

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	MARCH EAST IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Thursday 28 th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.
- B. The Board 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.
- C. Acknowledge the approach to using the current GiA funding allocation.
- D. Confirm if it wants the Engineer to produce a Pump and controls Refurbishment/Replacement Plan for all pumps for the subcommittee.

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.

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. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Works delivered for this district included weedscreen overhauls.

5. New FCERM grant funding guidance

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

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

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

Project types that are eligible for grant funding include:

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

Asset Refurbishment Projects

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

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

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

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

New or Improved Asset Projects

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

These include:

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

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

Applying for funding

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

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

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

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

Timescales

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

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

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

The Board is strongly advised to consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement and to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly considering the following:

- **consider submitting new projects for inclusion in the FCERM Investment Programme (from July 2026)**
- **liaise with the Consulting Engineer to determine project suitability and timescales**
- **agree to making a contribution towards future project costs to aid funding prioritisation.**

6. Capital Programme

- 6.1 In terms of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRM GiA) there is currently an allocation available for 2026/27 to progress a system study in combination with Euximoor district. It is recommended that with the change in funding guidance and prioritisation approach that the funding is used to undertake surveys to inform future potential rationalisation works in relation to the Boards' amalgamation and a bid will be prepared for approval by the EA.

The Board is asked to acknowledge this approach.

- 6.2 The Board's Capital Programme is shown as Appendix 1.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield

Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: Capital Programme

Appendix 2: List of applications since last meeting

Appendix 3: Operational Services Report

Appendix 4: M&E Report

Appendix 1

March East Internal Drainage Board														
Capital Improvement Programme (2026/2027)		PREVIOUS YEARS	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
Bedlam 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	4,250.0	4250.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	5	0	0.0	10.0	30.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	74.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	43.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	43.8
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.5	0.0	0.0	47.5
	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
Binnimoor 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	2,820.0	2820.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.9	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0.0	0	10.0	28.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.4
	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	28.2	28.2
	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
Latches Fen p/s	Pumping station replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15,300.0	0.0	0.0	15300.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.9	0	0.0	35.0	18.0	0.0	310.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	382.9
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	15.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
	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
Drainage Channels														
		14.7	0.0	35	122	73	30	310	0	0	15,343	0	7,113	23,041

Appendix 2

There have been 32 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

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

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

There have been 3 infiltration device applications have been acknowledged since the last meeting.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	MARCH EAST IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES
Date:	Thursday 28th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Morgan Lakey

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

The maintenance works carried out last year generally accorded with the phased maintenance programme approved by the Board in 2008.

Due to road closures, the programmed machine cleansing of the Silt Road drains, reaches 76-77 was postponed and will be included in this year's programme

A successful bid for funding from the DEFRA tranche 2B grants, allowed for improvements works to be carried out at each of the Board's pumping station. Access improvements and hard standings were installed to allow for the deployment of mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown at one of the stations.



Improvements works @ Latches Fen Pumping Station

Provisional notices for the 2026 phased programmed machine cleansing works were issued last year. The extent of this year's works is shown on the site plan at the end of Appendix 3.

A recent inspection of the Board's district drains has revealed that many of the drains are in a satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard. The inspection indicates that many of the Board's drains that fall within this year's phased machine cleansing programme, will only require light machine cleansing to retain their good status.



Emergent Aquatic Weed growth @ Barkers Lane

Barkers Lane drains have historically suffered with emergent aquatic vegetation and this season is no exception. The drains will be treated with an application of herbicide and inspected later in the summer to assess if they should be included in this year's machine cleansing programme.

As with many other local Internal Drainage Boards, the March East district continues to suffer its fair share of fly tipping incidents throughout the year. A provisional sum has been allocated to allow fly tipped debris to be cleared, on the basis that the Board's area has been targeted in past years and unfortunately is likely to be targeted again.

The approved revetment works to the south bank of reach 3-5 was postponed last season and they will be undertaken this year following the displacement of the resident water voles under a Natural England Licence, led by the Middle Level Ecology Department.

The Board's previous flail mowing contractor, Mr Ashman will no longer be available due to retiring at the end of last year. For the previous 3 seasons, Mr Ashman has been assisted by M&C Agri and they are available to undertake the flail mowing requirements this year if the Board wish to proceed with them. A sum for the completion of flail mowing of Board's drains for the ensuing year has been included in the estimated costs.

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

A provisional sum has also been included within the Board's estimates for any bank slip repair, emergency cleansing, Cott removal or culvert clearance that may be required later in the year.

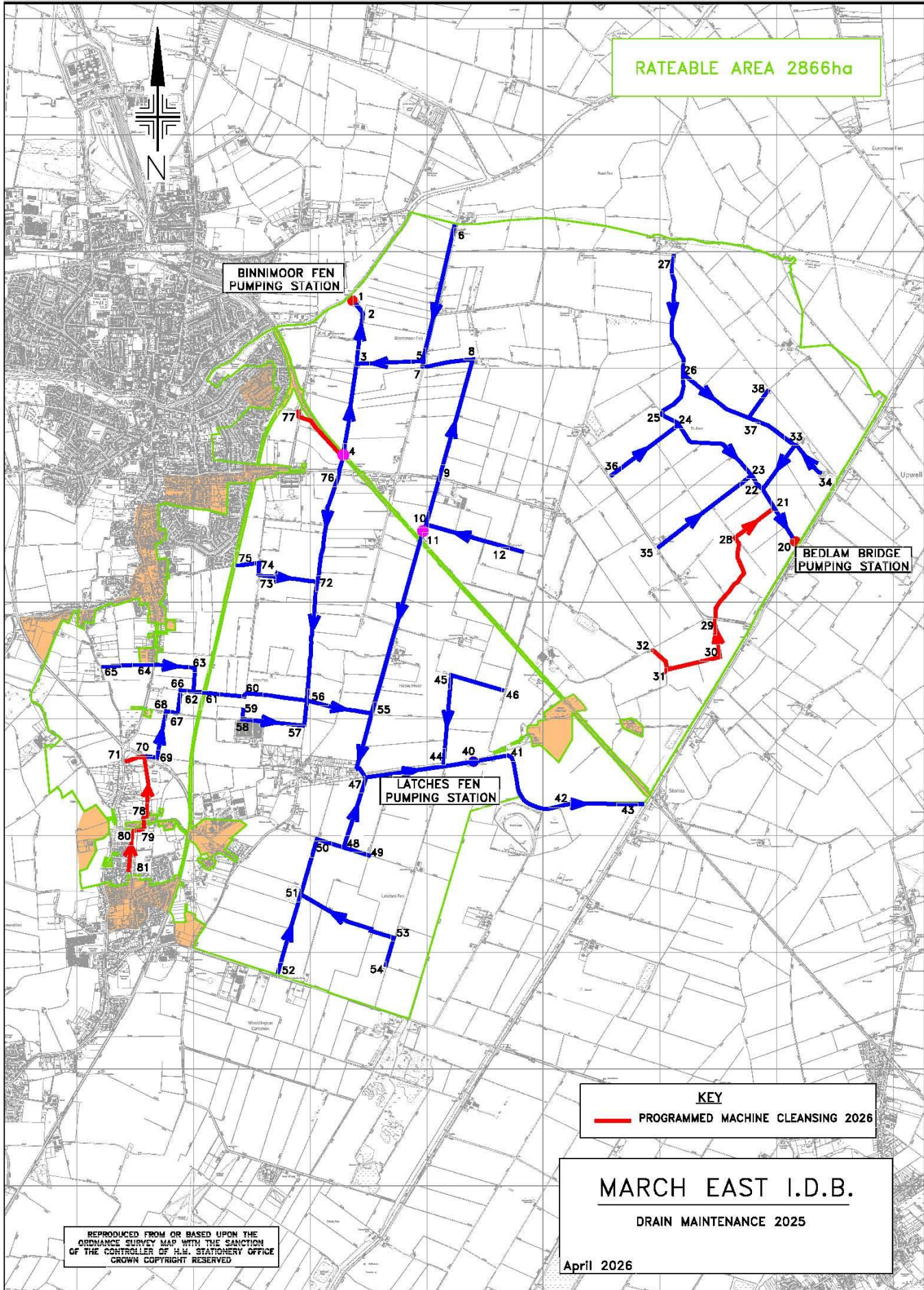
The estimated costs of this year's weed control and drain maintenance works are as follows:

1. Machine cleanse the following drains:				£	£
<u>Bedlam Bridge Pumping Area</u>					
(i) Reach 21-28-29-30-31-32	2300	m	@	1.30	2990.00
<u>Latches Fen Pumping Area</u>					
(i) Reach 71-70-78-79-80-81	1100	m	@	3.00	3300.00
<u>Binnimoor Fen Pumping Station</u>					
(i) Reach 76-77	600	m	@	1.30	780.00
2. Roundup application to control reed water cress and other emergent weed growth in district drains	Item	Sum			2000.00
3. <u>Provisional Item</u>					
Allow sum for bank revetment works Reach 3-5	Item	Sum			6000.00
4. <u>Provisional Item</u>					
Allow sum to remove fly tipped materials from Board's drains as required	Item	Sum			1000.00
5. Allow sum for flail mowing.	Item	Sum			9000.00
6. <u>Provisional Item</u>					
Allow sum for bank revetment, emergency cleansing, cott removal or culvert clearance works	Item	Sum			2000.00
7. Fees for inspection, preparation, and submission of report to the Board, arrangement, and supervision of chemical applications and maintenance works.	Item	Sum			2500.00
TOTAL					£29,570.00

Orders for the application of herbicides by the Middle Level Commissioners are accepted on condition that the application is weather dependant, and they will not be held responsible for the failure or efficacy.

Author Name: Morgan Lakey

Role: Operations Manager



Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	MARCH EAST IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Thursday 28th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Dave Bantoft

1. M&E key messages and advice

Other than the matters previously reported or described below, only routine maintenance has been carried out since the last meeting and the pumping plant at 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. The details below include any works already scheduled and funded to be completed this year. For example, The Bosker Weedscreen Cleaner Trolley & Grab Overhauls and NEW Control Panels at Bedlam Bridge and Binnimoor; and the Weedscreen Cleaner Upgrade Works at Latches Fen. To ensure reliability, resilience and longevity of the pumping equipment it needs to be refurbished or replaced at suitable intervals. We have experienced examples lately of pumps being left too long and failing, or when they are removed for overhaul the condition is very poor and the pump overall lifetime has been reduced significantly, which is not cost-effective use of the asset. The same is true for control panels, component failures often damage other components incurring costly repairs and machine downtime. Overall, it is more cost effective to run well maintained equipment.

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



Table 1: Key Health Indicators

	Station				Weedscre en		
Station	Built	Pump	Pump Overhaul	Controls	Bars	WSC	Controls
Bedlam	1971	1971	2010/11	1971	2003	2025	2025
Binnimoor	1976	2018	2018	2018	2000	2025	2025
Latches Fen	1956	1995 (D) 1998 (E)	2025 (D)2010 (E)	1998 diesel 1986 elec	1995	2026	2026

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the areas for concern and improvement is the pump and control panels. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump and control panel refurbishment/replacement plan for the pumps that are due refurbishment. Having a plan in place and underway helps to secure further grant funding when it comes available, such as the recent IDB Recovery Fund. The control panel at Bedlam is in excess of 50 years old and should be replaced. Which is likely to cost c£30k.

Submersible pumps are often not cost effective to repair and lead time on new pumps can be up to a year. Standard pumps are normally cost effective to repair and lead times can be as short as 4 weeks or can be over a year if impellers are damaged and have to be reverse engineered. Costs can be in the range £30k to £100k depending on pump condition.

The Board is requested to confirm if it wants the Engineer to produce a Pump and controls Refurbishment/Replacement Plan for all pumps for the subcommittee.

1.2 Latches Fen

The Pump impellor has had to be reverse engineered to manufacture a new one which is currently being machined and due for refitting this summer.

The engine and weedscreen control panels were combined, the refurbishment of the weedscreen has its own control panel. The electric pump and diesel engine control panels should be updated which is likely to cost c£18k for the electric pump panel and 310k for the diesel control panel.

The last routine inspection took place at Latches Fen Pump Station on 13th April 2026. Recommendations / remarks include:

- 1) The siphon heater has failed on the electric pump.
- 2) Diesel Tank showing 2960 litres.
- 3) Diesel Pump currently removed for overhaul.
- 4) Surge Protector Failed – Linked Out.
- 5) Internal Crane has corroded areas.
- 6) Floodlight failed at electric pump.

Bedlam

The widescreen cleaner has been overhauled.

The vibration on Pump 2 has decreased and may have been caused by foreign object in impellor or silt build up, this will continue to be monitored on routine inspections.

The level control failed at the station last season, a temporary repair was made. The control panels at this station are now in excess of 50 years old and plans should be made for their replacement to

ensure reliability. The level controller would be replaced as part of this works. Replacement control panels are likely to cost c£30k.

The last routine inspection took place at Bedlam Pump Station on 4th April 2026. Recommendations / remarks include:

- 1) Temporary repair has been carried out previously on ultrasonic head. Requires new stainless bracket.
- 2) Wobble on Pump 2, requires further investigation.
- 3) Pump 1 Panel – buzzing contactor. Pumps and motors greased.

Binnimoor

The weedscren cleaner has been overhauled.

The outlet door has been overhauled.

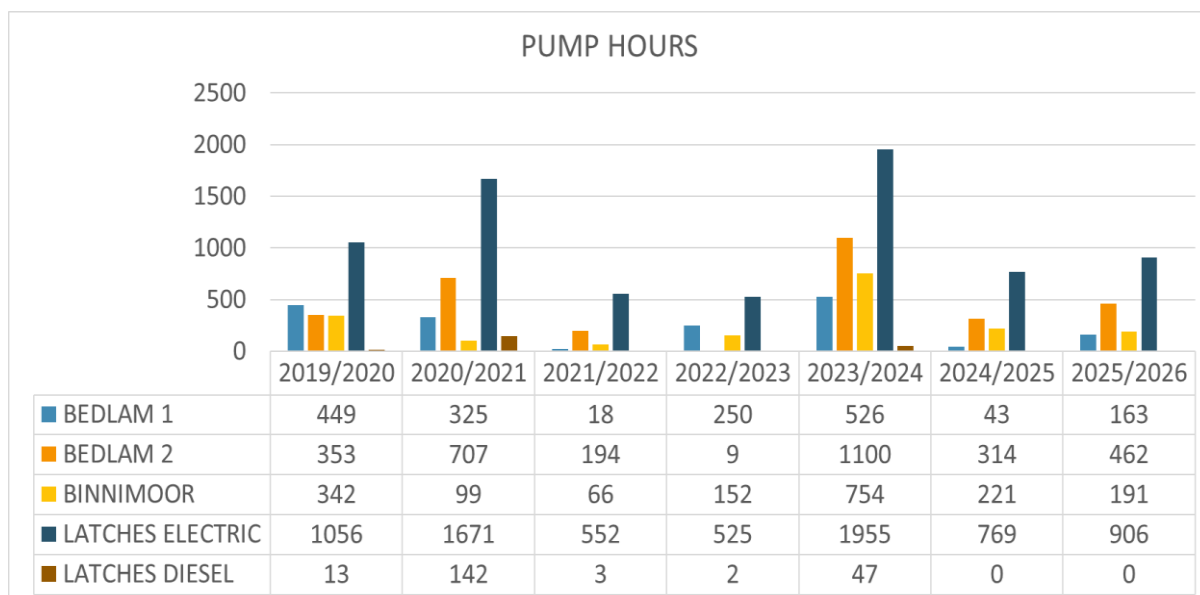
The last routine inspection took place at Binnimoor Pump Station on 2nd April 2026. There were no recommendations or remarks apart from station details and WSC inspected – all ok.

1.3 Electricity Readings

The pump attendants have all been providing regular readings of pump hours and electricity usage which is greatly appreciated.

2. Pumping summary

2.1 Pumping Hours



3. Inspections

3.1 HSB Engineering annual inspections for insurance were carried out during September 2025.

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

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Bedlam	29-Mar-2024	29-Mar-2029
Binnimoor	06-Nov-2025	06-Nov-2030
Latches Fen	27-Sep-2023	27-Sep-2028

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