

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	CONINGTON & HOLME IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Wednesday 3 rd June 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.
- B. Consider the development of an investment plan for future asset refurbishment/replacement and grant funding and to confirm acceptance of recommendations to the Consulting Engineer.
- C. Confirm if you would like MLC to restart the quarterly routine maintenance inspections.
- D. Provide meter readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved.
- E. Confirm if the site telemetry has been refitted with the new control panel or if any assistance is needed with it.
- F. Confirm if a new EICR has been completed as part of the station works, and if so please provide a copy for file.
- G. Review the pumping station key dates below, confirm any amendments and additional details.

1. Enforcement & Compliance Overview

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

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

Cases already concluded:

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

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

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

2. Summary of Key Planning Issues

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

3. New FCERM grant funding guidance

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

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

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

Project types that are eligible for grant funding include:

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

Asset Refurbishment Projects

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

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

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

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

New or Improved Asset Projects

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

These include:

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

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

Applying for funding

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

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

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

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

Timescales

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

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

The Consulting Engineer will prioritise workload based primarily on Key Health Indicators.

4. Capital Programme

It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for future asset refurbishment/replacement.

The Board is asked to consider the development of a capital investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

There have been 3 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been no Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses or to discharge to a watercourse) or infiltration device applications processed since the last meeting.

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Meeting:	CONINGTON & HOLME IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES
Date:	Wednesday 3 rd June 2026	Officer Responsible:	Morgan Lakey

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

- 1.1 Following a request from the Board, a site meeting was attended at Sawtry Road, Glatton, to discuss the maintenance downstream of point 72. The first section is land locked with residential properties and high boundary fences at the top of both banks, restricting the bankside access. It was agreed the best possible action for the Board, would be to investigate the un-adopting of the section between the two properties, moving the start of the Board's drain to the East of the residential boundaries. The Chairman was going to consider this further and discuss with the Board at their next annual meeting.

It was also agreed to carry out an inspection of the syphon at Point 5, whilst everyone was available and local to the site. A visual inspection revealed the syphon appears to be in good order, however without the correct PPE it was difficult to fully assess the integrity of the steel pipe from the bankside. The Chairman will discuss the findings with the Board and consider if further inspections are required and a proposal to carry out remedial works by inserting a smaller diameter twinwall plastic pipe, inside the existing steel one. A steel conversion plate could be fabricated for either end of the syphon, allowing the proposed works to be completed without excavating through the road.



Syphon @ Point 5

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Assistant Operations Engineer

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Meeting:	CONINGTON & HOLME IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Wednesday 3 rd June 2026	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

- 1.1 No routine inspections have been carried out at the station since June 2024 as the board had refurbishment plans in place.

Please confirm if you would like MLC to restart the quarterly routine maintenance inspections, and if so, please provide a key for the station.

If you would like MLC to hold any of the O&M files for the refurbishment works, then please forward electronic or paper copies.

1.2 Electricity Readings

Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting usage.

Moving forward it is requested that the Pump Attendants/District Officers take electricity meter readings and pump run hours readings monthly (as close to the 1st of each month as they can) and then forward them onto the M&E Engineer David Bantoft on david.bantoft@middlelevel.gov.uk or 07768 026119.

If you are unable to provide readings, or would prefer, the MLC can take quarterly readings; these will be at a cost to the Board for the time and mileage involved. Please approve this if it is required.

Without regular electricity meter readings, the MLC cannot verify electrical bills.

2. Pumping summary

The site telemetry has not been communicating since 12th April 2025. Please confirm if this has been refitted with the new control panel or if any assistance is needed with it.

3. Inspections

- 3.1 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report was completed in May 2024

Please confirm if a new EICR has been completed as part of the station works, and if so please provide a copy for file.

EICR Date	EICR Due
22 May-2024	22 May 2029

4. Pumping Station Key Dates

- 4.1 Please review the pumping station key dates below, if there are any discrepancies or you can add any details, please let me know. The key dates are an important reference and will feed into the upcoming Key Health Indicators and investment plan.

Station				Weedscreen
Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls	Bars
1970	1970	2025	2025	1970

5. 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