



WITHAM AND HUMBER
DRAINAGE BOARDS

Jane Froggatt, MA BA (Hons), Dip HSM. Chief Executive.

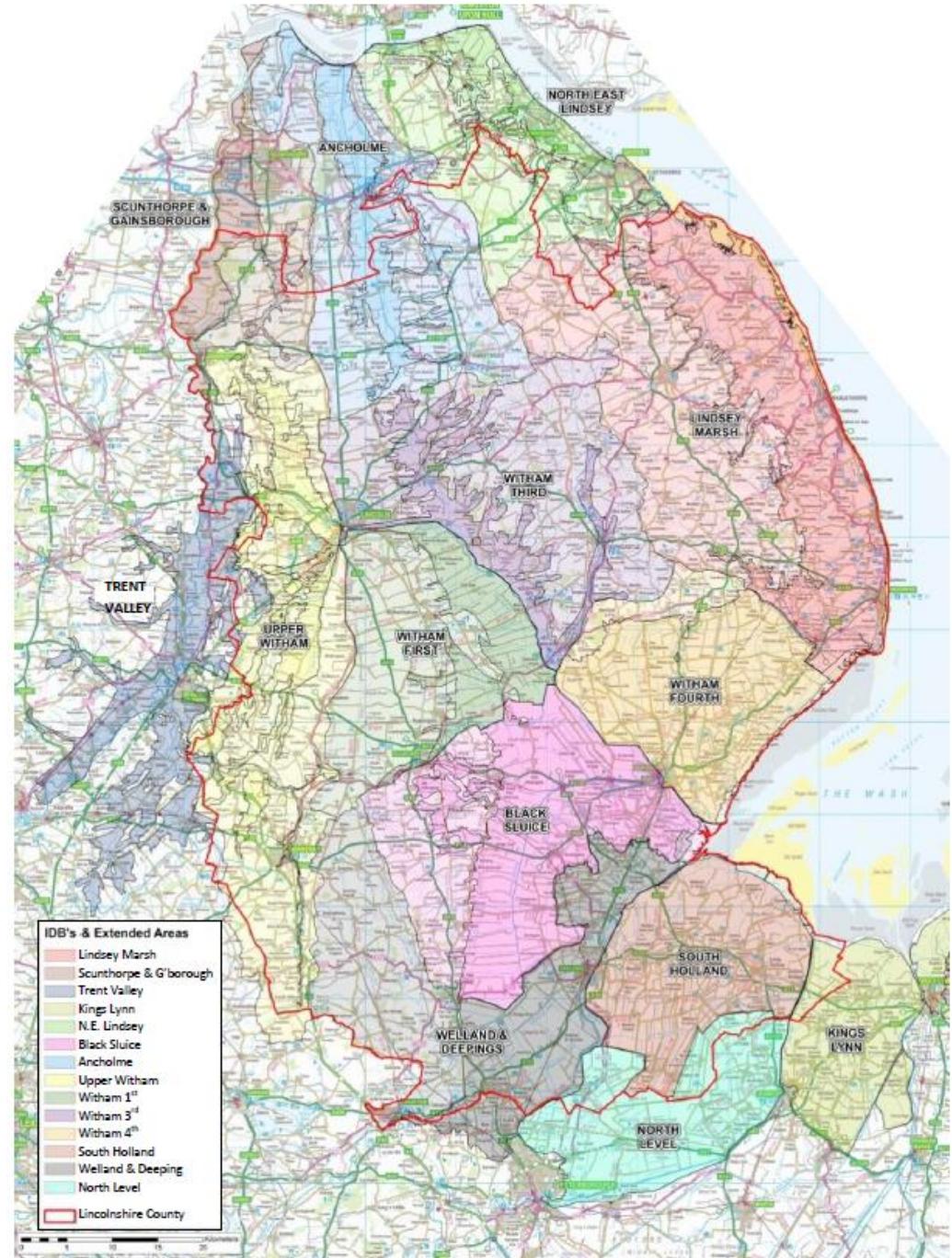
All Party Parliamentary Group for
Sustainable Flood and Drought Management.

**APPG & AGM: "Ignoring Main River Maintenance at our peril-
Short term win or long-term loss?"**

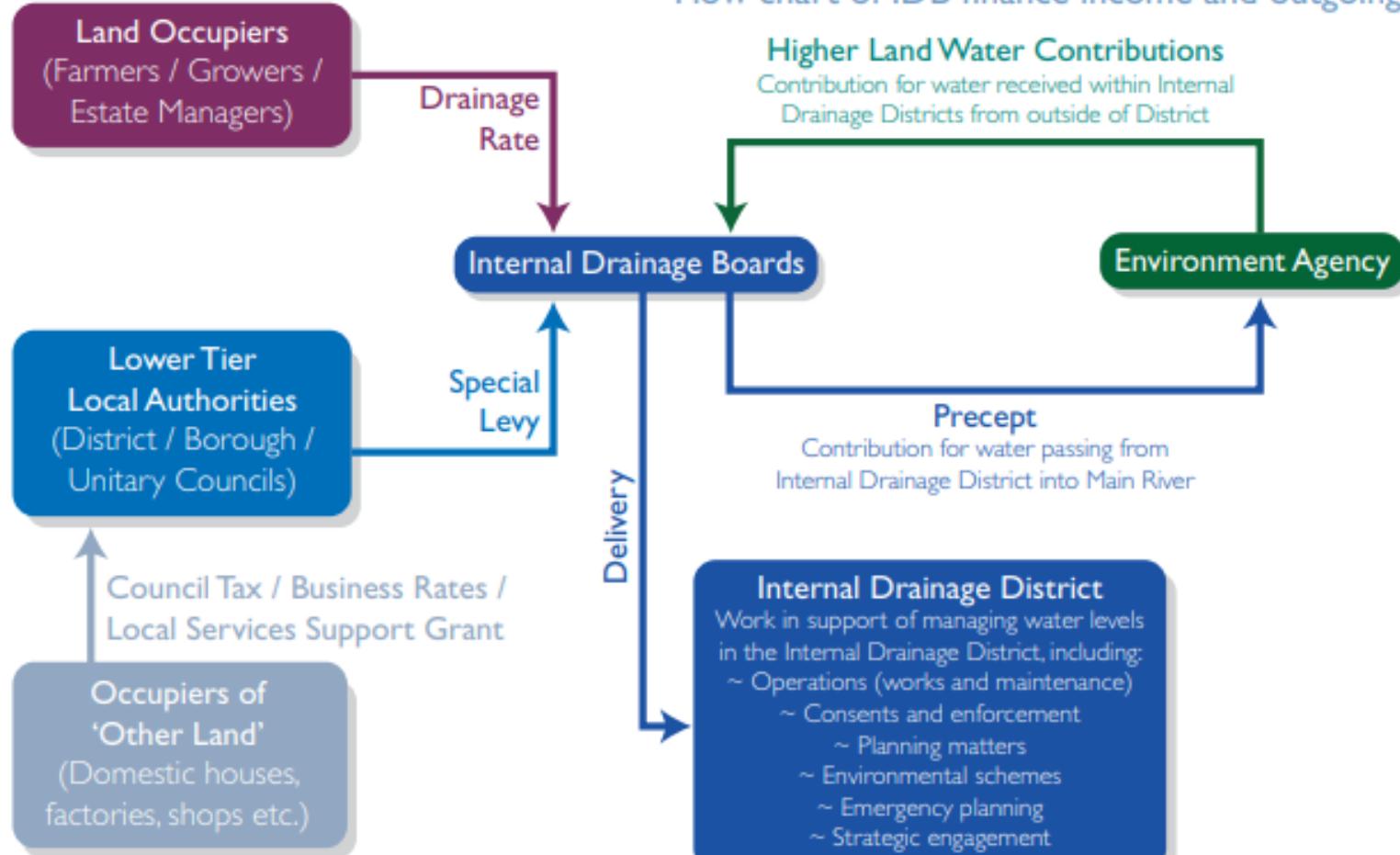
Portcullis House: 9:45am-11:00am, Wednesday 10.12.25

What IDBs do:

- ▶ Reduce flood risk to people, property, critical infrastructure, businesses and agricultural land.
- ▶ Manage land drainage & water levels for agricultural and environmental needs - in times of drought & flood.
- ▶ Maintain rivers, drainage channels, culverts, sluices, weirs, embankments and pumping station control structures.
- ▶ Keep watercourses clear of obstructions.
- ▶ Provide a consents & enforcement service .
- ▶ Scrutinise planning and development within drainage districts.
- ▶ Work with partner FRMAs including the Environment Agency, local authorities as LLFAs & LPAs. In Greater Lincolnshire: 2 Unitary Councils & 1 Upper Tier Council, 7 District/Borough Councils, Town & Parish Councils, C&RT and water companies.



How IDBs are Funded - note no national Government funding



Witham & Humber Drainage Boards (1)

- ▶ Accountable to both Defra and the EA, as the 2 supervising authorities.
- ▶ Economies of scale & efficiencies of 4 separate IDBs working collectively under a legal partnership, a Joint Services Agreement, since 01st April 2017.
- ▶ Sharing a management structure, co-location, shared use of plant & Operatives across the Boards and reducing costs where practicable to do so [HQ at Lincoln combined with Upper Witham operational depot, operational depot now combined for Witham First and Witham Third DIDBs at Woodhall Spa and a third depot for North East Lindsey IDB at New Holland on the Humber South Bank].
- ▶ Group Income & Expenditure turnover of c £7.25 million 2025/26 (excluding Capital FDGiA and IDB Fund grant income).
- ▶ Staffing: 5 Operatives on W1st, 10 Operatives on UW, 13 Operatives on W3rd & Contractor service for NELDB. 16 FTE Engineering, technical and finance staff working across the 4 IDBs. Smaller public authorities - single purpose & efficient.
- ▶ IDB £91 million Fund 2024/25 & 2025/26: 33 schemes at £17.4 million.

Witham & Humber Drainage Boards (2)

- ▶ Operate & maintain 53 Pumping Stations across 48 sites.
- ▶ Maintain annually 967 Km of watercourses across the 4 Boards: UW 320Km, W1st 272 Km, W3rd 233Km and NELDB 142Km.
- ▶ Planning scrutiny to Local Planning Authorities, consents, enforcements and capital improvement schemes with communities within 4 drainage districts.
- ▶ Total hectares each IDB drainage district : UW 21,095ha W1st 16,384ha W3rd 15,196ha and NELDB 11,250ha.
- ▶ Lincolnshire FRMA water levels, flood risk & drainage partnership- an established partnership since 2012.
- ▶ Undertake Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) works on main rivers for the Environment Agency, averaging £740k per annum average in the previous 4 financial years to 2025/26.
- ▶ Members of ADA and input to national industry policy and practice.

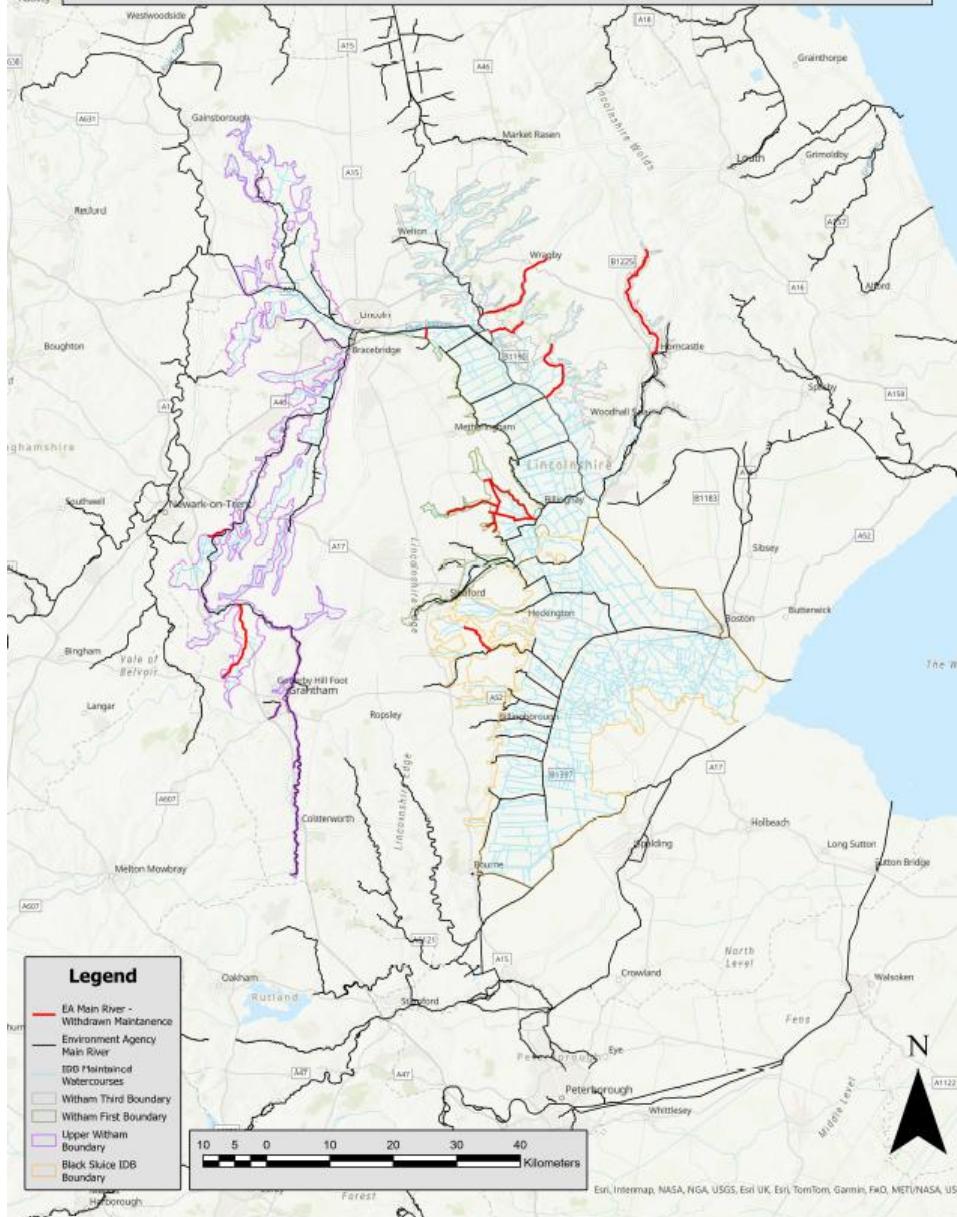
Reduced &/or temporary cessation of main river maintenance (1)

- ▶ Reduced maintenance is short-term financial gain by one public body, the EA, but at the expense of the longer-term asset condition and at great financial & operational risk to the systems and assets of other public bodies. A perfect example of **cost saving** in one part of public services being **cost shifting** to other public bodies.
- ▶ **Temporary cessation of EA revenue funded maintenance on low & medium consequence systems**- step down deterioration of asset condition & consequent increased risk. When does temporary become permanent & EA invoke protocol for permanent cessation? If permanent cessation, impact on licensing of maintenance by third parties. What are the future maintenance plans for main rivers or are we seeing the start of a policy of abandonment?
- ▶ Reduced maintenance is cost saving by one public body, but it is cost shifting to **riparian landowners** and other **public bodies like IDBs, Highways Authorities**. Assessment of **social costs** impact of temporary road closures arising from repeat flooding in frequently flooded locations [e.g. impact on commuters, cost & performance impact of ambulance diverts to the NHS] ?
- ▶ **impacts upon IDB systems & assets:** inability of IDB lowland systems to function as originally designed to provide agreed standards of protection when **frequently inundated by water, to a greater depth and duration, from EA main rivers** with water originally not designed to enter those IDB systems (e.g. South Delph Lincoln and W1st's Sandhill Pumping Station). **W&HDBs had 18 [of 53] pumping stations inundated during 23/24 Storms Babet & Henk.**
- ▶ **Response & Recovery** costs far outweigh the costs of **planned preventive maintenance**.

Reduced &/or temporary cessation of main river maintenance (2)

- ▶ One-off national IDB £91 million Fund 2024/25 & 2025/26 has been an excellent opportunity. But IDBs have no direct source of flood response and recovery funding.
- ▶ Landowner dissatisfaction about adequacy of main river maintenance & increased business risk, due to more frequent flood events impacting for longer durations - affecting agricultural businesses, **land productivity and UK food security**.
- ▶ Calls grow louder for **separation of river maintenance function** from other EA responsibilities and debate about a different way forwards main river maintenance responsibilities and accountabilities.
- ▶ IDBs across Lincolnshire pay £2.2 million per annum as mandatory **precept to the EA**. Service received increasingly questioned.
- ▶ Bleak future for the fens under the current EA revenue maintenance funding regime: **13 main river breaches in Lincolnshire winter 2023/24 & not all yet repaired**. Used to be 'fix, repair & sort out finance later' but no guarantee of incident response/recovery funded nationally outside Area budgets. Main river significant instances of **bank breaches, overtopping and seepage**. Lack of maintenance on the River Witham tributaries -e.g. Branston Delph has 19 residential properties in the flood cell and main rivers North, South, East and West- only the River Witham qualifies for maintenance funding but EA and IDB staff aware the LHB of Branston Delph is in poor condition and there is a significant risk of uncontrolled breach into Heighington Fen [IDB's Heighington Fen PS the last line of defense out of Lincoln and risks inundation].

Environment Agency Main River - Withdrawn Maintenance 25/26



Reduced EA main river maintenance in Lincolnshire on low & medium consequence systems.

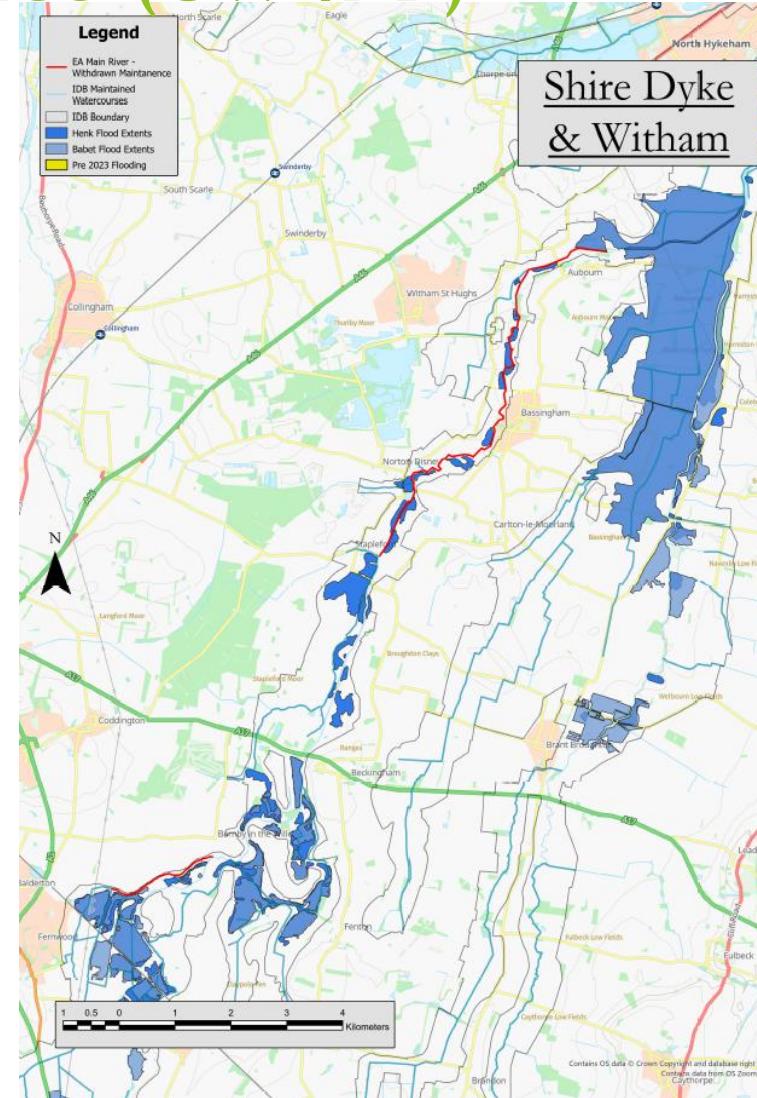
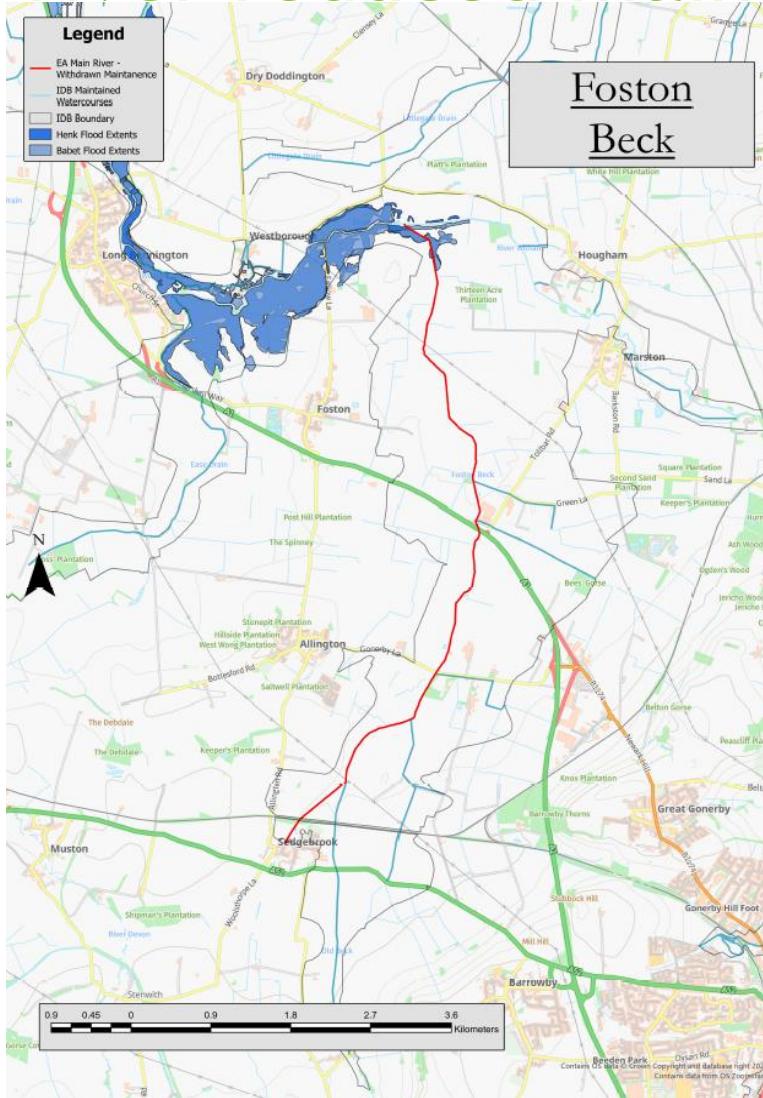
- ▶ Maintenance ceased on some EA low consequence systems 2022/23 onwards [across 29 systems in Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire], temporary cessation.
- ▶ Maintenance ceased on some medium consequence EA systems in 2025/26 in Lincolnshire, temporary cessation.
- ▶ When does temporary become permanent & who maintains thereafter & under what licensing arrangements and at whose expense? Impact on asset condition. Impact on third party assets and systems?
- ▶ W&HDBs undertaking maintenance on EA main rivers under PSCAs at the IDBs' cost- for 2025/26 only- due to concerns about asset condition.
- ▶ The following slides illustrate the flood extents in parts of Lincolnshire in Storms Babet [Oct '23] & Henk [Jan '24] against the stretches of EA main river where maintenance has been withdrawn.

PSCA INFORMATION: Upper Witham IDB

UWIDB	Total Meterage Quoted for	Total amount quoted
	187,158	£216,471.10

Medium Consequence systems removed 2025/26									
Environment Agency Lead	Hand or Machine	Activity ID	Maintenance Activity	Work Title	Delivery Date Start	maintenance option	Section length (m)	Estimated cost of work to the EA	Actual Costs
UWIDB	Machine	2025UW003	Grass Embankment	Witham - Aubourn to Stapleford	April	ME2	16,800	£14,515.20	
UWIDB	Machine	2025UW008	Grass Embankment	Witham - Aubourn to Stapleford	May	ME2	16,800	£14,515.20	
UWIDB	Machine	2025UW029	Grass Channel Cutting	Foston Beck	August	M3	5,717	£4,939.49	
UWIDB	Machine	2025UW030	Weed Machine	Foston Beck	August	W2A	1,807	£3,137.03	
UWIDB	Machine	2025UW036	Grass Embankment	Witham - Aubourn to Stapleford	August	ME2	16,800	£14,515.20	
							57,924	£51,622.12	£18,693.30
Low Consequence systems removed in 2022/23									
UWIDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Shire Dyke		ME2	2,084	£1,800.58	Actual Costs
UWIDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Shire Dyke		W2A	2,084	£2,925.94	
							4,168	£4,726.52	£5,719.50

Storms Babet & Henk Flood Extents - EA main river reduced maintenance (UW IDB)



PSCA INFORMATION: Witham First DIDB

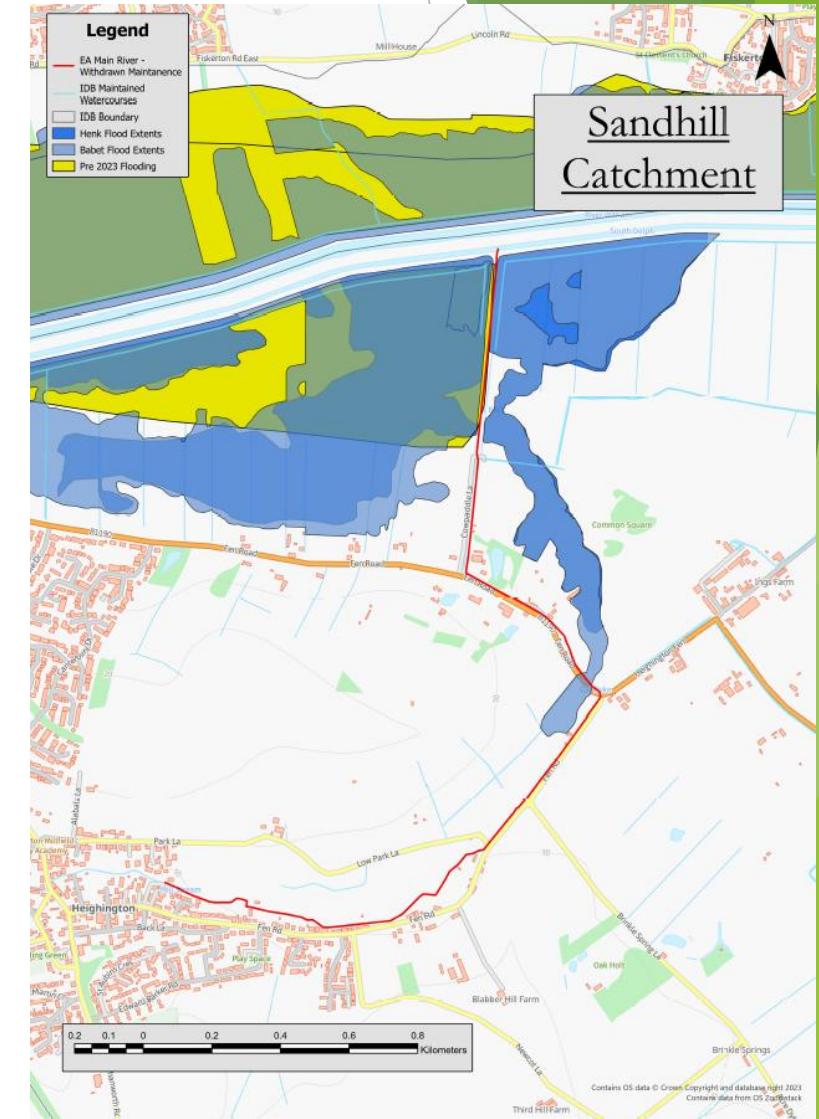
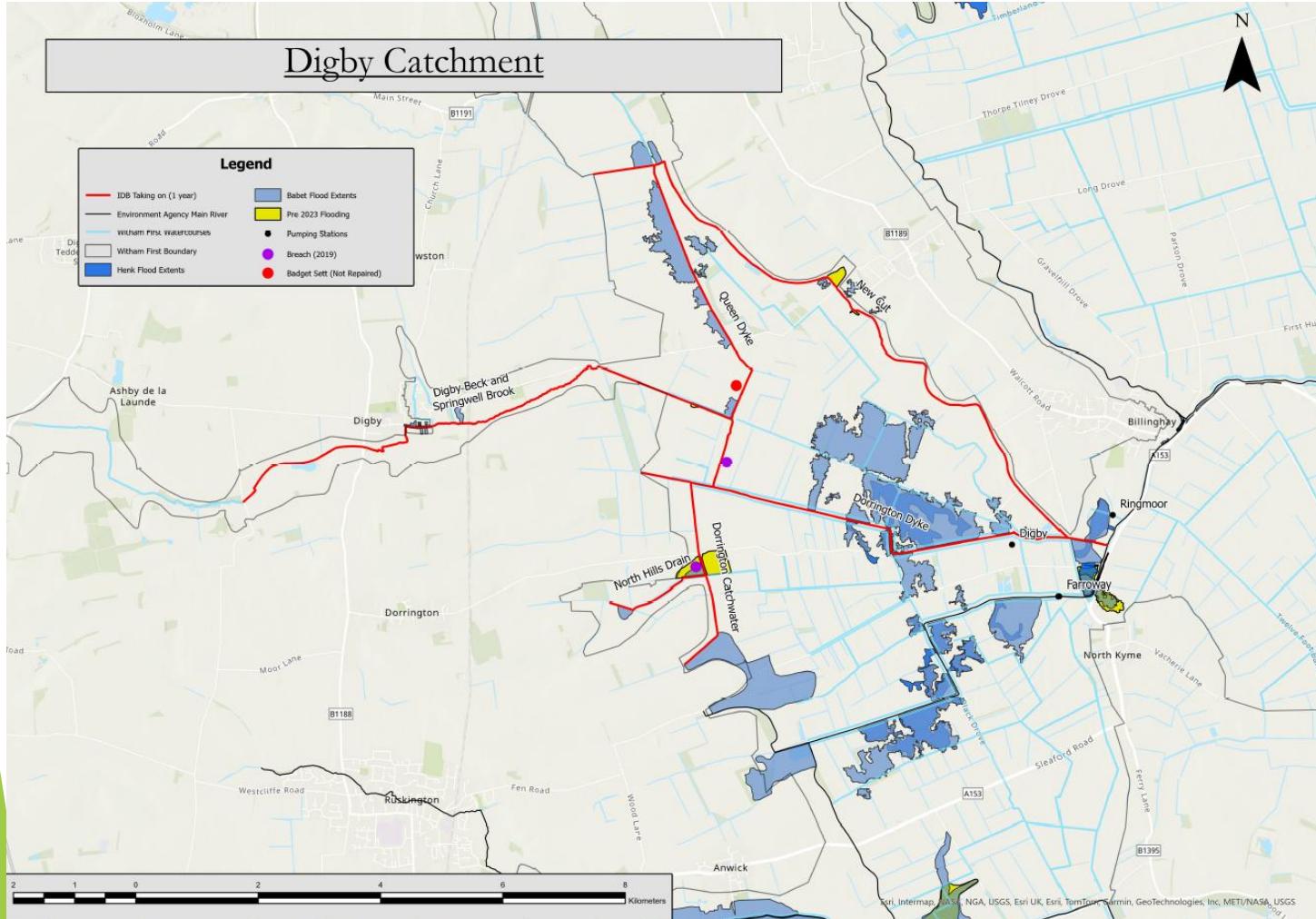
W1 IDB	Total Meterage Quoted for	Total amount quoted

Medium Consequence systems removed 2025/26									
Environment Agency Lead	Hand or Machine	Activity ID	Maintenance Activity	Work Title	Delivery Date Start	maintenance option	Section length (m)	Estimated cost of work to the EA	Actual Costs
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Digby Beck	April	ME2	2,286	£1,975.10	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Anwick CW	April	ME2	4,720	£4,078.08	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Farroway Drain	April	ME2	8,293	£7,165.15	
W1IDB	Hand		Grass Embankment	Sandhill beck	April	ME2	220	£744.00	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Anwick CW	May	ME2	4720	£4,078.08	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Farroway Drain	May	ME2	8293	£7,165.15	
W1IDB	Hand		Grass Embankment	Sandhill beck	May	ME2	220	£744.00	
W1IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Digby Beck	July	W1	633	£888.73	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Channel Cutting	Digby Beck	8th August	M4	1,749	£1,511.14	
W1IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Digby Beck	8th August	W1	2,898	£4,068.79	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Channel Cutting	Sandhill Beck	8th August	M1	335	£744.00	
W1IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Sandhill Beck	8th August	W2A	902	£1,866.41	
W1IDB	Hand		Grass Embankment	Sandhill beck	8th August	ME2	220	£744.00	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Digby Beck	September	ME2	2,286	£1,975.10	
W1IDB	Hand		Grass and Weed Hand	Digby Beck	September	M1 & W2A	1,223	£3,283.12	
W1IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Digby Beck	September	W1	633	£1,488.73	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Anwick CW	September	ME2	4,720	£4,078.08	
W1IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Farroway Drain	September	ME2	8,293	£7,165.15	
							52,644	£53,762.81	£8,509.50

Work Cut from Main Frame Contractor but affects Board's systems Significantly

W1 IDB	Machine		Grass Channel Cutting	Dorr Dyke,Dorr Catch,QueenDyke, New cut, N.Hills	18,154		Actual Costs	Work Completed
W1IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Dorr Dyke,Dorr Catch,QueenDyke, New cut, N.Hills	18,154			
W1IDB	Machine		Grass and Weed Hand	Heighington Beck		1,600		
W1IDB	Machine		Grass and Weed Hand	Washingborough Beck		1,400		
					39,308		£27,666.50	

Storms Babet & Henk Flood Extents - main river reduced maintenance (W1)



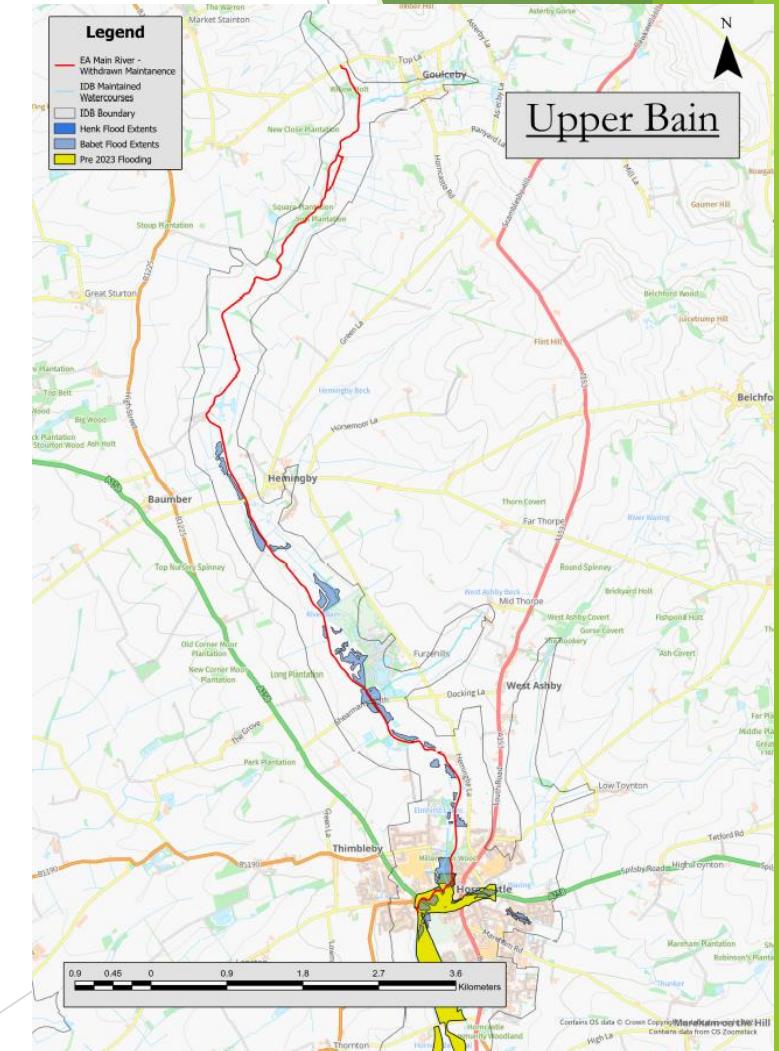
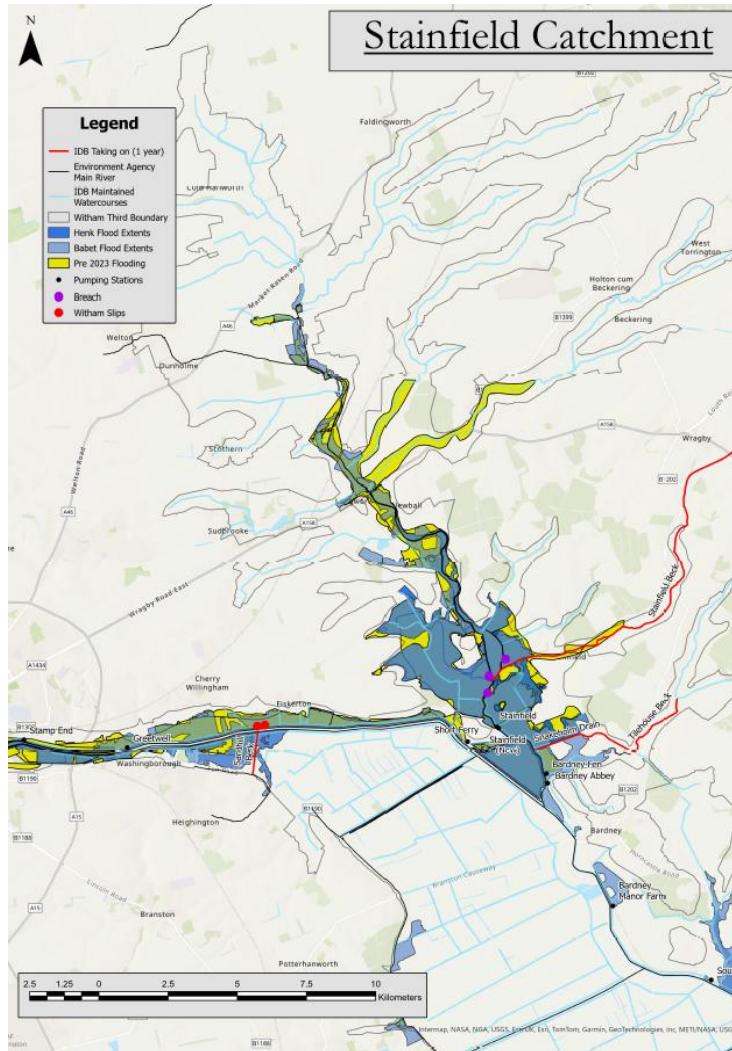
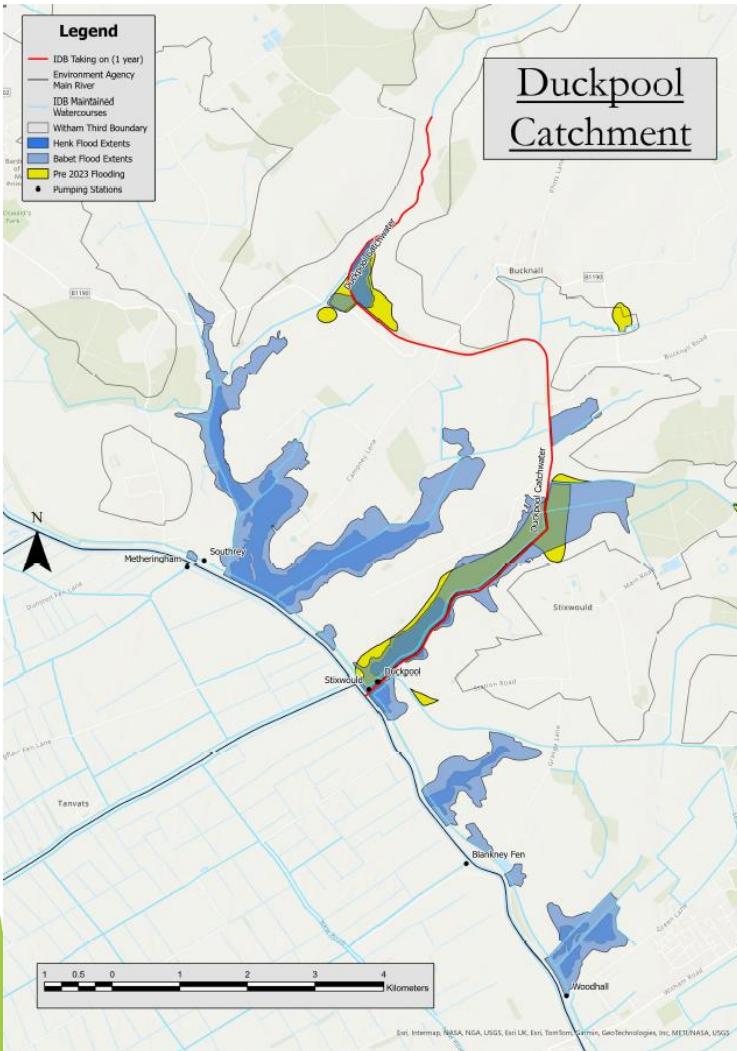
PSCA INFORMATION: Witham Third DIDB

W3 IDB	Total Meterage Quoted for	Total amount quoted
	267,758	£318,568.84

Medium Consequence systems removed 2025/26									
Environment Agency Lead	Hand or Machine	Activity ID	Maintenance Activity	Work Title	Delivery Date Start	maintenance option	Section length (m)	Estimated cost of work to EA	Actual Costs
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Upper Bain - Shearmans Wath	April	ME2	434	£744.00	Work Not Undertaken
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Duckpool Catchwater	April	ME2	6,144	£5,308.42	
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Upper Bain - Shearmans Wath	May	ME2	434	£744.00	
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Duckpool Catchwater	May	ME2	6,144	£5,308.42	
W3IDB	Hand		Spraying	River Bain Ranby Loop	May	Spray	537	£1,486.13	
W3IDB	Hand		Spraying	River Bain Ranby Loop	June	Spray	537	£1,486.13	Work Completed
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Channel Cutting	Upper Bain - Goulceby to Shearmans Wath	August	M5	9,761	£8,433.50	
W3IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Upper Bain - Goulceby to Shearmans Wath including FSR	August	W2A	8,532	£12,578.93	
W3IDB	Hand		Grass and Weed Hand	Upper Bain (Ranby Looop)	August	M1 & W2A	531	£2,177.05	
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Channel Cutting	Duckpool Catchwater	August	M5	1,437	£1,241.57	
W3IDB	Machine		Weed Machine	Duckpool Catchwater	August	W2A	7,479	£11,100.52	
W3IDB	Hand		Grass and Weed Hand	Duckpool Catchwater	August	M3 & W2A	150	£744.00	Work Not Undertaken
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Upper Bain - Goulceby to Shearmans Wath	August	ME2	434	£744.00	
W3IDB	Machine		Grass Embankment	Duckpool Catchwater	August	ME2	6,144	£5,308.42	
							48,698	£57,405.09	£23,761.50

Low Consequence systems removed in 2022/23								Actual Costs	Work Completed
W3IDB			Grass Channel Cutting	Snakeholme			2,005		
W3IDB			Weed Machine	Snakeholme			1,081		
W3IDB			Grass and Weed Hand	Snakeholme			1,396		
W3IDB			Spraying	Snakeholme			718		
W3IDB			Grass Channel Cutting	Tilehouse Beck			1,681		
W3IDB			Weed Machine	Tilehouse Beck			1,681		
W3IDB			Grass Channel Cutting	Stainfield Beck			3,200		
W3IDB			Weed Machine	Stainfield Beck			3,200		
							14,962	£744.00	

Storms Babet & Henk Flood Extents - EA main river reduced maintenance (Witham Third DIDB)



National IDB Fund of £91 million - W&HDB's £17.4m

- 33 schemes - totalling £17.4m
- Focus on recovery, resilience and innovation.
- 22 delivered by 31/03/2025 - totalling £4.9m.
- 11 schemes to be completed by 31/03/206 - totalling £12.5m.
- Excellent delivery model and good news for schemes which do not qualify for FDGIA funding.
- No commitment of future funding.

IDB FUND SCHEMES

IDB Fund Schemes Completed by 31st March 2025				Grant Awarded	Spend to 31/03/2025	Variance (Under)/Over
Witham & Humber Boards Bank Slip Reinstatement	All (W3)	AT1-068	£1,620,000.00	£1,649,484.82	£29,484.82	
Mobile pump replacement	All (W3)	AT1-063	£225,500.00	£231,656.90	£6,156.90	
North East Lindsey IDB Storm Recovery Costs	NEL	AT1-067	£20,900.00	£20,900.00	£0.00	
Aubourn PS Replace Submersible Pumps	UW	AT1-049	£84,000.00	£84,308.50	£308.50	
Sandyske PS Replace Submersible Pumps	UW	AT1-050	£84,000.00	£76,641.80	(£7,358.20)	
Burton Pumping Station Pump & Motor Refurbishment	UW	AT1-052	£83,000.00	£104,304.53	£21,304.53	
Pyewipe Automatic Weedscreen Cleaner Repair	UW	AT1-053	£42,000.00	£42,459.16	£459.16	
Hykeham PS Refurbishment	UW	AT1-054	£240,000.00	£125,736.53	(£114,263.47)	
Upper Witham IDB Storm Recovery Costs	UW	AT1-066	£120,975.00	£120,975.00	£0.00	
Farroway Pumping Station Weedscreen deck reinstatement & repairs	W1	AT1-060	£158,000.00	£143,139.25	(£14,860.75)	
Timberland Pumping Station Pump refurbishment	W1	AT1-062	£67,200.00	£68,946.99	£1,746.99	
Witham First IDIB Storm Recovery Costs	W1	AT1-065	£215,663.00	£215,663.00	£0.00	
Short Ferry PS Refurb	W3	AT1-047	£160,000.00	£164,757.81	£4,757.81	
Bardney Abbey PS Refurb	W3	AT1-048	£48,000.00	£50,349.42	£2,349.42	
Replacement Tilting Weirs at Dogdyke & Marsh Lane	W3	AT1-055	£208,000.00	£195,200.21	(£12,799.79)	
Stainfield New Pumping Station Pump Replacement	W3	AT1-056AT	£84,000.00	£84,444.42	£444.42	
Marsh Lane (Old) Pumping Station Pump Refurbishment	W3	AT1-058	£40,000.00	£40,950.00	£950.00	
Witham Third DIDB Storm Recovery Costs	W3	AT1-064	£166,053.00	£166,053.00	£0.00	
Sub Total Tranche 1			18	£3,667,291.00	£3,585,971.34	(£81,319.66)
Additional Mobile Pump Capacity	All (UW)	AT2-0055	£1,128,000.00	£1,132,451.49	£4,451.49	
Access Platforms & weedscreen	NEL	AT2-0040	£82,000.00	£83,304.00	£1,304.00	
Branston Pumping Station Syphon Breakers	W1	AT2-0011	£41,500.00	£41,923.80	£423.80	
Bardney Fen relocate MCC to Bardney Abbey	W3	AT2-0036	Withdrawn			
Sub Total Tranche 2			4	£1,251,500.00	£1,257,679.29	£6,179.29
TOTAL ALL SCHEMES COMPLETED			22	£4,918,791.00	£4,843,650.63	(£75,140.37)

Extended Schemes to be delivered by 31st March 2026				Grant Awarded	Spend to 31/10/2025	Variance (Under)/Over
Torksey Syke PS Refurbishment & Pump Replacement	UW	AT1-051	£445,000.00	£297,741.61	(£147,258.39)	
Kirkstead Pumping Station AWC Replacement	W3	AT1-057	£155,000.00	£148,828.97	(£6,171.03)	
Automatic Weedscreens	All (UW)	AT2-0052	£1,415,000.00	£296,820.00	(£1,118,180.00)	
Coulson Road	UW	AT2-0039	£1,075,000.00	£485,261.24	(£589,738.76)	
Sandhill Beck Pumping Station additional pump	W1	AT2-0038	£970,000.00	£285,996.08	(£684,003.92)	
Marsh Drain Breach Repair (PSCA)	W3	AT2-0033	£400,000.00	£103,807.49	(£296,192.51)	
Fiskerton & Stikwold replacement electric motors (1 each of 2)	W3	AT2-0035	£1,335,000.00	£400,517.02	(£934,482.98)	
TOTAL ALL SCHEMES EXTENDED			7	£5,795,000.00	£2,018,972.41	(£3,776,027.59)

Tranche 2B Schemes to be delivered by 31st March 2026				Grant Awarded	Spend to 31/10/2025	Variance (Under)/Over
Shortferry & Southrey Pumping Station additional pumps	W3	AT2B-013	£1,552,437.00	£1,099,164.18	(£453,272.82)	
Saxilby Pumping Station Refurbishment	UW	AT2B-017	£1,704,105.00	£171,133.58	(£1,532,971.42)	
Replacement Archamedies Screw Pumps at Fen Lane, North Kyme & Decoy Pumping Stations	All (UW)	AT2B-018	£2,500,000.00	£677,879.58	(£1,822,120.42)	
Water Level Control Structures & Penstock Automation at various locations	All (W1)	AT2B-062	£953,550.00	£45,988.00	(£907,562.00)	
TOTAL ALL SCHEMES TRANCHE 2B			4	£6,710,092.00	£1,994,165.34	(£4,715,926.66)
			33	£17,423,883.00	£8,856,788.38	-£8,567,094.62
				£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Summary of IDB Fund Schemes				Grant Awarded	Spend to 30/09/2025	Variance (Under)/Over
IDB Fund Schemes Completed by 31st March 2025			22	£4,918,791.00	£4,843,650.63	(£75,140.37)
Extended Schemes			7	£5,795,000.00	£2,018,972.41	(£3,776,027.59)
Tranche 2B Schemes to be delivered by 31st March 2026			4	£6,710,092.00	£1,994,165.34	(£4,715,926.66)
TOTAL ALL SCHEMES			33	£17,423,883.00	£8,856,788.38	(£8,567,094.62)



EA Main River - Marsh Drain Bank Breach in October 2023
Witham Third DIDB Recovery Fund Work via PSCA route
September 2025

Repaired Bank slips @ £1.6 million from IDB Fund.
Example: Minting & Gautby Beck - Before & After.

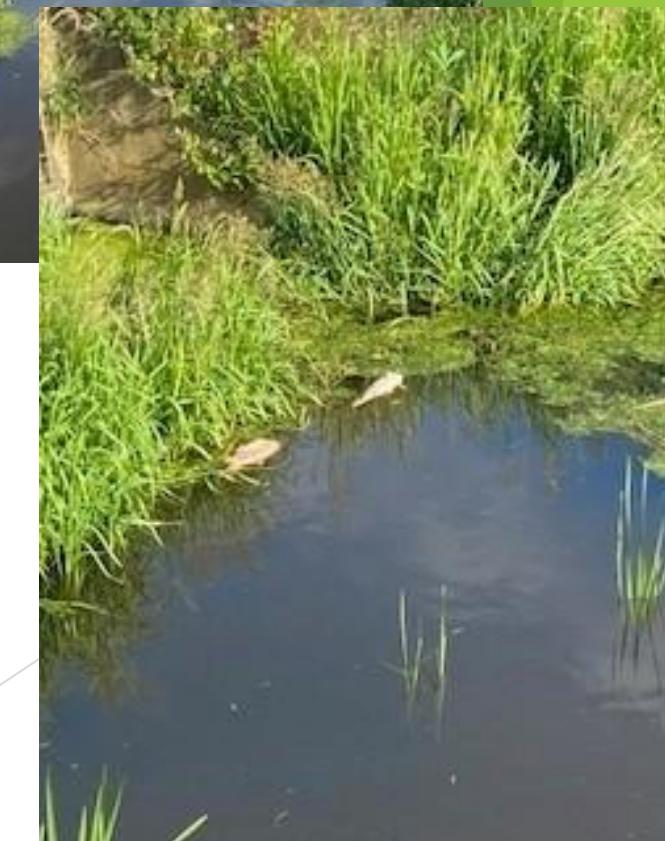




Sandhill Pumping Station, Witham First DIDB. Flooding
Storm Babet 2023 and new auxiliary pump installed
September 2025 - IDB Recovery Fund Scheme.

River Till- EA Main River, near Lincoln- January 2025 & summer 2025.

Upper Witham Internal Drainage Board



Electricity Standing Charges at Pumping Stations driving local taxation increases

	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
NEL	£ 16,504.33	£ 14,750.78	£ 16,119.75	£ 10,670.12	£ 4,678.99	£ 1,378.84	£ 1,147.12
UW	£ 45,100.82	£ 40,836.67	£ 44,481.50	£ 28,820.22	£ 12,244.51	£ 4,124.13	£ 3,803.99
W1	£ 80,032.89	£ 76,169.02	£ 84,851.25	£ 54,622.95	£ 20,361.68	£ 5,173.69	£ 5,218.87
W3	£ 54,614.72	£ 51,031.49	£ 54,410.29	£ 33,803.27	£ 14,099.40	£ 4,313.06	£ 3,521.91
Total	£ 196,252.76	£ 182,787.96	£ 199,862.78	£ 127,916.57	£ 51,384.58	£ 14,989.73	£ 13,691.90

Increase in penny rate

	2025/26	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
NEL	4.00%	14.00%	15.00%	5.00%	2.00%	2.00%	1.00%
UW	5.00%	16.00%	15.00%	6.25%	2.50%	2.40%	2.00%
W1	4.00%	20.00%	29.00%	6.50%	2.50%	5.00%	0.00%
W3	5.00%	14.96%	15.00%	5.00%	2.50%	2.00%	0.50%

- Risk of likely future increases in standing charges from 01.04.26 (Transmission costs)
- Reduced main river maintenance increases frequency and duration of flood events, resulting in increased electricity usage & costs.

Conclusion/Summary:

- ▶ Reduced EA maintenance on main rivers is short-term cost saving by one public body, but it constitutes cost shifting to other public bodies including IDBs.
- ▶ Asset condition will deteriorate, both EA main rivers and the IDB lowland systems which depend on them functioning as intended to meet their IDB standards of protection.
- ▶ IDB systems and assets will risk more frequent inundations, to greater depths & for longer durations. This will cost IDBs more, added to which is the increasing cost of electricity as a major cost driver for IDBs.
- ▶ Incident response and recovery is not guaranteed or funded nationally or for IDBs directly, e.g., 13 bank breeches in Lincolnshire main rivers in winter 2023/24.
- ▶ Future management and funding arrangements for incident response and recovery phases in flood events? Will main river breeches be reinstated?
- ▶ Agricultural businesses and rural areas will suffer the consequences; highly productive land use will degrade over time & challenge UK food security.
- ▶ Councils depend upon well drained land and good water & flood risk management in their communities to achieve their economic growth and prosperity objectives, e.g., housing growth.
- ▶ If the EA is unable to maintain main rivers, who will do so- or is the UK supporting a policy of abandonment of rivers as critical infrastructure?