



**middle level
commissioners**

Proudly managing water levels in the Fens since 1862

Planning & Consenting Fees 2026/27

This fee structure applies to planning and consenting relating to the interests of the Middle Level Commissioners, the Internal Drainage Boards within the Middle Level catchment and any IDBs outside of the Middle Level catchment that are administered by the Middle Level Commissioners. The Middle Level Commissioners are not for profit but obliged to recover their costs.

This fee structure will be reviewed annually.

Charges for advice/comments relating to applications in addition to the Standing Advice will be levied on a time basis at the hourly rate of charge applicable to the Officer(s) involved in the matter.

Pre-Planning Application Consultation on Surface Water Management and Flood Risk for New Development - All enquiries are levied on a discounted rate (80%) of the figures quoted below.

Post-Planning Application and Consenting Consultation on Surface Water Management and Flood Risk for New Development - All enquiries are levied at the full rate of the figures quoted below.

MLC Officer/Department Hourly Rates:

Officer	Hourly Rate
Chief Executive	£140
Chief Engineer	£130
Head of Operations and Water Level Management	£125
Operations Manager	£95
Head of Mechanical & Electrical (M&E)	£110
M&E Services Departmental Assistant	£70
Lead Clerk	£90
Head of Technical Services	£110
Planning & Consenting Technical Services	£90
Ecology & Environment Services	£90
External Consultancy/Specialist Services	Variable

Rates reviewed 1 May 2026 – for 2026/27.

The above rates are vatable and VAT will be charged at the rate in force at the time of billing.

Preliminary Surface Water and Sewage Effluent Assessment:	£284
Infiltration Device Certification and Checking Service:	£199 per device
Consideration of FRA from Commissioners'\Boards' perspective:	£175 upwards
Floodplain/Mortgage queries:	£175

Provision of Flood Risk Information:	Fee £154 plus £39 per question
The above rates are vatable and VAT will be charged at the rate in force at the time of billing.	

Consent Fees

	Description	Reason for charge being levied	Fee
A	Application to alter a watercourse	Application under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (and Board's Byelaws where watercourse is vested in the Board)	£50 per structure
B	Application for relaxation of one of the Board's Byelaws (not Byelaw 3)	Application for a relaxation of Board's Byelaws (usually Byelaw 10)	£100 per site
C	Application to discharge surface water to a watercourse	Application for a relaxation of Byelaw 3 (and possibly other Byelaws)	£100 per site
D	Application to discharge treated foul water to a watercourse	Application for a relaxation of Byelaw 3 (and possibly other Byelaws)	£100 per site

Any complex application requiring further advice or guidance may also require a post application agreement to cover additional cost at the discretion of the Middle Level Commissioners/Board. MLC Officer/Department Hourly rates will apply.

Please note a consent application is not considered "duly made" until the relevant fee has been made. The timescale for determining does not start until payment is received and all supporting information has been provided by the applicant.

Surface Water

New/Increased Surface Water Drainage *Minimum Charge £380 (in addition to Consent Fee C above)*

Surface Water Drainage Contribution (SWDC) Rates

Prior written consent is required from the Middle Level Commissioners or Board (or both) where a development will result in an increase in the rate and/or volume of flows in any watercourse and one of the conditions imposed as part of any such consent is the payment of a drainage contribution to the Board or Middle Level Commissioners (or both).

The charge is made to help fund the running and improvement costs of the drainage network that are required to cater for increases in the rate and/or volume of surface water flows. The Middle Level is a 2-tier system in which water must be pumped multiple times.

The relevant fee will be stipulated as part of a notification of intent to grant consent, at which point the applicant will be given a month to accept the SWDC as a condition of consent. Formal consent is issued following the applicant's confirmed acceptance of the conditions of consent and receipt of payment. The SWDC is **not** due at the point of application.

The contribution is calculated by:

- a) Assessing the drainage pathway of the receiving system and identifying existing IDB and/or MLC asset infrastructure which the site relies on to enable conveyance from the proposed outfall(s).

- b) Determining the impermeable area of the site to be positively drained (in hectares,ha).
- c) Determining the Greenfield Runoff Rate. The Greenfield Runoff Rate is the rate of discharge expected on an undeveloped site within a given rainfall event and varies geographically based on rainfall data and catchment characteristics. The annual average flow rate (Qbar) varies between 1.5 and 7 l/s/ha within catchment areas.
- d) The impermeable area of the site to be positively drained (in hectares, ha) should only reflect the additional impermeable area that is positively drained post development. It is therefore determined by taking away the area of impermeable surface positively drained to the watercourse prior to development from the proposed area of impermeable surface to be positively drained to the watercourse post development.

Additionally, please note:

- The Surface Water Drainage Contributions are payable at the rate applicable when the consent application is validated by the Middle Level Commissioners.
- Calculated fees will be at the discretion of the Middle Level Commissioners and/or Board as there are instances where the usual methodology may not be appropriate. For example, but not limited to, development in highland areas; areas formerly outside catchment boundaries or across Board boundaries; and temporary works or phased developments.
- We will advise applicants in these cases and a bespoke agreement and fee may be required.

SWDC per m ² of impermeable surface						
	Total site impermeable area in hectares		Number of times catchment is pumped downstream (including MLC system) = % fee			
Discharge rate above 1 yr greenfield	≤0.5ha	≥0.5ha	0 (gravity)	1	2	≥3
≤greenfield rate	£1.89	£1.89	85%	100%	110%	125%
≤ 3 x greenfield	£3.04	£4.70	85%	100%	110%	125%
≤ 6 x greenfield	£3.80	£5.88	85%	100%	110%	125%
≤ 12 x greenfield	£4.75	£7.35	85%	100%	110%	125%
≤ 24 x greenfield	£6.05	£9.18	85%	100%	110%	125%
≤ 40 x greenfield	£7.56	£11.48	85%	100%	110%	125%
> 40 x greenfield or unattenuated	£9.45	£14.35	85%	100%	110%	125%

Temporary Discharges

Contribution rates will be agreed based on bespoke arrangements on a site-by site basis, with a regular review depending upon the timescale of the temporary discharge.

New/Increased Effluent Discharge *Minimum Charge £380 (in addition to Consent Fee D above)*

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley	£171/cu m/day
All other Boards	£159/cu m/day

Treated effluent discharges from Anglian Water Services (AWS) Water Recycling Centres (WRC) or the Public Sewerage System *Minimum Charge £380 (in addition to Consent Fee D above)*

Warboys, Somersham & Pidley	£171/cu m/day
All other Boards	£159/cu m/day

For Surface Water and Effluent (Temporary or Permanent) discharges, the calculated contribution will be provided to the Middle Level Commissioners and/or IDB proportionately. For example, if water from a development is pumped once by an IDB and then twice by the Middle Level Commissioners, then the contribution will be distributed 1/3rd IDB and 2/3rd MLC.

Commuted Maintenance Fees

Commuted Maintenance (CM) fees are charged by various Internal Drainage Boards in connection with responsibilities relating to the future maintenance of new assets such as culverts, bridges, water control structures, outfalls, or sustainable drainage systems. These liabilities may be for routine maintenance only, to preserve an appropriate flow, or in the case of a new structure can also be accepting responsibility for future structural repairs/replacement of the asset.

Commuted Maintenance Fee (CMF) Rates

A Commuted Maintenance Fee (CMF) is a one-off charge payable where the Middle Level Commissioners/Board will become responsible for the future maintenance costs associated with a new or refurbished culvert, bridge, weir, outfall, or other structure within their district.

The relevant fee will be stipulated as part of a notification of intent to consent, at which point the applicant will be given a month to accept the Commuted Maintenance fee as a condition of consent. The fee is payable when formal consent is issued following the applicant's confirmed acceptance of the conditions of consent.

The Middle Level Commissioners/Board will not seek to abandon the commuted responsibilities pertaining to any adopted structure for which a commuted maintenance fee has been paid and recorded in the commuted obligations register. This is true only when there is a defined timeline of adoption which has not elapsed.

Any fees stated within this section are to be increased by inflation annually.

Culverts in watercourses not vested in/adopted by an Internal Drainage Board

Boards may consider adopting private culverts in watercourses not vested in the Board subject to the payment of a CMF. In such instances the Board will be responsible only for maintaining the clear flow of water through the structure while it is structurally sound (as determined by the Board's Officers). This will include desilting and vegetation clearance on a recurrence deemed necessary to meet water level management requirements.

The responsibility for structural maintenance will remain with the riparian landowner and the Board maintains the right to remove or require the removal of structures which pose a flood risk or safety risk due to poor repair. As such the CMF is derived from the costs that will be incurred by the Board in maintaining the clear flow of water through the structure over the lifetime of the adoption (length of adoption to be determined by the Board).

The CMF for culverts up to 150 metres in watercourses not vested in the Board can be determined using the tables below. For culverts over 150 metres the Board's Officers/Middle Level Commissioners will determine the commuted maintenance fee based on a case-by-case basis.

Commuted maintenance fees for culverts less than 750mm internal diameter:

Period of Adoption		
Length of Culvert ($\phi < 750\text{mm}$)	50 years	100 years
< 18 metres	£2,093	£4,511
19 – 50 metres	£7,537	£17,851
51 – 100 metres	£13,631	£32,814
101 – 150 metres	£20,086	£48,500

Commuted maintenance fees for culverts with internal diameter 750mm or greater:

Period of Adoption		
Length of Culvert ($\phi \geq 750\text{mm}$)	50 years	100 years
< 18 metres	£2,526	£5,594
19 – 50 metres	£10,313	£24,791
51 – 100 metres	£16,407	£39,755
101 – 150 metres	£22,326	£55,094

Development which restricts sSpoil Disposal:

Development which restricts spoil disposal	£275/linear metre
--	-------------------

Payment

Payments accepted by bank transfer or credit/debit card only. Should you require further information or bank details please contact our Finance Officers on 01354 653232 Option 1 or via finance@middlelevel.gov.uk.