

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME
Date:	Tuesday 19th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Nicola Oldfield

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

- A. Authorise the Chairman and Vice Chairman to take decisions on enforcement action on behalf of the Board with advice from MLC.**
- B. Consider the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. The Board is asked to instruct the Consulting Engineer accordingly, AND**
- C. Confirm how it wishes to progress the "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" project.**

1. Enforcement & Compliance

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. Planning & Consenting

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.

For all planning and consenting matters 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. IDB Recovery Fund T2B

Following the initial, unsuccessful bid for funding, the Environment Agency subsequently awarded funding for the 'Asset Resilience Pumps & Channels' package in June 2025. These works are due for completion by March 2026.

This included works to the weed screen control system (including new PLC, HMI and level sensors) at Nightlayers Pumping Station which supplements the weed screen overhaul work funded under T2A.

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)

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 2025 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
- delivery 2027/28 onwards

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

The Board had a project "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" identified on the FCERM investment programme with an indicative allocation of £160,000 for 26/27. However, the EA indicated at the January 2026 RFCC meeting that this allocation has been deferred.

It is recommended that Board develops an asset investment plan, to include the items identified in the M&E Report and shown on the Capital Programme, and to confirm how it wishes to progress the "Nightlayers Pumping Station Refurbishment" project.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

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

Appendix 1

Nightlayers 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
Nightlayers 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	5,000.0	5000.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	130.0
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Telemetry	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.8
	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														
		4.8	0	0	0	30	30	50	50	0	0	0	5,000	5,165

There have been 22 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 6 applications for Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) granted since the last meeting.

There have been 5 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.

Planning updates & Consultations

Residential development involving the demolition of existing dwelling and stables on land to the east of 13B Bridge Street, Chatteris – Mr J McGarvie (JMC Construction Ltd) (320/PL/910 & 971)

A Reserved Matters planning application has been submitted for the erection of seven dwellings on the former cattle field and stables off Black Horse Lane.

Following concerns received from local residents the Boards Chair gave approval for a bespoke response to be made to the District Council. This advises of the:

- A. History of the previous issues created by the surrounding development and includes a reference to the subsequent Ombudsman's Report.
- B. Incomplete remedial works that were requested as part of the Ombudsman's Report.
- C. Flooding that continues to affect the surrounding area following rainfall events with some residents advising that this restricts the enjoyment of their property.

The response also advises that the development of this site provides the opportunity to rectify the unresolved issues and requests a meeting to be attended by all the relevant parties i.e. developer/agent, Board, District Council, LLFA and Anglian Water to mitigate and hopefully solve these issues but no subsequent correspondence or response has yet been received from either the applicant, the agent or the District Council.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES
Date:	Tuesday 19 th May 2026	Officer Responsible:	Morgan Lakey

1. Weed Control & Drain Maintenance

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

A recent joint inspection of the Board's drains has been undertaken with the Chairman, revealing that most drains remain in a generally satisfactory condition and are being maintained to a good standard. The success of last year's herbicide application is evident in several Board's drains and the sporadic stands of fresh emergent aquatic vegetation identified during the inspection, will be included in this year's programme. It was also noted the revetment works completed in early 2025 under the storm recovery grant are still holding well and the grass has re-established. Historically these reaches of the Campole drain continually suffer from bank subsidence, however at the time of the inspection, they remain stable and will be continually checked throughout the summer.



Successful herbicide application at point 4 & 2025 bank revetment works at point 25

The inspection also highlighted accumulations of silt in the reaches downstream of New Drove. In agreement with the Chairman, the reaches from New Drove to the main pump drain will be included in this year's proposed machine cleansing programme, maintaining water conveyance and allowing the arisings to be incorporated easily into the adjacent arable fields, by working on the 'little and often approach' to maintain the channel. In anticipation of the Board's agreement, a sum has been included in the estimated costs for the works to be completed following the harvest of the adjacent crops.

At the Chairman's request, a provisional sum has been allocated within this year's estimated expenditure for any other emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal, culvert clearance or bank slip repair works that may be required within the Board's drains later in the year.

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.

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

The recommended Weed Control and Drain maintenance programme is as follows, see following site plan for locations.

1) Roundup applications to control emergent aquatic weed and reed growth in District Drains	Item	Sum	1400.00
2) Machine Cleansing			
Reaches 3-14-15-16-18	1600m	@	2.00
			3200.00
3) Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing, Cott removal, culvert clearance works in Board's Drains	Item	Sum	1750.00
4) Flail mowing district drains	Item	Sum	3500.00
5) Fees for inspection, preparation and Submission of report to the Board, Arrangement and supervision of herbicide Applications and maintenance works	Item	Sum	1450.00
TOTAL			£11,300.00

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

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Role: Operations Manager

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RATEABLE AREA 687ha.



NIGHTLAYERS
PUMPING STATION

KEY

-  RATEABLE BOUNDARY
-  BOARD'S DRAINS/
DIRECTION OF FLOW
-  HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
-  PUMPING STATION

KEY

-  PROPOSED MACHINE CLEANSING WORKS 2026

NIGHTLAYERS I.D.B.

DRAIN MAINTENANCE WORKS 2025

April 2026

Scale 1:25000

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	7
Meeting:	NIGHTLAYERS IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)	Subject:	CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL
Date:	Tuesday 19th 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 Weed Screen Cleaner Control System Works (CW Engineering). 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

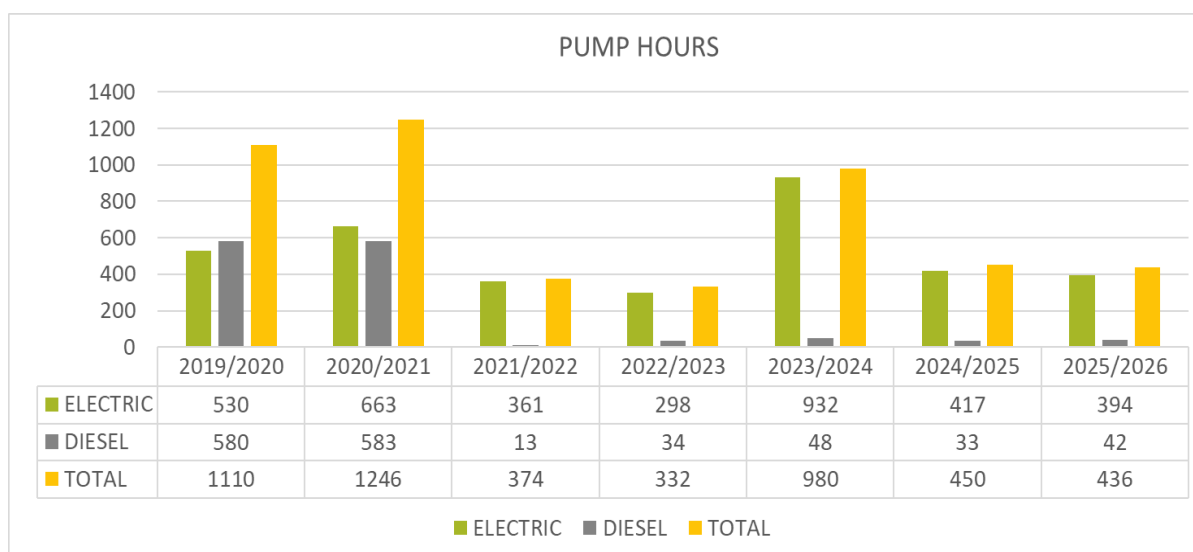
Station	Built	Pump 1	Pump 2	Pump 1 O/H	Pump 2 O/H	Control Panel
Nightlayers	1952	1952	1996	2012	1996	1979
Station	Weedscreen Bars		WSC	WSC O/H	WSC Controls	
Nightlayers	2010		1996	2024	2026	

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pumps range from 29 to 73 years old with last refurbishments ranging from 13 to 29 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the 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. The pump control panel needs to be replaced and is likely to cost in the region of £20 to £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.

2. Pumping summary

2.1. Pumping Hours



2.2 Pumping Station

The electric pump motor insulation resistance had improved at the last inspection but will continue to be monitored closely. This reading shows that the pump has some signs of water ingress and is likely to need overhaul or replacement.

The electrical control panel is 45 years old and need replacing to ensure its reliability. This is likely to cost in the region of £20k to £30k.

The weedscreen PLC controller is due to be replaced imminently.

The ultrasonic level controller failed during this season and had to be replaced; a new duct is to be installed so that the sensor cable can be replaced.

3. Inspections

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

3.2 The mandatory site Electrical Installation Condition Report was completed April 2024.

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Nightlayers	23-Apr-2024	23-Apr-2029

4. Water level Management

The pumping stations have summer and winter pump level references based on historic values which serve as very good reference points. I would actively encourage pump attendants to vary these to suit their current catchment conditions. For example, running pump start and stop levels at intermediate settings above the base winter settings during times of high Soil Moisture Deficit and then reducing towards winter level setpoints as the SMD reduces or if there is heavy rainfall forecast. This needs to be balanced with ensuring the pump has a good operating range so it is never short cycling (hunting). This can also be used to ensure maximum benefit of the lower night electricity rate.

Ultimately this takes more operator time but will produce more efficient running and reduce costs. We can advise on this if needed and show some good and bad examples to help with setting and monitoring your pumps.

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