

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	MARCH THIRD DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Wednesday 7 th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Authorise 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 and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.
- C. Confirm if it wishes to progress pump overhaul works.
- D. Confirm if it wishes to consider submitting projects for inclusion in the FCERM Investment Programme (from July 2026) and agree the recommendations for prioritisation.

1. Enforcement & Compliance Overview

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. Summary of Key Planning Issues

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

3. Technical Services Overview

A new Senior Planning & Consenting Officer, Emma Ryder, joined the team at the beginning of March. She had been working for us on a consultancy basis since November last year and she has extensive experience in flood risk, economics and sustainable drainage. Emma is the first appointment in an ongoing recruitment campaign to better manage the increased planning and consenting workload resulting from new development across the Middle Level.

4. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Works delivered for this district include the following:

- Improvement works for mobile pump deployment

5. New FCERM grant funding guidance

The Government published new FCERM funding guidance on 3 March 2026.

To be eligible for funding a project must deliver strategic objectives and government policy. Governments' objectives most relevant to IDBs include:

- value for money (Net Present Value)
- reducing flood risk
- focusing on deprived areas
- prioritising projects with contributions from others (this would include funding provide by IDBs themselves)
- a percentage investment in Natural Flood Management (NFM) across the programme

Project types that are eligible for grant funding include:

- refurbishing or replacing existing assets
- building new assets
- NFM projects
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Asset Refurbishment Projects

Asset refurbishment is a significant renewal to one or more components in an existing asset that is not covered by routine maintenance.

It includes work to mitigate for the loss of asset performance. This covers issues that asset maintenance cannot manage and that would be significant and permanent if not fixed.

It does not include asset replacement projects where an existing asset at the end of its life is replaced with another like for like asset which sustains the standard of service.

Under the new FCERM funding policy existing FCERM assets are eligible for 100% of funding for refurbishment.

New or Improved Asset Projects

Projects that are not refurbishment are eligible for 100% for the first £3 million, and 90% for costs above £3 million.

These include:

- projects replacing existing assets with a like for like replacement
- projects building new or improved assets
- projects with combined asset interventions

Projects cannot be artificially split into smaller components to fall below the £3 million fully funded threshold.

Applying for funding

It should be noted that there will be more projects that are eligible for investment than funding available. Projects will need to be prioritised to meet government targets and achieve best value for money.

Therefore, it is recommended that should the Board wish to apply for FCERM grant funding, they consider part-funding projects. This is similar to the funding rules that were in place prior to 2011 when IDBs only received 45% of project costs.

Should the Board wish to submit a new project to be considered for funding, the first step is to collate relevant cost and benefit data to submit to the Environment Agency from 1 July 2026. This requires collating costs and benefits and other relevant data required by the EA to determine a project's eligibility and prioritise the programme. The Consulting Engineer can provide resources to do this and this will be recharged to the Board.

If a project already appears on the FCERM investment programme with an allocation for future years, an application for grant funding approval/business case will need to be submitted. The Consulting Engineer can provide resources to do this.

Timescales

The Consulting Engineer currently has limited resources to develop and deliver projects, although recruitment is currently in progress to address this. The likely timescales for project delivery are:

- submit for funding consideration July 2026 onwards
- prepare and submit applications for subsequent funding approval onwards
- delivery 2027/28 onwards

The Consulting Engineer will prioritise workload based primarily on Key Health Indicators. Refer to the Mechanical & Electrical report for specific recommendations.

The Board is asked to:

- **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly**
- **Confirm if it wishes to consider submitting projects for inclusion in the FCERM Investment Programme (from July 2026)**
- **Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to determine project suitability and timescales**

- **Agree making a contribution towards the project costs to aid funding prioritisation**
- **Confirm acceptance of recommendations so we can prioritise developing funding bids ASAP.**

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

[illegible]

Appendix 2

There have been 18 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 2 Byelaw Consent applications (to undertake works in and around watercourses) have been granted since the last meeting.

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

There have been 1 infiltration device applications acknowledged since the last meeting.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	MARCH THIRD DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES
Date:	Thursday 7th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Morgan Lakey

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

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

A Roundup herbicide application was made to reaches in advance of the programmed machine cleansing works and to other district drains where it was required to control dense reed stands and emergent aquatic vegetation.



Grant funded improvements at Pumping Station to aid mobile pump deployment in the event of a breakdown

The Commissioners were successfully awarded part of the DEFRA IDB funding package to improve access for the deployment of mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown. This allowed for fully funded access improvements at the pumping station and the track from Borrowmoor Road.

The Board's flail mowing contractors, M & C Agri Services, have indicated that they are available to undertake the flail mowing requirements for the ensuing year. A sum for the completion of flail mowing the Board's drains has been included in the estimated costs.

A recent inspection of the district drains has been undertaken with the Chairman, indicating that the majority of the Board's drains are being maintained to a good standard and are in a generally satisfactory condition.

Drains to the West of the Bypass

The inspection highlighted the drains to the west of the bypass are in a satisfactory condition following last year's machine cleansing works. At this early time in the growing season there are some sporadic stands of emergent aquatic vegetation and filamentous algae (cott) evident in the drains that were not included in last year's programme. It is recommended the affected reaches are treated with an application of Roundup herbicide followed by light machine cleansing as soon as the harvest of the adjacent crop allows access for the works to be completed.



Early Season Cott in Reach 18-19



Emergent Aquatic Vegetation, Point 15

The Cannon & Kirk attenuation lagoon and associated ditches remain inundated with reeds and bullrush, severely reducing the water conveyance of the Commissioner's system. Drains to the East of the bypass now run through the lagoon as the connection at Point 23 has been blocked, sending all flows through the un-adopted drains and lagoon. At the time of writing the report the Middle Level compliance and enforcement team are looking to assist with resolving the historic matters and hopefully a positive progression can be reported at the Commissioner's annual meeting this year.

Historically, late occurring algal blooms have been problematic and required clearing from the Board's drains to the west of the bypass later in the season. A provisional sum has been included within the estimated costs to allow for any additional Cott cleansing work that may be required.

Drains to the East of the Bypass

The district drains to the east of the bypass remain in a satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard. The BMX track adjacent to the Board's drain at Point 31 remains unconsented, however mitigation measures have been agreed with FDC and an update will be provided at the Commissioner's annual meeting.

A provisional sum has also been included within this year's estimated costs to allow for any emergency bank repair, culvert clearance or debris removal and disposal works that may be necessary later in the year.

An allowance has been included within this year's estimated costs to allow for a Roundup aquatic herbicide application to be made in advance of the proposed machine cleansing work and in any other Board's drains where it is required to control emergent weed and reed growth.

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

The estimated cost of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance works is as follows. Please refer to the site plan at the end of this report for locations.

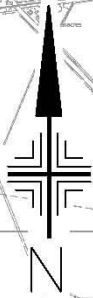
			£	£
<u>Machine Cleanse</u>				
1.	Reaches 16-18-19	500 m @	1.40	700.00
2.	Reaches 14-15	300 m @	1.40	420.00
3.	Reaches 39-40	600 m @	1.40	840.00
4.	<u>Provisional Sum</u>			
	Allow sum for cott clearance or emergency machine cleansing works	Item	Sum	2000.00
5.	Flail mowing district drains	Item	Sum	2500.00
6.	<u>Provisional Sum</u>			
	Allowance for emergency bank repair, culvert cleansing works or debris removal/disposal works	Item	Sum	1000.00
7.	Allow sum for Roundup application to reed and emergent weed	Item	Sum	600.00
8.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangement and supervision of chemical applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum	1100.00
TOTAL			£	9160.00

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that they are weather dependent and they will not be held responsible for the efficacy of any treatments

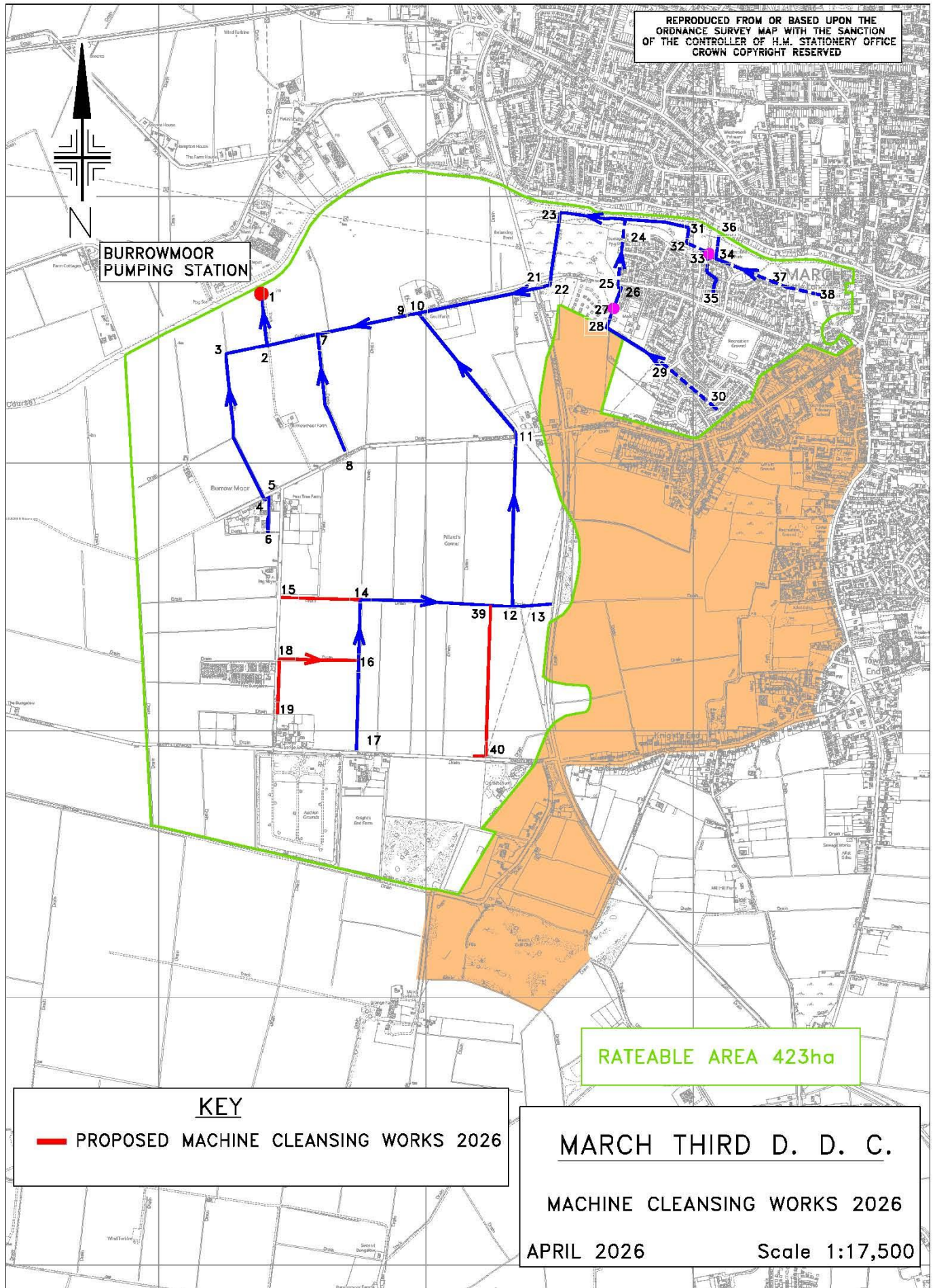
Author Name: Morgan Lakey

Role: Operations Manager

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BURROWMOOR
PUMPING STATION



Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	MARCH THIRD DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 7 th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

Other than the matters previously reported or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The station and pumps are at an age where reliability is a concern and a plan should be put in place to overhaul or replace items as necessary to ensure ongoing reliability.

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 Date to allow easier identification of equipment age and the need for refurbishment to assist in developing an investment plan for asset refurbishment or replacement. 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 (not this station) 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.



Table 1: Key Health Indicators

	Station				Weedscreen				
Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul		Controls	Bars	WSC	WSC O/H	Controls
Burrowmoor	1964	1964	2005 (1)	2006 (2)	2025	2002	2002	2021	2025

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The Storm and Recovery GiA has funded the recent replacement of the Pumps Control Panel and Weedscreen controller replacement.

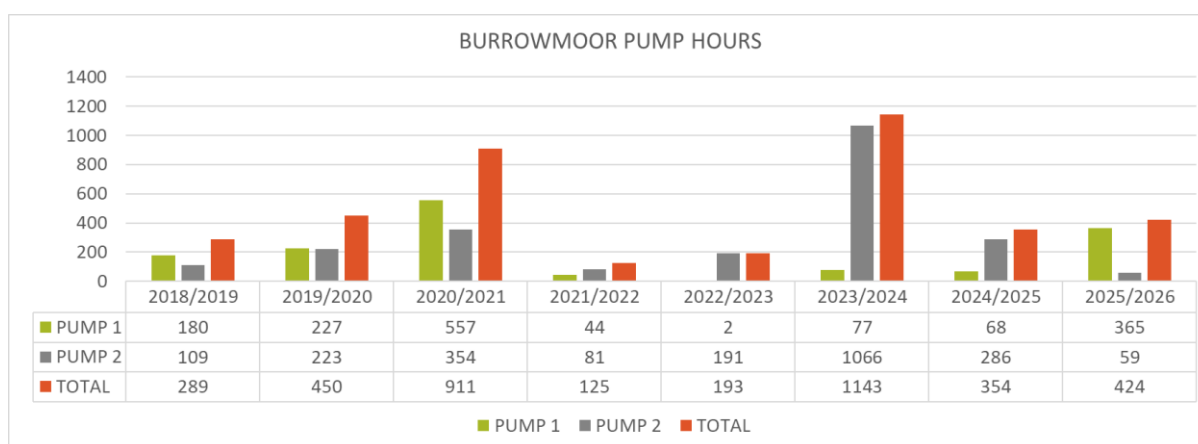
The pumps are both 62 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 20 to 21 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the 2 pumps that are due refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund.

Standard pumps of the type at Burrowmoor are normally cost effective to repair and lead times can be as short as 4 weeks or can be over a year depending on contractor availability and pump condition. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition.

Please confirm when the board would like to overhaul these pumps. It is likely these pumps will cost circa £40k each to overhaul.

2. Pumping summary

2.1 Pumping Hours



3. Inspections

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

Station	EICR Pass Date	EICR Due
Burrowmoor	29-Mar-24	29-Mar-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