or teleconference.
- The minimum notice period shall be waived when urgent matters need to be dealt with.
- All notices, agenda, minutes and meeting reports shall be sent to the Members of the Committee electronically (and Advisors, if they are requested to attend the meeting).
- The minutes of the meeting shall be confirmed as true record subject to the correction of any mistakes omissions or inaccuracies, by email following the meeting.

Where a matter is determined by the committee by email, the email exchange will serve as the minutes of the meeting.

10: Attendance of advisors at meetings

The Advisors shall attend Committee Meetings, as and when requested by the WMA's Chief Executive. However, if the Advisors are unable to attend, their absence will not by itself invalidate the proceedings of such meetings.

11: Venue for meetings

All physical meetings of the Committee shall take place at a location determined by the Committee Chairman and clearly set out in the notice of the meeting. Video/teleconferencing will be permitted and such facilities will be made available to Members and Advisors of the Committee, as and when required. Virtual meetings by email are also permitted.

Appendix 3

Water Management Alliance

Development Control Charges and Fees

This document has been prepared to detail the applicable charges and fees associated with the regulatory functions of the member Internal Drainage Boards ("IDBs") of the Water Management Alliance ("WMA").

The charges and fees detailed in this document relate to the following activities;

1. Consent application fees Page 2
2. Development Contributions Page 3
3. Maintenance Fees Page 5
4. Easements Page 8
5. Additional Costs Page 8
6. Refund Policy Page 8

Last Updated: 01/04/2025
Next Review Date: 01/04/2026

1. Consent Application Fees

The charges associated with consent application fees are set out in table 1 below.

Description	Reason for the charge being levied	Fee due[1]
Application to alter a watercourse	Application for consent in accordance with Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991	£50.00 per structure
Application for Byelaw consent (other than Byelaw 3)	Application for consent in accordance with Board's Byelaws (other than Byelaw 3)	£50.00 per site
Application to discharge surface water to a watercourse (Byelaw 3)	Application for consent in accordance with Byelaw 3	£100.00 per site
Application to discharge treated foul water to a watercourse (Byelaw 3)	Application for consent in accordance with Byelaw 3	£100.00 per site

Table 1: Consent Application Fees

Where an application form is submitted without payment of the relevant fee due, the application is not deemed valid and may not be considered by the Board.

[1] VAT is not payable on applications to the Board (statutory charges are beyond the scope).

2. Development Contribution Rates

Prior written consent is required from the Board where a development will result in an increase in the rate or volume of flows in any watercourse and, one of the conditions imposed as part of any such approval is the payment of a development contribution to the Board. The charge is made to help fund the cost to the Board resulting from increases in the rate and/or volume of surface water or treated foul water flows.

The relevant fee will be stipulated as part of a notification of intent to consent, at which point the applicant will be given a month to accept the Development Contribution as a condition of consent. The fee is payable when formal consent is issued following the applicant's confirmed acceptance of the conditions of consent. The Development Contribution is not due at the point of application.

Development Contributions are payable at the rate applicable when the consent application is validated by the Board and any fees stated within this section are to be increased by inflation annually.

2.1. Surface Water Development Contribution (SWDC)

The Surface Water Development Contribution (SWDC) is charged when an application is received to discharge surface water from an impermeable area. The SWDC calculated by:

- Determining the impermeable area of the site to be positively drained (in square metres, m^2)
- For larger sites, determining the Greenfield Runoff Rate. The greenfield runoff rate is the rate of discharge expected on an undeveloped site within a given rainfall event and varies geographically based on rainfall data and catchment characteristics. The annual average flow rate (Qbar) varies between 1.5 and 7 l/s/ha within the WMA catchment areas.

Additional SWDC Information:

- The impermeable area of the site to be positively drained (in square metres, m^2) should only reflect the additional impermeable area that is positively drained post development. It is therefore determined by taking away the area of impermeable surface positively drained to the watercourse prior to development from the proposed area of impermeable surface to be positively drained to the watercourse post development.

The Surface Water Development Contribution charges are shown in Table 2 overleaf.

SWDC per m² of impermeable surface					
Gravity Catchment			Pumped Catchment		
Maximum Discharge Rate	Total Site Impermeable Area		Maximum Discharge Rate	Total Site Impermeable Area	
	< 0.25HA	≥ 0.25HA		< 0.25HA	≥ 0.25HA
≤ 2 l/s/ha	£1.63	£1.63	≤ 2 l/s/ha	£2.03	£2.03
≤ 6 l/s/ha	£1.63	£2.12	≤ 6 l/s/ha	£2.03	£2.63
≤ 12 l/s/ha	£1.63	£2.61	≤ 12 l/s/ha	£2.03	£3.24
≤ 24 l/s/ha	£1.63	£3.58	≤ 24 l/s/ha	£2.03	£4.46
≤ 48 l/s/ha	£1.63	£5.54	≤ 48 l/s/ha	£2.03	£6.89
≤ 96 l/s/ha	£1.63	£9.45	≤ 96 l/s/ha	£2.03	£11.75
> 96 l/s/ha or unattenuated	£1.63	£11.40	> 96 l/s/ha or unattenuated	£2.03	£14.18

Table 2: SWDC charges.

2.2. Treated Foul Water Development Contribution (TFWDC)

The Treated Foul Water Development Contribution is charged when an application is received to discharge treated effluent (used potable water) from a treatment plant or waste water treatment works. The TFWDC is calculated in accordance with in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Property Type	TFWDC
Private Residential Dwelling	£184

Table 3: TFWDC charge per private residential dwelling.

Property Type	Charge per 100m² floor space
Low Occupancy Commercial - Including Industrial / Agricultural Units (1-5 people per 100m²)	£195
Medium Occupancy Commercial - Including Offices / Retail Units / Care Facilities (6-15 people per 100m²)	£586
High Occupancy Commercial - Including Restaurants / Cafés / Schools (16+ people per 100m²)	£977

Table 4: TFWDC charge for commercial development / premises.

For commercial development the occupancy will be determined using the design occupancy rates per 100m². Alternatively the Board may refer to table D1 of Building Regulations Approved Document B2 to determine design occupancy rates.

2.3. Bespoke Development Contributions

For discharges which cannot be calculated in accordance with the SWDC or TWFWDC methodology a bespoke charge may be stipulated which aims to recover some of the actual likely costs resulting from the increased volume of water draining to infrastructure maintained by the Board.

3. Maintenance Fees

A Maintenance Fee is a one-off charge payable where the Board will opt to maintain a new culvert, bridge, weir, outfall or other structure within their Internal Drainage District, using the Board's permissive powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

The relevant fee will be stipulated as part of a condition of consent. The applicant will be given will be given a month to accept the fee as a condition of consent. The fee is payable when formal consent is issued following the applicant's confirmed acceptance of the fee. Any fees stated within this section are to be increased by inflation annually.

When a maintenance fee is paid, the Board will continue to maintain the structure for a defined amount of time. Please be aware that maintenance will be undertaken using permissive powers however there is no change in the ownership or liability associated with the watercourse.

3.1. Culverts in watercourses not owned by the Board

The Board may consider maintaining private culverts in watercourses not owned by the Board subject to the payment of a maintenance fee. In such instances the Board will maintain the clear flow of water through the structure, provided it is structurally sound (as determined by the Board's Officers). This will include desilting and vegetation clearance on a recurrence deemed necessary to meet water level management requirements. The responsibility for structural maintenance will remain with the riparian landowner and the Board maintains the right to remove structures which pose a flood risk or safety risk due to poor repair.

The standard maintenance fee is calculated based on the costs that will likely be incurred by the Board in maintaining the clear flow of water through the structure over a defined period. The fees for culverts up to 150 metres are shown in tables 6 and 7 below. For culverts over 150 metres the Board's Officers will determine the maintenance fee based on a case by case basis.

	Length of Adoption	
Length of Culvert (Ø < 750mm)	50 years	100 years
< 18 metres	£2,019.02	£4,351.33
19 – 50 metres	£7,270.07	£17,217.89
51 – 100 metres	£13,147.72	£31,650.92
101 – 150 metres	£19,373.47	£46,780.16

Table 6 Maintenance Fees for culverts in a watercourse not owned by the Board with an internal diameter of less than 750mm

	Length of Adoption	
Length of Culvert (Ø ≥ 750mm)	50 years	100 years
< 18 metres	£2,436.75	£5,395.65
19 – 50 metres	£9,947.81	£23,912.24
51 – 100 metres	£15,825.46	£38,345.27
101 – 150 metres	£27,406.70	£66,863.23

Table 7: Maintenance Fees for culverts in a watercourse not owned by the Board with an internal diameter greater than or equal to 750mm

3.2. Culverts in watercourses owned by the Board

Any consent granted to install a culvert within a watercourse owned by the Board will be subject to the payment of a Maintenance Fee. The works may also require a Deed of Easement with the Board (please see section 4 of this document).

In such instances the Board will be responsible for maintaining the clear flow of water through the structure (including desilting and vegetation clearance on a recurrence deemed necessary to meet water level management requirements) as well as the structural integrity of the culvert in perpetuity. As such the maintenance fee is derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining both the clear flow of water through the structure as well as the structural integrity.

The maintenance fee for culverts in watercourses owned by the Board can be calculated by adding the relevant figure from table 8 below to the cost of replacement as determined by the Board's officers. For culverts over 150 metres the Board's Officers will determine the maintenance fee based on a case by case basis.

	Internal Diameter of Pipe (Ø)	
Length of Culvert	**Ø < 750mm**	**Ø ≥ 750mm**
< 18 metres	£4,351.33	£5,395.65
19 – 50 metres	£17,217.89	£23,912.24
51 – 100 metres	£31,650.92	£38,345.27
101 – 150 metres	£46,780.16	£66,863.23

Table 8: Maintenance Fees for culverts within Board owned Watercourses.

3.3. Watercourses

The Board may consider adding private watercourses to their arterial network, and therefore maintaining them, in line with Policy 8 of the Planning and Byelaw Strategy. Whether this is to be subject to the payment of a maintenance fee will be determined on a case by case basis and would be derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining the watercourse over a defined time period, as determined by the Board's Officers.

3.4. Sustainable Drainage Systems

The Board may consider maintaining private drainage systems in line with Policy 10 of the Planning and Byelaw Strategy. Whether this maintenance is to be conditional on to the payment of a maintenance fee will be determined on a case by case basis and would be derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining the structure over a defined time period, as determined by the Board's Officers.

3.5. Pumping Stations

The Board may consider maintaining private pumping stations subject to the payment of a maintenance fee. The fee will be determined on a case by case basis and will be derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining the structure over a defined time period, as determined by the Board's Officers.

3.6. Water Level Control Structures

The Board may consider maintaining private water level control structure subject to the payment of a maintenance fee. The fee will be determined on a case by case basis and will be derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining the structure over a defined time period, as determined by the Board's Officers.

4. Easements

Where accesses or works (including freespan bridges) are proposed within / across an area of land owned by a WMA member Board a Deed of Easement will be required. This payment may be due irrespective of who will be responsible for the future maintenance of any structures erected as part of the proposed works.

In accordance with Section 63 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the WMA Member Boards may not dispose of land owned by the Board for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained, other than with the consent of the relevant Minister.

To ensure compliance with Section 63 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 the WMA Member Boards will engage the services of a chartered surveyor, to value the proposed disposition. For the avoidance of doubt, the disposition of land includes the granting of an easement (enabling a third party to cross land owned by the Board).

5. Additional Costs

The Board passes on its costs for preparing legal agreements relating to granted consents, including any legal fees and Land Registry costs incurred. A charge may also be levied for the provision of information regarding flood risk and drainage infrastructure, at the discretion of the Board's Officers, or for work relating to hydrological models of watercourses, depending on the type and amount of information required. VAT may be chargeable on fees relating to legal agreements, flood risk/drainage data and hydrological models.

6. Refund Policy

If a formal consent is granted and a SWDC or maintenance fee is paid, the Board will consider withdrawing consent for a new structure, and refunding the SWDC or maintenance fee, if the proposed works are abandoned by the applicant within 3 years of the consent being issued. If subsequently the proposals are re-established a new consent application will be required. Future consent is not guaranteed. Application Fees are non-refundable.

Mrs Martin explained to Board members following the confirmation that the Water Management Alliance (WMA) will be managing Board affairs from 1st April 2026; it is recommended that an earlier transition of planning and consenting services is approved by the Board. This is to better manage the transition, particularly providing additional continuity in respect of some of the more significant developments within the District.

It is intended that the resolutions take effected from 5th January 2026.

Mr Miscandlon asked if the transfer of the planning and consenting services would also include enforcement, and it was confirmed it would.

Matthew Philpott from WMA added that the Board already have similar policies to the MLC, but it is not practical for WMA staff to learn and work within the MLC processes for a short period of time, although it is likely that they are very similar. The Chair added that the conversation regarding an earlier handover of planning and consenting came about following a development application from Del Monte in relation to a large-scale development that would take some time to bring to completion, and that it would be prudent for WMA's Planning and Consenting team to work on this development from the beginning. A meeting was held between the Chair, Vice Chairs, WMA and MLC to discuss this application and other larger developments and it was felt that an earlier transition would be prudent.

Mr Buttress had asked for clarification on point 3.3 of the paper, where it was indicated that the 'Middle Level Commissioners will not charge the Board for minor transition time inputs' and added that he had been in contact with Paul Burrows, the Middle Level Chief Executive, who had advised that any inputs of less than 15 minutes of the MLC Planning Engineers time would not be charged, with time in excess of this being charged at the standard rates.

The Board agreed unanimously the resolutions.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

That from 5th January 2026 the Board will:

h) Enter into Service Level Agreement (LA) with the King's Lynn IDB (Water Management Alliance) from 5 January 2026 to cover provision of planning and consenting services only.

i) Adopt the Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document (Sections 1 and 2 only) - Appendix 1.

Note: The WMA will recommend the full document is adopted when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

j) Adopt the terms of reference for the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee - Appendix 2.

k) Adopt the WMA's Development Control Charges and Fees Policy – Appendix 3

l) That the Middle Level Commissioners are no longer authorised to sign and issue consents on behalf of the Board and respond to planning applications on behalf of the Board.

m) Approve the following statement to added to their Schedule of Reserved Matters

Note: The WMA will recommend a fully updated schedule when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

a. Approval of non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent (any prior written consent required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws), other than urgent applications. Non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent include the following application types:
   i. All applications for consent that are from applicants or agents related to or associated with a member or employee of the Board.
   ii. All appeals against a previous determination of an application for consent (the application having first been determined under delegated authority by the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee)
   iii. Applications for consent that are against the Board's policies as set out in Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.
   iv. Applications to permanently discharge surface water from a new impermeable area greater than 5 hectares.
   v. Applications for permanent structures within 9 metres of an arterial (Board maintained) watercourse as defined by Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document
   vi. Applications where the proposed works include the permanent alteration of over 18 metres of arterial watercourses, which are those watercourses for the time being under the control of the Board (the Board maintained network)

n) Approve the following statements within their Scheme of Delegation

Note: The WMA will recommend a fully updated scheme of delegation when all service provision is handed over to WMA.

a. The authority to consider and determine applications for Land Drainage Consent (any prior written consent required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws), is delegated to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee with the exception of non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent (unless urgent). Non-delegated applications for Land Drainage Consent include the following application types:
   i. All applications for consent that are form applicants or agents related to or associated with a member or employee of the Board.
   ii. All appeals against a previous determination of an application for consent (the application having first been determined under delegated authority by the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee)
   iii. Applications for consent that are against the Board's policies as set out in Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.
   iv. Applications to permanently discharge surface water from a new impermeable area greater than 5 hectares.
   v. Applications for permanent structures within 9 metres of an arterial (Board maintained) watercourse as defined by Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document.
   vi. Applications where the proposed works include the permanent alteration of over 18 metres of arterial watercourses, which are those watercourses for the time being under the control of the Board (the Board maintained network)

b. The authority to approve plans of specified work received in accordance with Part 6 of Schedule 11 of the The Medworth Energy from Waste Combined Heat and Power Facility Order 2024 is delegated to the WMA Chief Executive's Planning Committee.

c. The authority to engage with Local Planning Authorities in accordance with Section 2 of the Board's Catchment Services Strategy and Policy Document is delegated to officers within the WMA's Catchment Services Department.

B.2167 Consulting Engineers' Reports
Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Thursday 13th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

1. **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 Haskoning.

There was a delay to surveys being completed due to availability of surveyors and issues with the information provided (especially with regards to the CCTV survey of culverts). However, the data supplied was sufficient for Haskoning to build the model. As a result, a substantial reduction of the surveyor's fee was negotiated to allow money if the Board wishes to carry out further work separately in the future.

A number of additional items have been added to the scope of the study to cover specific conditions in events (such as debris screen blockages) and changes to the Board's system (such as the Attenuation Area and Incinerator works) that are ongoing, as they are advantageous to add to the model at this stage. This will reflect a more accurate situation for a model which will stand up better to Environment Agency scrutiny when FCERM GiA is applied for in the future.

These aspects have set back delivery of the study until at least the end of the year and completion of the project with the business case to spring/summer 2026. Once the full details of the additional items are known, an accurate finish will be known.

Meetings have been held with both Boards' involvement to discuss the options to take forward to the business case, including consideration of control structures, attenuation area(s) or improvements to existing or a new pumping station.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: List of planning applications since last report

Appendix 1

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

MLC Ref.	Council Ref.	Applicant	Type of Development	Location
1778	F/YR25/0444/FDC	Fenland District Council	Conversion (1 x dwelling to 7 x sheltered accommodation)	Main Road, Elm
1779	F/YR25/0435/F	Mr A Mason	Residence (Extension)	The Stitch, Friday Bridge
1780	F/YR25/0459/F	Dawbarns & Sons Ltd	Industrial	Enterprise Way, Wisbech
1781	F/YR25/0565/F	Mr A Rolfe	Residence (New dwelling)	Bar Drove, Friday Bridge
1782	25/01235/F	Motor Fuel Group	Commercial	Elm High Road, Emneth
1783	F/YR25/0653/F	Mrs C Butcher	Residence (New dwelling)	Gosmoor Lane, Elm

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

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Description of Works	Location	Date consent granted
1746		HW/BC/160	Medworth CHP Ltd	Encroachment, to carry out a groundwater pumping test to provide hydrogeological information	Algores Way, Wisbech	29/05/2025
1768	F/YR25/0025/CERTP	HW/BC/161	Tudor Dumitru	Replacement of septic tank with treatment plant	Begdale Road, Elm	01/07/2025
183, 1313, 1456 & 1654		HW/BC/162	Mr A Harris	Encroachment – Installation of piled foundations, ring beam, ground slab, single bay garage, raised patio, driveway & footpaths	Fridaybridge Road, Elm	20/08/2025

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

MLC Ref	Council Ref	Consent No	Applicant	Location	Date consent granted
1746		HW/DC/28	Medworth CHP Ltd	Algores Way, Wisbech	29/05/2025
1768	F/YR25/0025/CERTP	HW/DC/29	Tudor Dumitru	Begdale Road, Elm	01/07/2025

There have been no infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

Mrs Martin referred the Board to the Consulting Engineers report and that it would be taken as read.

Combined Catchment Study

Referring to the report, Mrs Martin provided the following update from Project Engineer, Tom Pollendine. She reported that the latest programme was received at the end w/c 27th October. Mr Pollendine and Graham Moore, the MLC Planning Engineer, met with the Board members and a representative from Royal Haskoning on 20th October on site to discuss inclusion of the debris screen effects on the current condition of the drainage for the baseline model. They are currently discussing the inclusion of A47 culvert assessment and awaiting a price from Royal Haskoning but this is looking increasingly unlikely to be included in the study now.

The timescale on the current programme is for the baseline environmental assessment to be complete imminently, the baseline modelling to be completed at the start of December 2025, short list modelling in the New Year and OBC production starting in March/April. Project completion in June with the Project Completion meeting currently scheduled around the first week of July.

Deliverables will be the Baseline Environmental Assessment Report (any time now), Modelling Report in April 2026, Outline Business Case in June 2026 and transfer of files at completion in July 2026.

It was explained that due to contractual arrangements, it is not possible to hand over the responsibility for the Catchment Study to WMA for completion and so it was agreed that MLC would complete the study with WMA representatives attending meetings towards the end of the process.

Key planning issues

Taking the report as read, Mr Moore invited questions from the Board, adding that he was surprised about the number of planning applications in the district, being lower than expected. Mrs French advised that Fenland District Council Planning Committee had approved two large planning applications the previous day. She added that she keeps asking if the Drainage Board have been consulted when applications are discussed.

As this was likely to be the last meeting administered by MLC staff, Mr Buttress wanted to thank Mr Moore for his support. In his role of District Officer, Mr Buttress had felt that Mr Moore was his ‘go to’ for advice on planning issues, and he had simply been brilliant. Mr Moore responded that this Board had paid a large part in his role of Planning Engineer over many years and wished the Board well in the future.

B.2168 District Officers Report

Mr Leach gave a verbal report on behalf of both Mr Buttress and himself as District Officers. He advised that he had started to source quotations for desilting the pipe in Weasenham Lane/Oldfield Lane, He has spent time with contractors and following a rigorous process they have appointed ADC to carry out the works. These works have now been carried out.

The District Officers have spent some time with Royal Haskoning, especially taking them to look at weed screens. They have also spent time with WMA’s officers that lead planning and consenting.

They have met with Tim Marks regarding issues with the incinerator, moving water voles and dealing with acoustic fencing. They have not been able to walk to the drains and could not therefore invite Board members to join them as requested by Ms Foice-Beard at the last meeting, but they will need to carry out a maintenance inspection in February and will advise Board members when this is should they wish to attend.

At Point 67 there is a large manhole chamber which is located in the entrance to Nestle Purina’s site in Coalwharf Road. Nestle Purina have a consent to discharge, and Anglian Water also discharge at that point.

There is about 0.5m of silt in the pipe which comes into the Board's manhole. Mr Leach has spent some time in the last few days on Anglian Water's WhatsApp chat to try to resolve this. However, the manhole cannot be accessed without the cooperation of Nestle Purina due its location. It is hoped that the silt issue will be addressed in the next week.

Mr Leach advised the Mr Buttress would follow this report with his, which will mainly contain Health & Safety and Environmental information. He reminded the Board that they were very lucky that Mr Buttress has taken on these roles, especially as Boards are constantly being reminded of their responsibilities in these areas and the consequences of breaches of legislative responsibilities.

Mr Leach advised that he would be invoicing for 16 hours of time since the last Board meeting.

Mr Buttress continued, advising that he had been in discussion with Mr Harrison (in his capacity as a contractor) regarding a serious issue with watercress between points 54 and 53, on Ha'penny Lane. With a significant storm being forecast Mr Harrison was instructed to carry out some clearance, but this required going onto crops and causing some damage. The landowner had given permission for the access, but compensation for the crop loss will need to be paid. Mr Buttress suggested that, as regular access may be needed in the same area, that the landowner be approached to leave a 6m strip to allow access, in return for payment. It is not possible to access the drain from the opposite side on the lane, due to vegetation growth in the lane. It could be necessary to clear the watercress 4 or 5 times a year and it will be necessary to get in with a machine and weed bucket. Mrs French advised that although a planning application for the area had been rejected, a revised application is expected, and it will be important for access to this drain to be considered in any development. Mr Harrison advised that when removing the weed it needs to be deposited on the bank and so access will be needed from Ha'penny Lane. Mr Buttress recalled that a previous major rainstorm had seen the vegetation being pushed to Point 50, and they had to spend a good 4 hours retrieving the weed before it caused a significant issue. They have tried chemical destruction of the weed, but this did not work at the time is was applied due to a change in weather along with other issues. Removal using a weed basket is really the only way to deal with it. Mr Harrison added that the Board will need to keep removing the weed until an alternative solution can be found. The Chair added that the weed is fast growing. Mr Miscandlon asked if the vegetation is so invasive, when it is removed from the channel, why it was not being removed from the site. Mr Harrison replied that this would cause unacceptable disruption, and that the Board need to find a way to protect the drain without causing an additional issue with depositing mud onto the road when accessing to remove the weed.

Mr Buttress also advised the Board of an issue that Mr Miscandlon had been assisting with. In the New Drove area overgrown bushes are preventing access to Point 50 from the highway, and so MVV allowed the Board to access the reach through their development site. However, this will not be feasible in the future. Some discussion followed regarding which Council department to contact for assistance with clearance of the bushes. It was agreed that the Board would establish who the associated landowner is and then contact the appropriate Council department to advise of the issue. The Chair advised of a further issue in the Newbridge Lane area, where a van and caravan have been parked in the road preventing access. Mrs French advised that both Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council should be contacted for their assistance.

Mr Buttress ended his part of the report by thanking Mr Leach for his work, adding that he thought they worked well together. He advised that neither District Officer charged the Board for all of the time they spent on Board issues, and the Board noted their appreciation of this.

<u>Environmental Report</u>

Mr Buttress gave his verbal report. He advised that following the last Board meeting he had met with Sofi Lloyd, the MLC Ecology and Environmental Services Manager and that there were a lot of legal requirements that the Board should follow. He was happy to report that the Board were following the guidelines, filling in an Environmental Survey Report where required, and arranging for the relocation of water voles. However the water voles have now made their home in a section of polluted watercourse in Algores Way, a pollution problem which has been going on for about 8 years. The EA reviewed the pollution about 18 months ago and 5 weeks ago Mr Leach, Mr Buttress and Ms Lloyd, and also Ben Wales from Waldersey IDB all contacted the EA Hotline and reported the pollution, but there has been no response to date.

Mr Buttress and Mr Leach have also been liaising with Mr Harrison regarding the timing of flail mowing, removal of vegetation using the weed basket, and so on. They have set up a WhatsApp group including Mr Harrison's staff to advise areas that should and shouldn't be cut and this is working well.

Mr Buttress asked if the Board were happy for him to continue as Environmental Liaison for the Board, and the Board were pleased agree that Mr Buttress continues, thanking him for his work.

Health and Safety Update

Mr Buttress circulated the Audit and Inspection Report carried out by AW Safety Ltd and apologised to the Board for not providing this before the meeting as the review had only been carried out the previous week. He has arranged for a digital copy of the document to be circulated to all Board members following the meeting. Mr Buttress invited the Board to contact him directly with any comments once they had chance to the read the document fully.
Mr Buttress reminded the Board that they had agreed at the last meeting to engage Cope to provide their H&S guidance. Cope have now become AW Safety Ltd, and Mr Buttress has met with them, and a H&S audit has been carried out. He has been advised that anything highlighted green in the report is OK, yellow and amber have resolutions in place, or there is documentary evidence either in Mr Buttress' office or at the MLC office. The items that are marked as red need to be discussed by the Board.

Mr Buttress referred the Board to point A.10 of the report. He advised that he had been unable to provide evidence of contractor selection as the documentation had not been handed over by the previous Chair, but he was aware that they had carried out a length process of interviewing and carrying out due diligence on 5 contractors before making their selection.

Referring to point D.13 Mr Buttress urged the Board to look read the 'Good Governance' guide and review the ADA videos, as this will provide the evidence that the Board are fulfilling this audit requirement. He added that he had been advised verbally when the inspection was carried out that there were no 'red' issues identified, and so was disappointed when he received the written report with three 'red' items identified. These are significant issues that the Board must address. The first of these items is reported as F.1, F.14 and relates to the outfall at Point 1, where this Board's district adjoins the Waldersey district. Mr Buttress refutes that there is a lack of visible signage as there is signage everywhere, but he does agree that a gate would be helpful. Item F.3 relating to the barrier at Point 50 is easily remedied as this is just missing a bolt.

Moving on to item F.15, Mr Buttress felt that this statement should include item F.14 plus the 3 other structures. In January 2019 there were no access platforms in place, and he had been advised by NFU, who were the Boards previous H&S advisors, that these should be installed which was duly arranged. NFU were happy with the structures and the Board always felt these were fit for purpose. However, this report is advising the Board that they should engage a competent person to inspect these. Mr Philpott has been assisting the Board in commissioning this survey, advising that should an incident happen involving the structures, the Board would be asked how they had established they were fit for purpose and currently they cannot provide any documentation to support this assumption.

Mr Buttress concluded that the audit that had been carried out had been intensive, and that he feels that the Board need an annual audit and he recommends to the Board that they commission AW Safety Ltd to carry out that audit. He also feels that the time is right for him to relinquish his H&S responsibilities and gave the Board notice of his intention to continue until 1st April 2026 when he would like to hand this role over to WMA to manage. He added his intention to provide every Board member with a map of the district showing where signs have been installed and asked all Board members to check these when passing and report any that are missing so that they can be replaced.

Mr Buttress advised that he would be invoicing for 59 hours of time since the last Board meeting, much of this being for Health & Safety works.

Mr Roy agreed with Mr Buttress' proposals and commended his proactive approach, agreeing that the 'red' items should be a priority. He also agreed that the Board should be looking towards WMA to take on the role as the Board do not have the relevant expertise. Mrs French also thanked Mr Buttress for the time and effort he has put in over the years.

Mr Philpott added that he thought the audit had been thorough and that the 'red' items would be easily addressed. He added that it is good governance to have a Health & Safety lead on the Board and would welcome Mr Buttress staying involved. In response Mr Buttress agreed to do this provided the role is not as onerous as his previous role. The Chair thanked Mr Buttress for his report and the work he had undertaken, and Mr Buttress added that thanks should also be extended to Mr Leach for his work to support the role.

Maintenance

Mr Harrison reported that the usual issues were being encountered plus a few access issues as previously discussed. Work is continuing in the district but there are no issues to report.

Mr Buttress reminded the Board that they had agreed the previous year to extend Mr Harrison's contract for a further year. Mr Buttress suggested that the Board negotiate with Mr Harrison to extend that contact until the planned amalgamation with Waldesey IDB is complete, especially in the light of Mr Harrison's Health & Safety knowledge of the Board and his knowledge and understanding of the district. This was agreed unanimously by the Board. This agreement prompted the need for the Works Committee to meet in order to renegotiate Mr Harrison's rate, and the Board resolved that the Works Committee be given approval to do this.

RESOLVED

That the Board retain the services of AW Safety Ltd for H&S on an annual basis.

That the services of Harrison Agricultural Contractors be retained until the completion of the amalgamation with Waldesey IDB.

That the Works Committee meet with Harrison Agricultural Services in order to negotiate a new rate.

B.2169 Governance

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**9**
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 13th November 2025**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the Annual Return 2024/2025
B. Consider and approve the Auditor's Report 2024/2025
C. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor.
D. 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.
E. Exercise of Public Rights
F. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments

1. Annual Return & Auditor's Report 2024/2025.

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 2025. (Appendix 1)
- the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year ended 31st March 2025. (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

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

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

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

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

3. Exercise of Public Rights

3.1 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.

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

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

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

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

4. Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments:

4.1 The clerk to report.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025
Appendix 2 Audit Report 2024/2025

Appendix 1

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Notice of conclusion of the audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31st March 2025

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 Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board for the year ended 31st March 2025 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 Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

The Clerk
Hundred of Wisbech 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: 10th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, 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 2024/25 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 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 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 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 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 2023/24 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
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: 03/06/2025 11/06/2025 16/06/2025

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: P. BEEEEY - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 16/06/2025

***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 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

HUNDRED OF WISBECH 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:

09/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

B.2157

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

Chair M. G Day

Clerk R Martin

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

HUNDRED OF WISBECH 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	1,264,671	1,103,653	*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	215,262	284,731	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	36,183	193,162	*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	74,628	74,628	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	337,835	256,049	*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	1,103,653	1,250,869	*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	1,199,007	1,267,924	*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	244,500	244,500	*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	1,310,495	1,259,011	*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

AWool

Date 30/05/2025

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

09/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

B.2158

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

M. G. Bury

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of **Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board – DB0038**

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 2025; 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 2024/25

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 2024/25

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 2025.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date 07/09/2025

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 2025

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

Dear Messrs. P Burrows, A Wool, and S Ablett,

MLC administered Internal Drainage Boards - Internal Audit 2024-2025

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 2025, 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. **Employee Benefits**

   As of 6 April 2025, HMRC has implemented a significant change in the tax treatment of double cab pickups. These vehicles are now generally classified as cars rather than vans for Benefit-in-Kind (BIK) purposes, unless they are primarily suited for the conveyance of goods.

   As a result, BIK charges will now be based on CO_2 emissions, which could lead to higher tax liabilities for employees and increased Class 1A National Insurance contributions for employers. However, vehicles that were purchased, leased, or ordered before 6 April 2025 may continue to be treated as vans until the earlier of disposal, lease expiry, or 5 April 2029.

   We recommend that businesses review their fleet policies and carefully consider the tax implications when acquiring new vehicles.

   In relation to other employee benefits, we note that, where applicable, these are being correctly recognised as Benefit-in-Kind and disclosed on form P11D. We encourage employers to regularly review the valuation of such benefits to ensure they accurately reflect what the employee receives—particularly in cases where living accommodation or similar provisions are offered.

Client comment:

This was considered and new double cab pickups ordered before 6th April 2025. This will be reviewed again before 5th April 2029.

An audit of Benefits-in-Kind declared and P11D's has been arranged for October.

2. 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.

3. 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. Although inflation has now eased to 3.4% as of May 2025, it remains essential to continue reinvesting and actively managing these assets to preserve and grow their value over time.

Client comment:

We are currently making treasury deposits for individual Boards within the mandated authority given by each authority but need to manage this with specific cashflow 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.

4. 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. Several Boards have small holdings of land which are let at reasonable rates with a view to keep the land tidy and in good order therefore they are not necessarily commercially viable. Several 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.

5. 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 3 - 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.

6. Bank reconciliation and verification

We are pleased to note that bank reconciliations have been conducted on a monthly basis throughout the year. However, we observed that verification was not completed for the first two months of the year across all Boards.

We acknowledge that this period coincides with a particularly demanding time for the staff from financial department, who are focused on preparing year-end financial reports for submission ahead of the 1st July 2025 deadline for external audit.

Nonetheless, we would like to emphasise that timely and documented verification of bank reconciliations is a fundamental internal control. It plays a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of financial records. We therefore recommend that verification be consistently performed and evidenced on a monthly basis, including during peak reporting periods.

Client comment:

Control accounts and bank reconciliations are carried out for the quarter to 30th June every year and we do not have the capacity to complete these monthly at that time. Accounts are still be prepared in this time and adjustments made, therefore closing/opening balances have not been confirmed.

7. Website Publication

We are pleased to note that, for several years, a substantial amount of information has been made publicly available and is generally kept up to date, with links directing users to the most current versions. However, we have occasionally observed inaccuracies—such as links pointing to outdated or incorrect documents. For example, a link may reference the Capital Improvement Programme for the 2023/24 financial year instead of the current 2024/25 version. We also note that the most relevant version of this document is available within the published meeting minutes.

Nonetheless, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of ensuring that all published information is accurate and up to date.

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.

8. **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

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	£37,696.50
Hundred of Wisbech IDB - Creditor	£40,000.00
Difference	**£2,303.50**

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 have also noted that the closing debtors balance in Waldersey IDB and the closing creditors balance in Hundred of Wisbech IDB were overstated in the previous financial year by £38,700.30. This discrepancy arose because the Boards were not aware that a grant recovery would be available later in the year to offset excess pumping costs incurred during the 2023/24 financial year. This issue only came to light following the completion of the audit for that year.

We can confirm that the overstated amounts have been correctly adjusted during the current financial year in both Waldersey IDB and Hundred of Wisbech IDB.

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 because 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 approved to enter discussions concerning a potential amalgamation between the Boards. It is unlikely that any amalgamation will be completed by 31st March 2026 at which time both Boards are moving to the Water Management Alliance.

Waldersey IDB

We have noted that the Board owns two parcels of land, located at Green Drove and Crooked Bank. We understand that the Green Drove land has been professionally revalued and is situated near the pumping station. However, the Crooked Bank land, which is located next to the former pumping station, has not been revalued. Based on our discussions during the course of the audit, it would appear that the Board currently has no plans to undertake a revaluation of this land.

Both parcels of land should be revalued and recorded in the Board's fixed asset register to ensure these assets are properly reflected in the financial records of the Board.

Client comment:

Clerking and administration of Waldersey IDB is being transferred to the Water Management Alliance in 2026. Board approval would be required to action this request. We would advise the board to approve for a valuation exercise to take place at their next Board meeting which is in June 2026.

Manea & Welney IDB

During our review, it was noted that the Debtors Report showed a significant unallocated amount of £1,625,843.45. We understand that this is an isolated incident related to software issue that has subsequently been rectified and hasn't affected the accuracy of the financial statements prepared.

Client comment:

Your comment is noted.

Upwell IDB

We observed that the new hire purchase agreement applies the straight-line interest allocation method. We have recommended adopting the effective interest method, which more accurately reflects the cost of borrowing over the life of the agreement and is in line with UK accounting standards.

Based on our discussions during the course of the audit, we understand that this recommendation will be implemented in the accounts for the next financial year. The impact on the current financial statements is not considered material.

Client comment:

Your comment is noted.

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

Mrs Martin went through the Governance report and the Board were asked to consider its content.

Completion of the Annual Accounts and Annual Return of the Board – 2024/2025

RESOLVED

i) The Board considered and approved the comments of the Auditors on the Annual Return for the year that ended on the 31st March 2025.

ii) The Board considered and approved the Audit Report of the Internal Auditor for the year that ended on the 31st March 2025.

The Board noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor

Review of Internal Controls

The Board were reminded that these are available on the Board's web page and were asked to 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.

RESOLVED

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

Exercise of Public Rights

Mrs Martin asked the Board to confirm that they have provided proper opportunity for the exercise of electors rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and referring 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.

RESOLVED

The Board noted their satisfaction with the Exercise of Public Rights.

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 2024.

B.2170 Finance Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**10**
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT**

Date:	Thursday 14th November 2025	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Budget Monitoring
B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
C. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2025/2026 appendix 1.

1. Budget Monitoring

1.1 The current forecast for income/expenditure to 31st March 2026 shows that expenditure could be in-line with the budget against which rates were set.

However, members are advised that these figures are estimating pumping costs to be in-line with the budget proposal against which the rates have been set and should therefore also consider the significant financial implications major storm events can have on drainage Board budgets.

The joint Hundred of Wisbech /Waldersey flood alleviation catchment study is progressing and for 2025/2026 these works are fully grant aided. The engineer will provide an update on this scheme.

Revised out-turn figures for 2024/2025 from Waldersey IDB have shown a better than originally forecast position with regards to the joint plant maintenance costings and this adjustment will be shown in the year-end accounting statements, likely re-instating balances previously reduced.

2. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

2.1 To consider the District Officers Fee for 2024/2025

3. Estimates for 2024/25

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

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

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett
Role: Head of Finance/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2025/26

Appendix 1

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

		Approved Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 30th September 2025 £	Estimate To 31st March 2026 £
1	Rates, Insurances and telephones	1,800	697	1,725
2	Drainworks (incl District Officer's fee & expenses and Environmental measures	95,000	39,066 A	95,000 B
3	Joint Plant Maintenance (with Waldersey IDB)	50,000 C/D	0 C/D	50,000 C/D
4	Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions etc	25,650	10,912	25,650
5	Planning Applications	9,500	4,102	9,500
6	Environment Agency Precept	17,780	17,780	17,780
7	Loan Charges	74,628	37,314	74,628
8	Studies and Surveys	87,160 E	3,181 E	87,160 E
		361,518	113,052	361,443
	Improvement Works - Funding	87,160 F	3,181 F	87,160 F
	LESS Rents, Deposit Accounts Interest etc	20,000	10,723	20,000
	General Fund - Use of balances	20,378 G	0	20,303 H
	Annual value - 3,119,734	233,980	99,147	**233,980**

Remarks

A -	Includes:-	
	Contractors charges	37,291
	District Officer Fees	1,775
B -	Includes provision for:	
	Contractors charges	38,400
	Proposed Slubbing Programme	30,000
	Additional Work/Fuel Changeover/Surcharge	14,000
	Spoil disposal	5,000
C -	Provision Based on New Calculation	
D -	Includes for New Electricty Contract	
E -	Joint Flood Alleviation Study	
F -	Funding (Joint Flood Allevation Study)	
G -	Use of General Fund	20,378
H -	Use of General Fund	20,303

Mr Wool referred to the Budget Monitoring report and explained to the Board that the figures had been reviewed with the Chair and Vice Chairs. He reported that spending is currently on budget and adhering to the estimates.

The main area of potential variation would be pumping costs should there be a wet winter or storm event. The District Officers also cautioned that a storm event could affect the stability of the banks and channel structures which could be costly to repair.

Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

District Officers fees for 2025/26

Mr Buttress and Mr Leach declared an interest in this item.

Mr Wool advised the Board that arrangements had remained the same for the last few years and asked for the Board's view on this. Neither District Officer had asked for an increase and did not feel one was necessary, but Mrs French thought that should have an increase and this was supported by Mr Miscandlon, who proposed that a percentage increase in line with inflation should be given every year. Mr Miscandlon proposed that their rate increase by 4%, from £25/hour to £26/hour, and this was seconded by Mr Roy. Mrs French proposed that the rate increase to £27/hour for 2025/26, and then increase by inflation annually. Mr Miscandlon withdrew his original proposal and seconded Mrs French's, and this was agreed unanimously.

Mr Leach and Mr Buttress both expressed their appreciation.

RESOLVED

> That the District Officers hourly rate increase to £27/hour for 2025/2026 and then annually in accordance with inflation.

B.2171 Date of next Meeting

Mr Philpott advised the Board that an additional meeting may be required in February 2026 to discuss rate setting but this is to be advised.

RESOLVED

> That next Meeting of the Board be held on Tuesday 9th June 2026 at the Water Management Alliance Offices, Pierpoint House, Horsley's Fields, Kings Lynn at 2pm

B.2172 Any Other Business

The Chair observed that it was likely that this would be the last meeting held at the Middle Level Offices and wanted to thank the staff at the Middle Level Commissioners for their help and input over the years.

……………………………………………………
Chair

………………………………….
Date