

WITHAM FIRST DISTRICT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Minutes of the one-hundred-and-thirty-second meeting of Witham First District Internal Drainage Board, incorporating the Annual Public Meeting held on Thursday, 27th November 2025 in Branston Booths Village Hall, Lincoln at 2pm.

Present:

Mr D C Armstrong - **Chairman**
Mr D K Busby
Cllr M Clarke
Mr S Cobb
Cllr K Fernandes
Mr P Gilbert
Mr W Grantham
Mr R Hickling
Mr S B Leggate
Mr I Mair
Mrs B Maplethorpe
Mr S Maplethorpe
Mr A R Means
Mr C R Oxby
Dr V Stanton
Cllr P J Vaughan

In attendance:

Mr Ian Coupland	Director of Operations
Ms Jayne Flower	Executive Assistant
Mrs Jane Froggatt	Chief Executive
Mr Steve Larter	Director of Finance & Governance
Mr Martin Shilling	Director of Engineering & Technical Services

2774 Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Mr E Applewhite, Cllr I Carrington, Cllr A Hagues, Mr M Harrison (Vice Chairman), Cllr M Head, Cllr G Hewson, Mr A Hodgson, Mr S Longmate and Cllr L Sanders.

2775 Declarations of Interest.

Declarations of interest were received from members appointed by City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven District Council, in matters relating to the respective Councils.

2776 Election of Chairman.

Mr David Armstrong was nominated, seconded and there being no further nominations, he was duly elected as Chairman for the following year.

2777 Chairman's Announcements.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome everyone to the November Board meeting and, this being our Annual Public Meeting, he thanked members for electing him to serve as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

He advised it would be a busy and varied agenda, highlighting the range of Capital Schemes underway across the 4 IDBs, particularly the IDB Fund schemes which are due to be completed by 31st March 2026, but also some of the Flood Defence Grant in Aid major schemes on which members would be updated.

Some Members were aware that Mark Harrison had recently undergone surgery and is recovering well at home. Mark did receive a copy of the papers for the meeting by request, and he would be back in circulation early in the New Year. He had confirmed that he is willing to be elected to the role of Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.

2778 Election of Vice Chairman.

As just confirmed by the Chairman, Mark Harrison was willing to stand and, after being proposed, seconded and there being no further nominations, he was duly elected as Vice Chairman.

2779 Election of Executive Committee Members (Up to 9 members).

All 7 current members, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Mr Ed Applewhite, Mr Steven Cobb, Mr Peter Gilbert, Mr Ron Oxby, and Mr Simon Maplethorpe were elected to the Executive Committee en-bloc.

Bridget Maplethorpe was nominated, seconded and duly elected as a member.

2780 Election of Joint Services Committee Members.

The 3 current members, namely the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Mr Peter Gilbert, and the current deputy, Mr Steve Cobb, were re-elected to the JSC. Bridget Maplethorpe and Ron Oxby were both nominated, seconded and duly further elected to serve as deputies.

2781 Election of ADA Lincs Branch Environment Committee.

This is an open position. However, Mr Peter Gilbert was nominated, seconded and duly elected as the Board's representative. All Members would in addition be invited to attend the twice-yearly meetings, with the Environment Officer, Nick Downing, circulating agenda and papers to interested parties. There is a new chair for this committee, Cllr Tom Ashton who is also a member of Witham Third DIDB and Witham Fourth IDB. It was hoped to reinvigorate this forum and Nick Downing would be encouraging all members to attend the events throughout the year.

2782 Calendar of Meetings 2026.

Members AGREED the following dates for 2026:

Witham First District Board Meetings (Branston Booths Village Hall at 2pm):

- Tuesday, 27th January.

- Tuesday, 19th May
- Tuesday, 24th November (+APM).

Witham First Executive Committee Meetings (W1st Depot, Woodhall Spa at 2pm):

- Tuesday, 13th January.
- Tuesday, 05th May.
- Tuesday, 10th November

Joint Services Committee Meetings (at 10am, Witham House, Meadow Lane):

- Monday, 11th May.
- Monday, 13th July.
- Monday, 07th December.

Annual Inspection 2025

Thursday, 16th July. NELDB to host

ADA 89th Flood & Water National Conference 2025

- Tuesday 17th November

Steve Cobb proposed the reinstatement of a fourth Board meeting, stating he believed that the time between the May and November meetings (6 months) was too long between meetings, and he would like an extra meeting so that members could be kept informed. The Chief Executive agreed it did seem a long time between formal meetings, but members had wished to cease the Board meetings that used to be held each August. There are regular circulations to members and the Annual Inspection plus a meeting can be convened when necessary. She was happy to support either 3 formal meetings per year as now, or an additional formal meeting if that is what members wish to put in place.

There was much discussion on the proposition and a vote was held. The results were 15 to remain at 3, 1 to move to 4 meetings and therefore motion passed to remain at the current 3 meetings per year. This is the minimum requirement, and Members were advised they could request a meeting at any point and were very welcome to contact Officers at Witham House for updates.

2783 Register of Members' Interests.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Members were asked to complete the annual update of the Register of Members' Interests and hand completed forms to Jayne Flower at the end of the meeting or submit to them to Witham House subsequently.

2784 Minutes of the previous Board meeting, 20.05.25.

The Minutes of the Board's previous meeting, held on 20th May 2025 were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising, all items being covered by the agenda.

2785 Minutes of the Joint Services Committee meeting, 14.07.25.

The minutes of the Joint Services Committee held on 14th July 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were received and NOTED by members.

MATTERS ARISING:

There no matters arising, all items being covered by the agenda.

2786 Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting, 11.11.25.

The minutes of the Board's Executive Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 11th November 2025 had been circulated with the agenda and were proposed, seconded and APPROVED as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising, all items being covered by the agenda.

2787 Chief Executive's Report.

The Chief Executive's report had been circulated with the agenda and was taken as read, with issues highlighted as follows:

2787.1 ADA Lincolnshire Branch Pay & Conditions Committee update and Proposed Pay Settlement for 2026/27.

The 7 Lincolnshire IDBs party to the joint Lincolnshire negotiating with staff side Unison representatives are our 4 Witham & Humber DBs, Witham Fourth, Black Sluice and South Holland.

Cllr Lance Pennell, UW Board member, is our 4 Boards' representative on the Committee, supported by the CEO [Lance has fulfilled this role for almost 10 years]. Lance is unable to take on the commitment of chairing the Pay Committee but is content to continue to represent our 4 IDBs for a further year. Mark Leggate represents BSIDB, supported by Daniel Withnall [Mark is also a W4th IDB member] and new committee member Cllr Stuart Evans has replaced Peter Richardson as W4th's representative on the committee [supported by Peter Bateson]. Cllr Stuart Evans agreed to chair the 01.10.25 meeting, and the proposal to appoint him as ADA Branch Pay & Conditions Committee Chairman was supported at the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 23.10.25.

The focus of the Pay Committee 01.10.25 meeting was the pay claim for 2026/27 to be applied from 01.04.26, received in September from Unison on behalf of staff side. This was for a consolidated £500 across all salary and wage scales combined with application of the usual formula - which this year outputs 5%. As a reminder, for some years the formula we have used is the "changes in Average Weekly Earnings [AWE] within the public sector rolling average for the previous 12 months July to July, as published by ONS in September" each year- this is 5% for July 2024-July 2025. ONS also publishes a similar tracker for private sector pay movements [which our

membership body ADA uses- which at a meeting in September was noted as running at 5.4% for their proposed staff pay settlement from 01.01.26].

Staff-side colleagues presented their pay claim and particularly why they wished to digress from the formula with an additional consolidated sum of £500- reasons included falling value of pay settlements over the last 5 years in relation to inflation levels, inflation forecasts this year particularly in relation to utilities, food costs and a view that ADA Lincolnshire Branch Pay Committee constituent IDBs are falling behind the salaries/wages relative to those IDBs outside the joint negotiating forum. The additional pay cost to our 4 Boards of £500 consolidated plus the 5% formula would be £208,920 from 01.04.26 [including oncosts like National Insurance, factoring in assumed overtime etc].

Employers felt the unconsolidated sums of recent past years had attempted to address the historical pay backlog issues and suggested the formula was a fair, impartial application but formula only, not £500 consolidated plus formula. Targeting internal IDB pay disparities was an individual IDB grading issue, not we felt a pay claim issue for all staff. We felt we would only be able to support the 5% formula element of the pay claim. The additional pay costs to our 4 Boards of implementing the 5% from 01.04.26 is £169,949 [including NI, overtime assumed etc].

It was stressed that pay costs are one significant IDB cost driver, but in budget setting for 2026/27 we will need to make provision for others- e.g. insurance, electricity, fuel, R&M, any changes announced in the 26th November Budget. Boards need to contain the costs envelope in order to contain the increase in the penny rate, which drives our drainage rates and Special Levies to Councils when we set budgets in late January 2026.

After discussion, staff side agreed to drop the £500 consolidated element of the claim and to abide by the formula output of 5%. Unison put this proposed settlement to a ballot of their members, with a recommendation of acceptance. The Unison ballot result was received on 23.10.25 and 77% voted to accept the proposed settlement [with a 52% turnout].

Employers took the recommended 5% pay settlement to the ADA Lincolnshire Branch meeting on 23rd October for ratification. The pay settlement based on the formula output of 5% was endorsed by the ADA Branch and the White Book of Terms & Conditions will be uplifted accordingly from 01.04.26.

It remains a decision reserved to individual IDBs as to whether they adopt the ADA White Book pay settlement. Therefore, Members discussed and were content to formally APPROVE and adopt for 2026/27 the ADA Lincolnshire Branch's agreed pay settlement of 5%.

Some updates to Terms and Conditions may be necessary, depending on the final content of the Employment Rights Bill. As a result, there may be a delay in issuing the updated ADA White Book for 2026/27 until after the next Lincolnshire ADA Pay and Conditions Committee meeting, scheduled for 11 March 2026.

The CEO placed on record her thanks to Lance Pennell for his time in doing this work for the 4 IDBs, for almost 10 years now.

2787.2 **Highland Water Payments.**

Pleasingly, as of 02nd October 2025 the EA paid in full the 4 IDB Highland Water Claims which were submitted in May 2025 and due for payment by 30th September 2025 [this being: the balance owed on the 2024/25 actual costs incurred in the claim and 80% of the Estimated Claim for 2025/26]. The amount being £830,800 to the 4 Boards, so one of our key income streams- relating to the costs incurred in processing water received from upland areas. There was not a single query raised by the EA on the claims this year.

This is reassuring, given the only partial payment by the EA in 2024, and the balance being paid not by the EA but under the largesse of the then RFCC Chairman from Local Levy monies in February 2025.

However, the claims have been processed this year nationally within the EA and informally we understand the EA is undertaking a review of HWC payments, so this remains a potential significant financial risk for the future.

2787.3 **IDB £75 million Fund [increased to £91 million in April 2025].**

The 4 Boards successfully bid for all tranches of the IDB Fund national monies, levering in £17.4 million across 33 schemes. All schemes must be completed for 31.03.26.

This has been a great opportunity for recovery across the drainage districts [e.g. £1.6 million bank slip repairs] after storms Babet [October 2023] and Henk [January 2024], for achieving greater resilience of our IDB assets where practicable, e.g. schemes at Sandhill Beck PS, at Shortferry PS, at Coulson Road and for innovation, e.g. conversion of two diesel engines to be operated electronically, one each at Stixwould and Fiskerton stations.

The schemes are challenging for our suppliers and our staff, achieving so many schemes in such a very tight timescale is stretching everyone.

A full breakdown was provided to Members in the Capital Programme Report later on the agenda.

2787.4 **Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) with the EA.**

AS reported to May Board meetings, a meeting was held on 24.02.25 between Ian Coupland and the CEO with Darren Pitcher and Luke Davenport of the EA. The purpose was to agree the revised 5-year PSCA agreements for each IDB with the EA, which take effect from 01.04.25 to 31.03.30. There was not a lot of room for negotiation, the PSCA EA template is national, the main new section relates to complaints handling. The PSCAs were signed by both parties and have been operational from 01.04.25.

We discussed the practical implementation of PSCAs and the Defra 5-year commercial review of the PSCA works awarded by the EA, as an exercise was being undertaken this Spring to compare the costs of works commissioned by the EA from their mainframe contractors with works undertaken by IDBs. Whilst the EA mainframe contractor costs were not shared with us, it seems clear in the comparisons we discussed that IDBs offer value for money to the EA, particularly if you factor in the 'exceptional events' which it appears contractors charge the EA as extras and IDBs tend to absorb, e.g., if an access route is blocked and needs clearance works, or works around a tree stump- we undertake within the scope of the job not charging extra.

In context, the agreements have been a productive way for the Boards to see regular maintenance works on EA maintained main river. PSCAs have been used annually to commission works from each of our 4 Witham & Humber Drainage Boards. The PSCA level of works by the 4 Boards for the EA has averaged £740k per annum over the last 4 years.

Only some of the income from these works has been at times been built into baseline budgets, largely to cover the costs of some Operatives' overtime. So, although the Boards are required to operate at a full costs recovery basis rather than making a profit, each year some of the PSCA income has in effect been fortuitous income for each Board. To put some metrics around the value of the PSCA income to each Board, last year 2024/25 the actual income for PSCA works [which may vary from the original start of year quotations, e.g. due to rainfall event access to riverbanks may be halted and works stopped] was as follows:

- NELDB: £167,566
- Upper Witham IDB: £174,893
- Witham First DIDB: £78,987
- Witham Third DIDB: £249,181

The Director of Operations submitted quotations, as requested by the EA, for a similar level of works by each Board for 2025/26 and for 3 of the Boards initially orders were confirmed verbally, then works were halted whilst the EA assessed its available maintenance budgets for 2025/26.

There was discussion with the EA during April as the EA had less maintenance monies available for main river in 2025/26 than the Operations team bid for, particularly in the Witham catchments. We were advised that many stretches of 'medium consequence main rivers' would not be maintained this year [stretches of 'low consequence watercourse' maintenance being withdrawn last year].

There are two significant issues here. The impact of reduced maintenance on main river and associated IDB systems affected by that lack of maintenance and secondly the reduced IDB income 2025/26 from EA PSCA works. Members will recall we cover this work through retained plant and machinery and through our floating Operative roles bolstering the workforce.

NELDB was unaffected by the reductions in EA maintenance and the PSCA workload has been sustained. It has reduced significantly in each of the other 3 IDBs, although some PSCA works have still been undertaken. The work to 31.10.25 has recently been quantified and invoices raised with the EA as follows:

- Upper Witham: £130k invoiced for 2025/26.
- Witham First: £40k invoiced for 2025/26
- Witham Third: £231k invoiced for 2025/26
- NELDB: £129k invoiced for 2025/26

The Boards have undertaken works cut from the PSCA programmes on main rivers, at IDB cost. For one year only and after discussion at JSC in July 2025 about the risk to IDB systems and assets if main river was not maintained. This has been flagged with ADA, and similarly by Somerset IDBs.

2787.5 **IDB Visit by Floods & Water Minister Emma Hardy MP on Thursday 30th October 2025.**

Floods & Water Minister Emma Hardy MP visited Upper Witham IDB's Pyewipe Pumping Station on Thursday 30th October; the meeting having been instigated at the request of Hamish Falkner MP for City of Lincoln following his visit on 01.08.25. A representative of the EA's national team [Ian Hodge], the Area Director [Leigh Edlin], the new RFCC Chairman and officers attended, together with ADA's Chairman Robert Caudwell, new Vice Chairman Michael Sly and CEO Innes Thomson.

The Minister wished to hear about the use of IDB Fund monies, the 4 Boards having been awarded £17.4 million of the now £91 million available nationally for 33 schemes to be completed by 31.03.26. The schemes were outlined and 4 of the mobile pumps purchased from the IDB Fund were on display and their use outlined.

We took the opportunity to brief the Minister on escalating electricity costs for IDBs over recent years, particularly standing charges which for these 4 Boards had risen from just under £15k in October 2020 to £200k by October 2024. The burden these increases place on those paying Drainage Rates and the Councils paying Special Levies was outlined. And the recent further changes mean the fixed element of IDB electricity costs is rising once again. A commitment was given for Defra to raise this issue with OFGEM.

The impact of reduced maintenance funding for the EA in parts of Lincolnshire was outlined, particularly on IDB lowland systems and assets.

2787.6 **All-Party Parliamentary Group [APPG] on Sustainable Flood & Drought Management meeting in London, 10.12.25.**

The CEO had been invited by ADA to attend a meeting of the APPG on Wednesday, 10th December, to provide a 15-minute presentation followed by 1 hour of MPs' questions on the topic: "the impact of reduced maintenance on EA main rivers on lowland systems and assets".

2787.7 National Study on IDB Funding & Costs.

Defra and MHCLG have commissioned a study into the future of IDB Funding and Costs. The study is being led by consultants ICF, working with Logika. The brief communicated to IDBs is that the appraisal will consider IDBs' operations focusing on financial efficiency, value for money and the broader benefits that IDBs deliver. The research has 3 stated core objectives, as follows:

- IDB Funding & Financial Appraisal: to analyse IDB funding mechanisms, operational costs and financial pressures over the past decade, and explore future funding options.
- Benefit Evaluation: to assess the economic and social value of IDBs' work, both locally and nationally.
- Data modernisation: to explore how the IDB 1 forms can be improved and modernised to improve data collection and reporting.

We will need to closely engage with this work and its direction.

The Chief Executive's report and update were discussed and NOTED.

2788 Publication of the External Auditors' Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25.

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Finance and Governance.

The Annual Return 2024/25 was agreed at the Board meeting on 20th May 2025, subsequently published on the Board's website for public inspection and despatched to the Board's appointed External Auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP on 06th June 2025. The public inspection period was from 09th June 2025 until 18th July 2025. The Board had until 30th June 2025 to approve and submit its Annual Return 2024/25.

The External Auditor has a statutory deadline of 30th September to complete their external audit and publish the formal Completion of Audit Certificate (Section 3 of Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)). This was issued and received on 05th September 2025.

Part 2 of section 3 of the AGAR has been completed as follows: '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'.

Under the section 'Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority' external audit has reported: 'None'.

This therefore completes the External Audit for 2024/25 and this Board, along with the other 3 Boards in the Witham & Humber Drainage Boards group, have all received similar clean Audit opinions.

The Notice of Conclusion of Audit was issued on 08th September 2025 and has been displayed as required at the Board's depot, on the Board's website and at Witham House office.

Members of Witham First District IDB NOTED the External Audit Notice of Closure on the IDB Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2024/25.

2789 2025/26 Financial Report to month 7, as at 31st October 2025.

A report had been prepared by the Director of Finance and circulated with the agenda.

The financial performance as at 31st October 2025 is attached and was summarised as:

Profiled Budget P7 £	Actual (Surplus)/Deficit £	Variance £
(964,845)	(980,914)	(16,069)

The Board is in a reasonable financial position for 2025/26 to date, showing a modest (£16,069) positive variance against budget profile. However, some of the 'high risk' spend areas may occur (especially electricity) over the remainder of this financial year. The Board is also delivering several IDB Fund schemes of significant value.

Income (£396k)

The main income streams have been posted in terms of Drainage Rates raised (not necessarily paid) at (£897k), and Special Levies received at (£718k) for the full year from the 2 relevant councils. Ongoing action is taking place against unpaid drainage rate account holders.

No further grant income has been received for FDGIA schemes to date but a further (£381k) has been received for IDB Fund schemes.

Rechargeable Works are being undertaken, mainly for the EA through the PSCA. Invoices have been raised up to the end of October (£39.6k) for PSCA works, which is much less than previous years due to the withdrawal of maintenance by the EA on some main rivers, and (£3k) in other recharges, with expenditure incurred to date to offset this shown in Rechargeable Works.

Highland Water claims were submitted to the EA in May 2025 for the balance of the 2024/25 actual costs incurred (£704) and for the 2025/26 Estimated claim of (£33,000). The EA was due to pay 80% of the estimated claim for 2025/26 (£26,400) along with the balance for 2024/25 actual costs incurred (£704), i.e., a **total of (£33,704)** by 30.09.25 and did so. Correspondingly, the balance adjusted for the actual 2025/26 costs incurred will be submitted in May 2025 and is payable by the EA in September 2026 together with 80% of the estimated claim for 2026/27.

The current position of the **Drainage Rates collected** for 2025/26 including previous years' arrears as at 31st October 2025 was presented to Members. The collection rate stands at 97.2% (93.8% @P7 2024/25), so it is ahead of last year's collection rate. First reminders were despatched on 18th September 2025, and final reminders were despatched on 24th November 2025. A court date has been set for 23rd February 2026 at Boston Magistrates Court. All historical outstanding rating queries are now resolved and only land issues raised in-year are now being actioned.

Nationwide accounts: due to operational difficulties with these accounts notice was served to close them for all 4 Boards. The funds held in the Instant Access accounts were returned immediately and the notice period on the 95-day Notice Account expires on 24th November 2025. This will return the balance owed to UW of £15,906 plus interest and to W3 £466,581 plus interest. The rates on these Nationwide accounts reduced from 1.55% to 1.50% on instant access and 3.60% to 3.40% for 95-day notice account from 18th September 2025.

Interest Achieved Per Board from Nationwide Accounts (2025/26)			
	Instant Access	95 Day Notice	Total
NEL	£ 1,543.78	n/a	£ 1,543.78
UW	£ 5,132.16	Due 24/11	£ 5,132.16
W1	£ 7,138.07	n/a	£ 7,138.07
W3	£ 9,829.71	Due 24/11	£ 9,829.71
Total	£ 23,643.72	£ -	£ 23,643.72

CCLA: the Boards agreed to set up some Public Sector Deposit Fund Money Market Funds with CCLA. These were opened on 28th August 2025 and are being utilised to ensure the Boards have enough liquidity to pay for the IDB Fund works. The interest rates and interest received to date are as follows:

	CCLA Interest 2025/26		
NEL	£ 2,971.40		
UW	£ 3,579.28		
W1	£ 2,881.02	Aug-25	4.11%
W3	£ 3,128.47	Sep-25	4.03%
Total	£ 12,560.17	Oct-25	4.01%

Electricity:

Members were reminded of the significant increases in electricity rates from 01st October 2022, with unit prices averaging 30p/KWH and Standing Charges increasing from £20k to £55k p.a. for the Board and from £51k to £128k for the Witham and Humber group. However, these unit rates did not increase as significantly as the market, where rates peaked at over 70p/KWH.

Due to the 'forward buying' model used by the ESPO Electricity Framework that the Board uses, it meant that further increases would feed through in the following year from 01.10.23 with average unit rates of 33.5p/KWH and standing charges increasing again to £85k p.a. for the Board and £200k across the Witham and Humber group.

Since then, unit rates have reduced but increases have continued on the 'fixed' element of the charges, i.e. Standing Charges and the KVA capacity charge paid on larger sites to ensure the grid capacity is available when it is needed.

Budgets for 2025/26 were calculated based upon the October 2024 rates, along with the new standing charges for 6 months and an anticipated +10% for the final 6 months.

However, these budgets were predicated on an 'average' rainfall year/usage, not a 'dry' year or a 'wet' year such as 2019/20 and 2023/24.

The electricity Budgets approved for 2025/26 for the Boards were [2024/25, 2023/24 & 2022/23 as a comparator]:

	Budget 2025/26	Budget 2024/25	Budget 2023/24	Budget 2022/23
NEL	£ 85,000	£ 90,000	£ 90,000	£ 15,000
UW	£ 175,000	£ 192,000	£ 192,000	£ 48,000
W1	£ 335,500	£ 335,500	£ 305,000	£ 69,000
W3	£ 205,000	£ 220,000	£ 220,000	£ 69,000
Total	£ 800,500	£ 837,500	£ 807,000	£ 201,000

For the period of this report (the first 6 months for electricity, to 30.09.25) these budgets have been sufficient due to the dry summer we have experienced this year.

New rates had been received from ESPO applicable from 01st October 2025. The good news is that due to the buying strategy used by ESPO, the hourly rates are reducing except for additional cost elements that are being 'passed through', resulting in an average of 21p/KWH for day rates (20p last year) and remaining at 17.5p/KWH for night rates.

Day Rates (p/KWH)								Y-O-Y Change					
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	25 to 24	24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
Min	18.594519	18.4123	31.7739	27.9015	12.4119	11.0647	12.8496	0.99%	-42.05%	13.88%	124.80%	12.18%	-13.89%
Max	22.36725	20.7269	35.3702	32.1291	16.8755	22.2900	22.2900	7.91%	-41.40%	10.09%	90.39%	-24.29%	0.00%
Avg	21.042465	20.0778	34.2874	30.6964	14.9267	13.6598	14.7974	4.80%	-41.44%	11.70%	105.65%	9.27%	-7.69%
Night Rates (p/KWH)								Y-O-Y Change					
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19	25 to 24	24 to 23	23 to 22	22 to 21	21 to 20	20 to 19
Min	16.89833	16.7177	31.2170	27.0600	11.6027	9.9769	10.3882	1.08%	-46.45%	15.36%	133.22%	16.30%	-3.96%
Max	17.856989	17.8229	33.1785	28.9451	12.3624	17.6400	17.6400	0.19%	-46.28%	14.63%	134.14%	-29.92%	0.00%
Avg	17.560443	17.4477	32.5520	28.2408	12.0977	10.6157	10.8729	0.65%	-46.40%	15.27%	133.44%	13.96%	-2.37%

For standing charges there has been a further increase from 01.10.25 which claws back the slight reduction experienced last year. However, increases in the KVA allowance charges had happened again this year. The following table showed how standing charges are increasing again, compounding years of significant increases. Four years ago, in October 2020 the 4 Boards' standing charges were £14,989.73 compared with an increase to £196,252.76 from 01.10.25.

	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
Y-O-Y Increase							
NEL	£ 1,753.55	-£ 1,368.97	£ 5,449.63	£ 5,991.13	£ 3,300.15	£ 231.73	
UW	£ 4,264.16	-£ 3,644.83	£ 15,661.27	£ 16,575.71	£ 8,120.38	£ 320.14	
W1	£ 3,863.87	-£ 8,682.22	£ 30,228.30	£ 34,261.27	£ 15,187.99	-£ 45.19	
W3	£ 3,583.23	-£ 3,378.80	£ 20,607.02	£ 19,703.87	£ 9,786.34	£ 791.15	
Total	£ 13,464.80	-£ 17,074.82	£ 71,946.21	£ 76,531.98	£ 36,394.86	£ 1,297.83	
Min	£ 322.51	£ 246.75	£ 214.47	£ 189.04	£ 168.49	£ 73.00	£ 72.31
Max	£ 14,252.18	£ 13,692.21	£ 15,188.94	£ 9,411.86	£ 3,092.10	£ 756.37	£ 735.38
Avg	£ 4,088.60	£ 3,808.08	£ 4,163.81	£ 2,664.93	£ 1,070.51	£ 312.29	£ 285.25

Again, this year we have seen an increase in the KVA allowance charges. This is a result of continued 'cost shift' between unit rates, standing charges and KVA charges for elements of the network and distribution costs. Further increases are also expected in the future.

KVA Rates							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
NEL	£ 3,146.40	£ 2,014.80	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,076.40	£ 1,048.80	£ 1,146.84	£ 1,119.24
UW	£ 20,873.52	£ 15,772.32	£ 9,998.88	£ 8,905.92	£ 8,406.24	£ 8,240.28	£ 7,934.28
W1	£ 48,353.76	£ 35,955.36	£ 21,903.84	£ 19,424.16	£ 18,184.32	£ 17,268.84	£ 18,197.88
W3	£ 24,660.00	£ 19,778.40	£ 13,762.80	£ 12,171.60	£ 11,595.60	£ 11,403.60	£ 11,143.20
Total	£ 97,033.68	£ 73,520.88	£ 46,741.92	£ 41,578.08	£ 39,234.96	£ 38,059.56	£ 38,394.60
Y-O-Y Increase							
NEL	£ 1,131.60	£ 938.40	£ -	£ 27.60	-£ 98.04	£ 27.60	
UW	£ 5,101.20	£ 5,773.44	£ 1,092.96	£ 499.68	£ 165.96	£ 306.00	
W1	£ 12,398.40	£ 14,051.52	£ 2,479.68	£ 1,239.84	£ 915.48	-£ 929.04	
W3	£ 4,881.60	£ 6,015.60	£ 1,591.20	£ 576.00	£ 192.00	£ 260.40	
Total	£ 23,512.80	£ 26,778.96	£ 5,163.84	£ 2,343.12	£ 1,175.40	-£ 335.04	
Standing Charges & KVA Rates							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Oct-19
NEL	£ 19,650.73	£ 16,765.58	£ 17,196.15	£ 11,746.52	£ 5,727.79	£ 2,525.68	£ 2,266.36
UW	£ 65,974.34	£ 56,608.99	£ 54,480.38	£ 37,726.14	£ 20,650.75	£ 12,364.41	£ 11,738.27
W1	£ 128,386.65	£ 112,124.38	£ 106,755.09	£ 74,047.11	£ 38,546.00	£ 22,442.53	£ 23,416.75
W3	£ 79,274.72	£ 70,809.89	£ 68,173.09	£ 45,974.87	£ 25,695.00	£ 15,716.66	£ 14,665.11
Total	£ 293,286.44	£ 256,308.84	£ 246,604.70	£ 169,494.65	£ 90,619.54	£ 53,049.29	£ 52,086.50
	14.43%	3.94%	45.49%	87.04%	70.82%	1.85%	
Net Increase in KVA & Standing Charges							
	Oct-25	Oct-24	Oct-23	Oct-22	Oct-21	Oct-20	Cumm
NEL	£ 2,885.15	-£ 430.57	£ 5,449.63	£ 6,018.73	£ 3,202.11	£ 259.33	£ 14,499.22
UW	£ 9,365.36	£ 2,128.61	£ 16,754.23	£ 17,075.39	£ 8,286.34	£ 626.14	£ 44,870.71
W1	£ 16,262.27	£ 5,369.30	£ 32,707.98	£ 35,501.11	£ 16,103.47	-£ 974.23	£ 88,707.63
W3	£ 8,464.83	£ 2,636.80	£ 22,198.22	£ 20,279.87	£ 9,978.34	£ 1,051.55	£ 56,144.78
Total	£ 36,977.60	£ 9,704.14	£ 77,110.05	£ 78,875.10	£ 37,570.26	£ 962.79	£ 204,222.35

These large increases are due to the national 'OFGEM Targeted Charging Review'. The Targeted Charging Review was initiated by OFGEM to investigate how network charging (DUoS (Distribution) and TNUoS (Transmission) costs) could be made fairer across all consumer groups. The concern was that the costs of maintaining the grid have been steadily increasing over recent years, yet they were passed on to a reducing number of users.

The objective of the OFGEM TCR is supposedly to reinstate fairness for everyone involved; whilst making sure network operators recover the revenue needed to maintain the transmission and distribution systems.

OFGEM believes the most effective way to make sure everyone contributes fairly is through a fixed per/day charge (standing charge). In 'normal' times the day/night unit rates will have reduced, due to these charges coming out of the unit rates and into the standing charges. Unfortunately, we are not seeing this increase in standing charges with corresponding reduction in unit rates due to the increases in day and night unit rates for other reasons. The level of charge paid is determined by the TCR Band each site is allocated; an allocation that is carried out by the distribution networks. ESPO's flexible energy contract meant that customers started to see the changes from 01st October 2021, with the beginning of the new scheme starting in April 2022 onwards.

The reason for this is the nature of energy generation and consumption has changed radically in recent times. Energy efficiency measures, embedded generation and load shifting have all meant that a growing number of consumers can minimise or even avoid any reliance on the grid, and therefore their exposure to the current charging regimes of DUoS and TNUoS.

These standing/KVA charges put significant pressure on the 4 Boards' cost of electricity based on a 'normal usage' year. The Boards experienced two years of large increases in the penny rates to accommodate the significant electricity increases, and now further increases in Standing Charges and KVA allowance charges are being experienced. Further information will be supplied on this issue in the Budget Report to the Board in January 2026.

We are aware that further increases are feeding into and are due to feed into both the unit rates and standing charges due to the following 3 elements:

- Balancing Services Use of System (BSUoS)
This charge covers the cost of keeping the electricity grid stable. From 1 October 2025, BSUoS will rise from 1.074p/kWh to 1.569p/kWh - a 46% increase. This will be on the unit rates.
- Regulated Asset Base (RAB)
Introduced from 1 December 2025, this new 0.354p/kWh charge helps fund major infrastructure projects like nuclear power plant Sizewell C, ensuring future energy security. It was anticipated this would be @0.1p/KWH so is a 3-fold increase on expectations. This will be on the unit rates.
- Transmission Network Use of System (TNUoS)
Perhaps the most impactful, TNUoS pays for maintaining and expanding the national transmission network. Following National Grid's reported £3.68bn funding deficit, forecasts suggest an increase of up to 94% in these costs. While final figures won't be confirmed until January 2026, the new rates will apply from 01 April 2026. This will increase the standing charge.

The percentage of Daily Charge made up of TNUoS is not uniform across all meters, but looking at our HH supplies across the drainage board sites it ranges between 60% – 90%.

So, this could be a further significant increase in costs for the Boards.

We have raised our concerns regarding this further significant increase in Standing/KVA Charges with both ESPO as the Framework provider and with ADA, the IDBs' membership body who nationally is aware of the pressures this place on IDBs and have been lobbying OFGEM on this issue. A meeting was held between OFGEM and ADA with representatives from DEFRA and Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) on 07th November 2025. This highlighted the significant impact electricity charges is having on IDBs, and the knock-on impact of penny rate increases to agricultural Ratepayers and Special Levy paying Councils. Discussion focussed on the seasonal usage, high usage during storm events, whether IDBs met the 'peaky' consumer criteria, how IDBs protect critical infrastructure including the electricity network and more recently solar farms, battery storage, etc. Whilst the meeting was positive, unfortunately no actions were agreed to resolve the issue for IDBs.

Write offs:

Members were requested to review the write-off of drainage rates proposed. This year there are no accounts Under £2.50 where it is not economical to send out an invoice. There is an account which requires the Intensive Unit Charge removing due to a fire at a poultry unit, at a cost of £2,620.17, then there are those accounts relating to land transferred to Special Levy, uncollectable accounts and Board owned land.

As part of the annual review of land use changes and billing reconciliations, some accounts had been identified as requiring adjustment, due to changes in land use that were not notified to the Board prior to the issue of the 2025/26 rate demands.

In accordance with guidance under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Board applies a policy of refunding the current year plus one previous year, where billing errors have occurred due to changes in land use or classification not previously reported. This policy ensures consistency and fairness while recognising the administrative limitations of retrospective recovery.

Account 0792 – Land now in residential and business use was not transferred to the Special Levy due to delayed notification. Parcels will be included in the 2026/27 Special Levy calculations, as part of known land movements as at 31 December 2025. It is requested that the Board writes off £14.91 for this account, and these parcels will be transferred to the 2026/27 Special levy calculations in known land movements as at 31/12/25.

Account 0663 - land that has had an official change of use from a farmyard to commercial units. It is requested that the Board writes off £26.64 for this account, and these parcels will be transferred to the 2026/27 Special Levy calculations in known land movements as at 31/12/25.

Removal of Intensive Unit charges

Account 0889 relates to a poultry unit near Walcott, which was destroyed by fire in December 2020. The intensive unit drainage charges remained in place during the period in which the buildings were absent. The site has since been rebuilt and reassessed, and appropriate new charges have been applied from the point of completion. The charges levied between December 2020 and October 2023 no longer reflect the site's actual status, as the intensive use ceased following the fire and did not resume until the new units were completed.

It was recommended that the Board approve the write-off of £2,620.17 for Account 0889 to reflect the period of inactivity following the fire and confirm that the site is now correctly assessed under current drainage rate calculations.

Drainage Rates on Board owned land

The Board is required to accrue drainage rates on land that it owns within the district, in the same way as private landowners, for transparency and accurate rate-setting.

Account 0730 functions as a holding account for Board-owned land not currently under tenancy. This includes:

- 0.132 ha of riverbank land adjacent to Sandhill Beck Pumping Station, and
- 5.14 ha of land behind the former depot at Thorpe Tilney, previously let under tenancy.

The land at Thorpe Tilney was returned to the Board's management following the tenant's decision to quit the tenancy, and it has since remained under the Board's responsibility.

The balance on Account 0730 stands at £444.89, representing the cumulative drainage rates accrued on these parcels.

Drainage Rates on Uncollectable accounts

Account 0122 has an outstanding balance of £1.98 from a deceased account holder. Attempts to contact the estate administrators have been unsuccessful. The property and associated land have since been transferred to a new owner, and the account is now held in the purchaser's name. Given the minimal amount outstanding and the inability to recover the debt, it was recommended that the Board write off the balance of £1.98 as uncollectable.

Account 0896 was sold to a new owner in 2023, who provided only a care of (c/o) address. Subsequent drainage rate demands issued to this address were returned marked "gone away," and no payments were received. In 2024, the land was sold again to a new owner who has since settled all rates due from the date of their ownership onward. However, an outstanding balance of £355.47 remains for the 2023/24 financial year, which includes £40.00 in collection costs. As all reasonable efforts to recover this amount have been unsuccessful, it was recommended that the Board write off the balance of £355.47 income due as uncollectable.

In summary, it was recommended to Members that the Board write off the following amounts:

Transfer to Special Levy - 0792	£14.91
Transfer to Special Levy - 0663	£26.64
Remove Intensive Unit Charge - 0889	£2,620.17
Board owned land - 0730	£444.89
Uncollectable - 0122	£1.98
Uncollectable - 0896	£355.47
TOTAL	£3,464.06

Following discussion Members were content to:

- **NOTE** the 2025/26 financial performance for the period -01st April to 31st October 2025.
- **REVIEW** the schedules of expenditure as presented.
- **APPROVE** the write off of drainage rates as set out.
- **NOTE** the corporate governance update report.

2790 Operations Report, including Health & Safety.

The Operations report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations.

Incidents. (from 08.05.2025 – 15.10.2025)

Between the 4 Boards, there have been 7 reported Incidents:

- (UW) – near miss with gate (reported after last report prepared) no injury.
- **(W1) – not wearing gloves, cut hand when moving scrap metal.**
- (W3) – IP removed wire from flail by hand, painful finger, sought advice - metal fragment removed.
- **(W1) – LDO noted smoke in AEBI and extinguished a small electrical fire.**
- (UW) – telephone wire caught, no charge from utilities provider, but internal investigation completed.
- (W3) – LDO was strimming, and stone? Kicked up, hit retaining wall, cut to elbow.
- (W3) – LDO believes flail bearing ‘collapsed’ causing ‘flames’ – self extinguished.

Employee Safety Representative (ESR) meeting.

- 29th May 2025 – representation for all Boards in attendance. Items raised include when depot works are completed any necessary walkways. | Radios being linked together |
- 10th September 2025 – representation for all Boards in attendance. Items raised include day to day items sent to foremen, e.g. needing a longer air line for compressor, cut out attachment for ad-blue nozzle so it does not splash and access and egress into watercourses.

It is important to note items raised are suggested improvements, rather than concerns over safety standards or items already in place.

All the Boards' Operational staff and contractors are busy with vegetation management in and around the Board maintained watercourses, we have had a predominantly dry season enabling work to progress nicely. One of our main challenges across the Witham Boards where we have our own plant and machinery has been around repairs and maintenance, we are exceeding budgets in all 3 Boards and after reviewing the plant and machinery repairs there is no one item on any Board that stands out as a particular problem, it seems to be an accumulation of costs due to the rise of R&M work, prices have increased more than expected.

Staffing

Richard Marshall the Board's working Foreman retired in August, and a retirement lunch was held at the Abbey Lodge in Woodhall Spa. Richard was presented with vouchers of his choice representing his long service of 25 years.

Dan Walker has been appointed Working Foreman for the Board following interviews. Dan already worked for Witham First as an LDO predominantly operating a tractor flail. Dan has been in the Foreman role since August and is already proving to be an asset. We have recruited a replacement for Dan from Upper Witham. Ben Carr asked to move from UW to Witham First, one of the main reasons is the amount of travel Ben does, he lives in Kirton and if working in Gainsborough for UW could have up to 90 mins of travel each way. This decision also works as an advantage to both Boards in reducing travel costs.

Pete Maplethorpe has also decided it the right time to retire from the Board, Pete has served a 21-year term with Witham First as an LDO predominantly operating a wheeled excavator. A retirement lunch was held for Pete at the Dower House in Woodhall Spa on the 28th October where Pete was presented with vouchers of his choice in recognition of his long service. Pete retired on the 03rd November 2025.

We have interviewed for a replacement for Pete and have been fortunate to fill the post with a farm experienced person. Gary Blows starts in post on the 17th November 2025; Gary has many years of experience on a farm and working in a quarry.

Machinery

Tenders have been sent out seeking quotations for the replacement of the Volvo tracked excavator, year 2013. These have been returned on 10.11.25 and are currently being evaluated.

Fleet Vehicles and 4x4's

Officers have reviewed the Operational needs around fleet vans and 4x4's. The current van leases came to an end and are due to be returned to the lease companies. Quotes from different suppliers have been sought and vans will now be leased from T C Harrison Leasing. An order has been placed for 19 Renault Kangoo vans across the group comprising 14 petrol and 5 full electrics. AN order has also been placed for 3 single cab Isuzu pickup trucks from Stoneacre Isuzu - single cabs due to the new tax rules around the double cab pickups.

Public Sector Cooperation Agreement [PSCA] works

There is no further update to report and there has been no change in status since the May Board meeting, details of which are as follows:

Quoted works for 25/26

NEL: £156,026.84

UW: £216,471.10

W1: £107,896.53

W3: £318,568.84

Witham First systems with no current funding are:

Digby Beck Grass Embankment 2286 meters 2 x year

Digby Beck Grass channel cut 1749 meters 1 x year

Digby Beck Weed Cut 633 meters 3 x year

Digby Beck Grass/Weed handwork 1223 meters 1 x year

Sandhill Beck Grass Embankment 220 meters 3 x year
Sandhill Beck Grass channel cut 1749 meters 1 x year
Sandhill Beck Weed cut 902 meters 1 x year

Income reduction is £20,033.12. The EA are also looking to reduce the work undertaken on Anwick Catchwater and Farroway.

All the PSCA works are well under way. The further PSCA work being undertaken by the Boards at their own expense is on a one year only basis and with no precedent set and is also well under way. Operatives have only undertaken 1 x flailing cut and 1 x weed cut on all the unfunded work as this reduces the actual cost to the Boards considerably.

In liaison with the PSCA contact within the EA regarding next year's potential work, Ian Coupland is hoping to have a list of works for quoting by mid-December, with a further update at the January Board meetings.

Steve Cobb commented that beyond the sewage works no works had been completed. It was advised that this is hand work, the EA use their own team, and they had agreed to complete this work. It is usually done by their own main frame contractor.

There are 11 miles in total which are being completed at the expense of the Board:

- Dorrington Dyke
- Dorrington Catchwater
- Queens Dyke
- New Cut
- North Hills.

All works are being completed to EA standards and specification.

Members received, discussed at length and NOTED the Operations Report and update.

2791 Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme Update.

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations.

The Plant & Machinery Replacement Programme (Plant Programme) was last reviewed and approved by the Board in May 2024 to approve purchases for 2025/26 and to indicatively approve the Plant Programme for 2026/27 onwards. The updated Plant Programme and the impact on the Plant Replacement Fund had been reviewed by Officers and the Executive Committee at its meeting on 11th November 2025.

The Board's policy is to retain key pieces of plant and machinery for 7 years and this is the period they are depreciated over. However, each replacement is reviewed when it becomes due and most plant is not being replaced until 10+ years, depending upon hours, condition and recent repair costs.

The programme has also had purchase values updated where recent tender exercises and market feedback have indicated increases in costs.

There are no changes for 2025/26.

The purchase of the Tractor/Flail planned for 2026/27 to replace the John Deere has been deferred a year to 2027/28. It will also now replace the Case Tractor and Herder flail instead of the John Deere and flail, which will be retained to undertake haulage, PSCA works, etc. This leaves the tracked excavator in 2026/27 which is out for tender to 12 potential suppliers; tenders received 10.11.25 and being evaluated.

The remainder of the programme for 2028/29 onwards remains broadly unchanged, except for updated values, etc.

The implication on the Plant Fund has been assessed and there is no shortfall base on the indicative programme and values. To protect against inflationary increases, any sales receipts achieved above the book values, and by making fund contributions at the year-end should resources allow will hopefully mitigate this. The programme will be reviewed annually based on usage of plant (hours/mileage), maintenance history, condition, etc.

There is also a shortfall in the depreciation budget (revenue account) from 2027/28 onwards. This will be addressed through the annual budget cycle.

A member asked how many hours does an excavator do. It was confirmed that it is dependent, but roughly 10k. Wheeled and tracked excavators are very different and there is no set number of hours.

Following discussion Members were content to:

APPROVE the plant programme for 2026/27 and 2027/28 as recommended by the Executive Committee meeting of 11.11.25 as set out.

NOTE the impact on Plant and Machinery Reserve and Depreciation charges as set out in based on an indicative programme from 2028/29 onwards.

2792 Mobile Plant Deployment and Operation Policy.

A draft policy had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Operations.

This guidance relates to the mobile pumping and electric power generation equipment held and operated by Witham & Humber Drainage Boards [WHDB].

It aims to set out the guidance under which the Director of Operations will deploy such resources as are available in response to an unplanned flood event within the WHDB catchments or further afield under the protocol of mutual aid to fellow professional Flood Risk Management Authority partners.

The aim of the Boards' mobile plant deployment and operation policy is to ensure:

- Safe and standardised use of the mobile pumping and electric power generation equipment held and operated by Witham & Humber Drainage Boards [W&HDB].
- Provision of guidance under which the Director of Operations will deploy such resources as are available in response to an unplanned flood event within the W&HDB catchment or further afield under the protocol of mutual aid to fellow professional FRMA partners.

- Protection of IDB fixed pump assets within a W&HDB district
- Replacement of failed IDB fixed pump assets within a W&HDB district
- Recovery of W&HDB fixed pump assets or control structures within a district
- Mutual aid deployed by WHDB to Lincolnshire partner IDBs
- Mutual aid deployed by WHDB to Lincolnshire partner FRMA
- Mutual aid to other FRMA via LRF request.

The mobile plant deployment and operation policy is provided to aid an open, consistent and transparent way of deploying and operating mobile plant.

The Boards will achieve this policy by:

- Ensuring that the policy is available to all staff.
- Ensuring that the policy is available to partner agencies via the website.

Following discussion Members APPROVED the Mobile Plant Deployment and Operation Policy.

2793 Capital Programme Report.

A report had been circulated with the agenda and was jointly presented by the Director of Finance & Governance, the Director of Engineering & Technical Services and the Director of Operations.

The Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) programme is administered by the Environment Agency (EA) on behalf of Defra and applications to claim GIA are approved by the EA.

Flood Defence Grant in Aid 2025/26:

The programme for the year 2025/26 has not changed since the allocation in April 2025. The Boards have been awarded GIA funding for two projects, Woodhall PS refurbishment and Timberland & Billingham PS refurbishments, the remaining projects are being developed more slowly using alternative funding sources, after the FDGiA programme was revised and cut back with 2025/26 becoming year 5 of a 5-year programme rather than year 5 of a 6-year programme. The EA is keeping a list of projects FRMAs wish to progress with additional funding, which will be funded if other projects do not progress as forecast. No funding has been made available via this route to date.

Flood Defence Grant in Aid Indicative Allocation 2026/27:

The indicative allocation has been received for 2026/27 from the EA following the programme refresh in May & July 2025.

Extract from Anglian RFCC Report NFCC 25/20, SPENDING REVIEW 2025 AND INDICATIVE FCRM GRANT-IN-AID (GIA) ALLOCATIONS FOR 2026/27, explaining the position:

1.2 This year's programme refresh has been complicated by the timing of Spending Review 2025 (SR25). Bids for funding exceed available budget by more than previous years and means that not all the schemes that are planning to enter construction phase by 1 April 2026 are affordable.

1.3 Therefore, this also means all schemes currently in development are unaffordable, a position not experienced before. This is a challenging position that is reflected across the

country. We recognise that difficult decisions will need to be made through local choice discussions on which projects to fund.

1.4 2026/27 would have been the final year of the original 6-year (April 2021 to March 2027) programme and as a result many projects are in construction. Starting the new programme a year early from April 2026 means more of the available budget is committed to those projects in construction.

Flood Defence Grant In Aid New Funding Rules:

Following the Defra consultation on the changes to the funding rules which closed 29.07.25, the new policy was published on 14.10.25. Full details can be found at the links below should you wish to read the policy in full:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/flood-and-coastal-erosion-funding-reform>

In summary, the new funding rules are as follows:

Eligibility

- All FCERM assets requiring refurbishment will be eligible for 100% of the refurbishment costs.
- For new assets (including new pumping stations) - eligible for 100% for the first £3 million, and 90% for costs above £3 million

Prioritisation by value for money

- Benefits assessment
 - Flood damages avoided (residential, non-residential, agriculture)
 - Natural capital
 - Environmental benefits

Strategic Objectives

- The overarching strategic objective of the FCERM programme is to 'reduce risk from, and increase resilience to, flooding and coastal erosion and deliver environmental outcomes that are intrinsic to meeting this ambition'.
- Deprived communities, a minimum of 20% of FCERM investment will go to the quintile and a minimum of 40% to the 2 lowest quintiles combined, over both the next 3 and 10 years.
- Partnership Funding - non-Defra contributions will boost a project's prioritisation.

Local Choice

- The new approach will improve local choice

Removing Barriers

- There will no longer be a need to demonstrate that a project is moving properties from one risk band to a lower risk band.
- Properties constructed since 2012 will now be included in the benefit calculations.

The policy will be implemented from April 2025.

The transition arrangements:

- projects of a value under £50 million, which have an approved outline business case by 31 March 2026, will stay on the old funding rules otherwise they will move to the new rules.
- projects of a value greater than £50 million, which have an approved full business case by 31 March 2026, will stay on the old funding rules otherwise they will move to

new rules.

The guidance documents to support the implementation of the new police are expected to be published by the EA on 30 November 2025.

Implications for the 4 Boards' projects & current projects

Timberland & Billingham PS Refurb	No change
Woodhall PS Refurb	No change
Immingham PS Refurb	OBC already with EA for approval, will continue on existing rules
Mawmbridge PS Refurb	OBC aiming to be submitted January 2026 with view to staying on existing rules

The current capital programme will be reviewed on receipt of the new guidance documents and will be presented to the Board prior to the capital programme refresh in May 2026.

Timberland & Billingham PS Refurbishment (Ongoing)

IDB No	FD 533-2020-PRO
EA National Project No	ANC403I/002A/051A
GIA Claim No	IDB 0408 & IDB 0633
GIA Approval Amount	£3,131,000
GIA Contingency Amount	£1,729,211
Project Stage	Tender

The Outline Business Case (OBC) was approved on 04th July 2025. The approval process has taken longer than usual due to the uncertainty in funding from the government for 2026/27.

The Board is currently in discussion with the EA's Fisheries Biodiversity and Geomorphology team (FBG) regarding the provisions required to meet the eel regulations. We have submitted information to the team and are waiting for approval of our proposals, this has been delayed due to a change in personnel and a lack of resources.

The Board has gone out to tender for both the M&E and civils elements of work at both sites, which will be awarded as two separate contracts [one civils and one M&E, to include both sites]. Contracts will be awarded by 05th December 2025.

A summary of the key information is as follows:

	Combined Scheme
Total Project Cost	£4,860,211
GIA approval amount	£4,660,211
Department for Education funding	£200,000
OM1A Benefits	£76,077,049
Duration of Benefits	5 years
OM1B (People related)	£1,041,504
OM2A(Residential properties)	80
Cost Benefit Ratio	15.4
Raw Partnership Funding Score	99%

Adjusted Partnership Funding Score	103%
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Income and spend as at 31st October 2025:

<i>Billinghay & Timberland Catchment Study (Phase 2)</i>	Budget	Actual	Variance
Income	(£4,860,211)	(£183,000)	£4,677,211
Expenditure	£4,860,211	£78,439	(£4,781,772)
Net	£0	(£104,561)	(£104,561)

Farroway Pumping station (Ongoing):

The pump control panel had 2 x doors overheated and burnt out the electronics within the doors, these have both been replaced at a cost of @£18,210. The motor has been refurbished £22,750 and the second motor refurbished for £24,055. Some civils work undertaken and the track has also been levelled. Spend to date £74,895.

Blankney Pumping Station (Ongoing):

1 x motor has been refurbished at a cost of £25,884 the second motor has now also been away and refurbished at a cost of circa £15,000. The fence around the station has been replaced @ a cost of £9,115 and the track has been levelled. Spend to date £57,845.

Heighington Pumping Station (Ongoing):

The 2 x pumps and motors need refurbishment at Heighington. 1 x pump and motor have been refurbished @£37,760, and the second has now been away and repaired at a cost of £36,280. Both pumps have also been converted from grease lubricated bearings to water lubricated bearings, this was decided due to the amount of time the pumps spend in high water levels (above the grease points). The compound has been refenced @ a cost of £5,763 and the track has been levelled. Spend to date £90,691.

Automated Weedscreen Cleaners [AWC] (ALL (UW) - T2 Extended to 31/03/2026):

Orders have been placed for new AWC's at the following sites, Ingleby (UW), Boultham (UW), Hykeham (UW), Heighington (W1), Branston (W1).

Another application for an AWC at Oxpasture was also made however was rejected by the EA at this stage due to other funding commitments. The original 5 sites have had the designs approved and are currently in manufacture. Branston and Heighington are due to be installed in December this year while Hykeham, Ingleby and Boultham are due to be installed Q1 2026. Cost to date £296,820.

Sandhill Beck Pumping Station (W1– T2 Extended to 31/12/2025):

A 12" electric mobile pump c/w pipework, fish screen (both delivered) and electric panel will be permanently installed at the station, mounted on a steel frame and concrete pad. This pump is to aid the recovery of the land in the Sandhill area following a flood event, it will not help prevent the land flooding, only aid its recovery.

The FRAP was approved in September and the works are under way. The concrete pad, platform, pump and pipework have all been installed along with a new inlet headwall. The next phase will include the electrical works and auxiliary works within the compound which are to include the installation of a new fence. These works are to be completed Q1 2026. Cost to date £285,996.

Replacement Archimedes Screw Pumps at Fen Lane & Decoy Pumping Stations (UW)

and North Kyme (W1) AT2B - 018

DJ Swallow Construction Ltd. has been appointed main contract and will undertake the role of Principal Contractor under the CDM 2015 Regulations. CES has been appointed to undertake the role of Principal Designer on behalf of the Board. Working with Aquatic Control Engineering, and the main contractor, a scheme has been developed that utilises the existing civil infrastructure as much as possible. Detailed design is currently being progressed, along with a construction phase program of works.

A new gravity pipe has been installed at North Kyme Pumping Station prior to the install commencing.

Cost to date £656,019.

Water Level Control Structures & Penstock Automation at various locations (W1) AT2B-062:

The Board were awarded money for the supply and installation of various control structures to be installed across all 4 Boards.

The two penstocks within the Timberland and Billingham catchment have been ordered and are due to be installed Q1 2026. Cost to date £44,893.

Steve Cobb raised a query regarding the £1m for a pump at Sandhill Beck, and whether the money was given to the Board or we had to apply for it. The Board did apply for the funds as one of the 33 IDB Fund schemes following the damage done in Storms Babet and Henk in 2023/24 and was successful in this bid. The scheme to install a second auxiliary pump will improve resilience, with an additional 325 l/sec capacity; a good project to combat the worst-case floods, providing auxiliary back-up. It was this scheme or do nothing – there was no time to build a new pumping station.

Members NOTED the report on Capital projects.

2794 Engineering Report.

A report covering Environment Updates, Planning & Consultations and Consents & Enforcements had been circulated with the agenda and was presented by the Director of Engineering & Technical Services.

ADA Environment Forum & Environment Day (04th February 2026).

The ADA Environment Forum, which brings together IDB environmental officers and other partners a few times each year, discussed several key topics at its recent meeting in September. These included Natural England's pilot scheme for strategic water vole licences, designed to streamline the licensing process for developers and with potential implications for IDB operations in areas supporting strong water vole populations. If successful, this will roll out across other counties. Members reaffirmed the need for a balanced approach to invasive weed control, combining physical and chemical methods where necessary, and noted updates to EA approval and record-keeping requirements. Updates were provided on research into Chinese mitten crabs, with control trials underway and further study planned. Under AOB, concerns were raised about limited engagement with IDBs regarding beaver reintroduction proposals and gaps in Nature Recovery Strategies, such as the absence of an eel species plan in Somerset.

ADA will be hosting its annual Environment Day on Wednesday, 4 February 2026, at Park Farm, Thorney, near Peterborough. This free of charge, in-person event offers an engaging programme of talks covering a wide range of topics relevant to the management of lowland watercourses and the freshwater environment. Discussions will span subjects from eels to invasive species, and from beavers to landscape recovery.

Members who wish to attend can register via the ADA website or contact the Board's Environmental Officer at nick.downing@witham3idb.gov.uk.

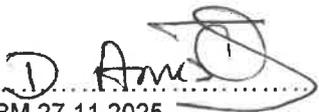
Members received and NOTED the Engineering report and update.

2795 Any Other Business.

There were no further items of business, and the meeting closed at 16:15.

2796 Date, Time and Place of the Board's Next Meeting.

The Board's next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 27th January 2026 at 2pm in Branston Booths Village Hall.

.....  Chairman  Date
W1st BM 27.11.2025. 27.1.26