MARCH AND EUXIMOOR WATER MANAGEMENT BOARD

At a Meeting of the March and Euximoor Water Management Board
Held virtually on Wednesday 21st October 2026.

PRESENT

Charles Albutt
Roger Gladwin
Clive Martin
Michael Mottram
Andrew Dunham
Will Gladwin
Tobias Martin

Mr Paul Burrows, The Clerk, was also in attendance as we Mrs Ruth Martin, the Lead Clerk.

B.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Timothy Boor, Graham Dunham and Alison Morris.

B.2 Introduction

Mr Burrows welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the Board. He explained that the agenda would cover the Composition and Membership of the Board, Governance, Finance, and the next meeting date.

All present agreed to the meeting being recorded.

B.3 Constitution & Membership

Election of Chair, Vice Chair and District Officer

Mr Burrows advised that the first decision the Board needed to make was the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair and asked the Board if there were any nominations or if anyone wished to put themselves forward.

Mr C Martin advised that he would be happy to stand as Chair to start the Board off but would only wish to commit to two or three years in the role.

The Board agreed that Mr C Martin be appointed as Chair. This was proposed by Mr C Albutt and seconded by Mr Mottram.

The Board agreed that Mr R Gladwin be appointed as Vice Chair. This was proposed by Mr Mottram and seconded by Mr W Gladwin.

RESOLVED

That Mr C Martin be appointed as Chair of the Board.

That Mr R Gladwin be appointed as Vice Chair of the Board.

Continuing Appointment of District Officer and Pump Attendants

The Board agreed that the Pump Attendants from the predecessor Boards continue in post, with payment arrangements as previously agreed by those Boards.

It was agreed that the District Officer for the former March East area, Mr C Martin, continue in post with payment arrangements as previously agreed. The former Euximoor Board did not have a District Officer in post at the point of abolition, and the Board agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair review District Officer arrangements across the new combined area.

RESOLVED

That the Pump Attendants and District Officer continue as with the predecessor Boards, on the same payment basis.

That the Chair and Vice Chair review District Officer arrangements.

B.4 Governance

Adoption of Byelaws, Standing Orders, and Policy Continuity

The Board approved the adoption of the Defra Model Byelaws and Model Standing Orders. These will require Ministerial approval although the predecessor Byelaws will remain in place until this is complete.

The Board agreed that all existing policies, regulations (including financial regulations) and prior decisions of the abolished Boards remain as if issued by the new Board, although documents will be renamed and republished by the new Board. The Scheme of Delegation and Schedule of Reserved Matters will be reissued by the new Board and will match the existing Middle Level standard; although the Board were advised that updates are planned for discussion at the Board meetings scheduled for Spring 2027.

The Board agreed to delegate the approval and publication of new and updated policies to the Clerk.

Appointed Membership

Fenland District Council have been approached to nominate 6 appointed members to the new Board. This figure is based on a rates vs special levy balance.

Legal Arrangements Related to Fens Reservoir

The Board were asked to reaffirm their agreement to join MLC's legal package for Fens Reservoir to recover costs from Anglian Water. This was agreed.

Service Provision by MLC

The Board were asked to agree to retain MLC services for Clerking, Mechanical and Electrical services, Environmental Risk Management, and Technical Services. The Board agreed to retain all services previously provided to the abolished Boards.

It was agreed to retain the services provided by the MLC Operations team within the former March East area. The Board agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair agree the option for the provision of services within the former Euximoor area, alongside the District Officer arrangements. Mr Burrows confirmed that the MLC Operations Team have capacity to take this additional area on.

Declarations of Interest Refresh

The Board were advised that MLC are planning to streamline and refresh declarations for all members across all Boards, introducing a single form for members on multiple Boards. It has been noted that many declarations are out of date, and it is planned to introduce a review program which will follow the current election cycle. The Board acknowledged the need for the update and that they would be receiving the Declaration Form soon.

Delegation for Transition Tidying

Mr Burrows advised the Board that best efforts have been made to include all resolutions required in the setting up of a new Board. However, in case any have been missed the Board were asked to delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair authority to approve items required to complete setup and address missed transition matters. This was approved by the Board.

RESOLVED

That the Model Byelaws and Standing Orders are adopted, and that prior policies and decisions continue.

The approval and publication of new and updated policies delegated to the Clerk.

Predecessor Board decisions will be mirrored including retaining MLC services.

B.5 Finance

Banking Setup and Financial Administration

Approval is needed in order to open a new Barclays bank account in the name of the newly constituted Board, with standard signatories: Chair, Vice Chair, Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer and Assistant Treasurer. This was agreed.

The Board approved adopting Whiting's as internal auditor. Mr Burrows reminded the Board that collectively we are 3 years into a 5-year internal audit agreement term.

Mr Burrows confirmed that the current-year rates set by the abolished boards remain in force; and all debts carry forward.

RESOLVED

The setting up of the new bank account is approved along with signatories

Whiting's retained as internal auditor

The continuity of the current year rates is acknowledged

Differential Rating and Pathway to a Unified Rate

Mr Burrows explained that it had originally been planned that the Board would use a temporary differential rating leading to a unified rate. He explained that the Board could not set up a differential rate until a ministerial order was in place to enact differential rating, and this could not be progressed until the new Board had been constituted and had passed an appropriate resolution.

He pointed out that the current difference in rates is estimated at about 10p; although this would be assessed further once the accounts are combined. He asked the Board to resolve their agreement to the creation of a temporary differential rating order if it were deemed necessary, with the understanding that should it transpire that it is not required it can be retracted. Once in place it may be that a differential rate is only required for 1 or 2 years in order to align the rates, but it is suggested that if it has to be specified, a period of 5 years is agreed.

Therefore, the Board agreed the proposal to prepare a temporary differential rating order (up to 5 years) if necessary. The Board agreed to parallel-track analysis of the rate and retract the order if not needed. The Board agreed to aim to unify the rate as soon as feasible.

In addition, the Board agreed to delegate to the Chair and Vice Chair in conjunction with the Responsible Finance Officer the final decision making on the need for a differential rating order, with the agreement that should it be necessary a further short meeting of the Board may be called early in 2027 should it be required to confirm a final decision either way.

RESOLVED

> Agreed to proceed with preparing a temporary differential rating order if required, with delegated authority and option to retract after analysis; intent to move to a unified rate in a reasonable timeframe.

External Audit Appointment Scheme

The Board were asked to decide if they wished to opt in or out of the Small Authorities' Audit Appointments (SAAA) central auditor scheme. They were advised that no IDBs have opted out; and that the predecessor Boards had opted in.

Board resolved to opt in.

Conflict-of-Interest Check Regarding Whiting's

The Board were advised that the internal audit requires confirmation of any member conflict of interests with the Internal Auditors (Whiting's), including such relationships as employment or family ties.

No conflicts were declared.

Corporate Seal for Rating

The Board were asked to approve the purchase a new seal (or plate for the main seal) for issuing rates; and were advised that the seals of the predecessor Boards would be retired.

Approval was granted to acquire new seal hardware.

Website and Records Housekeeping

Mr Burrows reported that a new webpage for the March and Euximoor Water Management Board has been created on the website middlelevel.gov.uk, and that the predecessor Board pages remain. These have been linked to the new Boards page for continuity of minutes and finances. In addition, a post-meeting tidy-up of the web content is planned.

The Board acknowledged this and agreed for the office to proceed with the update.

Year-End and Mid-Year Transition Issues

The Board were advised of and noted the mid-year formation of the Board complicates the year-end tasks. This includes concluding the accounts of the predecessor Boards, and then starting the accounts of the new Board mid-financial year. There will be items that cannot be concluded until the end of the financial year, including the IDB1s for the predecessor Boards as well as the new Board. Ideally the new Board would be constituted to come into existence on 1st April to tie in with the financial year end, but this did not happen and as such year end may be a little untidy.

There may also be some consents and communications that still carry the old Board names until these are tidied.

The Board acknowledged the transitional untidiness and agreed that these items be attended to.

RESOLVED

To opt in to the SAAA central auditor scheme.

To purchase a new Seal

B.6 Date of next Meeting

Mr Burrows proposed that the Board adopt the meeting date agreed by March East IDB at their last meeting, adjusted for practicality.

It was agreed that the March and Euximoor Water Management Board would meet on Thursday 27th May 2027 at 10am at the Middle Level Offices. The meeting will be followed by a buffet lunch.

It may be necessary to call short meetings in the interim, especially on the decision to pursue differential rating.

B.7 Any Other Business

Mr Burrows asked the Board if they had any other questions about the new Board or any of the items discussed. No questions were raised, and the meeting was closed at 6.40pm.