MARCH SIXTH DISTRCI DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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Administered by:

3rd June 2026

Dear Board Members

Upcoming meeting of the Board
Thursday 11th June 2026

Please find overleaf the agenda for the meeting of the Board to be hosted at the Middle Level Offices, PE15 0AH at 10am on Thursday 11th June 2026.

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 SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Thursday 11th June 2026 – 10am
Middle Level Offices, 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 - 12	Chair
4	Constitution & Membership	Pages 13 - 15	Clerk
5	Clerk's Report	Pages 16 - 20	Clerk
6	Environment Officer's Report	Pages 21 - 23	Clerk
7	Consulting Engineer's Reports	Pages 24 - 36	Clerk or Engineer
8	Health & Safety	Pages 37 - 42	Chair
9	District Officer's Report	Verbal	DO
10	Governance • Accounts Return for 2024/2025 • Auditors report for 2024/2025 • Annual Governance Statement	Pages 43 - 45 Pages 46 - 50 Page 51	Clerk
11	Finance Report: looking back • Budgeting • Payments 2025 • Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026	Pages 52 - 53 Page 54 Page 55 Pages 56 - 60	Clerk
12	Finance Report: looking forward • Rating Estimates for 2026/2027 • Agricultural Drainage Rates and Special Levy requirements or 2026/2027	Pages 61 - 62 Page 63 Page 64	Clerk
14	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 17th June 2027 10am	Verbal	Chair
15	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 SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

At a Meeting of the March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners

Held at the Middle Level Offices, March on Thursday 12th June 2025.

PRESENT

D West (Chair)	Mrs French (FDC) until 6.15pm
E Alterton (Vice-Chair)	A Miscandlon (FDC)
T Alterton	

Mrs Ruth Martin (Lead Clerk) representing the Clerk and Mr Morgan Lakey (Operations Engineer) representing the Consulting Engineers were in attendance.

Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from M Arnold, M Deptford and M Mottram.

C.1111 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman 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 of Commissioners.

Mr T Alterton declared an interest in District Officers matters.

Mrs French and Mr Miscandlon declared an interest in matters involving Fenland District Council.

Mrs French declared an interest in matters involving Planning as a member of the Fenland District Council Planning Committee.

Mr Miscandlon declared an interest in matters concerning the Middle Level Commissioners as a Middle Level Board members.

C.1112 Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

There were no matters arising and the Minutes of the Last Meeting were agreed.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commissioners held on the 13th June 2024 are recorded correctly and that they be confirmed and signed.

C.1113 Constitution & Membership

Vacancies

Mrs Martin advised that there were currently no vacancies on the Board of the Commissioners. However, following some discussion regarding future membership of the Board, it was decided that the Clerk be asked to write to Waldersey Farms and Mr Deptford asking if they have any nominees for consideration.

Mr West advised the Commissioners that he intended to stand down at the end of the meeting as Chair but also to resign as a Board member as he no longer has an association with J C Martin. The Commissioners noted their sadness at this decision and Mr West was thanked for his works as both Board member and Chair.

RESOLVED

> That the Clerk write to Waldersey Farms and Mr Deptford inviting them to nominate a representative to join the Board of Commissioners.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Commissioners agreed that Ms E Alterton appointed as Chair of the Commissioners. This was proposed by Mrs French and seconded by Mr Miscandlon.

The Commissioners agreed that Mr M Miscandlon be appointed as Vice Chair of the Commissioners. This was proposed by Ms Alterton and seconded by Mrs French.

The Commissioners agreed that Mr West remain in role as Chair until the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED

> That Ms E Alterton be appointed as Chair of the Commissioners.
>
> That Mr Miscandlon be appointed as Vice Chair of the Commissioners.

Training

Mrs Martin advised that the updated version of the ADA Good Governance Guide has now been printed and copies were handed to Commissioners. She advised that it is not yet clear what supporting training material will follow, but that the original training videos are still available to view.

The Commissioners were asked to complete the training matrix as circulated at the meeting, and to advise the office if any further training is undertaken.

C.1114 Clerk's Report

Mrs Martin advised that the Clerks Report would be taken largely as read, asking for further consideration to be made of the following points.

Planning and Consenting Charging Model

The new planning and consenting charging model has been implemented and been in use since 1st April. Mrs Martin reported that it is planned to review the fees every year, and that the Clerk invites feedback. Recovery and Enforcement will form part of the new model with additional staff already recruited into these roles. The Commissioners asked if the outstanding surface water discharge fees have been recovered from Finks, and Mrs Martin advised that this would be passed onto the Recovery and Enforcement team. The Commissioners noted their satisfaction with this approach.

Highland Water and IDB Precept

Mrs Martin outlined the issues detailed in the Clerks Report, and that after being advised that claims would not be paid in full, a formal appeal was narrowly avoided after the shortfall was met by the Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC). Following this the Clerk has written ‘The Highland Water

Conundrum' document which has been submitted to the Minister, Defra, the EA and our local authorities, and also circulated to all of the Board of Commissioners.

Mrs Martin advised that the IDB Precept had increased by 2% this year, and that the Clerk was considering whether an appeal should be lodged, and if this would have greater gravitas if this were on behalf of all the Boards that he administers. The Commissioners agreed to delegate this decision to the Clerk acting with the Chair.

RESOLVED

> The Commissioners agreed to delegate the decision on whether to appeal the IDB Precept (under s40 of the Water Resources Act) to the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman. Any appeal must be lodged within 6 weeks of formal notification.

Fens Reservoir

Although the March 6th District Drainage Commissioners are not directly impacted by the scheme, all IDBs that gravity outfall or pump into the Middle Level watercourses have an interest and Mrs Martin reminded the Commissioners of this. She advised that the Middle Level Commissioners will be working with Anglian Water over the coming months in their development of the Development Consent Order, and MLC need to secure specific delegation authority from the Commissioners in readiness for this. Therefore, the Commissioners are asked to approve that they act as one with the Middle Level Commissioners and other impacted IDBs, and to provide the relevant authorisations for staff and consultants. The Commissioners are also advised that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Commissioners, and that decision making on this is delegated to the Clerk and Chair/Vice Chair.

RESOLVED

> That the Commissioners 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 Commissioners.
>
> Acknowledge that the Fens Reservoir DCO may need to overwrite/disallow existing statutory powers held by the Commissioners and delegate the decision making on this to the Clerk, engaging with the Chair/Vice Chair as he sees fit.

C.1115 Environment Officers' Report

Mr Lakey took the Commissioners through the main points of the Environment Officers report. He advised the Commissioners on the updated Environmental Services package, and that the increase in fee for the Commissioners was reduced slightly as they contract Operational Services from MLC. He drew the Commissioners' attention to the changes in the Hedgerow Regulations and advised the Commissioners that the Ecology Team can now check if any works affecting trees may impact on bats. He reminded the Commissioners that any non-routine maintenance works will require a survey before works commence, and the Ecology Team have an environmental screening form that needs to be completed. He advised the Commissioners that any bank slips should be reported as early as possible, as the slip will most likely displace any water voles that may have been present and so will not prevent any repair works being carried out. Alternatively leaving the slip and dealing with it later may give water voles chance to re-establish themselves and therefore prevent works being carried out. Mr Lakey referred the Commissioners to the 'Water Voles – Myth Busting' part of the report. Mr Lakey also reminded the Commissioners of their culverting policy, and that culverts should be seen as the last resort. Loss of habitat needs to be considered when installing any culverts.

Ms E Alterton and Mr T Alterton have met with the Ecology and Environmental Services Manager, Sofi Lloyd, and have documented the flailing plan for the year. The intention is to leave a margin at the bottom of each reach.

The Commissioners are invited to attend a biodiversity training day, although all of this work is undertaken by Mr Lakey on behalf of the Commissioners.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Report be approved.

C.1116 Consulting Engineers' Reports

The Commissioners considered the reports of the Consulting Engineers, and it was taken as read.

Planning

The Commissioners noted that no specific information had been included in the Board report, but that input was being sought where needed through the Chair and Vice Chair. Mrs French advised that the Local Plan would not be going ahead as revised. Ms Alterton asked what this would mean for the Commissioners, and Mrs French advised that with the Local Government reorganisation it is likely that there will be only one planning committee for the whole area. Mr Miscandlon advised that the 2014 Local Plan would still remain in place. Ms Alterton noted concern that this would promote development in areas not identified within the revised Local Plan, but Mr Miscandlon was confident that the 2014 Plan would still hold position.

Capital Programme

The Commissioners reviewed the Capital Programme and considered the uncertainty over future GiA funding.

The Commissioners acknowledged the Consulting Engineers report.

Operational Services Report

Mr Lakey reported that works were been undertaken as previously approved and talked the Commissioners through his report.

Reaches 19-20 were discussed, with the management plan having been discussed with the Ecologist prior to any machine cleansing being progressed. The Commissioners discussed the previous pollution in the area but noted that nothing had been observed recently. The Drain Maintenance budget costs were reviewed.

Mr Lakey advised that some additional Storm Recovery Funding had recently become available from Defra, and that an application had been made on the Commissioners' behalf for funding of the revetment works on Reaches 6a & 7, and 7 – 17.

Mr Alterton advised that the water control structure for the pond had been cleansed the previous year, and the clay sides attended to and this resolved the previous issues. Ms Alterton had arranged for Ms Lloyd to come and assess the pond and other areas when appropriate and Mr Lakey noted the Commissioners' positive approach to ecology.

The Commissioners acknowledged the report.

Mechanical and Electrical Report

The Commissioners noted the report and the uncertainty around GiA funding. They reviewed the plan for asset refurbishment and estimated costs presented in the report.

Mr Alterton asked if the Commissioners had a contingency fund for the weed screen, but they did not, and Mr Lakey advised that nothing had been included in the budget. Ms Alterton suggested that the outstanding developer debts would fund some of the works, and Mr West noted concern that the pumps had not been looked at for 20 years although Ms Alterton advised that the pumps run well, but that the panel does not. It was discussed that the panel trips regularly in the Autumn and particularly when fine leaves in the water wrap around the impeller. It was thought that a weed screen cleaner would not stop this.

It was agreed that the Commissioners should start to consider raising funds for future works, and Mr Lakey advised the Commissioners that the Middle Level now have some large emergency pumps that could be available for Boards to use in emergencies.

RESOLVED

That the reports be noted.

C.1117 Health & Safety

The Chair referred to the report received from Cope Safety Management following their visit in February, which he attended. It was noted that little had changed from the previous year's visit, and Mr Lakey advised that the signage is now ready for the Commissioners and that installation would be arranged.

The Chair asked about lighting around the access to the Pump House, but it was thought that this was not an essential requirement and so the Commissioners agreed that they would not consider this further at this time.

C.1118 District Officers Report

The District Officer gave a verbal report, advising that he had completed a flail mowing course as he cuts the area around the pumping station that the main contractor is unable to access. He had nothing further to add to what had already been discussed.

C.1119 Governance

Mrs Martin went through the Governance report and the various Resolutions that the Commissioners had been asked to make.

RESOLVED

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

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

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

The Commissioners noted the continued appointment of Whitings as Internal Auditor

b) Review of Internal Controls

Mrs Martin reported that the internal controls that the Middle Level Commissioners have in place in their services to the Commissioners have now been summarised and are available on the Commissioners' web-page.

RESOLVED

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

c) Approval of authorised officers for operational/regulatory roles

RESOLVED

The Commissioners confirm that all employees and contractors of the Middle Level Commissioners are considered as duly authorised offices and therefore able to use the Commissioners' powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Commissioners.

The Commissioners confirm that their Chair, Vice Chair, District Officer(s), pump attendants and employees (if applicable) are considered as duly authorised officers and therefore able to use the Commissioners' powers and IDB Byelaws for their operational and regulatory roles on behalf of the Commissioners.

d) Responsible Finance Officer

Following the retirement of Robert Hill, the MLC Treasurer and the appointment of Andrew Wool as the new MLC Head of Finance, the Commissioners approved the relevant resolutions to manage the transition.

RESOLVED

The Commissioners 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 Commissioners.
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 Commissioners.
iii) 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 Commissioners.
iv) 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.
v) 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 Commissioners.

e) Insured Values

The Commissioners reviewed the Insured Values and were pleased that they continue to be index linked.

f) Policy Reviews

Mrs Martin referred to the Commissioners' Finance Regulations and Finance Code Policy which has been reviewed and updated by the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. The Commissioners also reviewed the

Complaints Procedure, Privacy Policy and Anti-Bribery policy, reviewed and approved the Commissioners' Policy Statement, and approved the Data Protection Officer.

RESOLVED

> That the update and re-publication of the Complaints Procedure and Privacy Policy is approved.
>
> That the Commissioners reviewed and approved the publication of an Anti-Bribery policy, and the Financial Regulations policy.
>
> That the Commissioners reviewed and approved the publication of the Commissioners' Policy Statement.
>
> That the MLC Lead Clerk, currently Ruth Martin, acts as the Commissioners' Data Protection Officer and acknowledges that this role will be associated within the incumbent employee role of MLC Lead Clerk.

g) Risk Management Strategy and Internal Controls

The Commissioners did not highlight any specific risks or issues not covered within the Commissioners' Risk Management Strategy (published in 2024 and on the website), noted the system of financial Internal Controls (as published on website) and no additional controls were highlighted as required.

h) Exercise of Public Rights

The Clerk 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.

i) Consideration of potential litigation, liabilities, commitments.

Mrs Martin reported that as part of the Annual Governance review the Commissioners 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. She 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 Commissioners that would need to be included within the accounting statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

j) DEFRA IDB1 Return

RESOLVED

> Mrs Martin referred to the completed IDB1 form for 2023/2024 which the Commissioners noted and approved.

k) Annual Governance Statement

RESOLVED

The Commissioners approved that the Chairman be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.1120 Finance Report – Looking Back

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Commissioners considered and noted the key finance messages of the Finance Officer, and the payments detailed for 2024. The Commissioners noted the Storm Recovery Grant Fund bids and that the Commissioners received £3,771.64 for excess winter pumping costs.

The Budget Comparison was noted.

Payments for 2024

The Payments were reviewed and accepted.

Highland Water Contributions

The Commissioners noted the Highland Water contributions.

Annual Accounts and Finance Papers 2024/2025

The Commissioners considered and approved the Annual accounts and Finance Papers for the year ended 31st March 2025, as required in the Audit regulations.

RESOLVED

> That the Chair be authorised to sign the Annual Return, on behalf of the Commissioners for the financial year ended 31st March 2025.

C.1121 Finance Report – Looking Forward

Finance officer's review and key messages

The Commissioners considered and noted the key finance messages of the Responsible Finance Officer.

Fees, Remuneration & Subscriptions:

a) ADA subscription

The Clerk reported that ADA have increased subscriptions by 6.5% for 2025, from £636 to £678 (plus VAT).

RESOLVED

> That the requested increased ADA subscription for 2025 be paid.

b) District Officers Fees

The Commissioners considered the payment for pumping duties for 2025/26 and agreed that an increase of 4.15% could be applied.

RESOLVED

That the Commissioners agree that the District Officers Fee for Pumping Duties increase to a maximum of £897 for 2025/2026.

c) Precept

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.

The Anglian (Great Ouse) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) determined that the Precept will increase by 2% for 2025.

The precept for 2024 was £1,223.29.

RESOLVED

That the Precept is paid in full unless a decision to appeal against the Precept is made.

d) Estimates & Rate Requirements for 2025/26.

The Commissioners reviewed the proposed budget for 2025/2026.

RESOLVED

That the budget is agreed.

e) Rate Requirement for 2025/26

The Chair added that in order to raise sufficient income to cover the budget estimate a rate of 31p in the £ would be required. Ms Alterton thought that as there had been a significant increase the previous year, she would rather leave the rate at 26.5p until the Commissioners establish what developer debts can be recovered. The Chair agreed this would be a good approach, and Ms Alterton noted that the Commissioners have more than the recommended years running costs in hand.

With this in mind, Ms Alterton proposed a rate of 26.5p in the £ which was seconded by Mr T Alterton. This was agreed unanimously by the Commissioners, with the view that the position can be reviewed again the next year.

Mr Miscandlon asked if it would be possible for the Commissioners to take out a public works loan if they needed to in an emergency, but it was noted that the Commissioners have the funds to replace a pump if they need to, with Mr Alterton advising that the electric motor on the top of the pump had been serviced.

The Commissioners considered estimates of expenditure and proposals for special levy and drainage rates in respect of the financial year 2025/2026. and were informed by the Clerk 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 57.31% and 42.69%.

RESOLVED

i) That the estimates be approved.
ii) That a total sum of £17,736 be raised by drainage rates and special levy and by way of a contribution from Cambridgeshire County Council.
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 £10,164 and £7,572.

iv) That a rate of 26.50p in the £ be laid and assessed on Agricultural hereditaments in the District.

iv) That a Special Levy of £7,572 be made and issued to Fenland District Council for the purpose of meeting such expenditure.

v) That the seal of the Commissioners be affixed to the record of drainage rates and special levies 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.1122 Middle Level IDB Change

Mrs Martin referred to the Clerks Report relating to the Middle Level IDB Change and updated the Commissioners on the progress to date. The Commissioners agreed to respond to the Clerks questions through the Chair.

The Commissioners agreed to make a contribution towards the next stage of the report.

RESOLVED

That a £300 contribution be made by the Commissioners towards the cost of developing the detailed design.

C.1123 Date of next Meeting

RESOLVED

That next Meeting of the Commissioners be held on 11th June 2026 at 10am at The Middle Level Offices, March.

C.1124 Any Other Business

The Incoming Chair, Ms E Alterton, gave the Commissioners thanks to the outgoing Chair, Mr D West.

With no other items being raised by the Commissioners, the meeting was closed at 6.25pm.

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**4**
Meeting:	**MARCH 6TH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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	6			3
Actual	5	3 FDC	8	
Vacancies	1		1	

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	Chair
2	Tony Alterton	Ratepayer	
3	Malcolm Arnold	Nominee of HMP	
4	Michael Deptford	Ratepayer	
5	Michael Mottram	Ratepayer	
6			

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	Jan French	FDC	Councillor
2	Charlie Marks	FDC	Councillor
3	Alex Miscandlon	FDC	Councillor – Vice-Chair

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	12/6/2025	13/6/2024	15/6/2023	16/6/2022
1	Emma Alterton	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Tony Alterton	Present	Present	Present	Present
3	Malcolm Arnold	Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies
4	Michael Deptford	Apologies			
5	Michael Mottram	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Apologies
6					

Attendance at Chairs Meetings

No	Name	5/12/2025	6/12/2024	6/10/2023	13/12/2022
1	Emma Alterton	Present	N/A	N/A	N/A

Appointed Members (current and previous)

No	Name (Council)	12/6/2025	13/6/2024	15/6/2023	16/6/2022
1	Jan French (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	Present
2	Charlie Marks (FDC)	Apologies	Apologies		
3	Alex Miscandlon (FDC)	Present	Present	Present	

3. Elections, vacancies & appointments

3.1 Consider the appointments of a Chair and Vice Chair

3.2 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 9 months, and the tenure of the current Vice Chairman is 9 months.

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:	5
Meeting:	**MARCH 6TH DDC**	**Subject:**	**CLERK'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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.

This paper was drafted in February 2026 for use within all the MLC administered IDB agendas over the Spring 2026 meeting season. Verbal updates to the content below will be provided as necessary.

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. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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:	6
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Sofi Lloyd**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. **Review and approve the new Biodiversity Action Plan** – available from the IDB's webpage on the Middle Level Website: www.middlelevel.gov.uk/march-sixth

B. 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.

C. Propose to set the biodiversity budget at £100 and saved towards environmental enhancement agreed over the next year.

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:		**Emma Alterton**	
KCI:	**Description of KCI:**	**Status:**	**Comments:**
1.	A current channel categorisation map & reasoning is available		Yes. ML completed.
2.	Standard Operating Procedures audit has been undertaken and works considered compliant		Yes. ML Completed.
3.	The previous year's maintenance record is available for review and to inform the following year's works planning.		Yes. Current is flail mowing down to 1m margin from waters' edge on all drains apart from working side for desilting where whole is cut. Desilting on 3-year rotation. Pump drain from point 2 to pump cut downs to water's edge both sides for access each year.
4.	A channel maintenance plan (flail mowing and desilting) has been prepared for Board review and approval.		Moving to 1 flail head width only down each bank from top each year to help bind soil better and hopefully improve bank stability, other than ahead of desilting which will be whole bank cut. No maintenance again between points 19-20 due to pollution.
5.	All non-routine works undertaken in the previous year were screened for environmental impacts and opportunities using the ESR process		N/A and none planned for 26-27
6.	The Biodiversity Action Plan has been reviewed and objectives for the previous year have been met and following objectives set		
7.	Biodiversity budget is proposed and defined		
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		In progress, will attend Dec 26 MLC event

9.	There has been no net loss of open watercourse (via culverting or other) in the district in the previous year		
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		ML has completed.

middle level commissioners

March 6th DDC

Annual Environmental Review - Notes from Meeting

Attended by: Sofi Lloyd, Emma Alterton, Tony Alterton, Morgan Lakey

Date: 26/05/2026

Point No.	Notes	Action by and due date
1	The KCI's for the Board report was completed	
2	Noted that soil stability is a concern in the district and ML proposes that flail mowing is reduced to 1 flail head width down from the bank top to try to encourage sward and bind soil more.	ML 26
3	SL to survey polluted drain in 26 to condition assess for biodiversity.	SL 26
4	Noted that there is very little difference between summer and winter levels and discussed the benefits of this to bank stability and some biodiversity	
5	Discussed that the diverse seed mix on the repaired bank between point 17-7 has not established well so the standard diverse MLC grass seed mix will be broadcast now to help establish a sward.	
6	Noted that the hydroseeded area has established relatively well and the coir roll has also established well due to water levels being managed favourably during year 1 establishment.	
7	Noted the value of grass margins throughout the district to buffering watercourses and biodiversity refuge provision	
8	SL to check if the raised area/track adjacent to point 7-9 was part of an old drove	SL 26
9	Noted that the area showing as a channel between points 10-11 is actually an on-line pond.	
10	Confirmed that point at the twentyfoot river onwards from point 12 is a gravity outfall	
11	There is a defunct plank informal footbridge north of point 3 which needs to be replaced with telegraph poles as is dangerous to cross. SL to camera trap as TA thinks it is used frequently by a range of wildlife.	SL 26
12	Noted that the old water tanks adjacent to the pump and the lake are owned by Sustrans who also manage the footpath from the bridge to the gate where the prison-owned land begins. The prison owns and manages the wildlife area from the gate towards the prison including the reedbeds. SL will seek the management recommendations for the sites from the wildlife trust and survey for condition and enhancement opportunities.	SL 26
13	Noted that there are water level control structures (IDB managed) that help to keep levels up in the pond at points 10 and 12. 10 had new boards recently to comply with H&S and seal better.	
14	Discussed that there would be benefits of ground-truthing habitat maps and seeking to update.	SL 26
15	Noted that most of the farmland in the district is under SFI agreements mainly for good soil management	
16	TA thinks there is barn owl activity in his farm barns as he finds pellets there frequently	
17	Noted that TA has observed Great Crested Newts in the district in high numbers previously near the prison	
18	Noted that the Japanese Knotweed previously present on the railway near the pump has been managed and is now under control and under supervision.	
19	Noted that grey partridge have been spotted on the farm previously near the reservoir	
20	Noted that there are a lack of farm buildings high enough within the district on which a swift box could be erected. Will save Biodiversity budget for another more relevant project next year.	
21	SL to check who owns the pond at the back of the landfill and who is tasked with its management.	SL 2026
22	Noted that M&C Agri and Danny Button now contracted for ditch maintenance	
23	SL stressed the importance of recording and reporting more species that are found within the area to better inform efforts for conservation and enhancement. Please use the **iRecord** app: **www. irecord.org.uk/app** and join the **Middle Level Commissioners Activity** or online *www://irecord.org.uk/join/middle-level-commissioners-nature*	All 2026
24	Discussed that the WV survey included a bio review last year and will send for records	SL 2026
25	Discussed that the BAP was written within the service package	
26	The remaining points were captured in the BAP review	
27	SL will load draft BAP onto the M6th page on the MLC website and make a link available to Board members in the Board papers ahead of the meeting for them to review. The aim is to have the BAP approved by the end of June.	SL 2026

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Thursday 11th 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 form 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. **The Board to 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.**

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 22 boards plus Middle Level Commissioners.

We have a total of 102 investigations of which 47 are currently active including:

- 29 surface water or surface water and foul discharges,
- 12 byelaw cases.

The Officers will also be taking over some aspects of Navigation Enforcement.

Since joining they have successfully recovered £445,000 of outstanding discharge contributions across IDBs 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. Technical Services Overview

The team was joined by Project Manager, Ellie Edwards at the end of April. She will be assisting the Engineer in planning and delivering capital projects, significantly increasing our capacity to deliver the developing works programme.

4. 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.

Works delivered for this district included access improvements for deployment of mobile pumps.

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.

6. Capital Programme

6.1 It is recommended that the Board considers the development of an investment plan for asset refurbishment/replacement. Pumping station replacement costs are included on the capital programme. Further investment will be needed in the interim and will be developed further in line with the Key Health Indicators.

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

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
Appendix3: Operational Services Report
Appendix 4: M&E Report

Appendix 1

March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners

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
Norwood 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	1,600.0	1600.0
	Pumping station pumping and control equipment replacement	4.6	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.0	159.6
	Pumping station automatic weedscreen cleaning equipmet	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0
	Pumping station Control building refurbishment/replacement	0	0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
	Pumping station compound/surrounds improvements	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Drainage Channels	Water control structures	2	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.7
	Gravity outfall controls	2	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
		8.7	**2.5**	**3**	**15**	**0**	**85**	**10**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1,670**	**1,794**

Appendix 2

There have been 4 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

There have been 1 Byelaw Consent (to discharge to a watercourse) application processed since the last meeting.

There have been 1 infiltration device application processed since the last meeting.

There have been no Byelaw Consent (to undertake works in and around watercourses) applications processed since the last meeting.

Appendix 3

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**	**7**
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: OPERATIONAL SERVICES**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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 Commissioners at its last annual meeting.

Roundup herbicide applications were applied to the district drains included within last year's machine cleansing programme, and to other drains where it was required to control dense stands of reed and emergent aquatic vegetation.

As with the previous year, the Commissioners were successful in securing funding from the DEFRA mobile pumps package, allowing fully funded improvement works to be carried out at the Pumping Station. Hard standings were installed to allow for the deployment of back up mobile pumps in the event of a breakdown. Last year's revetment works were also completed under the same funding package and the pre-planted coir rolls, and hydro-seeded banks are re-establishing the vegetation at both sites, however, reach 7-17 will require additional seed to support the grass cover. It was agreed with the Chair; the District Officer would complete this task to save additional visits and costs to the Commissioners.

Re-established Revetment works, reach 6a – 7 April 2026

A recent joint inspection of the Commissioner's district drains has been undertaken with the District Officer and Chair. The inspection revealed that majority of drains are in a generally satisfactory condition and being maintained to a good standard, indicating that many of the district drains that fall within this year's machine cleansing programme will only require light machine cleansing to retain their current good status.

Completed Revetment works April 2025

Drains to the West of the Prison

The Commissioner's district drains to the west of the prison are generally in good condition. The aquatic vegetation in reach 19-20 of the EEDA drain continues to provide a natural filter from the discharge of the industrial area and the high banks will contain any water level rise experienced during a rainfall event. The Southwest reaches of the Commissioner's drains are programmed for machine cleansing following the harvest of the adjacent crops this season. Reach 19-20 will remain uncleansed and monitored throughout the year to ensure there are no water conveyance issues. This reach will also be included in the proposed Ecological survey this year, to identify the extent of the biodiversity and if there is any evidence of the pollution incidents impacting on the aquatic habitats.


Aquatic vegetation providing natural filtration, reach 19-20


Point 20, Failing concrete bagged headwall

The inspection also highlighted the concrete bagged headwall on the landfill pond discharge, has deteriorated and become dislodged, eroding the toe of the bank.
This issue has been raised before, however it still remains unresolved and will only deteriorate further.
The Commissioners may wish to take this oportunity to discuss how they wish to proceed with the matter going forward.

As part of the inspection, the water control structure at point 6a was visited to observe and discuss current water level management and review the structure condition. It was noted that some of the timber boardwalk and the dam boards have signs of rot and decay. It is recommended that the machined hardwood dam boards are replaced along with the treated deck boards and an additional kick board and mid rail on the downstream edge are installed. Once the structure has had the remedial works completed, it will be included in the next Health & Safety inspection to identify any other improvments required and to ensure it remains compliant and safe for the District Officer to continue using. In anticipation of the Commissioners approving the recommendations, a provisional sum has been included within the estimated costs for the remedial works to be completed.

Drains to the East of the Prison

The district drains to the east of the prison remain in a generally satisfactory condition due to being machine cleansed last season. Two sections of redundant rabbit fencing were identified during the programmed works at point 16 & 11. Since installation they have become overgrown with bramble and now restrict the flail mowing and hinder visibility during machine cleansing works. It is recommended the Board contact the relevant landowner to request the removal or agree for it to be removed by the Commissioners when their contractor's excavator is programmed for machine cleansing in the area.

As the Commissioners have formerly agreed, in recent years, it is again recommended that the main Norwood Pumping Drain, reach 1-2-10, is included within this year's phased machine cleansing programme. Historically this has proven to be an effective method of reducing the weed mass at the manually cleansed weedscreen during winter pumping periods.

An allowance has been included within this year's estimated costs to allow for a Roundup Pro-Biactive herbicide application to be made in advance of the programmed machine cleansing work, and in any other district drains identified as requiring herbicide treatments, to control emergent weed and reed growth.

The Commissioner's flail mowing requirements were undertaken by M&C Agriculture last year, and they have indicated they are available to undertake the flail mowing requirements again for the ensuing year. The flail mowing regime was discussed during the inspection, and it was agreed to increase the uncut marginal vegetation on the Commissioner's drains for a number of benefits, including cost saving and to enhance biodiversity. The proposal is to cut approximately halfway down the bank, leaving the bottom bank and marginal vegetation uncut. Majority of the district drains have poor soils on the bankside, and the vegetation finds it hard to establish and provide complete ground cover. Leaving more uncut will allow the bank vegetation to establish a denser sward, increasing the bank stability and wildlife benefits. A sum for the completion of flail mowing district drains has been included within the estimated costs.

A provisional sum has also been included within the estimate for any other emergency machine cleansing, culvert clearance or filamentous algae (Cott) removal works that may be deemed necessary later in the year.

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

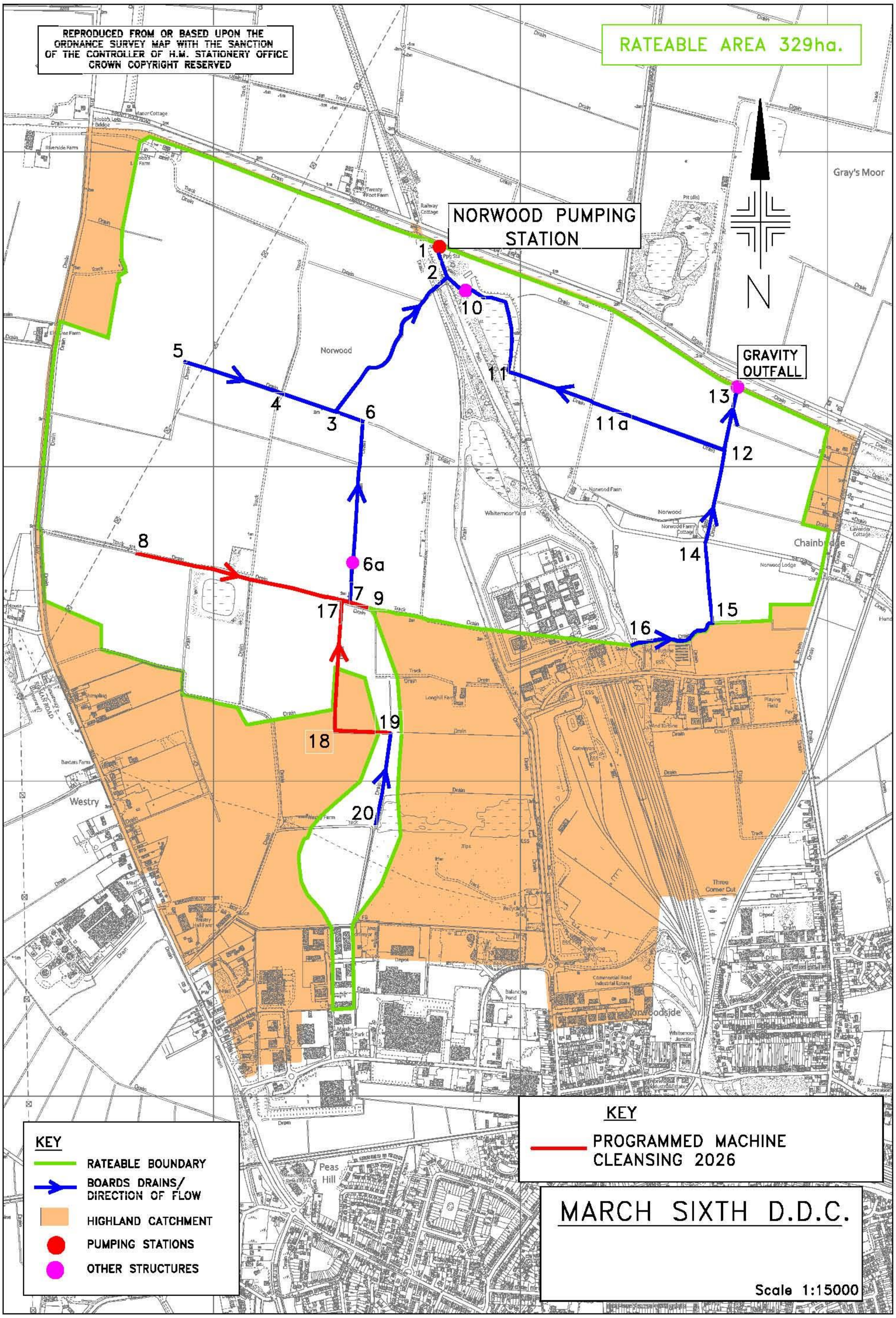
2.1 The estimated costs of this year's recommended weed control and drain maintenance works are shown below, please refer to the following plan for locations.

Phased Machine Cleansing Programme

1.	**Drains to Southwest of the Prison**				
	(i) Reach 6a-7-17-18-19	800	m @	2.00	1600.00
	(ii) Reach 9-7-17-8	450	m @	2.00	900.00
2.	Remedial works to water control structure Point 6a		Item	Sum	1000.00
3.	Machine cleanse Norwood Pump Drain	150	m @	3.00	450.00
4.	Allow sum for Roundup application to control Japanese Knotweed at Norwood Pumping Station, if required, self-sown saplings and emergent aquatic weed within the Commissioners' drains		Item	Sum	950.00
5.	Allow sum for flail mowing		Item	Sum	1650.00
6.	Provisional Item Allow sum for emergency machine cleansing or Cott removal work		Item	Sum	700.00
7.	Fees for inspection, preparation and submission of report to the Commissioners, arrangement and supervision of herbicide applications and maintenance works		Item	Sum	850.00
			TOTAL		**£ 8100.00**

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

Author Name: Morgan Lakey
Role: Operations Manager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Norwood
Gray's Moor
Westry
Chainbridge
KEY
RATEABLE BOUNDARY
BOARDS DRAINS/ DIRECTION OF FLOW
HIGHLAND CATCHMENT
PUMPING STATIONS
OTHER STRUCTURES
KEY
PROGRAMMED MACHINE CLEANSING 2026
MARCH SIXTH D.D.C.
Scale 1:15000

Appendix 4

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:		7
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: MECHANICAL & ELECTRICAL**	
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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. 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	Pump Overhaul	Thrust Bearing	Controls	Weedscreen Bars
Norwood	1964	1964	2006	2020	1992	1964

The Key Health Indicators table above shows the critical area for concern and improvement is the pumps. The pump is 62 years old with last refurbishment being 20 years ago. The Board is advised to develop and start a pump refurbishment/replacement plan for the pump that's 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.

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

The Pump current has been rising over the lasts years inspections and the pump does sometimes trip out. This could be caused by a build up of debris in the sump, electrical or mechanical issues with pump. The sump should be checked and cleared of any debris and if that does not rectify the issue then the pump should be overhauled. It is difficult to estimate pump overhaul costs as condition is not fully known until the pump is removed but it is likely to cost c£30k to £50k. The pump was last overhauled in 2006. The weedscreen bars are heavily corroded and consideration should be given to their replacement which is likely to cost c£10k plus dam and dewatering costs. The control panel is now in excess of 30 years old should be replaced to ensure its reliability. A replacement panel is likely to cost c£10k to £20k.

The power factor correction in the current control panel has failed and this should be replaced which is likely to cost c£2K.

1.2 Electricity Readings

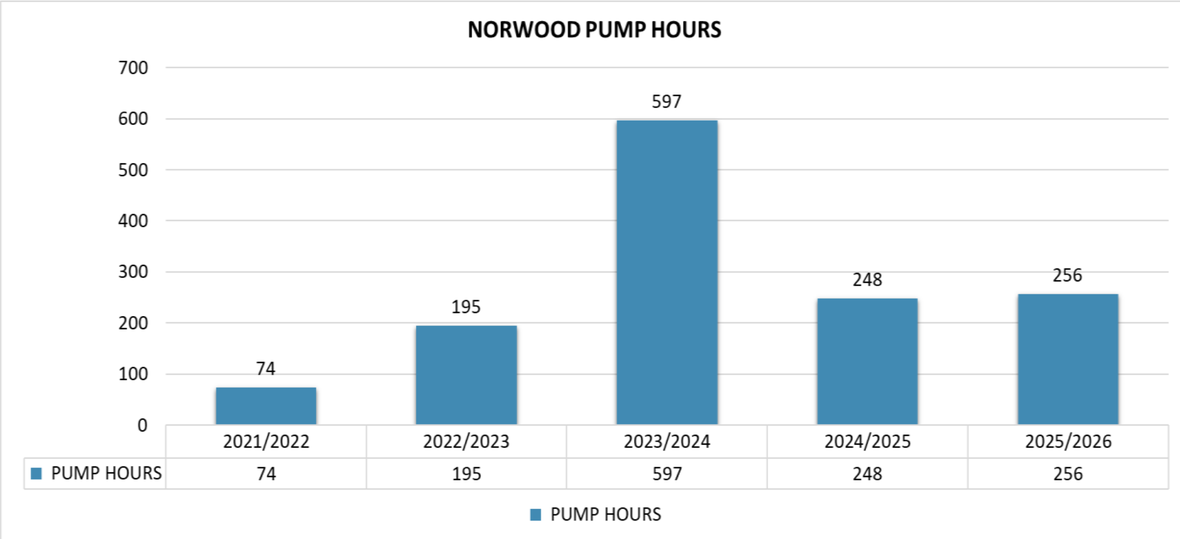
Taking regular and accurate manual electricity meter readings is very important; even for sites with meters that are read remotely. There have been cases of significant variances between bills and actual usage, regular meter readings and pump hours readings are essential for verifying bills and forecasting 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. Approximate cost will be £60 per station per quarter.

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

2. Pumping summary



3. Inspections

3.1 The last routine inspection at Norwood Pump Station took place 26th February 2026. Recommendations / Remarks include:

1) The level controller needs resetting to include an offset for telemetry.
2) Weedscreen is severely corroded and needs replacing.
3) New winch and wire rope to be fitted to flap door (when area is clear – currently overgrown).
4) Mains cable leaking tar / oil.
5) Power factor correction fuses removed as one of the cables to capacitor has burnt out. Also, sump pump winding resistance to earth now 1.86 MΩ 1.8A.

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

Station	EICR Date	EICR Due
Norwood	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.

Author Name: Dave Bantoft
Role: M&E Engineer

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	8
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**HEALTH & SAFETY**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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 Sixth DDB

carried out on

Thursday, 12 February 2026

by

AW Safety Management

Key Information	
Client:	March Sixth DDB
Site:	Norwood Pumping station, March PE15 0BE
Site Contact:	Emma Alterton
Site Contact E-mail:	enquiries@middlelevel.gov.uk
Inspection date:	12/02/2026
Inspected by:	Elena Spataru
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

The meeting was held with Emma Alterton.

It was pleasing to observe that the area was well maintained and tidy, with no recommendations required.

It was understood that components used to operate the flap gate were found to be defective; however, a replacement has already been invoiced and is scheduled to be installed.

If you have any queries, please contact us at support@awsafety.co.uk.

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 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:	10
Meeting:	**MARCH SIXTH DDC**	**Subject:**	**GOVERNANCE**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Paul Burrows**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Annual Return submitted for 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. To review and approve the submission of their Annual Governance Statement for 2026 and authorising the Chair and Clerk to sign the statement.

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 SIXTH DDC
INSURED VALUE OF FIXED ASSETS

PUMPING STATION

	As At 1st April 2026	
NORWOOD PUMPING STATION	806,581.00	Index linked

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.

6. Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities

6.1 In previous years the Board has continued with a limited assurance review approach and not take advantage of the audit exemption available for smaller public bodies with income and expenditure less than £25,000.

7. Annual Governance Statement

7.1 That the chair be authorised to sign the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Board for the financial year ended 31st March 2026 (Appendix 2)

Author Name: Paul Burrows
Role: Clerk

Appendix 1 Annual Return 2024/2025
Appendix 2 Annual Governance Statement 2025/2026

Appendix 1

March Sixth 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 Sixth 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 Sixth District Drainage Commissioners

The Clerk
March Sixth 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: 10th September 2025

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

MARCH SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.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: 03/06/2025 15/06/2025 16/06/2025

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

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: G. PEERY – WHITINGS LLP

Date: 16/06/2025

***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 SIXTH 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	Agreed 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.*
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.	Yes: / No:	N/A:	*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:

12/06/2025

and recorded as minute reference:

C 1120

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

Chair

Clerk RMartin

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

MARCH SIXTH 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	72,888	67,179	*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	14,866	16,637	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	2,716	27,886	*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	23,291	17,922	*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	67,179	93,780	*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	82,570	91,074	*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	544,700	544,700	*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

Date 29/05/2025

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

12/06/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

C.1121

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

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

In respect of **March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners – DB0050**

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:

None

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 05/09/2025

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

MARCH SIXTH 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 2026, 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 have assured 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.*
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.**	Yes	No	N/A — *has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***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:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		Item No:	11
Meeting:	**MARCH 6TH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING BACK**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**	**Andrew Wool/Sam Ablett**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is asked to:

A. Note the Budgeting review within Appendix 1.
B. Note the Highland Water contributions
C. Consider and approve the payments detailed within Appendix 2.
D. Consider and approve the Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/2026 within Appendix 3.

Finance Officer's review and key messages

For 2025/2026 the Board had estimated expenditure for the year of £20,748, however the Board set a rate of 26.50p to raise £17,736 through agricultural drainage rates and Special Levies.

Net Expenditure in 2025/26 was lower than the revised budget. Drain works was under the original budget. Fuel costs were also lower than budget, following a dry summer and below average year for pumping volumes.

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 Access Improvement works were carried out at Norwood Pumping Station at a cost of £10,063. This was 100% funded from the Grant. In the prior year Channel Improvement works at a cost of £16,067 were carried out under the Storm Recovery T2a Asset Resilience Package, again this was 100% grant aid funded.

Note that we will be introducing a consistent naming convention for MLC and IDB Reserves during 2026/27, this will include some rationalisation of funds.

This will leave the General fund balance as of 31st March 2026 at £40,404. The Developers fund balance as of 31st March 2026 is £51,529. N.B. Another £30,000 has been received into the Developers Fund after the year end. 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 forecasted out-turn as of 31st December 2025 for the financial year ending 31st March 2026 is included as Appendix 1.

2. Payments for 2026

2.1 Payments are detailed within Appendix 2

3. Highland Water Contributions

3.1 Under Section 57 of Land Drainage Act 1991 the Commissioners 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 £13,89.73.

Following the submission of claims for contributions the net sum of £(611.05) (£1,578.10 less £2,189.15 paid on account) (inclusive of supervision) was netted off against the 2025/2026 claim based on the Boards' actual expenditure on maintenance work for that financial year and the sum of £1,992.64 in respect of 80% of the Commissioners' estimated expenditure for the financial year 2025/2026.

4. Storm Recovery Grant – T2A and T2B

4.1 During the year and prior year MLC were successful in securing Grant Aid on behalf of some of the IDB's that they administer. As a result of the decisions made when setting the rates for 2025/2026 works that had already been started or was to be started meet the criteria to be Grant eligible. The following work was done and was 100% Grant funded as a result:

Work Done	Value	Penny rate equivalent
T2A – Channel Improvement Works	£16,067	24.01p
T2B – Access Improvements – Mobile Pump Deployment	£10,063	15.04p
	£26,130	39.05p

5. Annual Accounts and Finance papers 2025/2026:

5.1 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 3

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

Appendix 1 Budget Review
Appendix 2 Payments for 2025/26
Appendix 3 Annual Accounts & Finance Papers 2025/26

Appendix 1

MARCH SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

RATE BUDGET MONITORING - 2025/2026

		Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31/12/2025 £	Forecast To 31/03/2026 £
1	Insurances	753	803	803 [A]
2	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	11,000 [C]	2,141 [B]	11,000 [C]
3	Repairs and renewals	1,600	622	1,600
4	Electricity	2,950	1,153	2,950 [D]
5	Administration charges, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	4,900	2,457	4,900
6	Environment Agency - Precept	1,248	1,248	1,248
7	Improvement works	-	- [E]	- [F]
		22,451	8,425	22,501
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc	4,714	1,866 [G]	1,991
		17,736	6,559	20,510

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums

B - Includes:

Drain cleansing	-
Flail mowing	1,587
	1,587

C - Includes:

Engineer's items	6,725
District Labour	910
Contribution/fees/misc.	3,365
	11,000

D - Provision based on 2 year average plus increase in rates of 5% from October 2025

E - Does not include provision for future works

F - Does not include provision for future works

G - Includes:

Interest	484
Highland Water	1,382

MARCH SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

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

Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.95
Middle Level Commissioners - Board ID card	7.37
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	1,322.51
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply remedial Health & Safety signage (Account from 3B Design & Print)	69.60
Middle Level Commisssioners - Fees (Weed control and drain maintenance 2024/25, planning and developmement applications)	729.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, travelling, health & safety contract and storm recovery - tranche 1 claim	2,237.36
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	123.88
Environment Agency - Precept	623.88
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	813.60
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	77.86
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Discharge consent application - Batchelor Developments)	3,574.77
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	179.95
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	76.62
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid storm recovery T2a scheme works	18,728.98
Middle Level Commissioners - Grant in aid received for storm recovery T2a scheme	-16,067.48
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	82.28
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	252.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	301.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	188.35
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	80.04
T. Alterton - Flail mowing	244.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	803.10
Middle Level Commissioners - Replace outside lamp	190.28
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, storm recovery tranche 2A claim, IDB change contribution, internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024-2025 accounts)	2,986.58
British Gas - Electricity supply	41.21
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	1,534.20
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, planning and development applications)	363.30
EDF Energy - Electricity supply	92.27
British Gas - Electricity supply	28.15
Environment Agency - Precept	623.87
M & C Agri Services Ltd - Flail mowing	124.80
British Gas - Electricity supply	51.69
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	188.35
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	854.40
British Gas - Electricity supply	65.98
British Gas - Electricity supply	52.76
Middle Level Commissioners - Chemical weed control of District Drains	574.88
Middle Level Commissioners - Health & safety remedial works	71.39
T. Alterton - Pumping station duties 2025-2026	897.00
Davies Contracting Ltd - Drain maintenance	2,556.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery, health and safety contract and ecological and environmental services	4,790.38
Middle Level Commissioners - Pumping station maintenance	188.35
Middle Level Commissioners - Investigate pump fault and supply padlock keys	330.87
Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration	52.00
	31,340.93

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

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

2026				2025		
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year:-			Apr-01	Balance brought forward	37,681.89
	Precept		1,247.75	2026	Rate Income & Special levy	17,736.34
	Insurances and Rates	803.10		Mar-31	Interest on Deposit Accounts	598.14
	Repairs & Renewals	1,193.53			Highland Water Contributions	1,381.59
	Fuel	2,289.06			Development Charges Account	2,007.00
	Drainworks	7,162.82				
	Contractors Charges	897.00			Storm Recovery Grant- T2a and T2b	26,129.98
	Administration Charge, Audit fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising etc	5,482.30	17,827.81		Compensation	75.00
	Storm Recovery Grant- T2a and T2b		26,129.98			
	Balance carried forward		40,404.40			
			85,609.94			85,609.94

BALANCE SHEET

Capital Section

Liabilities		Assets		
		Pumping Station (Valuation)	544,000.00	
		Land - Twenty Foot	700.00	
Capital Provisions Account	544,700.00			544,700.00

Revenue Section

General Fund	40,404.40	Ratepayers' Account		-
		Value Added Tax - Refunds due		3,817.22
Development Charges Account	51,529.30	Sundry Debtors		587.00
Contributions Holding Account	30,505.74	Balance In Hand -		
		Barclays - Treasurer's Account	15,000.00	
Sundry Creditors	4,922.30	Barclays - Business Premium Account	107,439.72	
		National Savings - Treasurer Account	517.80	122,957.52
	672,061.74			672,061.74

March Sixth Internal Drainage Board

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward		90,561.17	Payments made during the year	31,340.93
31st March 2026				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	62,208.87			
Interest on deposit accounts	1,010.61	63,219.48	Balance carried forward	122,439.72
		153,780.65		**153,780.65**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	512.67	Payments made during the year	0.00
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	5.13	Balance carried forward	517.80
	517.80		**517.80**

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026	15,000.00
Less unpresented cheques	0.00
O/S lodgement	0.00
Balance per Trial Balance	**15,000.00**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**15,000.00**
Business Premium Account	**107,439.72**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**517.80**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**122,957.52**

March Sixth 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	37,681.89		
	Development charges account	26,307.96		
	Contributions holding account	29,789.71		
			93,779.56	**93,780**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates	10,164.34		
	Special Levies	7,572.00		
	Penalty	0.00		
	Costs	0.00		
	Write-off	0.00		
			17,736.34	**17,736**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
	General fund	598.14		
	Development charges account	417.60		
	Grant in Aid	26,129.98		
	Highland Water	1,381.59		
	Discharge contributions	30,505.74		
	Compensation	75.00		
			59,108.05	**59,108**
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	1,247.75		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	803.10		
	Repairs and renewals	1,193.53		
	Fuel	2,289.06		
	Drainworks	7,162.82		
	Administration	5,482.30		
	Development charges fees	2,978.97		
	Contractors charges	897.00		
	Improvement Works	26,129.98		
			48,184.51	**48,185**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	40,404.40		
	Development charges account	51,529.30		
	Contributions holding account	30,505.74		
			122,439.44	**122,439**

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6 122,439.44

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

MARCH SIXTH 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	67,179	93,780	*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	16,637	17,736	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	27,886	59,108	*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	17,922	48,185	*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	93,780	122,439	*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	91,074	122,958	*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	544,700	544,700	*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 AHWool

Date 28/05/2026

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:	12
Meeting:	**MARCH 6TH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS**	**Subject:**	**FINANCE REPORT: LOOKING FORWARD**
Date:	**Thursday 11th June 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
F. Note that we will be introducing a consistent naming convention for MLC and IDB reserves during 2026/27, this will include some rationalisation of funds.

Finance Officer's summary and key messages

For the rating estimates for 2026/2027 standard provisions have been made for general expenditure with specific items included where known. The engineers' estimates have been included for the drain maintenance programme.

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, especially with the current uncertainty because of the conflicts within the Middle East. The provision is therefore an estimate of pumping volumes at an estimate of possible new contract rates (20% increase on 2025/26 rates). Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate. The Board also need to consider any increase in Contractor costs also with higher Fuel costs again as result of the conflict in the Middle East. Members should therefore consider if they think the provision is reasonable when setting the rate.

When considering the rate for 2025/2026 members should consider likely future capital investment requirements at the pumping station.

1. Fees, Remunerations and Subscriptions

1.1 To consider the payment for pumping duties 2026/2027

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 £1,247.75.

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 SIXTH DISTRICT DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET PROPOSAL - 2026/2027

		Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31/03/2026 £	Proposed Budget 2026/2027 £
1	Insurances	753	803	883 [A]
2	Drainworks (including Environmental measures)	11,000	8,060 [B]	11,750 [C]
3	Repairs and renewals	1,600	1,194	1,600
4	Electricity	2,950	2,289	2,750 [D]
5	Administration charges, Health and Safety contract, Audit fee, printing, stationery, advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities subscriptions etc	4,900	5,482	5,500
6	Environment Agency - Precept	1,248	1,248	1,273
7	Improvement works	-	26,130 [E]	- [F]
		22,451	45,206	23,756
	LESS Deposit Accounts interest, etc	4,714	30,192 [G]	2,004
		17,736	15,014	21,752
	Rates Raised/Rate Proposed	26.50 p		32.50 p

Remarks

A - Includes estimate for increased premiums (10%)

B - Includes:

Flail Mowing & Weed Control	2,065
Slubbing	2,178
District Labour	897
Contribution/fees/misc.	3,380
	8,520

C - Includes:

Engineer's items	8,100
District Labour	944
Contribution/fees/misc.	2,706
	11,750

D - Provision based on 3 year average plus increase in rates of 20% from October 2026

E - Includes:

Channel Improvement Works - T2A *	16,067
Access Improvements - Mobile Pump Deployment *	10,063

F - Does not include provision for future works

G - Includes:

Interest	598
Highland Water	1,382
Storm Recovery Grant T2A and T2B *	26,130

Appendix 2

March Sixth 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 – 57.31%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levy issued to Fenland District Council – 42.69%.

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £384.

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £669.

Revenue cash balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £39,733.

The estimated net expenditure for the Commissioners Revenue and Capital Programmes in 2026/2027 is £21,752 and equivalent to: -

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 32.50p and

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £9,286

In 2025/2026 a rate of 26.50p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £7,572 on Fenland District Council.

Members should consider the appropriate level of balances and future years rate requirements when setting the rate.

P BURROWS

Clerk to the Commissioners

June 2026