MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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Administered by:

9th April 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Wednesday 15th April 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, March PE15 0AH at 7pm on Wednesday 15th April 2026.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS AGENDA INCLUDES CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS. APART FROM THE COPY RETAINED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES THEY WILL BE DESTROYED FOLLOWING THE MEETING AND MEMBERS ARE REMINDED THAT THEY MUST NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH ANYONE OTHER THAN A BOARD MEMBER.

AFTER THE MEETING, PLEASE RETURN THEM TO THE CLERK TO BE DESTROYED.

As you'll be aware, we administer thirty Boards that mostly all meet within similar date ranges. Thank you to the majority of Members who already confirm their attendance proactively.

Please help us manage your Board effectively by **proactively letting Gemma know as soon as possible, by telephone or email, if you can attend the meeting, or not, or if you're uncertain.** This results in less abortive time and cost to the running of all Boards.

It is important that we have early confirmation whether or not the Board will be quorate.

Yours truly

P BURROWS, FCIWEM C.WEM CEnv

Clerk to the Board

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Wednesday 15th April 2026 – 7pm
Middle Level Offices, March, PE15 0AH

Agenda:

Item No	*Topic*	*Format*	*Lead*
1	Welcome & Apologies	Verbal	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	Verbal	Chair
3	Minutes of last meeting and matters arising	Pages 3 - 9	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 10 - 12	Clerk
5	CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS SUBJECT TO LEGAL PRIVILEGE Resolve to exclude the public under S1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) act 1960		Chief exec
6	Clerk's Report	Pages 13 - 18	Clerk
7	Environment Officer's Report	Page 19	Clerk
8	Chairman's Items	Verbal	Chair
9	Consulting Engineer's Reports, including:	Pages 20 - 31	Clerk or Engineer
10	Health & Safety	Pages 32 - 38	Chair
11	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
12	Governance • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025	Pages 39 – 41 Pages 42 - 46 (Link)	Clerk
13	Finance Report: looking back • Payments 2025 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 47 - 48 Page 49 Pages 50 - 53	Clerk
14	Finance Report: looking forward • Rating Estimates for 2026/2027 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2026/2027	Pages 54 - 55 Page 56 Page 57	Clerk
15	Date of Next Meeting - Wednesday 14th April 2027	Verbal	Chair
16	Any other business	Verbal	Chair

(NB: If required for any agenda item:

In pursuance of Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the meeting when the above matters are being considered by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.)

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners
Held at the Middle Level Offices on Wednesday 16th April 2025

PRESENT

T Hopkin (Chair)	C Boden (FDC)
A Payne (Vice-Chair)	S Bushell
Ms E Alterton	Ms J French (FDC)
T Alterton	J Lilley
P Beeton	A Miscandlon (FDC)
T Taylor (FDC)	

Paul Burrows the Clerk was in attendance along with Morgan Lakey representing the Consulting Engineer. P Beeton joined the meeting late.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from P Hayes, G Hopkin, C Marks (FDC) and A Woollard (FDC).

C.1277 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.

E Alterton declared an interest in the Fens Reservoir as an employee of Anglian Water.

C.1278 Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED

> That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on the 9th April 2024. are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.1279 Matters Arising

P Burrows provided an update on the land registry at the Slamp. Land Registry are taking on average 14-months to register land at the moment which means the Board's registration is relatively well advanced. He added that there has been notification of a likely contest to the registration and the MLC Lead Clerk will be meeting with the other party over the coming weeks.

C.1280 Constitution & Membership

RESOLVED

> T Hopkin reappointed as Chair
> A Payne reappointed as Vice-Chair

C.1281 Clerk's Report

The Board considered the report and its content. P Burrows highlighted the improvement work that has been undertaken in terms of planning and consenting and the importance of the new fee model that has been launched. He added that the Middle level Board would be asked to support the creation of a new compliance and enforcement role to work in conjunction with the new fee model to better manage risks and bring in income for the IDBs and Middle Level Commissioners. The Board were supportive of the measures, adding that there had been a longstanding need to improve the fee arrangements.

C Boden was supportive of the measures and added that improved working with Local Planning Authorities a crucial two-way responsibility. He enquired whether the improvements would enable the MLC to improve their inputs into planning. P Burrows outlined this was a start and the improved fee recovery should enable the MLC in time to consider increasing capacity without the full cost of this being borne by the rate and levy payer.

Fens Reservoir

Paul Burrows introduced the paper and outlined that whilst not directly affected, the Commissioners will have an indirect interest given they pump water into the Middle Level Commissioners system which will be the reservoir's primary source of water. He added that the recommended resolutions are to cover the eventuality that the Commissioners' interests need legal support.

RESOLVED

> Approved that the Board act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs. Therefore, the Middle Level Commissioners staff, consultants and legal service provider are authorised to act on behalf of and represent the Board.
>
> Acknowledged that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Board and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chair/Vice Chair as he sees fit.

C.1282 Environment Officer's Report

M Lakey introduced the report highlighting the new service package arrangement and increase fee, highlighting that this has been developed to help IDBs meet their minimum statutory compliance. He reported that the BAP meeting has been arranged and that in his operational role on behalf of the Board, he ensures compliance, and the Board receives a reduction in their environmental service package fee.

The Chair enquired about issues at Newmans Avenue and M Lakey replied that this has not gone further.

M Lakey advised the Board on the approach they ought to take regarding future bank-slips and the need for prompt action should piling be needed in order to reduce the likelihood of needing water vole displacement which add costs and working window constraint to such works.

S Bushell mentioned that badgers were more of an issue on his land and M Lakey outlined the approach to management and in particular for non-embanked IDB drains the most suitable approach was to work around the sett given the need to create an artificial sett for any closure.

C.1283 Chair's Items

The Chair added that he, E Alterton and T Alterton had met to discuss the developments at Elm Road and Berryfield along with the piecemeal infill development. E Alterton added that a more strategic view was required regarding the cumulative impact to assess whether there were better solutions that would work for developers, the Commissioners operations and local farmers in terms of water storage. It was agreed that a strategy focussed session of the Board would be valuable.

C.1284 Consulting Engineers' Reports

P Burrows introduced the planning section as a matter of report with no decisions required on the Commissioners. Ms J French remarked that it was disappointing to read about the FDC planning feedback and added about the challenge faced at Creek Fen with the lorry traffic, adding that she'll speak to FDC enforcement staff about the matter.

C Boden asked about the impact of the MLC Standing Advice note and remarked that disappointingly it had not seen that FDC planners were taking head of it. P Burrows outlined that it was an MLC issue rather than specific to this Board, however we should work on the premise that all Boards would consider their systems as at capacity. The new fee model helps support the messaging but added that he would reaffirm to LPAs the importance over the coming months.

M Lakey outlined summarised his operational services report, recommending that the Commissioners continue with their current appointed contractor. He added that with the Chairman's agreement they had cleared a small section of private ditch close to point 42 which had made a huge difference to the flow of water. J French asked who was responsible for tree management along Foxglove way, M Lakey replied that it was likely a management company.

M Lakey summarised the M&E report, highlighting that whilst currently in a satisfactory condition the cannister pumps ted to degrade quickly once issues arise. He added that there were approximately £100k of capital works that the Commissioners need to consider. C Boden asked whether Public Works Board Loan financing was suitable. P Burrows replied that this ought to be part of the investment strategy and added that currently a £50k loan repayable over 10 years equates to 1.3p on the Commissioners rate.

P Beeton asked whether costs were for like for like or improvements. M Lakey highlighted that it was like for like, as the capacity of the receiving Middle Level system was for no improvements to IDB pumping. E Alterton added that this is why a strategic view on storage within the district linked to development and farming needs for water was so crucial.

C.1285 Health & Safety

M Lakey mentioned that the signs were ready and just needed to be installed.

C.1286 Governance

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

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

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

b) Review of Internal Controls

Paul Burrows reported that the internal controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Board have now been summarised and are available on the Board's webpage.

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

c) Authorisations

The Board considered the review of authorisations.

RESOLVED

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

ii) The Board confirmed their stance that their Chair, Vice-Chair and Superintendents are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Boards powers and IDB byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Board.

e) <u>Responsible Finance Officer</u>

<u>RESOLVED</u>

The Board considered and approved the recommendations that:

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

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

iii) That the Chair and Vice-Chair be approved to be added to the Barclays Bank Plc mandate.

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

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

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

f) <u>Policy Reviews & DPO</u>

The Board considered the review of the policies.

<u>RESOLVED</u>

i) The Board considered and approved the policy reviews for the Complaints Procedure, Privacy policy and the Anti-Bribery policy.
ii) The Board considered and approved adoption of updated Finance Regulations covering the period 2025-2035.
iii) That the Board approve that while there is a service level agreement for provision of clerking services in place between the Board and the Middle Level Commissioners, the Middle Level Commissioner’s Lead Clerk acts as their Data Protection Officer.

g) <u>IDB1 and Annual Governance Statement</u>

<u>RESOLVED</u>

The Board noted and supported the IDB1 return submitted on their behalf.

The Board noted and approved the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 authorising the Chair and Clerk to sign the statement.

g) Exercise of Public Rights

Paul Burrows referred to the publishing of the Notice of Public Rights and publication of unaudited Annual return, Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the Notice of Conclusion of the Audit and Right to inspect the Annual Return.

h) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

P Burrows 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. He confirmed that there were no such matters that have been raised through the office of the clerk. Members gave consideration to the position.

RESOLVED

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

C.1287 Finance Report – Looking Back

The Board reviewed and noted the Finance Officers' report and key messages.

RESOLVED

That all payments be approved.
The Board considered and approved their annual accounts for 2024/25.

C.1288 Finance Report – Looking Forward

The Board considered the paper from their Responsible Finance Officer and P Burrows summarised his assessment of the Board's financial position. He stated that balances were the equivalent of a year's expenditure in-hand which is positive and there are development and improvement funds that would cover approximately 50% of the identified M&E investment needs for the Board's pumping stations. He added that for planning purposes, at today's rate, a Public Work Loan of £50k repayable over 10-years would cost the equivalent of 1.3p on the rate. He added that it would be prudent, especially given the Board has two single pump stations with no resilience to emergency, that they continue to invest such that any future loan is within financial reach.

The Chair proposed to keep the rate at 7.4p rather than the recommended 8.2p given the relatively healthy position of the Board and recent rate increases. C Boden agreed adding that there was also the potential additional development fees to consider. The Board discussed this and agreed resolving that the drain works estimate is reduced by the equivalent of 0.8p and that if drain works are required to Foxglove Way then the Chair delegated to authorise these and the development fund is used to cover the cost.

The Board considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026. and were informed by P Burrows that under the Land Drainage Act 1991 the proportions of their net expenditure to be met by drainage rates on agricultural hereditaments and by special levy on local billing authorities would be respectively 10.85% and 89.15%.

RESOLVED

a) To continue to subscribe to be a member of the Association of Drainage Authorities.

b) That the Board agree that up to £1044.00 be allowed for the District Officers fee for 2025/2026.

c) Determination of Annual Values for Rating purposes.

The Board considered the recommendation for the determination of annual value for rating purposes.

i) That the determination recommended be adopted by the Board
ii) That the Clerk be empowered to serve notices and to take such other action as may be necessary to comply with statutory requirements.
iii) That the Chairman and the Clerk be empowered to authorise appropriate action on behalf of the Board in connection with any appeal against the determination.

d) Rate Arrears

That the rate arrears amounting to £28.90 be written off.

e) Drainage rates:

i) That the estimates be approved with reduced allocation to Improvement Works to cater for the 0.5p reduction in actual versus estimated rate.

ii) That a total sum of £36,177 be raised by drainage rates and special levy.

iii) That the amounts comprised in the sum referred to in ii) above to be raised by drainage rates and to be met by special levy are £3,926 and £32,251 respectively.

iv) That a rate of 7.4p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

v) That a Special levy of £32,251 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

vi) That the seal of the Board be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies and to the special levy referred to in resolution (v).

vii) That the Clerk be authorised to recover all unpaid rates and levy by such statutory powers as may be available.

C.1289 Middle Level IDB Change

E Alterton provided an overview of the outline design undertaken, highlighting her role within the working group. She outlined the challenges many Boards are facing and the need to plan 20-years ahead. She added that the strategic issues discussed earlier in the meeting would be easier to address within larger, more influential Boards.

C Boden added that what is hugely important within any change or reform is that the strengths of the current model are not lost, he added the local knowledge, ownership and volunteer inputs were valued. P Burrows agreed adding that this would be a key factor within detailed design and that larger Boards elsewhere have mitigated this within their design and operating practises.

The Board had no specific preference and had no strong reservations regarding change. The Chair encouraged members to feedback as individuals and would discuss a Board response with E Alterton.

RESOLVED

> To prove a £300 contribution towards the costs of developing the detailed design.

C.1290 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

> That next meeting of the Board will be on Wednesday 15th April 2026, 7PM at the Middle Level Offices.

C.1291 Any Other Business

None raised

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	4
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Gemma Ashby**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the position regarding elections and consider the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments within its appointment of officials.
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. Outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training.

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	9	N/A		5
Actual	9	7 FDC	16	
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	Emma Alterton	Ratepayer	
2	Tony Alterton	Ratepayer	
3	Paul Beeton	Ratepayer	
4	Steven Bushell	Nominee of Ratepayer (Hopkin Farms)	
5	Paul Hayes	Ratepayer	
6	Geoff Hopkin	Ratepayer	
7	Tony Hopkin	Ratepayer	Chair & District Officer
8	Jack Lilley	Nominee of Ratepayer (P L Hayes)	
9	Andrew Payne	Ratepayer	Vice-Chair

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, e.g. major infrastructure, commerce, community groups, environmental interests.

No	Name	Appointing Council	Commentary (one of three categories)
1	Dee Laws	FDC	Councillor
2	Jan French	FDC	Councillor
3	Stuart Harris	FDC	Councillor
4	Charlie Marks	FDC	Councillor
5	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor
6	Lucie Foice-Beard	FDC	Councillor
7	Andrew Woollard	FDC	Councillor

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

2. Attendance

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

Elected Members

No	Name	16/4/2025	9/4/2024	11/4/2023	12/4/2022
1	Emma Alterton	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Tony Alterton	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Paul Beeton	Present	Present	apologies	Present
4	Steven Bushell	Present	Apologies	apologies	Present
5	Paul Hayes	Apologies	Present	Present	Present
6	Geoff Hopkin	Apologies	Apologies	apologies	apologies
7	Tony Hopkin	Present	Present	Present	Present
8	Jack Lilley	Present	Present	Present	Present
9	Andrew Payne	Present	Present	Present	Present

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Tony Hopkin	Present		Present	

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	16/4/2025	9/4/2024	11/4/2023	12/4/2022
1	Dee Laws (FDC)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	Jan French (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Stuart Harris (FDC)			N/A	N/A
4	Charlie Marks (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies	N/A	N/A
5	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)	Present	Present	N/A	N/A
6	Lucie Foice-Beard (FDC)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
7	Andrew Woollard (FDC)	Apologies	Present	N/A	N/A

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 To In appointing the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Board is expected to follow the principles within the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, there is a strong presumption that no individual should serve in any one post for more than ten years. The tenure of the current Chairman is 6.8 years, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 6.8 years.

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). See 'The IDB governance future within the Middle Level of the Fen' within the Clerk's Report.

4.2 Amalgamations and composition changes are not swift processes and can take a number of years. They require planning and additional/specialist resourcing by the MLC as your clerk, Environment Agency and Defra. Therefore, the Board is encouraged to think ahead five to ten years in its decision making, thinking about the next generation.

5. Training

5.1 IDBs are expected by Defra to support relevant externally accredited training and/or professional development of its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate). It is therefore recommended that the Board identifies and budgets for any such requirements.

5.2 In addition, IDBs are expected by Defra to provide in-house training and/or professional development opportunities for its Board Members, officers and employees (if appropriate).

5.3 Topics that Defra suggest are i) Governance ii) Ethics iii) Finance iv) Environment v) Health, safety & welfare and vi) Communications & engagement.

5.4 The Board are asked to outline the training undertaken in the last year as well as future needs or plan for training. 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.

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

Author Name: Gemma Ashby
Role: Senior Business Support Officer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	6
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the content of the report and feedback on items as appropriate.
B. The Board is asked to delegate the approval and publication of new and/or updated policies to the Clerk.
C. Ensure their District Officers keep records to enable completion of Questions 26 & 27 within the IDB1 Annual Report to Defra.

1. MLC Overview

Delivery has been the primary focus within 2025/26. We were successful in securing approximately £4.5m of grant for several IDB Fund (Tranche 2b) submissions and the administration and delivery of these commitments has been a primary focus, particularly for staff in M&E, Operations, Environment & Ecology and Finance, meaning some 'business as usual' activity has been impacted.

This fund, coming with fewer constraints than FCRM grant-in-aid, has enabled us to think and invest differently. We are starting 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. At St Germans Pumping Station for example, we now are starting to gear our infrastructure, turning our assets from feeling like a financial burden into engines that drive our business more efficiently. 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 staff 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.

It is also clear that MLC and the IDBs need to reduce our collective reliance on government grant in aid funding and highland water payments. Whilst we remain focussed on influencing and informing policy shifts, MLC and IDB assets are of the age that we cannot avoid the scale of capital works ahead of us that will cost hundreds of millions of pounds to develop and deliver. Collectively we have a significant gap in both capacity and capability, alongside a dependence on Fens 2100+ driving a case for change in how our assets are invested in.

Thanks to the support of the Middle Level Board, we now have greater capability to press our regulatory teeth and turn the significant development pressures we face within our catchment into a risk management and financial opportunity rather than seeing it negatively. A further increase in staff capacity has been approved to better cater for the workload, increase cost recovery to further reduce costs to ratepayers. Fees from developers are also a critical source of funding to develop and deliver the capital works on the MLC and/or IDB infrastructure that serves and benefits developments.

2. MLC Services to IDBs

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

Given that our focus in 2025/26 has been on establishing and strengthening our Planning, Compliance & Enforcement Service for MLC/IDBs, IDB Fund Delivery for MLC/IDBs and enabling the transfer of seven IDBs outside of the Middle Level to new service providers, the Service Guide and associated fee structure will continue to be developed during 2026 with a view to being ready to implement for 2027/28.

3. Policy Reviews

There are several new policies that need to be developed and published over the course of the next year, along with updates to existing policies. Given the nature of our catchment and our services to administered IDBs, most policies need to be consistent rather than bespoke for each IDB. Any policy also needs to come into effect at the same time across MLC and/or all relevant IDBs.

Planned new policies include:

- IT Policy
- Artificial Intelligence Policy
- Approach to CDM Regulations 2015 and the Procurement Act 2023
- Compliance & Enforcement Policy (primarily to support our regulation of consent compliance, unconsented works and associated enforcement)

The Board is asked to delegate the approval and publication of new and/or updated policies to the Clerk.

4. Waste Exemptions

Defra and the Environment Agency introduced waste exemptions in circa 2008/09 and there is a suite of exemptions available to IDBs (including D1 exemption which allows for depositing waste from dredging inland waters). We followed Environment Agency advice at the time and have one suite of exemptions that covers the MLC and all our administered IDB operations.

This approach now requires improvement and mitigation to de-risk operations for IDBs and MLC individually and collectively. Following discussion with MLC and IDB Chairs, over the next 12-months we aim to move to MLC and each administered IDB having their own suite of waste exemptions and associated implementation controls. There will also likely be a need for associated training materials for IDBs and their District Officers.

We will likely require external resources/services to deliver this improvement and the cost associated with the work will be divided equally.

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

IDBs and Board members had the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the outline design in Q1 of 2025/26. Members of the 'Case for Change' working group met in September 2025 to review the feedback on the Outline Design and agree next steps. The consensus is that people need something more specific to debate. We also, unsurprisingly, have people on either extreme of the spectrum between staying as we are and not seeing any need for change, and those that feel radical change is long overdue. Most are somewhere in-between.

A proposal has been conceived that the working group supports moving to 'Detailed Design'. This proposal is to move from the current 25 IDBs to 7 IDBs, in phases, over the next 15 years. The proposal aims to balance:

1. Hydrological common sense and logical alignment.
2. The Outline Design feedback.
3. Respective readiness for and need for change.
4. Likely trigger points for change.

This proposal aims to provide:

1 An option for detailed design and subsequent debate.
2 The ability to phase change and make it more bite sized.
3 Time for IDBs to make steps to align ‘standards’ ahead of amalgamation.
4 A meaningful change that will enable improvements and efficiency within MLC & IDB working.
5 A middle ground between the ‘go big’ and ‘stay small’ views.
6 A platform for further and quicker change should it be needed or if the Fens Reservoir enables.

We aim to have the Detailed Design undertaken by April 2026 so we can have an IDB Chairs session on it ahead of consultation through Autumn 2026. Depending upon response and agreement, Boards would be asked to approve any final proposal (particularly any Boards amalgamating in any Phase 1) at their 2027 AGMs.

6. 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.

7. Electricity

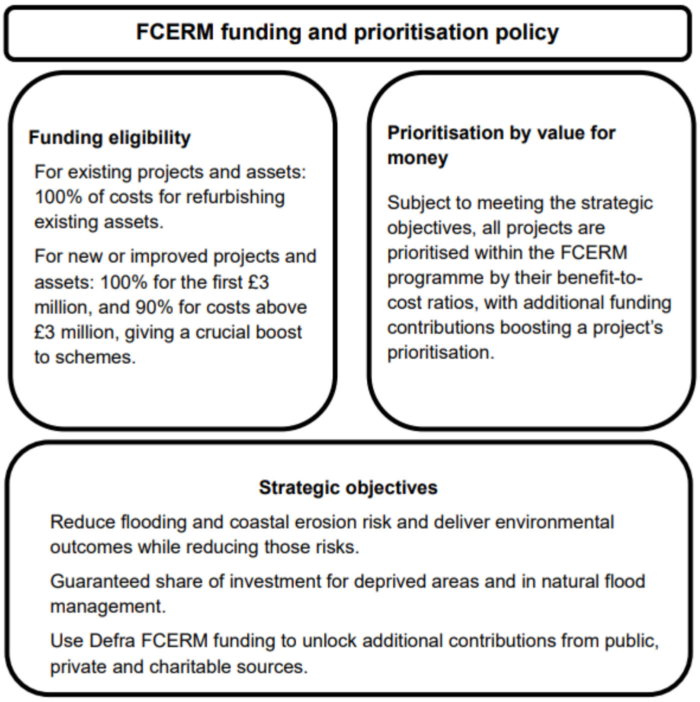
The 12-month group (MLC and IDBs) contract with EDF Energy ceased on 30th September 2025. This contract was facilitated by brokers GEAB.

A sub-committee of MLC Board Members and IDB Chairmen 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.

8. Defra Flood Funding Policy (Capital Works)

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. At the time of writing (February 2026) the guidance associated with implementing the new policy is yet to be finalised and published. Given existing financial commitments within the Environment Agency’s investment programme, there will likely be a transition period of a couple of years before the full programme reflects the new policy.



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 acknowledges 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.

9. IDB Funding & Costs Research

A joint Defra and MHCLG 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 and provided them with the information we have to hand for their data requests. W also hosted a case study visit in January 2026. 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.

In September 2025 we also hosted the Local Delivery & Rural Floods Policy Team from Defra. We took them on a whistlestop tour from Stanground Lock through the Middle Level to St Germans Pumping Station and used the time and the backdrop to discuss and showcase our system and breadth of water management operations.

We highlighted the 'big ticket' areas of efficiency we are driving at the MLC, including how we are using the governments 'IDB Fund' wisely. We discussed the strengths and successes in how we work across the Middle Level but also the areas of policy and associated financing that are constraining our collective ability to plan and be as efficient and as effective as possible in a world that's changing, due largely to factors beyond our control.

10. IDB 1 (Annual Reporting to Defra)

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 has on the sector in terms of governance and responsibilities.

Whilst MLC can derive most of the financial and non-financial information on behalf of our administered IDBs, there are an increasing number of questions where we require information from the Boards directly. Including, for IDBs that do not use the MLC for their operational services their District Officer will need to keep records of the length (in kilometres) of i) the length of watercourse maintained by the Board in the financial year and ii) the cumulative length of works on maintained watercourses (Questions 26 & 27 in the form).

If no answers are received from Boards, then questions will be left blank within returned forms.

11. IDB Precept

Section 139(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA 1991) empowers the Environment Agency to require a contribution from Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) each year towards its operational costs. The mechanism for collecting the contribution is for the Environment Agency to issue a precept to the relevant IDBs requiring payment of the amount due.

There is a statutory duty to spend IDB precept revenue “only in the carrying out of the Environment Agency’s flood and coastal erosion risk management functions… in or for the benefit of the flood risk management region in which [the precept] is raised”.

The amount of the contribution should be what the Environment Agency considers to be ‘fair’ and the legislation places a duty upon the Environment Agency to provide to the IDB a statement which provides detail of the purposes of which the contribution demanded by precept will be applied and the basis of the calculation of the contribution.

The Environment Agency, via the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) has committed to improve the clarity and transparency of how and where IDB Precept is spent along with the associated calculation. The existing approach is rooted in discussions and agreements that have been lost in time with changing corporate knowledge; therefore, it is likely to take a few years of incremental improvement to get to a clearer position.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Provide for the review and acceptance of the new Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) outside and following the Board meeting, on behalf of the Board, by the Chair and/or Vice Chair and/or another representative
B. Set a budget for biodiversity spend for the next year (£100 min)
C. Note that Key Environmental Compliance Indicators (KCIs), as below, have been launched this year to assess and report the environmental compliance of the IDB in a consistent way. This will help to ensure that any areas of environmental risk are flagged promptly, and the environmental achievements of the Board are recognised and published.
D. Note that a review of the IDBs Environmental and waste permits is required and will be planned with the Chair and VC in the coming months.

Review of Key Environmental Compliance Indicators (KCIs)

Key:	Not Achieved / Information Not Available	Partly complete / A date has been set for completion (provide date and resource)	Complete
Name of Board Environmental Representative:		**Morgan Lakey**	

KCI:	Description of KCI:	Status:	Comments:
1.	A current channel categorisation map & reasoning is available		Categorisation done. Digital map to be prepared.
2.	Standard Operating Procedures audit has been undertaken and works considered compliant	**In Progress**	ML will undertake during ops in 2026
3.	The previous year's maintenance record is available for review and to inform the following year's works planning.	**In Progress**	Desilting works available for 2025. 2026 will be first year to collect flail data.
4.	A channel maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting) has been prepared for Board review and approval.		Desilting plan in Board report (2-4yr rotation). Flail mowing planned on desilting working sides and all other accessible banks in accordance with SOPs and cat plan (which doesn't usually exceed 80% of total bank length).
5.	All non-routine works undertaken in the previous year were screened for environmental impacts and opportunities using the ESR process		No non-routine works
6.	The Biodiversity Action Plan has been reviewed and objectives for the previous year have been met and following objectives set	**In progress**	23rd April provisionally offered for new BAP review
7.	Biodiversity budget is set for proposal and defined	**In progress**	Will set at 2026 meeting & report
8.	At least one Board representative has attended at least one biodiversity training / information event in the year and reported relevant details to the board	**n/a**	This is the first year. Attendance at the MLC Bio Day is offered and contractors will be offered training
9.	There has been no net loss of open watercourse (via culverting or other) in the district in the previous year	**n/a**	Reminded Board of Policy and will be reviewed next year for first time
10.	A current map of badger setts in the district is available and licensable works around them was undertaken compliantly and in line with licence conditions	**In progress**	In progress. **ML** will continue mapping.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**9**
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 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 if it wants to progress with the System Study or to revise the project to an asset refurbishment project,**
C. **Consider the recommendations for the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and grant funding and to confirm acceptance of recommendations to the Consulting Engineer.**

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, unlicenced 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.

Refer to Appendix 2 for more details.

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. 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)

<u>Asset Refurbishment Projects</u>

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.

<u>New or Improved Asset Projects</u>

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.

The Board had a project "March Fifth DDC System Study" identified on the FCERM investment programme with and indicative allocation of £50,000 for 26/27. However, the EA indicated at the January 2026 RFCC meeting that this allocation has been deferred.

The Board is asked to:

- **Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement taking account of the recommendations made in the M&E Report in Appendix 4,**
- **Consider if it wants to progress with the System Study or to revise the project to an asset refurbishment project,**
- **Liaise with the Consulting Engineer to determine project suitability and timescales,**
- **Consider and agree to making a contribution towards the project costs to aid funding prioritisation, and**
- **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 & Planning issues
Appendix 3: Operational Services Report
Appendix 4: M&E Report

Appendix 1

March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners

Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)

		PREVIOUS YEAR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	FUTURE YEARS	ALL YEARS
		Pre Yr 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Post Year 10	Total Expenditure
North Creek P/S	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	3000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South Creek P/S	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3,000.0	3000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Refurbishment of inlets/outfalls	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drainage Channels														
		9.2	**0.0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**70**	**70**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**6,000**	**6,149**

There have been 15 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 3 applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) granted since the last meeting.

There have been no applications for Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 4 infiltration device applications acknowledged since the last meeting.

5. Planning issues

Rising main replacement

In early Autumn 2024, Anglian Water Services Ltd., replaced a rising main from their booster station at Riverdown, at March Water Recycling Centre (WRC), alongside Creek Fen Road – an initial application to replace the c.3km long rising main was rejected as a result.

The matter has now been resolved. Surveyors returned to site to realign the main 20m away from the Old River Nene and directional drilling levels of 2.5-3m below hard beds of IDB drains was adhered to.

The contractor had some issues when laying new pipe across the IDB drain close to South Creek Pumping Station and caused damage to the bank/bed of the drain. This was repaired under guidance of the Consulting Engineer.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**9**
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Morgan Lakey**

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

The maintenance and drain works carried out last year generally accorded with the recommendations approved by the Commissioners at their last Annual Meeting.

Harrison Agricultural Contractors carried out the Commissioners' flail mowing requirements last season and have indicated that they are available to undertake them again for the ensuing year. A sum for the completion of flail mowing district drains has been included within the estimate.

Following previous years' requirements and with the Commissioners' approval, the Commissioners' drains immediately upstream of North and South Creek Pumping Stations, reaches 1-2-3 and 20-21, were included in the annual machine cleansing programme. This action was deemed necessary to reduce the mass of aquatic weed required to be manually cleaned from the Pumping Stations' weed screens. It is recommended that a sum is allowed for both reaches to be included again in this year's machine cleansing programme.

The proposed machine cleansing works to the Foxglove Way area were successfully completed last year under favourable ground conditions, following the long dry summer. The removal and disposal of the arisings was carried out under the D1 exemption, as we have done previously when machine cleansing in this area. However, this year there was some queries from the Environment Agency and further clarification of the permit exceptions will be required before planning future works in this area.

The Middle Level was successful in securing funding from the Government's Tranche 2 scheme, allowing for improvement works at IDB Pumping Stations, for the deployment of mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown. A hard standing area has been installed at South Creek Pumping Station, improving access at the pump and a suitable area should a mobile pump be required.

A pre-harvest district inspection last summer indicated that a majority of the Commissioners' district drains were in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. Drains requiring aquatic herbicide applications were identified and included with the foxglove way drains that were programmed for machine cleansing.

A recent joint inspection of the Commissioners' district drains was undertaken with the Chairman. The inspection indicated that majority of drains are currently in a satisfactory condition, however as the Commissioners' annual meeting falls during the early part of the growing season a subsequent district inspection will be required during the summer months to accurately identify any additional drain maintenance requirements.

North Creek Pumped System

The Commissioner's drains within the North Creek area are in a generally satisfactory condition, however sporadic stands of emergent aquatic vegetation are evident throughout the North West drains around the Flagrass Hill area. It is recommended that reaches 26-33-34-35-36-37 and 26-27-28-29-30-31-32 are included in this year's machine cleansing programme. Herbicide application will be carried out prior to the proposed machine cleansing works and to any other Commissioner's drains where it is required. A provisional sum has been included in the estimated costs for the proposed works to be completed and the plan on the following page shows the extent of the works and their locations.

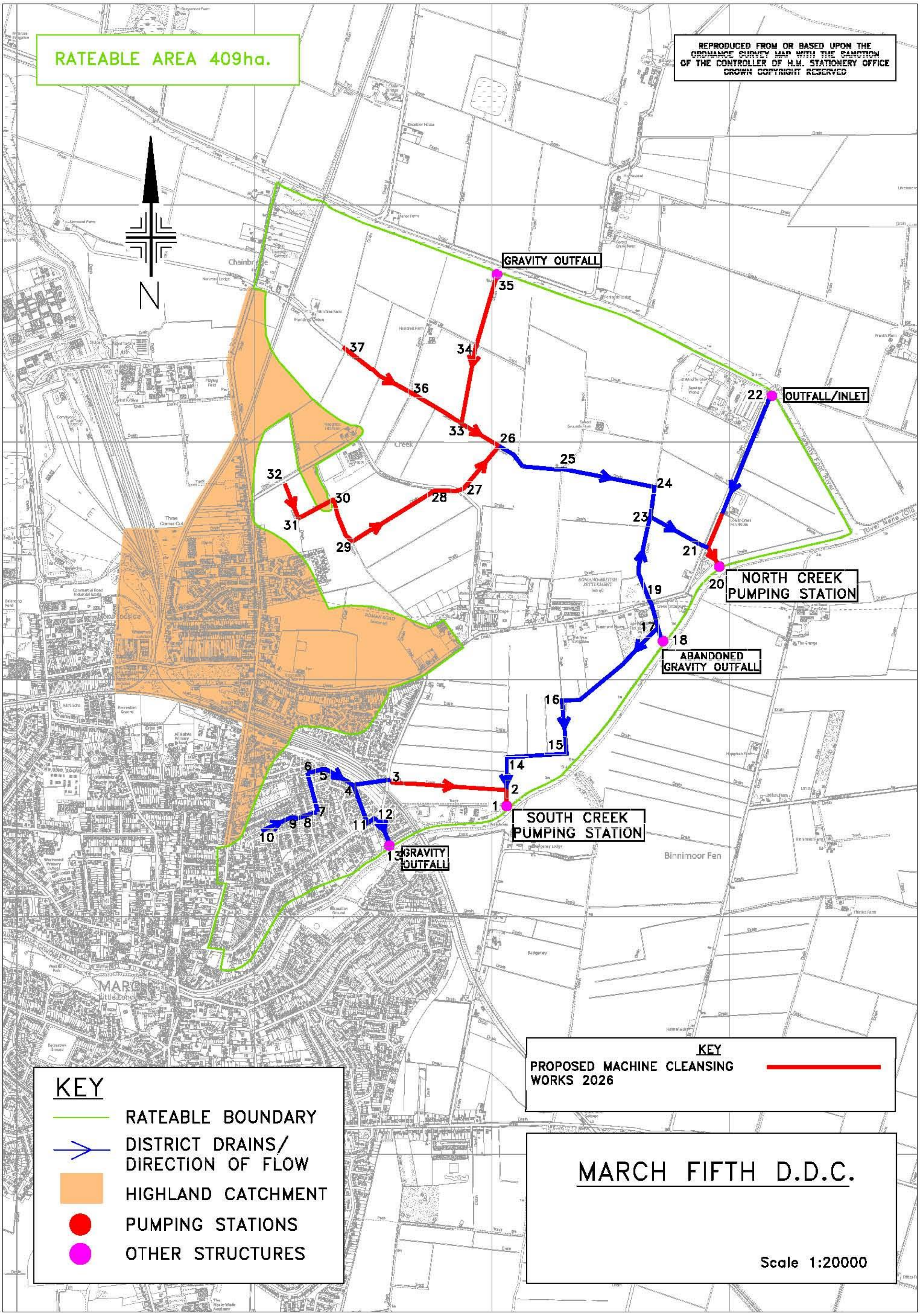
The collapsed Badger setts and small areas of bank subsidence identified on reaches 24-25-26 have not deteriorated any further and have naturally begun to self-heal and will be regularly monitored and any remedial works required, programmed in to be completed in-line with ecological guidelines.

South Creek Pumped System

The recent inspection indicated that the Commissioner's drains within the South Creek area are currently in a good condition. Historically district drains in the South Creek area have been prone to late occurring infestations of submerged weed growth, most notably semi-buoyant Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum dermersum*). The annual cleansing of this area has dramatically reduced this issue, however, as mentioned previously reach 1-2-3 will be included in the machine cleansing programme to prevent future issues with large accumulations of aquatic weed at the manually cleaned weed screen.

Creek Road/Newlands Avenue/Foxglove Way – Gravity System

Watercourses in the Foxglove Way area remain in a good condition following last year's machine cleansing works and it is pleasing to report only small amounts of windblown litter and debris are visible within the drain. It is envisaged regular visual inspections of drains will continue for the next season to ensure any domestic or household debris being fly tipped into the Commissioner's watercourse can be dealt with swiftly and to monitor for potential recolonisation of any invasive, non-native aquatic vegetation.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ABANDONED GRAVITY OUTFALL
SOUTH CREEK PUMPING STATION
GRAVITY OUTFALL
Binnimoor Fen
KEY
PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING WORKS 2026
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
MARCH FIFTH D.D.C.
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2. Estimated Costs of Drain Maintenance and Weed Control Programme

The estimated costs of this year's recommended Weed Control and Drain Maintenance works are shown below, please refer to the previous plan for locations. A provisional sum has also been included within the Commissioners' budget to allow for any emergency machine cleansing, bank slip repair or culvert clearance works required later in the season.

North & South Creek Pumped System

			£	
1.	Flail mowing District drains	Item	Sum	3200.00
2.	Application of Roundup to control emergent weed and reed	Item	Sum	900.00
3.	Machine Cleanse Reaches	M	£	
	26-27-28-29-30-31-32	1500	1.50	2250.00
	33-34-35	650	1.50	975.00
	26-36-37	675	1.50	1012.50
4.	Machine cleanse Pump Drains			
	North Creek	Item	Sum	250.00
	South Creek	Item	Sum	500.00
5.	<u>Provisional Item</u> Allowance for any culvert clearance, bank slip repair, emergency or additional machine cleansing that may be deemed necessary later in the year	Item	Sum	1200.00
6.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangements and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum	1200.00
			TOTAL	**£11,487.50**

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

Author Name: Morgan Lakey BSc
Role: Operations Manager

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**9**
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 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 each of the stations is mechanically and electrically in a satisfactory condition. The stations 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 are examples of pump bolts from other stations 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	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls	Bars	Telemetry
North Creek	**1976**	**1990**	**1990**	**1976**	**1976**	**2023**
South Creek	1976	2005	2005	2005	1976	2023

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical areas for concern and improvement is the pumps and the control panel at North Creek. The pumps range from 20 to 35 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 20 to 35 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the 2 pumps that are overdue 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.

1.2 North Creek

The control panel is from 1976 and should be replaced, similar control panels at other sites have been in the region of £15k to £20k. The canister pump is from 1990, and we have no records of overhaul during this time. Plans should be put in place for its replacement. Pumps of this type are likely to be in the region of £30k to £40k. The insulation readings for the pump do not cause concern but with pumps of this age they can deteriorate quickly when seals fail.

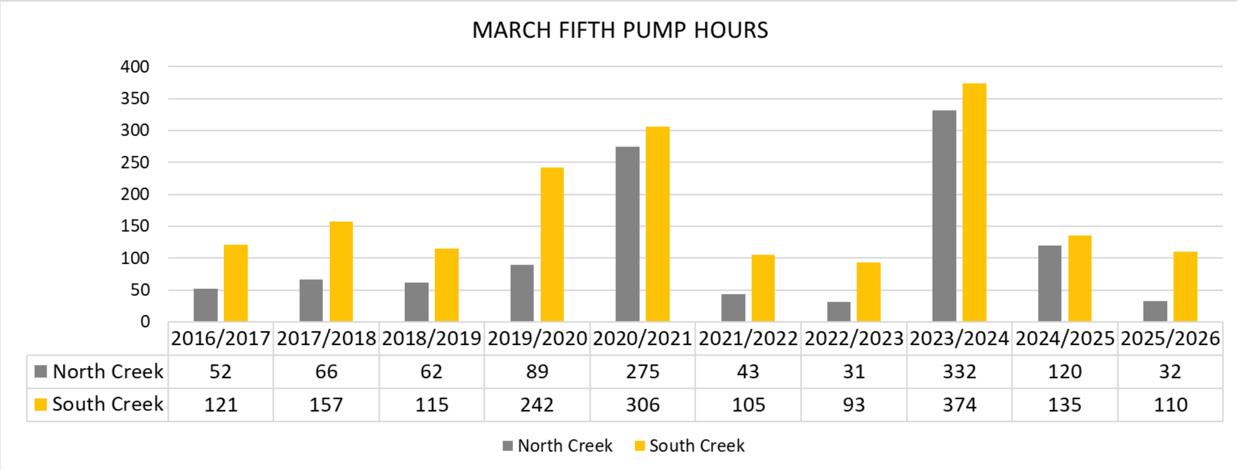
The last Routine Inspection at North Creek Pump Station took place on 7th January 2026. Recommendations / remarks include requires offset programming on telemetry for accurate water level readings (Station 98.97 / Telemetry 98.71). Recommend new pump panel due to age of the electrical equipment. New 4ft Tube light required/recommended. Pump run light smashed.

1.3 South Creek

The control panel is from 2005 and is in satisfactory condition. It would benefit from the exterior metal cabinet being updated to provide better protection for the panel and to allow the panel to be worked on in wet conditions if necessary. The submersible pump is from 2005, and we have no records of overhaul during this time. Plans should be put in place for its replacement. Pumps of this type are likely to be in the region of £40k to £50k. The insulation readings for the pump do not cause concern but with pumps of this age they can deteriorate quickly when seals fail.

The last Routine Inspection at South Creek Pump Station took place on 7th January 2026. Recommendations/remarks include: 1) Minor oil leak visible on UK Power Transformer – needs attention from UKPN. 2) Subsidence around power pole – needs attention from UKPN. Cabinet heavily corroded allowing ingress of vermin – recommend replacement cabinet. No access to check outlet – overgrown.

2. Pumping summary



	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
North Creek	52	66	62	89	275	43	31	332	120	32
South Creek	121	157	115	242	306	105	93	374	135	110

3. Inspections

The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Reports (due every 5 years) were carried out at both North & South Creek Pump Stations on 29th March 2024, and both sites are in a satisfactory condition.

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

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	10
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note its Health & Safety accountabilities.
B. Take initial actions to strengthen its governance of Health & Safety (Section 3).

1. Introduction

The ADA Good Governance Guide covers Health & Safety (P90-91) and there is a new guide in development that will go much deeper into responsibilities and standards. The Annual Report (IDB1) to Defra also asks the following questions:

- Whether the Board has a current Health & Safety Policy
- Whether the Board has a Board Member focussed on ensuring that Health & Safety is considered when Board decisions are made.
- Whether the Board has a responsible officer for Health & Safety.
- The number of 'near miss' incidents in the reporting period.
- Details of any reportable incidents in the reporting period.

2. Clarification of H&S accountabilities

For the avoidance of doubt, an IDB and the MLC are each different public bodies, independent from each other. In the UK, a public body can delegate specific health and safety *tasks* and *functions* to another body, but it cannot transfer its ultimate legal accountability or liability for ensuring that those duties are carried out safely. The original public body retains overall responsibility. Accountabilities and responsibilities cannot be outsourced to H&S service providers either.

Delegation of statutory functions requires explicit laws to enable, and these do not exist within MLC and IDB legislation. Specific day-to-day tasks can be delegated to competent individuals or organisations, provided there are clear arrangements for supervision, monitoring, and reporting. Delegation should be set out in formal, robust contracts or agreements (e.g., a written contract or a scheme of delegation) that clearly define roles, responsibilities, reporting arrangements, and monitoring procedures.

Currently, the only H&S task that MLC provides for administered IDBs is to facilitate specialist H&S advice via a group arrangement currently with AW Safety Management Ltd (previously COPE) as the supplier. As MLC further matures their own Health & Safety capacity, capability and standards, it may be that they can offer a broader service to administered IDBs.

The specific scope of services/advice that each IDB wants or needs from AW Safety Management Ltd is within their gift and responsibility to determine. Each Board essentially pays for an annual day with the H&S advisor as well as their ad hoc advice as required. These days have in recent years been focussed on a site inspection (e.g. pumping stations), however there is a diminishing value in repeat inspections of the same asset. It is also not clear whether Board's are making use of the ad hoc advice arrangements that they are paying for.

Where MLC are delivering specific operational services for an IDB (e.g. overseeing the maintenance programme, M&E works, ecological surveys) then they have responsibility to manage the H&S associated with those activities and any contractors they use. The IDB remains accountable for assuring themselves of MLC's competence in this regard.

3. Strengthening IDB H&S governance

It is recommended that the Board review its governance of its Health & Safety accountabilities. This should include the following initial actions, but not necessarily be limited to these:

a) Reconfirm if they have a lead Board Member and responsible official for H&S, and if so, who they are.
b) Confirming which Board Members and officials (e.g. District Officers, Pump Attendants) have been suitably trained in H&S leadership (e.g. IOSH Managing Safely) via their 'day job' employers, providing certification to MLC so it can be held on the Board's file.
c) Identifying Members and Officials (and employees) who ought to be trained*. This will then need to be budgeted for and arranged.
d) Review the Board's near miss and accident reporting approach and ensure any records are sent to MLC Offices for inclusion on the Board's file. MLC have template forms for their own H&S management that can be provided.
e) Consider its wider H&S risk exposure and target the days with AW Safety Management Ltd accordingly.
f) Provide feedback as to whether a broader H&S service from the MLC would be valued (reducing or replacing the need for a 3rd party service provider) and what range of services would be most valuable.

**The Institution of Occupational Health & Safety (IOSH) Manging Safely Course is a 3-day classroom style course costing circa £600 (exc VAT). There are also online learning options available.*

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Site Safety Inspection

March 5
North Creek & South Creek

carried out on

Wednesday, 11 February 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Key Information	
Client:	March 5 IDB
Site:	North Creek & South Creek
Site Contact:	Tony Hopkin
Site Contact E-mail:	enquires@middlelevel.go.uk
Inspection date:	11/02/2026
Inspected by:	Vicki Clutterbuck
Introduction:	This health and safety Inspection Report is part of the annual support programme from AW Safety Management and is designed to review the practical implementation of health and safety arrangements within the Company. The purpose of the inspection was to assess systems, management controls, working practices and identification of hazards and the controls in place. The aim was to conduct an examination to ensure that best practice is used and there has been compliance within set standards and any relevant legislation. We plan our work to ensure that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting any significant control weaknesses, however, our processes alone are not a guarantee that all operational conditions / activities will be witnessed, this is particularly relevant for any off-site activities. The responsibility for maintaining suitable controls for the safety of employees and anyone else who may be affected and safe operation of the business rests with the management of the Company. Subject areas that require action are detailed in the 'Action Plan' section of the report. Each subject is given a brief outline and the suggested remedial action required, a target completion date (based on the priority rating) and the person responsible for ensuring that the action is addressed. The person responsible listed against the action is based on our visit to site and understanding of the Company structure. Each subject area is given a priority rating, which is based on the auditor/s knowledge, understanding & judgement and is selected to highlight areas of non-compliance and provide general guidance on safe working. Where applicable, a number of key photographs are included in the report, these are referenced to the relevant subject area reference number. These can be used as a reminder of conditions at the time of inspection and provide additional guidance on the action required.

Priority Rating		
Priority Rating	Effectiveness of Controls	Target Completion
High	Serious 'material breach' of legislation and / or serious and imminent danger to persons	Immediate Action Required
Medium	Significant control weakness exposing persons to moderate degree of risk	Planned Action Required
Low	General guidance or areas where there are opportunities to implement better practice and reduce exposure to risk	Actionable Comment

Purpose of Inspection / Executive Summary

Thank you to Tony for accompanying me to North & South Creek pumping stations.

Please find actions listed in report below, no other areas of concern were raised at the time of inspection

All actions were discussed with on site at the time of inspection.

If you have any questions in relation to actions raised on this report, please don't hesitate to get in touch

Action Plan					
High Priority			Immediate Action Required		
Medium Priority			Planned Action Required		
Low Priority			Actionable Comment		
Reference Number	**Additional Controls / Actions / Comments**	**Supporting Photographs / Pictures**	**Person(s) Responsible**	**Risk Rating**	**Action Complete When / Who**
North Creek 01	Certificate of Employers Liability Insurance on display within branch is currently out of date. In accordance with regulation 5. (2) of The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 in date certification must be on display in view of all employees. Replace with current certificate		Tony Hopkin	High	
North Creek 02	Moss observed on access stairway, this can be hazardous transforming walkways into, slick surfaces that pose a high risk of slips, trips, and falls. It is recommended to clean and clear stairs for safe use.		Tony Hopkin	Medium	

Contacts & Addendum	
Contact Information:	**AW Safety** **Nottingham Office:** Edwinstowe House, High Street, Edwinstowe, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG21 9PR **Lincolnshire Office:** Boston Enterprise Centre, Venture House, Enterprise Way, Lincolnshire, PE21 7TW **Cumbria Office:** Low Cross Buildings, 4 Low Cross Street, Brampton, Cumbria, CA8 1NP **Tel:** 0330 223 7470 **E-mail:** Support@awsafety.co.uk
Website:	www.awsafety.co.uk / www.irmconnect.co.uk
Note:	It is important to note that this Inspection highlights conditions at the time of the visit at the premises detailed on the front cover of the report. It remains the responsibility of the management and staff within the business to make known to the inspector any potentially unsafe conditions or practices which were not apparent during the Inspection, or that may take place at any off-site location. It is the ongoing responsibility of management to ensure that the business and its employees operate safely at all times and that any day-to-day health and safety issues are addressed immediately. Any queries or inaccuracies with this report should be raised immediately with the auditor.
AW Group	**AW Safety is a core division of the AW Group, designed to deliver end-to-end health, safety, and compliance solutions as part of our fully integrated service model.** **The AW Group also includes AW Human Resources, AW Training, and AW Facilities Management. Each division specialising in a critical area of organisational support. Together, we provide a holistic 360° service offering that helps you manage risk, improve performance, and maintain operational resilience across all aspects of your business.**

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	12
Meeting:	**MARCH FIFTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider and approve the Annual Return 2024/2025
B. Note the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor and consider the Internal Auditors Report for 2024/2025 (link)
C. Consider any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions occurring during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the Board.
D. Review the effectiveness of existing Internal Controls and identify any new or strengthened Internal Controls that they may require.
E. Highlight if there are any specific risks or issues not covered within its Risk Management Strategy that may need review ahead of the next formal update.
F. Review pumping station valuations for insurance purposes.
G. Note the submission of the IDB1 form to Defra. (link)
H. Assure themselves 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.
I. Continue with a limited assurance review approach.

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

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

1.2 As part of their AGAR return, the Board is asked whether it has considered any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions occurring during or after the year-end that have a financial impact on the Board.

1.3 The Board/Commissioners to consider the comments of the auditors on the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2025. (Appendix 1)

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

1.5 The latest report of the Internal Auditor is available on the MLC website. for the consideration. This report covers the MLC and all administered IDBs.

2. Internal Controls

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

2.2 Note the Financial Regulations for the Board is also available on its page via www.middlelevel.gov.uk

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

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

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

3. Risk Assessment and Insured Values

3.1 The Board are asked to consider their Risk Management Strategy and review the insured values for their pumping stations as detailed below:

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
INSURED VALUES OF FIXED ASSETS

	As At 1st April 2026
North Creek Pumping Station	491,273.00
South Creek Pumping Station	498,047.00
	989,320.00

4. IDB1 (Annual Report to Defra)

4.1 All IDBs are required to report annually to Defra via an Annual Report called an IDB1 form. These reports are copied to the Environment Agency and to the relevant District Councils. The most recent form submitted on behalf of the Board is available on the Board's webpage.

5. Exercise of Public Rights

5.1 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.

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

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

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

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025

March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners

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 March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners 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 March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners on application to:

The Clerk
March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners
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 Commissioners

Date of Announcement: 29th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

WWW.MIDDLELEVL.GOV.UK

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).*	✓		

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

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 09/04/2025 17/04/2025 28/04/2025

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: J. PEEVEY - WHITINGS LLP

Date: 28/04/2025

***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:

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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	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.

	Yes	No	N/A	
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.				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:

16/04/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

C.1286

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

Chair

Clerk

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	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	95,790	97,865	*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	31,910	36,165	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,707	HW TDA 6,293 ~~8,236~~	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	32,542	32,238	*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	97,865	HW TDH 108,085 ~~110,028~~	*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	107,860	115,310	*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	809,000	809,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

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

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

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

HWool

Date 07-04-2025

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

16/04/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

C. 1287

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

TD Hl

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

In respect of **March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners – DB0049**

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:

The AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review. The AGAR has been amended.

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 23/09/2025

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**13**
Meeting:	**MARCH 5TH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**	
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Highland Water contributions
B. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 1.
C. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/2026 (Appendix 2).

Finance Officer's review and key messages

For 2025/2026 the Board set a rate of 7.40p to raise a total of £36,177 in agricultural rates and special levies. The original budget proposal recommended was to set a rate of 8.20p to raise £40,090.

Actual expenditure for the year was £37,021 which is equivalent to a rate of 7.60p. Drain works was higher than budgeted due to higher planning fees; this accounts for the main variance against the budget set.

Following the setting of the rates for 2025/2026 additional funding became available in respect of the Storm Recovery Grant, MLC were successful in acquiring additional funding. As part of the Mobile Pump package funding was approved for Access Improvements for the deployment of the Mobile Pumps. £1,898 is Included in Improvement works for the works completed and has been 100% funded.

This will leave the General fund balance as at 31st March 2026 at £38,941 which is roughly a year's expenditure in hand. The Asset Replacement Fund as at 31st March is £9,111. This position is reflected in the Boards financial statements and Annual Return which they are requested to review and approve.

1. Budgeting

1.1 The budget comparison of the forecast out-turn and the actual out-turn for the financial year ending 31st March 2026.

2. Payments for 2025

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 1

3. Highland Water Contributions

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

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 £1,342.36.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the sum of £233.25 (£2,124.58 less £1,891.33 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) has been received from the Environment

Agency for the financial year 2024/2025 based on the Commissioners' actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £1,998.74 in respect of 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/2026.

4. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

4.1 Annual Return 2025/2026:

To consider the Annual Accounts and bank reconciliation for the year ended on the 31st March 2026 and the completion of Section 2 of the Annual Return as required in the Audit Regulations. Appendix 2

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

Appendix 1 Payments for 2025/26
Appendix 2 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/26

Appendix 1

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Payments 2025/2026 (1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026)

Association of Drainage Authorities - Annual subscription 2025	813.60
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling and Health & Safety contract	5,838.68
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	
Middle Level Commisssioners -Supply remedial Health & Safety signage	139.20
Middle Level Commisssioners - Free off syphon breaker and clearing weed from automatic weedscreen cleaner	322.82
Middle Level Commisssioners - Testing for power loss	178.99
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024-25, production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,458.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Board ID card	7.37
Carlile's Nursery & Grounds Maintenance - Grass cutting at pumping stations	110.00
Environment Agency - Precept	1,168.73
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	353.96
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	370.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Taking of quarterly electricity meter readings	101.95
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges,IDB change contribution and Internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024/2025 accounts)	6,154.24
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Limited - Drain maintenance and flailmowing	3,681.60
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,105.11
Middle Level Commissioners - Repairs to level controller	68.10
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,709.10
Environment Agency - Precept	1,168.72
Middle Level Commissioners - Tree clearance at Foxgloves Way for excavator access	1,962.86
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	1,896.52
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	204.58
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	370.76
Association of Drainage Authorities - Annual subscription 2026	854.40
B J Plant Hire Ltd. - Drain maintenance	552.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Limited - Drain maintenance and flailmowing	916.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	370.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Taking of quarterly meter reads	101.95
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District drains.	497.38
Middle Level Commissioners - Investigate pump fault, together with Health & Safety remedial works	336.79
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & Safety remedial works	51.50
Middle Level Commissioners - Annual machine maintenance	738.20
Information Commissioners - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Repair to pump panel	189.18
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply 2 crones (Account from L R Boons)	135.84
Tony Hopkin - District Officer's Fees for 2025-2026	1,044.00
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (North Creek pumping station)	748.68
EDF Energy - Electricity supply (South Creek pumping station)	1,528.13
British Gas - Electricity supply (North Creek pumping station)	294.65
British Gas - Electricity supply (South Creek pumping station)	226.43
	38,076.04

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026
GENERAL FUND

31st March 2026			1st April 2025		
To expenditure during the year			By Balance Brought Forward	39,782.05	
Precept		2,337.45	By Prior Year Adjustment - Grant Written Off	(1,942.92)	37,839.13
Insurances	1,105.11				
Repairs & Renewals	2,419.42		31st March 2026		
Fuel	2,310.82		By Rate Income & Special Levy	36,179.55	
Contractor's Charges	1,044.00		By Interest on Deposit Accounts	428.39	
Drainworks	8,952.12		By Rent	200.00	
Administration Charge, Audit Fee,			By Highland Water Contributions	2,231.99	
Printing, Stationery, Advertising Etc.	16,769.57	32,601.04	By Storm Recovery Grant	1,897.50	40,937.43
Improvement Works		1,897.50			
To Asset Replacement Fund					
Rates Raised 2025-2026		3,000.00			
To Balance Carried Forward		38,940.57			
		78,776.56			**78,776.56**

BALANCE SHEET

CAPITAL SECTION

Liabilities		**Assets**		
Capital Provisions Account	809,000.00	Land - Slamp	9,000.00	
		North Creek Pumping Station	400,000.00	
		South Creek Pumping Station	400,000.00	
	809,000.00			809,000.00

REVENUE SECTION

General Fund	38,940.57	Ratepayers Account - Arrears		328.21
Development Charges Account	65,269.68	Sundry Debtors		639.07
Sundry Creditors	13,371.73	Value added Tax - Refunds due		3,157.39
Asset Replacement Fund	9,111.35	Balance in hand -		
		Current Account	20,000.00	
		National Savings-Treasurer's Account	3,121.19	
		Business Premium Account	99,447.47	122,568.66
	935,693.33			**935,693.33**

March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026		
Balance brought forward		112,219.53	Payments made during the year		38,076.04
31st March 2026					
Receipts during the year					
Clerk's collection account	44,111.22				
Interest on deposit accounts	1,192.76	45,303.98	Balance carried forward		119,447.47
		157,523.51			**157,523.51**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	3,090.29	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	30.90	Balance carried forward	3,121.19
	3,121.19		**3,121.19**

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026	20,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	20,000.00

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**20,000.00**
Business Premium Account	**99,447.47**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**3,121.19**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**122,568.66**

March Fifth DDC
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund	39,782.05		
	Prior Year adjustment	-1,942.92		
	Development charges account	64,202.82		
	Asset replacement fund	6,042.94		
			108,084.89	**108,085**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	3,926.08		
	Special Levies	32,251.00		
	Penalty	31.37		
	Costs	0.00		
	Write-off	-28.90		
			36,179.55	**36,180**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	428.39		
	Development charges account	726.86		
	Asset replacement fund	68.41		
	Rent	200.00		
	Highland Water	2,231.99		
	Consents	0.00		
	Discharge contribution	340.00		
	Storm recovery grant	1,897.50		
	Write back of provisions	0.00		
			5,893.15	**5,893**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries	0.00		
	National insurance contributions	0.00		
	Pension costs	0.00		
	Travelling expenses	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal	0.00		
	PWLB - Interest	0.00		
			0.00	**0**
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	2,337.45		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	1,105.11		
	Repairs and renewals	2,419.42		
	Fuel	2,310.82		
	Drainworks	9,996.12		
	Administration	16,769.57		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Improvement works	1,897.50		
			36,835.99	**36,836**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	38,940.57		
	Development charges account	65,269.68		
	Asset replacement fund	9,111.35		
			113,321.60	**113,322**

Reconciliation
Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 113,321.60

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*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	97,865	108,085	*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	36,165	36,180	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	6,293	5,893	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	32,238	36,836	*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	108,085	113,322	*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	115,310	122,569	*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	809,000	809,000	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	0	0	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 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.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED
AWool

Date 09/04/2026

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	14
Meeting:	**MARCH 5TH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Wednesday 15th April 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Consider the Finance Officer's summary
B. Fees, remuneration and subscriptions
C. Note the Precept to the Environment Agency
D. Review & Approve Rating Estimates for 2026/2027
E. Consider & approve the Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements for 2026/2027

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

The rating estimates for 2026/2027 are made up of standard budget provisions and the engineers estimate for drain maintenance works for the coming year.

Estimates for pumping costs are as problematical as last year in that we need to factor in an 'average' pumping year, taking-into-account the impact of climate change. Further, we will have a new electricity supply contract from October 2026 with no current indications of possible unit costs. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates (10% increase on 2025/26 rates). Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate.

When considering the rate for 2026/2027 members should also consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping stations.

A provision of £3,000 has been included for Future Works.

The estimated expenditure for the year is £40,577, equivalent to a rate of 8.30p, the rate for 2025/2026 being 7.40p.

1. Fees, Renumerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the District Officer's fee for the ensuing year.

2. Precept to the Environment Agency

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

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

The precept for 2025 was £2,337.45.

3. Estimates for 2026/27

3.1 The estimated budget for 2026/27 is shown in Appendix 1.

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

4. Rate Requirements for 2026/27

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

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

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

Appendix 1 Estimates for 2026/27
Appendix 2 Rate Requirements for 2026/27

Appendix 1

MARCH FIFTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET 2026/2027

		Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31/03/2026 £	Proposed Budget 2026/2027 £
1	Insurances	1,132	1,105	1,216 [A]
2	Repairs and renewals	3,000	2,323	3,000
3	Fuel (Electricity)	3,250	2,311	2,750 [B]
4	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	13,378	14,383 [C]	16,689 [D]
5	District Officers' fees	1,055	1,044	1,099
6	Administration charge, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising,	10,917	11,435	12,250
7	Environment Agency - Precept	2,337	2,337	2,384
8	Improvement works	3,000	4,898 [D]	3,000 [E]
		38,069	39,836	42,388
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, Highland Water Contributions etc	1,892	2,815	1,811 [F]
		36,177	37,021	40,577
	Rates raised 2025/2026	7.40 p		8.30 p

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Estimated expenditure based on an 5 year average rainfall, assumed an increase in Electricity rates when contract renews in October 2026

C -	Slubbing (Including Emergency)	6,188
	Flail Mowing	3,200
	Weed Control	900
	Contribution - Env. Officer	1,995
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	4,407
		16,689
D -	Slubbing	3,163
	Flail Mowing	1,284
	Weed Control/Clearance	874
	Contribution - Env. Officer	1,995
	Drainworks/Planning fees/misc	7,066
		14,383
D -	Provision for future works	3,000
	Access Improvements for Mobile Pumps	1,898
E -	Provision for future works	3,000

F Includes full Highland Water contribution

March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Commissioners must be borne for 2026/2027 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 10.85%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 89.15%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £531.

In 2025/2026 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £4,889

Revenue cash balance in hand decreased by £841 in 2025/2026 to - £38,941.

The estimated net expenditure for revenue and capital works of £40,577 in 2026/2027 is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 8.30p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £36,039

In 2025/2026 a rate of 7.40p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £32,251 on Fenland District Council.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Commissioners

April 2026