

SUTTON AND MEPAL
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

At a Meeting of the Sutton and Mepal Internal Drainage Board
Held at the Middle Level Offices on Thursday 15th January 2026.

PRESENT

M Latta (Chair)	D Griffiths
C Lee (Vice Chair)	M Heading
A Allan	R Lee
R Angood	R Smith
C Baker	J Sole
S Criswell (HDC)	P Sole
T Edgley	E Veal

The Lead Clerk Mrs Ruth Martin representing the Clerk and Mr David Bantoft representing the Consulting Engineer was in attendance. The Chairman also welcomed Mr Gary Roberts from the Environment Agency to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Jackson, Mr E Jackson and Mr W Veal.

B.2400 Declarations of Interest

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

The Chairman and Mr M Heading declared an interest as Middle Level Board Members.

Members agreed to declare any interests during the course of the meeting.

B.2401 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes were confirmed as a true record and no Matters Arising were identified.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 22nd May 2025 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

B.2402 Constitution & Membership

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	SUTTON & MEPAL IDB	Subject:	CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP
Date:	Thursday 15 th January 2026	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 **0** vacancies
- E. Reinforce the need for members to view all five ‘Good Governance’ videos.
- F. Identify any topic areas for additional training, as well as any inspection/site visit requirements.

1. Current status

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

	Elected Members	Appointed Members	Total Members	Quorum
Composition	16	N/A		8
Actual	16	1 HDC	17	
Vacancies	0		0	

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

No	Name	Status (one of four categories)	Commentary
1	A Allan	Nominee of ratepayer (Allan Partners)	
2	R Angood	Ratepayer	
3	T Edgley	Nominee of ratepayer (R A Latta Farms Ltd)	
4	D Griffiths	Nominee of Ratepayer (Mick George Ltd)	
5	M Heading	Ratepayer	
6	M Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	
7	M Latta	Ratepayer	Chairman
8	C Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	Vice-Chair
9	R Lee	Nominee of ratepayer (P J Lee & Sons)	
10	R Smith	Ratepayer	
11	J Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
12	P Sole	Nominee of ratepayer (A Sole & Son)	
13	E Veal	Ratepayer	
14	W Veal	Ratepayer	
15	C Baker	Nominee of ratepayer (A G Heading)	
16	E Jackson	Nominee of ratepayer (DJ & MO Jackson)	

- 1.3 The table below details the current appointed members of the Board.
- 1.4 Special levy paying District Councils appoint members to Boards and their role is to be part of the Board representing all the non-agricultural interests within the Board’s district. The Council must consider appointing members who have relevant knowledge or experience that is relevant to the Board and its district.
- 1.5 Appointed members do not need to be councillors or employees of the Council, therefore can represent wider relevant interests within the district, eg major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Stephen Criswell	HDC	Councillor
2			

- 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	22/05/2025	16/01/2025	23/05/2024	23/05/2024
1	A Allan	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present
2	R Angood	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	C Baker	Present	Present	Present	Present
4	T Edgley	Present	Present	Present	Present
5	D Griffiths	Apologies	Present	N/A	N/A
6	M Heading	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
7	E Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	M Jackson	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	M Latta	Present	Present	Present	Present
10	C Lee		Present	Present	Present
11	R Lee	Present	Present	Present	Present
12	R Smith	Apologies	Present		
13	J Sole	Present	Present		
14	P Sole	Present	Present	Present	Present
15	E Veal	Present	Present		
16	W Veal	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	M Latta		Attended	Attended	Attended

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	22/05/2025	16/01/2025	23/05/2024	18/01/2024
1	Stephen Criswell HDC	Present	Present	Present	Present
2					
3					

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.)

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

- 3.1 The Election of members of the Board will take place this year. Members will receive an election notice during July/August and are requested to return their complete slip as soon as possible. This term for current members ends on 31st October 2026.

4. Training

- 4.1 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/>
- 4.2 To date 0 of 15 Board Members have reported viewing all five videos.
To date 7 of 15 Board Members have reported viewing 2 of the 5 videos.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Member training is reported to Defra as part of the annual IDB1 return.

Author Name: Polly Tombleson

Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Mrs Martin advised that there are currently no vacancies on the Board, and Board members were thanked for their regular attendance. The Board were advised that 2026 is an election year and that they would be advised on further details in due course.

Board members were asked to complete the training matrix circulated and were reminded that Board training is now reported on the IDB1 form and asked to advise the Clerk of any training completed or required.

B.2403 Clerk's Report

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

IDB Fund

2025/26 has begun how 2024/25 ended with delivery being the primary focus. We were successful in securing approximately £4.5m of grant for a number of IDB Fund (Tranche 2b) submissions and the administration and delivery of these commitments has been a primary focus particular for staff in M&E, Operations, Environment & Ecology and Finance, meaning some 'business as usual' activity has been impacted:

- Mobile Pumps – Phase 2 - £1.2m
- St Germans Pumping Station Resilience Phase 2 - £1m
- Bevill's Pond Resilience - £0.3m (MLC and Sawtry IDB)
- Asset Resilience – Pumps and Channels - £2m (MLC and IDBs)

This fund, coming with less constraints than FCRM grant-in-aid, is enabling us to think and invest differently. In my view we need to change gear in terms of our business model and philosophy to become more commercially minded within the boundaries of a not-for-profit public authority. Whilst there remains work to do within our improvement and modernisation journey, our organisational foundations are now in a much healthier position to build from, albeit our base capacity and capability are a constraint to what needs to be, and could be, achieved. We will need to identify and nurture partnerships not only with traditional partners but with the innovators within our local agricultural and the development sectors.

The Board discussed differing ways in which they could source funding and will continue to consider this in the future.

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.

Electricity Service

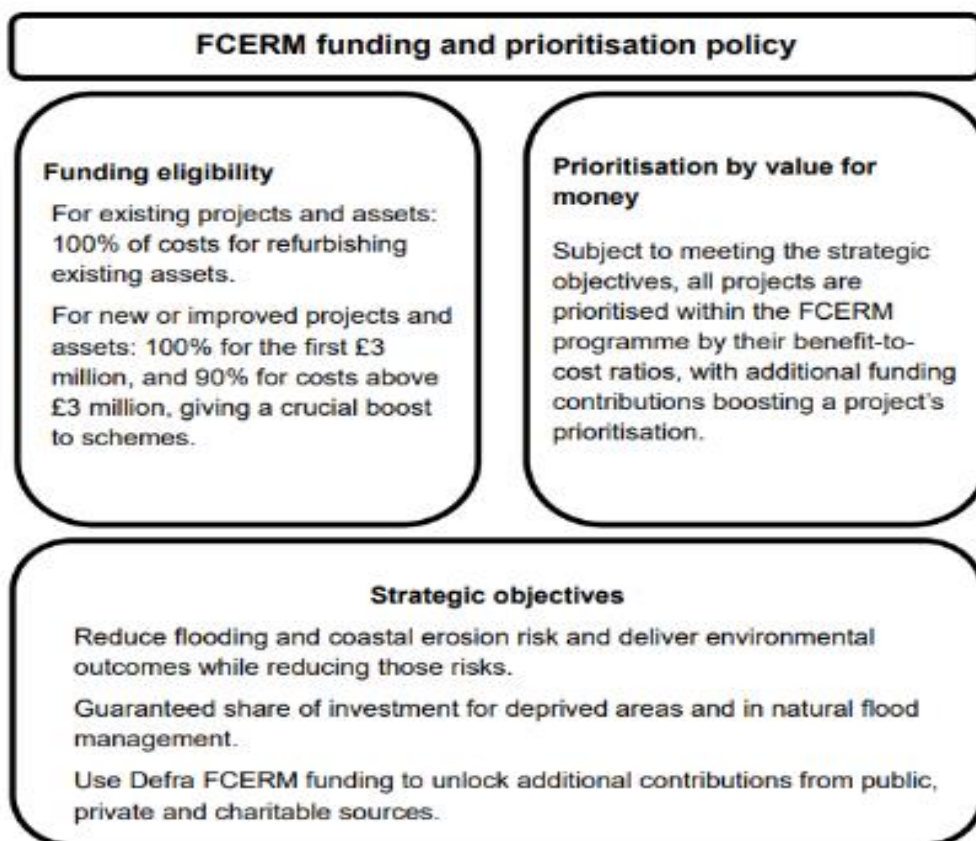
The 12-month group (MLC and IDBs) contract with EDF Energy ceased on 30th September 2025. This contract was facilitated by brokers GEAB.

A sub-Committee of MLC Board Members and IDB Chairman reviewed options alongside MLC staff. We are now in contact with British Gas and are self-managing this within the Finance team for the 12-months to 30th September 2026.

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

- Refurbishment is a significant fix on an asset that can't be addressed by routine maintenance alone. Further guidance is expected on this aspect.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The need to demonstrate a reduction in flood risk band as a result of works has been removed.
- 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. Given we collectively represent c25% of the IDB sector nationally, we will, in one way shape or form, inform their results and associated recommendations for change. 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 Levy 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."

IDB1

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. To assist Sam Ablett in preparing the form for return, each Chairman has been asked to respond with information covering a list of questions which will be provided, but include details around watercourse maintenance, Health and Safety, Board members training, and public and press engagement.

RESOLVED

That the Clerks Report is noted.

B.2404 Environment Officers' Report

Mrs Martin gave a verbal report on behalf of the Environment Officer.

Environmental Compliance and Standard Operations

This year we have developed and published a new suite of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all routine channel maintenance operations, for both MLC and IDBs. The procedures set out, in practical terms, how operatives should undertake each activity in order to remain compliant with a wide range of environmental law including around protected species. The SOPs are also provided to all contractors working for or on behalf of MLC and IDBs to ensure that there is harmony in the way all IDB channels are managed across the district. The SOPs cover flail mowing, desilting and weed-cutting basket work, managing aquatic plants with weed boats, biosecurity procedures and managing dissolved oxygen levels. This helps to evidence our competence in environmental management, which helps to increase opportunities to access funding for further environmental enhancements that would benefit our water level management activities. It also helps to reduce the risk of prosecution and the associated costs for non-compliance.

Environmental Screening of non-routine works

A huge number of non-routine works have been assessed by the department this year to identify and mitigate for environmental impacts. Assessments have included large DEFRA-funded projects such as St Germans solar project and Bevill's Leam pump overhaul, IDB tranche 2 works including bank repairs and culvert replacements and for residual MLSRMS activities, such as bank reinstatement and cutter-suction dredging preparation. These assessments have been undertaken alongside a full book of "normal" IDB and MLC non-routine projects such as culvert repairs, tree and scrub encroachment management, invasive non-native species control and aquatic vegetation control. This has helped MLC and IDBs to ensure their compliance with a full spectrum of environmental and wildlife laws.

Website

The "Ecology and Environment" web pages on the MLC website have been updated to showcase all the great work we do and the approaches we take to support our local wildlife to thrive, alongside our flood risk and water level management. News of our latest activities and surveys are published along with a library of resources and links to help others to better support nature in and around IDB channels. A dedicated page for IDBs has been developed which includes a library of advice, guidance, templates and much more to help them achieve and excel in environmental compliance and delivery.

Biosecurity & Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

Our biosecurity procedure has been updated and published this year, along with new biosecurity kits for all operatives and refreshed biosecurity training. This is well timed as a number of extremely problematic invasive non-native species (INNS), such as floating pennywort, are getting ever closer to us in bordering systems. We have renewed our efforts to ensure that everyone that uses or works in our channels are better informed of common INNS and what to do if they are spotted. Alerts have been refreshed and reissued to all stakeholders, partners, contractors and IDBs; flyers are being handed out to all boaters and the planning department are to begin to include an alert with all consent application responses. This should help to strengthen our borders, for now at least.

IDB Service Packages

IDB service package delivery has progressed well in its first season since launching. We have met with nearly all IDBs to discuss their environmental compliance and delivery and new Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are being drafted for each. The new SOPs and other resources, templates and procedures have been disseminated and are available through the IDB portal on the MLC website. A number of annual surveys have been completed and published which helps to benchmark the effect that current operations have on biodiversity. We can then be more confident in promoting the positive effects our management has on biodiversity, or in adapting regimes to improve environmental outcomes.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Development

We are grateful to have led the development of the “Fen Main Drain” and “Drainage Ditches” sections of the new (draft) Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire. The LNRS will be key to focussing efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity in our local area and it recognises that the habitats we manage are of significant importance in our area for biodiversity. Our driving role has ensured that only activities and enhancements that are compatible with our flood risk and water level management operations are promoted for consideration via development or funding. For IDBs, the Strategy could generate significant funding opportunities where the IDB can demonstrate that biodiversity will be enhanced by improving flood risk and water level management. Such measures may include the funding of additional or improved water level control structures, such as solar-powered tilting weirs, which could provide more localised and flexible water level management within IDB catchments in a more efficient and dynamic way. The Strategy is likely to encourage more funding for riparian margins to be taken out of cultivation to benefit biodiversity but will also allow more flexible and efficient management access for IDB operations.

The Chair asked the Board if they thought, with INNS and Biosecurity in mind, if they thought it would be wise for the Board to change their policy and not offer the services of the Boards machine outside of the Boards area. With not much work undertaken outside of the area it was agreed that private work would only be undertaken within the Boards district. Concern was raised that other contractors work on the Cranbrook Counter Drain and they could transfer INNS to the area.

The issue of working around badgers was also discussed. The Chair advised the Board that they need to follow the guidance of the Environment Officer. If there are any concerns it is important to seek the advice of Ms Lloyd, and to complete the correct paperwork and keep records.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Officers Report is noted.

That the Board only undertake private work within the Board's District.

B.2405 Chairmans Report

The Chair asked the Board for their thoughts on the Board's policy to only cut alternate sides and asked if there had been any issues noted. Mr R Lee thought that the approach appears to be working but the Board do not need to follow this policy all over the district and can change the approach where needed. The Chair will speak with the Environment Officer and the District Officer and consider if they should clear both sides when cleansing.

The Chair reported that there had been some issues with the weed boat overheating, which required a new head gasket and thermostat to be fitted by Youngs. The boat is operational and will continue to be monitored.

The Chair then introduced Gary Roberts of the Environment Agency, who had asked to talk to the Board about the Cranbrook Counter Drain Strategy.

Gary gave a presentation to the Board, explaining that the Strategy was last reviewed in 2018 and covers the management of water in the Old Bedford Catchment area. The EA are now looking at creating water storage areas primarily in the sand and gravel extraction areas of Block Fen, looking at water resource and environmental benefits as well as water management. The EA have been undertaking modelling to establish if the water storage is needed, and if adequate storage is available. This work is being undertaken by Mott MacDonald. The work also includes looking at land use restoration following mineral extraction. This is not just looking at filling the holes with water, but as many of the areas will not be wet all of the time, considering other land uses. Enabling works will also be required, looking at how storage areas are connected to IDB systems and how the water will be moved between the two.

The work includes looking at the planning strategy, with consultation and engagement with the mineral extraction companies, particularly Tarmac, who are working on the Western Extension proposals at present. The Minerals and Waste Plan Update starts in July of this year and this work will inform this update. The Provisions and Principles document is being updated to feed into the Plan.

The Enabling Works are focussing around the Tarmac controlled areas, with restorations planned from 2030 to the early 2040's. These will be looking at how to get water in and out, and how to move water around. This will include connecting to Sutton & Mepal IDB drains. The intricacies of the planning process means that some enabling works may not fall within the minerals planning and could need planning permission, but they could also fall within Land Drainage permitted development.

A key question is can storage be provided in an area that equates to Welches Dam pumping at a 1 in 25-year event rate, and for resilience doubling that figure. Stored water will be held longer and there is a risk of multiple events. In 2008 it was calculated that 11 million cubic metres of storage would be required, and this was increased in 2018 to 16 million cubic metres. This was increased further in 2025 following further modelling.

With the restoration proposals in mind and more information around the restored land contours and more detail on the storage volumes, modelling suggests that Block Fen cannot provide all of the storage required. The best options provides around 10 million cubic metres of storage. This is still equivalent to the volume pumped through Welches Dam but does eat into the overall resilience. They are keen on identifying more storage within the catchment but are trying to avoid above ground storage. All storage will be clay lined.

Mr Allen asked how they would stop the scheme being driven and controlled by the environmental and ecological factors, to which Mr Roberts advised that this is being considered. Mr Allen also asked about the long-term time scales. Mr Roberts responded that the strategy is considering over 100 years but looking at creating storage in the next 25 years.

The preferred option is to create storage to reduce the amount of pumping needed, as the 2018 strategy. In 2008 Welches Dam Pumping Station was given a 25-year design life, but the current condition indicates it will not achieve this and 2035 is the next significant milestone for the pumping station. It will need new pumps, which will need to comply with fish and eel regulations and so they will be looking at complete pump replacements, which brings affordability challenges. The sand and gravel extraction is taking longer than originally planned, and the Fens Reservoir has introduced opportunities for the strategy and also brings the potential for partnership funding from the Fens Reservoir. The strategy is evolving from the 2018 version to look ahead to the 2040s, taking into account the Fens 2100+ strategy which sits above.

The timings were discussed, with four phases being identified. Phase 1, the restorations of the Tarmac sites, is planned for the early 2030's, and the Phase 2 planning application is currently being worked on. Hanson and Mick George are still looking at the mid to late 2040's before they will be in the restoration phase. It is assumed that Phase 4 will follow on. They are looking at creating the storage areas over the next 25 years and so considering how to manage the system as storage areas come on stream.

It is looking like the EA will need to continue to pump and so they are looking at ways to manage the system with and without Welches Dam. Options being considered include keeping Welches Dam and discharging into the Ouse Washes as at present, not pumping at Welches Dam and more pumping elsewhere, such as the

Old Bedford end of the system and pumping into the Tidal River, but the Old Bedford Sluice needs major refurbishment. Combining two projects into one could give efficiencies. The Sluice is a gravity discharge but also a navigation structure. The structure also allows water abstraction into the counter drain. A like for like replacement for Welches Dam would provide a 10 cubic metre capacity replacement. Modelling is being carried out, and the initial results are showing a change in pumping location is looking possible.

The Cranbrook Counter Drain needs maintenance with essential desilting. This may also include the regrading of the Old Bedford section.

The Old Bedford Counter Drain is part of the Ouse Washes Environment Designation and a Special Area of Conservation. The river has been identified as Spine Loach Habitat, a species that prefer managed watercourses. Habitat restoration will also be needed. The Old Bedford is also a navigable watercourse, giving another reason for the works. In the longer term, water management of the resource within the Old Bedford Counter Drain is needed as water only comes in through the Old Bedford Sluice.

The plan for 2026 and beyond was outlined. The strategy work is still primarily around water storage, updating the masterplan and the EA Water Storage 'Principles' document. Consultation with Tarmac around their restorations continues. There are two projects looking at system changes, one is moving the Pumping Station location on the Old Bedford, the other looking at the restoration of the Old Bedford.

There will be an increase in the level of consultation with IDBs. The leading option is still the removal of Welches Dam Pumping Station. Consultation in a planning context will increase.

The Chair thanked Mr Roberts for the presentation, adding that it presented a lot to think about, and a question-and-answer session followed.

Is the water is being pumped or if it will gravitate. How will the storage be emptied.

It will gravitate as much as possible. The storage area is looking at the whole catchment. Sutton & Mepal IDB's storage area sits fully in the Old Bedford/Catchwater Drain catchment. The other IDBs can continue to pump into the Old Bedford and then gravity feed into storage areas. This is the preferred approach, and to restore the Forty Foot Drain from Welches Dam lock.

When it rains in winter the system gravity feeds, but if topping up will need to pump. How will water be drained in flood situations if the reservoir is already full?

More detailed modelling of the IDB system is needed but they shouldn't be looking at the equivalent of Mepal Pumping Station. Modelling will confirm the location of the pumping station but agrees that pumping cannot be removed complete.

The Sutton & Mepal Board will have to deal with water from the Manea & Welney catchment.

Other Boards already pump into the Old Bedford. The leading option is to restore the Forty Foot Drain as a high-level carrier to Horseway Lock. An alternative solution using the Board's system is also being considered should this not be feasible.

Can a lock be built further down to allow navigation?

This would require the rebuild of Horseway Lock

There are four stages to the water storage. Will this all be in one reservoir?

This depends on the restoration plan.

Will this require pumps to get the water out of the reservoir?

Emptying the reservoir would require pumping.

Would it be better for Sutton & Mepal to pump directly into the Old Bedford?

It has always been the aspiration for Mepal Pumping Station to be used to put water into the system from the Manea & Welney district.

It seems that the strategy has been developed to avoid replacing Welches Dam Pumping Station. This seems a complicated solution that looks expensive.

The solution is not cheap and how it will be funded is evolving.

Will the EA ultimately own an area of Block Fen? Will they use their Compulsory Purchase powers?

The preference is to work with landowners and not to own the land. The EA is interested in owning some parts around environmental benefits. The EA have to provide Biodiversity Net Gain. This could also provide wider benefits to the Ouse Washes and their responsibilities in relation to it. They could generate funds in order to purchase land but if landowners are keen to retain land there are partnership options.

The Fens Reservoir is coming on stream which may include restoring the Forty Foot Drain. They want water, with the final consultation due next year. They are currently deciding if they want to take water from Welches Dam but if they take it from Earith these plans change.

The EA are talking to Anglian Water. The Fens Reservoir creates a good opportunity for this strategy. The Fens Reservoirs purpose is to provide public water for supply. This strategy is to manage surplus water. Storing water in the Cranbrook Counter Drain that could go into the Fens Reservoir needs considering. We currently pump water twice, which is not cost effective, and we need to try to deal with it in a cost-effective way. If Anglian Water use Welches Dam, it would be a contribution to the plan. The EA will still need to store water. There are multiple assets fighting for funding. We need to challenge our original assumptions as managing at Welches Dam is expensive. Whichever scheme is adopted, the EA wouldn't want to keep pumping to the Ouse Washes. They have considered if it would be possible for Mepal Pumping Station to pump directly to the Ouse Washes.

It would cost more for Mepal pumping station to pump the extra distance and height.

Compared to retaining Welches Dam, Mepal Pumping Station would only need half of the capacity of Welches Dam. This is not a favoured approach and the response from the Middle Level Commissioners is they are not keen on this option.

We understand this is because of an issue with water quality.

Anglian Water have been monitoring water quality including at the discharge point on the Ouse Washes from Welches Dam Pumping Station. The EA are waiting for the data from Anglian Water, but the Board will face water quality issues at Mepal as the scheme faces issues at Welches Dam.

Will the Fens Reservoir be built before the mineral extractions have been completed?

The Welches Dam rebuild needs to go ahead or they would face issues on the Ouse Washes, including water quality, habitats directives etc.

Will the Board come to a stage where it cannot pump if the new reservoir takes water from the Ouse Washes?

This is possible.

There are lots of interested parties in this work. What is the formal process for documenting this? Are there minutes etc available for us to review, so we don't have to wait for the EA to come and consult with us? There is a lot of work going on.

The EA are developing a platform to share this information. To date it has been shared with the Middle Level. We are planning a stakeholder workshop later this year. There are no meetings planned for at least 18 months, but we will share outputs imminently. The slides will be available to view with the minutes from this meeting.

When will Planning Permission be applied for?

This will be off the back of the developers plans. For example, the restoration of the Tarmac land will be in accordance with the Minerals Waste Plan. Tarmac will put that application in. The IDBs need to be a part of the process through planning. The enabling works are different, and this is in discussion with Cambs County Council. To connect the Tarmac site, they are looking to modify the IDB system, creating drainage improvements, control structures etc. The project team are currently looking to see if Planning Permission is needed or if this will be through the provisions in the Land Drainage Act. Using the Tarmac application as a

bit of a test case. The proposal of enabling works is to change the IDB system so it will need IDB support. This could be IDB led.

There are a lot of drivers to this project, including the Ouse Washes environmental credits. What will stop the same issues being faced in 50 years' time?

The primary function is water storage. We do not wish to create a situation where we have the same environmental problems. The restoration project's primary function is water storage.

We are digging a wash by the side of the washes. It seems doubtful that we will ever pump into the wash. Landowner concerns have been pointed out to the Board, but the EA have compulsory purchase powers.

The EA do not wish to purchase the land at this stage but would prefer others to partner with them to help fund water management.

I agree with the principles of storage and gravity in pumping out. However, there is still some concern in emergency situations. Looking at the scheme, are the proposed wetland areas reservoir overspill? This conflicts with our purpose as a Drainage Board.

The Old Bedford Sluice/Counter Drain proposal appears to just move Welches Dam Pumping Station. This Board will become the last to drain and the last to be fed water. We already are but it will take longer to get water away. Currently we cannot get water away effectively and its only 1 mile. What will it be like if the pumps are moved 6 or 7 miles away? The Counter Drain needs major improvements.

The scenarios seem to be based on the assumption that we need water in the summer. What will happen in the scenario of a wet summer with no water needed?

In the worst case of a wet winter, wet summer followed by wet winter, we are looking at the storage capacity required to manage that risk

The EA have carried out some modelling moving the pumps. The plan is to look at some more detailed modelling.

Mr Roberts asked if the Board's Catchment Study was still progressing this year, and the Chair advised that the EA had informed the Board that they are no longer in a position to progress the project.

Mr Roberts was thanked for the presentation, and the Chair asked that a copy of the slides be added to the minutes. Mr Roberts left the meeting.

B2406 Consulting Engineers' Reports

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Thursday 15 January 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. The Board authorises the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.**
- B. Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.**
- C. Confirm the action to be taken regarding the pump 1.**

1. Enforcement

Our Enforcement and Compliance Officers Dave Coles and Tony Payne joined us on the 23 June 2025 as a job share. They are currently investigating cases across 17 boards plus Middle Level Commissioners, including:

- 47 active enforcement cases,
- 23 surface water or surface water and foul discharges,
- 24 byelaw cases.

Cases already concluded:

- Eight cases in the last two months including trespass, unlicensed moorings, unauthorised structures and encroachment,
- Six major developments have been referred to Technical Services following enforcement action, as consent applications for outstanding discharge consents.

In September and October, they were successful in recovering more than £70,000 of historic outstanding drainage charges for three developments across two boards and the MLC.

It is recommended that the Board authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC Officers. They will engage other Board Members as they see appropriate and determine whether a Special Meeting of the Board is needed on a risk and complexity basis.

2. Specific IssuesCranbrook/Counter Drain (CCD) Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy

Representatives from the Board and MLC met with the Environment Agency who informed us that they are no longer in a position to progress their project as planned.

We have agreed to use the allocated GiA funding to deliver a control panel refurbishment.

3. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Following the initial unsuccessful bid for funding, the Environment Agency subsequently awarded funding for the 'Asset Resilience Pumps & Channels' package in June 2025. These works are due for completion by March 2026.

Works to upgrade the weed screen cleaner are in progress.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Applications responded to since last report

Appendix 2: M&E Report

Appendix 1

There have been 8 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There has been 1 Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) processed since the last meeting.

There have been 2 Byelaw Consents (to discharge to a watercourse) processed since the last meeting.

There has been 1 infiltration device application processed since the last meeting.

Dewatering Discharge Consent: Block Fen revised quarry phase plan 2025-26

In July, Tetra Tech Limited, a company specialising in hydraulic modelling, submitted a robust report and supporting information for discharge consent on behalf of Mick George Ltd.

MLC are content to issue consent subject to Board approval, but on the proviso that it is conditioned in addition to those detailed and approved by the Environment Agency Environmental Permitting Regulations. As with other Mick George quarries, there are numerous ongoing problems that flout criteria issued in EPR/MB3640KE guidance dated 5th June 2025, and the Quarry Regulations 1999.

These include too many fines (silt and sand) being discharged when dewatering, causing IDB and riparian watercourses progressively becoming turbid and occasionally choked with silt and sand, stifling vegetation growth which ordinarily helps clean waterborne particulates. A knock-on effect of habitat loss impacts all biomass in those watercourses (i.e. water voles, fish & eels, amphibians, invertebrates etc) and those species that feed in them. Many of these watercourses are seen as important for biodiversity to the IDB, while others are statutory County Wildlife Sites. Nowadays, a majority of these are ecologically classed as in a 'poor' state, whereas previously they were in a 'moderate' to 'good' state. As the Board is responsible for managing these drains and their routine maintenance regime hasn't changed, there's only one common denominator for their decline in status.

To that end, the following clauses will apply for consent: The Board insists roses fitted to any 6" dewatering pumps must not rest on the quarry floor/sump and be held using buoyancy floats 0.6-1m above in the water column to avoid fines intake being discharged for the quarry's life; this authority requires individual pump meter readings to be provided electronically on a quarterly basis in an Excel spreadsheet from the working site; any broken or defective meter changes must be recorded and dated by Mick George Ltd. Finally, the Boards D/O requires occasional unfettered access to any pump(s) readings to gather their own records to verify and concur those given by as an accurate audit to invoice bi-annually.

Appendix 2

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	SUTTON & MEPAL IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 15 January 2026	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

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

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

1.1 M&E Equipment Key Health Indicators

Over the past 2 years we have been compiling and verifying Pumping Station Key Data to allow easier identification of equipment age and the need for refurbishment to assist in developing an investment plan for asset refurbishment or replacement. The details below include any works already scheduled and funded to be completed this year. For example, the Weed screen upgrade works with CW Engineering.

To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul, the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

The pictures below are of pump bolts that have been in situ for 20 years and have corroded to the point of failure as shown by the gap between the flanges. Although now rebuilt with stainless steel bolts they were not in the past. The pump tubes are also heavily corroded which reduces pump life considerably. Ideally pumps should be refurbished every 10 years because by the time they reach 15 to 20 years it is likely the corrosion will heavily impact their overall residual life.



	Station				Weedscreen		
Station	Built	Pump Canisters	Pump Overhaul	Controls	WSC	WSC O/H	Contr ols
Mepal	1929/ 1990	1990	Pump 1: new 2025, Pump 2: new 2023, Pump 3: new 2019	1990	1990	2025	2025

1.2 Pumps

Pump 1 - New unit fitted Oct 2025, **2** - New unit fitted Oct 2023, **3** New unit fitted Oct 2019

Pump 1 was replaced in October 2025, the pump that was removed had low insulation resistance and was noisy and although it was still runnable it cannot be deemed as a reliable spare. Although this pump could be refurbished previous experience and costs have shown that refurbishment is not usually cost effective on pumps of this type and age. The board has previously resolved to keep a spare pump in stock.

Please confirm if the board would like to have this pump overhauled, order a new pump as spare unit or wait and order a pump if any of the 3 pumps start to show signs of deterioration.

There has recently been a fault on pump 1 which we believe to be the motor overload failing, this unit is now 35 years old and has been replaced with a modern unit. The start delta contactors may also need to be changed to rectify this issue.

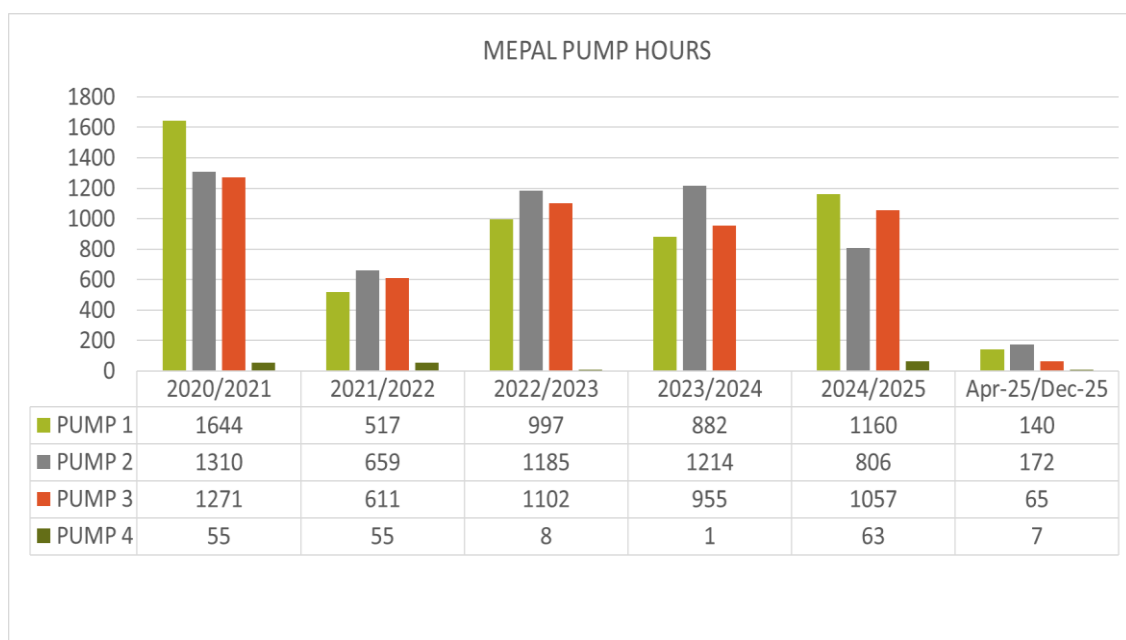
The pump control panel is now 35 years old, and replacement should be considered to ensure continuing reliability. Replacement of this control panel is likely to cost in the region of £40k to £70k. It may be viable to overhaul the current panels with modern components.

A quote has been requested for refurbishment of this control panel to include a generator change over switch. An application is being made for Grant in Aid to cover the control panel manufacture, if granted there is likely to be some cost to the board for installation during summer 2026. If not granted, then the board will need to fund the refurbishment of this control panel as it is becoming unreliable.

There have been two routine inspections at Mepal Pump Station since the last board meeting in May 2025. These inspections took place on 27th June 2025 and 6th November 2025. The last inspection confirms the following recommendations/remarks:

- 1) Pump 4 rails are showing signs of corrosion and should be planned in to replace with stainless tube.
- 2) Pump 1 & 3 cable protection has corroded and needs repair.
- 3) Pump order 2, 3, 1. 4) Swapped Duty to Pump 2 as Insulation Resistance Low.
- 4) The Power factor correction has failed on Pump 1.

2. Pumping summary



3. Inspections

- 3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during May 2025.
- 3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report (due every 5 years) was successfully completed in August 2024.

Board	Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Sutton & Mepal	Mepal	30-Aug-2024	30-Aug-2029

4. Water level Management

The pumping stations have summer and winter pump level references based on historic values which serve as very good reference points. I would actively encourage pump attendants to vary these to suit their current catchment conditions. For example, running pump start and stop levels

at intermediate settings above the base winter settings during times of high Soil Moisture Deficit and then reducing towards winter level setpoints as the SMD reduces or if there is heavy rainfall forecast. This needs to be balanced with ensuring the pump has a good operating range so it is never short cycling (hunting). This can also be used to ensure maximum benefit of the lower night electricity rate.

Ultimately this takes more operator time but will produce more efficient running and reduce costs. We can advise on this if needed and show some good and bad examples to help with setting and monitoring your pumps.

Author Name: Dave Bantoft

Role: M&E Engineer

Mrs Martin referred to the Consulting Engineers' report, asking that it be taken as read.

Enforcement & Compliance Overview

Since the two Enforcement and Compliance Officers joined MLC, they have recovered outstanding drainage charges and continue to work on cases across all the MLC administered Boards.

It is recommended that the Board authorise the Chair and Vice Chair to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC officers, engaging other Board Members or calling Special Meetings where they see appropriate. The Board agreed to this proposal.

Cranbrook/Counter Drain Flood Risk Management Strategy

As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the EA have informed the Board that they are no longer in a position to progress their project as planned. It has been agreed to use the allocated GiA funding to deliver a control panel refurbishment.

Planning

Referring to the Consulting Engineers' report, the Board were asked to confirm they are content with the consent clauses listed in relation to ongoing Dewatering Discharge Consents at Block Fen. They were also asked if they were content for consent to be issued.

The Board were also asked to resolve that future consents relating to revisions of the quarry plan are dealt with by the Chair/Vice Chair. This would apply only to areas already known to the Board. The Board agreed to the clauses listed, noting the importance of ensuring meters were in place, and agreed that future consents could be dealt with by the Chair/Vice Chair.

RESOLVED

That the Chair and Vice Chair take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board, having taken advice from MLC officers, engaging other Board Members or calling Special Meetings where they see appropriate.

That future consents relating to revisions of the Block Fen quarry plan are dealt with by the Chair/Vice Chair. This would apply only to areas already known to the Board.

Mr Bantoft took the Board through the Mechanical and Electrical report, reporting that the weed screen overhaul works have been funded through the Storm Recovery Grant process. He reported that pumps are all good, although the last pump to be removed was not in such good condition. The Board has previously resolved that they wished to keep a spare pump in stock but that the Board now have 3 good pumps which are checked quarterly. He asked if the Board were happy to change their approach and not have a spare pump in stock. It would cost around £45k to keep a spare pump. The Chair asked what the lead time on a new pump would be, and Mr Bantoft advised that this would likely be 6-8 months. If a pump failed in October, it would cause a significant issue. The Chair pointed out that the Board still has the diesel pumps in place and that if they purchased a pump to sit on the shelf, the warranty would be ticking away. Mr C Lee asked if it would be better to replace Pump No 3 with a new pump and keep the old pump as a spare. Mr Bantoft advised that any pump kept in storage would degrade, and the Chair added that the Board have 3 good electric pumps with the backup of the diesel pumps, and that Middle Level can provide emergency pumps. Mr Bantoft added that the Middle Level have 5 PTO driven pumps, but it could take a week to deploy these, and the Board would need to provide a tractor to run these. Mr R Lee thought that there should be no changes made at present and that the Board should wait and see what the EA proposals bring. Mr Bantoft said that if the Board see any deterioration in the existing pumps a decision could be made at the appropriate time. The Board agreed to leave the pumps as the current arrangement, and not to purchase a pump to be held as a spare.

Mr Bantoft advised the Board that the Control Panel is now 35 years old and that the contactor failed before Christmas. The EA have advised that the GiA funding that had been allocated for the District Study could be used to fund a new panel, and an application has been made to the EA to change the funding parameters. However, this will require the works to be completed before 31st March 2026. It is possible that the panel could be manufactured before that date, but unlikely that the installation would be completed by then. It may be possible to replace some of the existing panel components with new, and it is intended to install a generator switch. The budget for the works is £70-80k. Mr Bantoft recommended to the Board that the work needs to be completed within the next year or two. He can place the order for a new panel now, but there is a risk that if the EA funding application is not successful, the Board would need to fund the whole project.

He added that it is not intended to include an inverter drive. It would be more expensive and would need a complete redesign. Installing an inverter does give some cost savings, but they are less reliable and do not give any prior indication of failure. A contactor gives some warning of failure, will last 35 years, and can be changed quickly in the event of a failure. An inverter is gentler on the pumps as the starts on the pump cause the wear. The costs provided are for a modern like for like replacement with ultrasonics that can be logged into remotely. An inverter would require a PLC control panel, which is more expensive.

The Board agreed to go ahead with the design proposed by Mr Bantoft.

The Chair asked the Board if they wish to go ahead with the works immediately or wait for the outcome of the GiA application. Mr Bantoft warned of the potential damage to the pumps if the work is not carried out. Mr Heading thought that it unlikely that the funding would be received, but Mr Bantoft reminded him that the application is for the reallocation of the Study funding.

Following discussion, the Board agreed that the works should go ahead and accepted that the Board would fund the project if the GiA funding application were unsuccessful. It is intended that the works are completed during summer 2026.

Mr Bantoft advised that the cable protection repair identified in his report would be addressed as part of these works, and that this would put the pumping station in a strong position for the next 20 years.

The Board were asked to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board decided that this would not be required and that they were happy with their current position.

RESOLVED

That the Board approve that the replacement control panel go ahead, accepting that the work be funded by the Board if the Grant in Aid application is unsuccessful.

B.2407 Health & Safety

A verbal report was given by the Vice Chair. He reported that he will be meeting with the District Officer next month. The signage is now up to date, and he is working with the Chair in identifying and sourcing training as discussed at the last meeting, and that this is ongoing.

B.2408 District Officers Report

The Chair gave a verbal report on behalf of the District Officer.

The Ruston Engine No 2 pump has run for 4-5 hours and is in a good condition. The auxiliary engines on both pumps have small leaks but are otherwise good. As previously reported one of the three electric pumps has been replaced and all three are in good working order, as is the weed cleaner.

The 10" pump is also in good working order, and the rainfall is being recorded. Flail mower, tractor and boat are also in good working order.

The Atlas digger has had its first service and no problems are reported.

B.2409 Finance Report

Viz:

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	Subject:	FINANCE REPORT
Date:	Thursday 16 th January 2024	Officer Responsible:	Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Consider the Financial Officer's summary
- B. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
- C. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
- D. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B
- E. Note the Highland Water Contributions
- F. Determination of annual values & Rate arrears – Appendix 2
- G. Note the Precept to the Environmental Agency

Finance Officer's review and key messages

Storm Recovery Grant (T2b)

In March 2025 the Government pledged a further £16 million towards helping internal drainage boards (IDBs) recover from the very damaging floods of the 2023/24 winter period and to modernise and upgrade IDB assets and waterways to ensure they are fit for the future.

Claims were submitted for combined IDB works against the Storm Recovery resilience works (T2b), the Environmental Agency have approved these schemes. Works are underway in order to get these works delivered by the 31st of March 2026 deadline.

1. Budget Monitoring

- 1.1 The current forecast for income/expenditure to 31st March 2026 shows that expenditure could be below budget against which rates were set. Appendix 1

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 take into account the significant financial implications major storm events can have on Drainage Board budgets.

There will be a full reconciliation of balances at the financial year end.

2. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions

- 2.1 Subscription to the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) will increase by 5%, from £755 to £793 for 2026.

3. Storm Recovery Grant – T2B

- 3.1 At the beginning of the year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the that they administer. The following work has been successfully in being 100% Grant funded:

Work Scheduled to Be Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
Mepal Pumping Station – Weed Screen Replacement	£50,000	7.90p
Total	£50,000	7.90p

5. Highland Water Contributions

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

- 5.2 When completing the budget proposal claims were estimated against the likely out-turn for 2024/2025 and the budgeted expenditure for 2025/2026. The highland water claim included

within the rating estimates was £10,612. The final submitted claim amounted to £11,314.85 (£8,400.43 representing 80% of the Boards' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/26 plus £2,914.42 representing the balance of claim for the financial year 2024/25).

6. Determination of land for rating purposes and rate arrears – Appendix 2

7. Precept to the Environmental Agency

Internal Drainage Boards are required to pay a Precept (IDB Precept) to the Environment Agency for their expenses managing water passing into main rivers. Predominantly, the Precept funds additional maintenance downstream of and/or benefitting IDB districts. The precept for 2025/2026 is £124,839.54 (2024/2025: £118,826.90).

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2026

Author Name: Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett

Role: Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer

Appendix 1 Budget Monitoring

Appendix 2 Determination of annual values & rate arrear

SUTTON AND MEPAL INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
BUDGET MONITORING 2025/2026

Remarks

	<u>Approved budget</u> <u>2025/2026</u> £	<u>Actual to</u> <u>30th November 2025</u> £	<u>Forecasted Expenditure</u> <u>At 31st March 2026</u> £	
1 Rates, Telephones and Insurances	10,500	13,031 ^A	13,031 ^A	A - Increased Insurance Premium
2 Drainworks, Repairs and Renewals (including Environmental measures)	32,500 ^B	11,917 ^C	32,500	B - Includes for:
Drainage Channel - Cranbrook	-	-		Maintenance/general 17,000
				Service/repairs to excavator 3,000
				Pumping station/general repairs 12,500
				<u>32,500</u>
3 Oil and Electricity	138,500	17,668	100,500 ^D	C - Includes for:
4 District Labour	53,250	35,506	53,250	Maintenance/general 1,651
5 Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit Fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions Etc.	24,500	10,287	24,500	Service/repairs to excavator 0
				Pumping station/general repairs 9,746
				Bungalow Refurbishment 520
				<u>11,917</u>
6 Environment Agency - Precept	124,840	124,840	124,840	D - Provision based on 23/24 Consumption at new rates
7 Plant Replacement	25,000 ^E	-	25,000 ^E	E - Provision for plant replacement strategy 25,000
8 Reinstatement Of Balances	-	-	-	F - Weed Screen Cleaner Replacement 50,000
9 Improvement Work	-	-	50,000 ^F	G - Includes:
				Metered discharge (not paid) 20,000
				Highland Water Claim - Actual 11,315
				Rental Income - Bungalow 10,800
LESS :	409,090	213,249	423,621	
Revenue Income	51,296	22,638	101,296 ^G	
	357,793	190,611	322,324	
Rate Raised 2025/2026	56.50p			

June 2026

Transfer value to Special Levy - £202.367 per hectare	Area (Hectares)	Agricultural Land	Special Levies			East Cambs	TOTAL	Rate W/Offs
			Fenland	Hunts DC				
Opening Values (£)	4638.127	509,042	60,733	43,084	22,933	635,792		
Opening %		80.06%	9.55%	6.78%	3.61%	100.00%		
<u>Reason for change.</u>								
Developed land to domestic dwellings	1.365	-169	276			107	201.53	
						0		
						0		
						0		
						0		
						0		
						0		
						0		
Total determinations	4638.127	-169	276	0	0	107		
Closing Values (£)		508,873	61,009	43,084	22,933	635,899		
Closing %		80.02%	9.59%	6.78%	3.61%	100.00%		
£201.53								

The Board considered the report of the Finance Officer.

Budgeting

The Board noted the forecast against budget. Mr Heading asked if the £50k grant allocation had been included in the budget forecast, and Mrs Martin advised she would ask the Finance Officer for clarification.

(Post Meeting Note: The Finance Officer confirmed that the £50k was included in the budget)

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

ADA subscription

Mrs Martin reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 5% for 2026, from £755 to £793.

RESOLVED

That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2026 be paid.

Highland Water Contributions

RESOLVED

That the Highland Water Contributions are noted.

Determination of Land for Rating Purposes and Rate Arrears

RESOLVED

The Determination of Annual Value for Rating purpose and associated rate write off was reviewed and agreed by the Board.

Precept

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

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2026.

The precept for 2024/25 was £118,826.90, and for 2025/26 is £124,839.54.

RESOLVED

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

B.2410 Date of next Meeting

The Chair asked Board members to advise of any particular areas they wished to review on a District Inspection.

RESOLVED

That the next Meeting of the Board be held on Thursday 21st May 2026 at 8.30am at the Chatteris Cricket Club. The meeting will commence with a District Inspection.

B.2411 Any Other Business

The Chair reported that at the recent Chairs Meeting it was advised that a Chairs tenure should be no longer than 10 years where possible. He asked that if any Board member were considering taking on the role in the future to contact the Chair to discuss.

Mr R Lee raised the issue of the development at Tithe Barn Farm and the flood alleviation reservoir. He advised that there is currently no discharge in place but that the reservoir is quite full. He thought that the design was for a larger area and that there is now highland water as well as the development land water going into the Boards drain, bypassing the flood alleviation measures.

The Chair advised that he was not aware that a consent is in place as the design is still in development. He is waiting for a report from external contractors. It was agreed that Mr R Lee contacts the Planning Engineer to discuss.

The Chair advised that Polly Tombleson was leaving Middle Level, and the Board asked that a letter of thanks be sent to Polly from the Board.

The meeting closed at 11.05am.

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Chair

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Date