A MEETING OF THE HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD WAS HELD AT PIERPOINT HOUSE, 28 HORSLEY'S FIELDS, KING'S LYNN, PE30 5DD AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 09 JUNE 2026 AT 14:00 PM

	Elected Members		Appointed Members
*	N Buttress		**Fenland DC**
*	M Day		B Barber
*	H Duncalfe	*v	C Boden
*	N Harrison		G Booth
*	F Leach	*	S Clark
*v	J Leach	*v	M Davis
	N Pooley	*v	J French
*	B Wales	*v	L Foice-Beard
	Vacancy		S Hoy
	Vacancy	*	S Imafidon
	Vacancy		D Laws
	Vacancy		C Marks
	Vacancy		A Miscandlon
	Vacancy	*	D Roy
		*	C Seaton
			M Summers
*	Present		
*v	Present via MS Teams	*/*v	Total Present (52%)

M Day in the Chair

In attendance:

Marcus Coleman (Chief Executive), Olivia Follen (Business Support Manager), Sallyanne Jeffrey (Chief Financial Officer) and Matthew Philpot (Chief Operating Officer)

ID	Hundred of Wisbech IDB, Minute	Action
01/26	**WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**	
01/26/01	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular to the officers of the Water Management Alliance, whom had taken over the administration of the Hundred of Wisbech IDB from the Middle Level Commissioners. RESOLVED that this be noted.	
01/26/02	Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Brenda Barber, Gavin Booth, Cathryn Brady, Sam Hoy, Dee Laws, Alex Miscandlon and Matthew Summers. RESOLVED that this be noted.	

ID	Hundred of Wisbech IDB, Minute	Action

02/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

02/26/01 The Chairman declared an interest as a trustee of two charities- Elm United FC and The Thomas Squire Charity.

02/26/02 Councillor Sam Clark declared an interest as a Board Member of the North Level Internal Drainage Board.

02/26/03 Ben Wales declared an interest as a Board Member of the Waldersey Internal Drainage Board.

02/26/04 Nigel Harrison declared an interest as the Chair of the Waldersey Internal Drainage Board.

02/26/05 Councillor Jan French declared an interest in any planning cases that related to Fenland District Council.

03/26 GIFTS & HOSPITALITY REGISTER FOR 2025/26

03/26/01 The Chief Financial Officer asked all Board members to declare any gifts and hospitality over the value of £40.00 which they had received between 01 April 2025 and 31 March 2026 by Tuesday 30 June 2026. RESOLVED that this be actioned.

04/26 MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2025

04/26/01 The minutes of the last Board meeting held on 13 November 2025 were approved, signed and confirmed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

05/26 ENGINEERING REPORT

05/26/01 The Engineering Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book), was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

06/26 CATCHMENT SERVICES REPORT

06/26/01 The Catchment Services Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book), was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

07/26 DRAFT BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

07/26/01 The draft Biodiversity Action Plan (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book), was considered in detail and noted. Arising therefrom:

07/26/02 The Chief Operating Officer informed the Board that the Environmental Manager and the District Officers had met to discuss the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and proposed several amendments to ensure it aligned with the WMA's operational practices. It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED that the revised BAP would be circulated to Board Members once finalised, prior to its formal approval at the Board's next meeting in October. **MP**

08/26 DISTRICT OFFICER'S REPORT

08/26/01 The District Officer's Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

09/26 HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

09/26/01 The Health, Safety and Environment Report (a copy of which is filed in the Report book), was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

10/26 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2026/27

10/26/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to reappoint TIAA as the Board's Internal Auditor for 2026/27. The Board:

(i) is satisfied that the Internal Auditor is independent (see Practitioners' Guide 2025 Paragraphs 1.35 and 4.11);

(ii) approves the internal audit programme of work for 2026/27, having regard to the key risks identified in the Risk Register (see Practitioners' Guide 2025 Paragraphs 1.34 and 4.16); and

(iii) is satisfied with regard to the competence of the Internal Auditor and approves the letter of engagement (see Practitioners' Guide 2025 Paragraphs 1.35, 4.1 and 4.13), including the signed letter of engagement.

11/26 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS MADE FOR 2025/26

11/26/01 The schedule of payments made for 2025/26 totalling £371,076.18 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

12/26 FINANCIAL REPORT

12/26/01 The Financial Report and reconciliation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2026 were

considered in detail, and approved, (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book). There were no matters arising.

13/26 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2025/26

13/26/01 The Annual Governance Statement shown in Section 1 of the Board's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2026 was considered in detail and approved.

13/26/02 The Accounting Statements shown in Section 2 of the Board's Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ending 31 March 2026 was considered in detail and approved.

14/26 DATE OF COMMENCEMENT PERIOD FOR THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS

14/26/01 It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to publish the notice for the exercise of public rights on the Board's website and in the office reception, that the Accounts, year ending 31 March 2026 would be available for inspection for the 30-working day period commencing 19 June 2026 and ending on 30 July 2026.

15/26 FEES, REMUNERATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2026

15/26/01 The ADA Subscription for 2026 was considered in detail and approved. Arising therefrom:

15/26/02 It was agreed that this item should be removed from future agendas unless a significant rise in cost was noted.

16/26 RATE ESTIMATES FOR 2026/27

16/26/01 The detailed Rate Estimates for 2026/27 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) were considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

17/26 FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27
LAY AND SEAL THE DRAINAGE RATE AND SPECIAL LEVIES

17/26/01 Annual Values as at 31 March 2026

It was unanimously agreed and thereby RESOLVED to approve the aggregate annual values as at 31 March 2026, used for the purposes of raising and apportioning expenses from drainage rates and special levies for 2026/27 (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book).

17/26/02 Drainage Rates and Special Levies for 2026/27

It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to approve the net rate requirement of £236,397 for 2026/27, which equated to 7.50p in the pound:

Drainage Rate in the Pound:	7.50p
Agricultural Drainage Rates	£11,298
Fenland District Council	£223,801
Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk	£1,298
Reserves	£0
	£236,397

18/26 WMA Policies for Adoption

18/26/01 The WMA Policies (a copy of which is filed in the Report Book) was considered in detail and approved. There were no matters arising.

19/26 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

19/26/01 The next Board meeting would take place at 2pm on Friday, 16 October 2026 at Pierpoint House and via Microsoft Teams. RESOLVED that this be noted.

19/26/02 Maureen Davis gave her apologies for the next meeting on Friday 16 October 2026. **OF**

20/26 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20/26/01 The Board's new logo for use in general correspondence was considered in detail and approved. **OF**

20/26/02 The Chief Financial Officer sought the Board's approval to open a new bank account with NatWest to support the transition of administrative services provided to the Board from the Middle Level Commissioners to the WMA. It was proposed by Chris Boden and unanimously agreed to approve the opening of a new bank account. **SJ**

20/26/03 The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that he had included in the budget the provision of a new electronic system for maintenance, similar to that used by other WMA member boards. The district officers and chairman have had a presentation on the system and believe it would be beneficial. The Board suggested that these could be used across their maintenance and the Waldersey IDB. It was agreed that the Chief Operating Officer would look into this and the costs be apportioned accordingly if Waldersey IDB approve to move forward with the same system. **MP/SJ**

ID	Hundred of Wisbech IDB, Minute	Action
21/26	**OPEN FORUM: TO HEAR FROM ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, WITH LEAVE OF THE CHAIRMAN**	
21/26/01	There were no members of the public present at the meeting.	
22/26	**CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**	
22/26/01	It was agreed and thereby RESOLVED to exclude the public from the next part of the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, in accordance with Section 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Board's Standing Orders.	

Provided by the Middle Level Commissioners		**Item No:**		**6**
Meeting:	**HUNDRED OF WISBECH IDB (Hereafter referred to as the Board)**	**Subject:**	**CONSULTING ENGINEERS REPORT: CHIEF ENGINEER'S SUMMARY & CAPITAL PROGRAMME**	
Date:	**Tuesday 26th May 2026**	**Officer Responsible:**		**Nicola Oldfield**

1. **Flood Alleviation Investigation (Project Ref 346/25): Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Waldersey IDB**

Combined Catchment Flood Risk Study

The joint Catchment Study is continuing with close collaboration between the Engineer, the Board's Works Committee (User Group) and Haskoning.

The hydraulic model is progressing well with the baseline set up and the Do Something options have been finalised. These are currently being modelled with results expected imminently.

A number of additional items were added to the scope of the study to cover specific conditions in events (such as debris screen blockages) and changes to the Board's system (such as the Attenuation Area and Incinerator works) that are ongoing, as they are advantageous to add to the model at this stage. This will reflect a more accurate situation for a model which will stand up better to Environment Agency scrutiny when FCERM GiA is applied for in the future.

An additional item to look at the condition of the three A47 culverts was also added as this would be needed for any future plans to approach the Highways Agency to suggest improvements. This included a separate independent CCTV survey of the culverts with floating equipment, which was carried out in February 2026 by specialists IWJS in conjunction with Haskoning and MLC engineers attending.

These aspects have set back delivery of the study until the early summer and completion of the project with the business case to summer/autumn 2026.

Further meetings have been held with both Boards' involvement to discuss the options to take forward to the business case, including consideration of control structures, attenuation area(s) or improvements to existing or a new pumping station.

The Middle Level Engineer will continue to manage this project to completion of the business case before handing the project over to WMA.

Author Name: Nicola Oldfield
Role: Chief Engineer

Appendix 1: List of planning applications from the last reporting period up to 05th January 2026

Appendix 1

There have been 7 planning applications responded to since the last meeting.

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

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

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

WMA Catchment Services Report

1. REPORTING PERIOD AND PURPOSE

This report covers the reporting period 05 January to 01 June 2026. The report outlines core officer activity on behalf of the Board in the Sustainable Development Team. This team works with planning authorities, landowners, developers and National Infrastructure Projects to ensure new works do not increase flood risk or impact on the Board's operations.

2. OPEN LAND DRAINAGE CONSENT APPLICATIONS

There are currently 11 consent applications being processed. The most common types of consent that the Board receive and determine in its regulatory capacity are set out in the table below alongside the current breakdown of cases.

Application Type	Number
Byelaw 3 (B3) – Discharge of Treated Foul Water (TFW):	1
Byelaw 3 (B3) – Discharge of Surface Water (SW):	5
Byelaw 4 (B4) / Section 23 (S23), LDA 1991 – Alteration of watercourse:	0
Byelaw 10/17 (B10/17) – Works within 9 m of a Board's maintained watercourse:	5
Total:	**11**

3. DETERMINED LAND DRAINAGE CONSENT APPLICATIONS

During this reporting period, the following 4 consents under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and Board's Byelaws have been determined by Officers in accordance with their delegated authority.

Case. Ref.	Case File Sub-type	Location / Site Name	Description of Application or Proposal	Outcome
25_HoW_C_10002	Byelaw 10/17	New Bridge Lane, Wisbech	Cable installation via open trench	Granted 26/05/2026
25_HoW_C_10004 25_HoW_C_10005	Byelaw 3 Surface Water & Byelaw 10/17	Enterprise Way, Wisbech	Discharge of surface water from 1,030m^2 and associated outfall	Granted 17/03/2026
26_HoW_C_10013	Byelaw 10/17	Cromwell Road, Wisbech	Installation of EV charging stations	Refused 30/04/2026

4. LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY (LPA) ENGAGEMENT

Officers have provided responses to 11 applications that are either in or could impact on the Board's Internal Drainage District. 1 of these applications is for major development and is summarised below;

Planning App. Ref.	Location / Site Name	Description
F/YR26/3068/COND	Corporation Road, Wisbech	Education

Officers have also made representations on behalf of the Board to a planning appeal further to a refused planning application F/YR23/0477/O (Halfpenny Lane, Wisbech).

5. DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

There has been 1 development contribution fee invoiced or paid during the reporting period. This fee is detailed below;

Case ref(s)	Date invoiced	Amount (no VAT)	Date Paid
25_HoW_C_10004	16/04/2026	£2,090.90	17/04/2026

6. NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Officers continue to engage with the following Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project which is partially within the Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage District. This project was awarded its Development Consent Order (DCO) in 2024.

Project	Board Update
Medworth Combined Heat & Power Energy from Waste (MVV) – main construction site and part of electricity transmission route are within the Board's Area	Engagement with Middle Level Commissioners undertaken to facilitate handover of planning and consenting services to WMA. Ongoing engagement with developer towards consent for various works at New Bridge Lane (main construction site). Site visit undertaken in May 2026.

CATHRYN BRADY
HEAD OF CATCHMENT SERVICES
JUNE 2026

middle level commissioners

Hundred of Wisbech IDB

Annual Environmental Review & Draft BAP presentation - Notes from Meeting

Attended by: Neil Buttress, Caroline Layburn, Sofi Lloyd, Ben Wales

Date: 15/04/2025

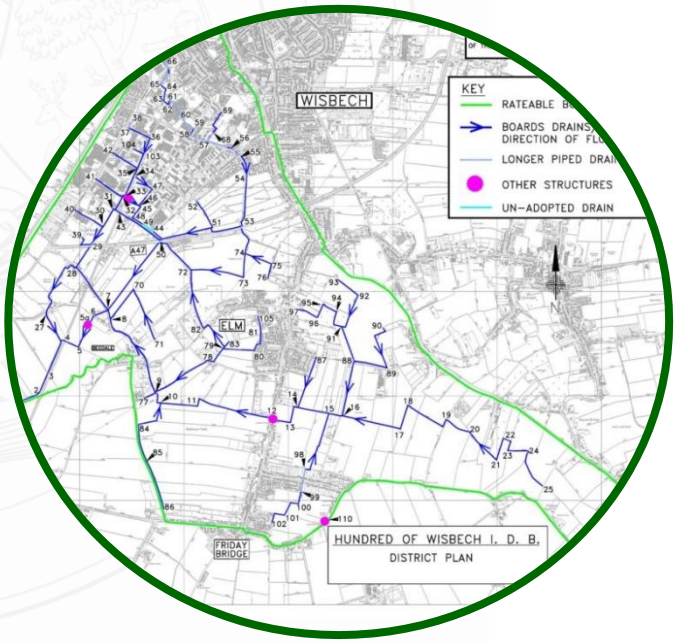
Item No:	Notes	Action by and due date
1	NB has handed much of the evidence to support the Board Report KCI's to Mathew Philpot already. SL will obtain and forward the culverting info for the Board report that MP and NB have already drafted.	**SL Apr 26**
2	CL and NB will discuss the biodiversity budget to be set at the Board meeting this year. It is likely to be an amount that will be accrued into next year to increase the amount available to spend on BAP objective delivery or similar.	-
3	NB indicated that there are no known badger setts in or adjacent to any IDB drains that he is aware of.	-
4	SL to retrieve any information she may have and pass on regarding the "A47" pond. Confirmation is needed around the ownership and purpose of the pond. NB states it was funded and built in compensation for habitat and system capacity loss as part of a nearby development	**SL/NB Apr 26**
5	Discussions had around the issues previously encountered with water levels around Elm church and that it had previously flooded. Now it is known that there are listed features within and associated with the church and grounds, this may incentivise efforts to improve water level management in that area.	-
6	It was proposed that a copy of the TPO map be made available to the IDB contactors to make them aware of their presence and ensure that unconsented works to them do not take place.	**NB 2026**
7	CL & NB may develop or use a flow chart similar to MLCs SOP for tree cutting	-
8	Discussed the possibility of setting up a Tidal Nene stakeholder group with a focus on improving the water quality reaching the designated Wash through planning conditions and other opportunities. NB/CL will discuss further.	**NB/CL 2026**
9	NB expressed concern that the traditional orchards in the district were not being given the proper protection through the planning process and believed that a number were up for clearance. NB/CL to consider how to action these concerns. All noted the importance of the district and immediate local area for Traditional Orchards and the unusually high concentration of them. Actions therefore have been included in the BAP for them, unusually, as they are not for other IDBs as a rule, where efforts are focussed on more relevant water-sensitive habitats.	**NB/CL 2026**
10	NB believes the habitat designated as coastal and floodplain grazing marsh correlates to the grazed paddocks belonging to Pinders.	-
11	SL highlighted that there was a known patch of Jap Knotweed along the A47 opposite the boundary to Wisbech and Waldersey IDB, on an EA-owned flood bank. BW and NB also indicated the previous presence in Peters Yard and a private property in Elm of Jap Knotweeed that needs to be reported and addressed potentially to prevent spread.	**NB/CL 2026**
12	Not non-native but a plan for the ongoing management of invasive watercress in the affected drain should be reviewed.	**NB/CL 2026**
13	SL & NB to send CL details of the pollution stakeholder team that met to tackle watercourse pollution with a focus on Algores way. All discussed the ongoing issues with pollution in the district and the	**SL/NB Apr 2026**

	robust reporting of all incidents and observations by all stakeholders to the EA that MLC and the IDB have maintained over the past few years.	
14	NB would like to install a berm along the drain adjacent to the railway to improve capacity and habitat diversity and provision. BW/CL discussed the constraints that may be present due to the proximity to the rail line. CL/NB will discuss further	**CL/NB 2026**
15	Discussed that the draft BAP needs to now be reviewed and finalised with CL & NB before presenting to the Board for approval at the next Board meeting. CL & NB will meet to progress.	**NB/CL 2026**
16	Discussed the incinerator development and water vole mitigations, settlement ponds and attenuation features that have been guided by the IDB and MLC. All noted that the district remains an important area for water voles even within Wisbech.	**-**
17	Discussed the current no-culverting policy that is enforced my MLC and its IDBs	**-**
18	Discussed the funding recent opportunities and are available to enable improved water level management for peat conservation i.e. LASIP. These would be available where certain conditions focussed around the extent of peat present were met.	**-**



Biodiversity Action Plan

2026 – 2031



Hundred of Wisbech

Internal Drainage Board

1. Statement

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been prepared by the Middle Level Commissioners on behalf of Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board. It demonstrates the Board's commitment to fulfilling its duty as a public body, in accordance with the Environment Act 2021, to conserve and enhance biodiversity whilst exercising their statutory functions.

Importantly, it reflects the Board's aspiration to maximise the outcomes for biodiversity, particularly priority UK species and habitats and the wider environment in general, through its day to day activities, by setting clear objectives, actions and targets, and then taking action. It also highlights the recognition of its vital role in contributing towards a wider thriving natural environment.

The Board has adopted this Biodiversity Action Plan as one of its policies and is committed to its implementation. It will be reviewed annually and updated every 5 years.

Signed ……. Date ……..

MG Day

Chairman of the Board

Note: We would welcome appropriate involvement in the delivery of the Plan from interested organisations, companies, and individuals.

You can contact us about this Biodiversity Action Plan by writing to the following address:

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

ADDRESS

Or via email:

Email Address

Further information is available on the Board's website:

Website Address

Contents

1. Statement 2
2. Executive Summary 5
3. Introduction 6
3.1. What is biodiversity and why is it important? 6
3.2. Legislative Background 6
3.3. Policy & Strategic Background 7
3.4. UK Biodiversity Indicators 7
3.5. Purpose 9
3.6. Vision 9
3.7. Aims 9
4. The IDB BAP Process 10
4.1. The Biodiversity Audit 10
4.2. Objectives and Actions 10
4.3. Monitoring and Reporting 10
5. The Biodiversity Audit 11
5.1. The Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage District 11
5.2. Map of Audit Area (Drainage District) 12
5.3. Geology & Soils 13
5.4. Peat 14
5.5. Landscape Character 15
5.6. Landscape Designations 15
5.7. Sites and Monuments (Table 2) 15
5.8. Tree Preservation Orders 18
5.9. Statutory Nature Conservation Sites 19
5.9.1 Internationally Designated Sites 19
5.9.2 Nationally Designated Sites 19
5.9.3 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) 19
5.9.4 Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites (Table 3) 19
5.10. Habitat Audit Summary 21
5.11. Species Audit Summary 26
5.12. Invasive Non-native Species Summary 37
5.13. Water Level Management Plans 39
6. Habitat and Species Action Plans 40
6.1. Introduction 40
6.2. Habitat Action Plans 40
6.2.1 IDB Ditches 40
6.2.1.1 IDB Ditch Objectives: 40
6.2.1.2 IDB Ditch Actions 41
6.2.3 Ponds 43
6.2.3.1 Ponds Objectives 43
6.2.3.2 Ponds Actions 43
6.2.5 Arable Field Margins 44
6.2.5.1 Arable Field Margins Objectives 44
6.2.5.2 Arable Field Margins Actions 44
6.2.6 Coastal & Floodplain Grazing Marsh (CFPGM) 45
6.2.6.1 CFPGM Objectives 45
6.2.6.2 CFPGM Actions 45
6.2.8 Fen Droves 46
6.2.8.1 Fen Droves Objectives 46
6.2.8.2 Fen Droves Actions 46
6.2.9 Orchards & Woodland 47
6.2.9.1 Orchards & Woodland Objectives 47
6.2.9.2 Woodland Actions 47
6.3. Species Action Plans 48
6.3.1 Notes on species without specific actions 48

6.3.2 Birds 48
6.3.2.1 Birds Objectives: 48
6.3.2.2 Birds Actions 49
6.3.3 Mammals 51
6.3.3.1 Mammals Objectives: 51
6.3.3.2 Mammals Actions 51
6.3.4 Trees 53
6.3.4.1 Trees Objectives: 53
6.3.4.2 Trees Actions 53
6.3.5 Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) 54
6.3.5.1 INNS Objectives: 54
6.3.5.2 INNS Actions: 54
7. Procedural Action Plan 55
7.1. Introduction 55
7.2. Procedural Objectives 55
7.3. Procedural Actions 55
8. Monitoring 56
9. Reporting 56
10. Appendices 57
Appendix I – National Character Area 46 – The Fens Detailed Statements of Environmental Opportunity 57

2. Executive Summary

The UK is one of the most nature impoverished countries on the planet and Cambridgeshire is one of the most nature depleted counties in the UK. It's no wonder that protecting and improving biodiversity and the environment are higher than ever on the political agenda. The Government is looking for strong and proactive environmental delivery from Public Authorities to contribute towards their own challenging statutory environmental targets. The public services provided by Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board (IDB) are no exception.

All IDBs will increasingly be expected to implement more sustainable approaches to water level and flood risk management. Proactively contributing to biodiversity conservation and enhancement is a vital part of this, and is a statutory requirement of Hundred of Wisbech IDB, as a modern Public Authority. Through their water level management activities, Hundred of Wisbech IDB is well placed to conserve and enhance a great range of habitats and species, particularly those associated with freshwater, riparian and wetland habitats.

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) provide IDBs with a formal mechanism to demonstrate and record their contribution to biodiversity conservation and enhancement. While biodiversity conservation thinking has evolved and some new approaches are being taken to protect and enhance our nature, the IDB BAP approach remains the most suitable tool to help IDBs to deliver their statutory conservation duties.

This revised BAP takes into account the most up to date legislation, policy and best practice, and includes current local strategies, plans and priorities for nature conservation. An up-to-date biodiversity audit has also been completed which has identified the valuable habitats and species within the district, but also sets out objectives to achieve improved biodiversity in general. These new and challenging targets and objectives have been set to ensure that the IDB continues to contribute to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and meet the associated new legislative requirements.

3. Introduction

3.1. What is biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity can be defined simply as “the variety of life” and encompasses the whole spectrum of living organisms, including plants, birds, mammals and insects. It includes both common and rare species, as well as the genetic diversity within species. Biodiversity also refers to the habitats and ecosystems that support these species.

Biodiversity is part of our natural capital, a vital resource providing:

- Supply of ecosystem services including clean water, nutrients, climate change mitigation, flood mitigation, carbon storage and pollination;
- Life resources including food, medicine, energy and raw materials;
- Improved health and well-being;
- Landscape and cultural distinctiveness;
- Direct economic benefits from biodiversity resources and ‘added value’ through local economic activity and tourism;
- Educational, recreational and amenity resources.

This Biodiversity Action Plan is part of a much larger biodiversity framework that encompasses international, national and local levels of legislation and policy and which also include ecosystem services and climate change.

3.2. Legislative Background

When carrying out its functions, an IDB must pay particular regard to the effects their actions have on the natural environment. Some environmental legislation relates specifically to maintaining or restoring the condition of protected sites or protecting certain species, but there are also statutory duties for IDBs to conserve and enhance biodiversity in general, in and alongside the watercourses they manage and the wider landscape.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on IDBs to conserve biodiversity. The Environment Act 2021 extends this duty to also include the enhancement of biodiversity, and associated statutory reporting to demonstrate the actions they have taken to do so. Below is a list of key environmental legislation (by no means an exhaustive list) relevant to the work of IDBs:

- The Environment Act 2021
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009
- Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Section 40)
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (Land Drainage Improvement Works) (Amendment) Regulations 2017
- Land Drainage Act 1994
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

- Flood and Water Management Act 2010
- Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975
- Hedgerow Regulations 2024

3.3. Policy & Strategic Background

In 1992 at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, commonly known as the ***Rio Earth Summit***, the UK signed the Convention on Biological Diversity which pledged its commitment to contribute towards halting the worldwide loss of habitats and species and their genetic resources. At the 2010 biodiversity summit in Nagoya, Japan, the UK re-affirmed this commitment and the "Biodiversity 2020" white paper was developed setting out how those commitments would be put into action.

Also in 2010, the report by Sir John Lawton "Making Space for Nature" set out that ecological networks were required in order to halt and reverse the declines seen in many threatened species and habitats. The report succinctly made clear that these ecological networks needed to be bigger, more frequent, better in quality, and more joined up in order to be successful in their ambitions.

The Government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy was published in 2011 and set out the ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020. The publication of the 25 Year Environment Plan (2018) followed along with the fist UK Environmental Improvement Plan; a more long-term strategy for nature recovery beyond 2020. The Environment Act 2021 further provided for the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) and along with the EIP, helps to better define the priorities, targets, and goals for successful nature recovery. The enhancements IDBs can make to their management of their arterial networks of drainage channels across the landscape are key to delivering these goals.

Importantly, These policies and strategies take into account the value of the ecological services provided by non-priority species and habitats such as the carbon sequestration of wetlands, the flood alleviation of tree-planting in the uplands and the wellbeing benefits brought about by green space. As such, this BAP presents the actions planned by the IDB to support both priority and non-priority species.

Numerous national and international reports have recognized and reaffirmed that climate change in particular is considered to be one of the biggest threats to our biodiversity now, and in the future. Supporting the continuity, connectivity and quality of habitat through management, restoration and expansion of our drainage ditches may help even the less mobile species to adapt more easily to climate change. This BAP presents the actions the IDB can take to support climate resilience for biodiversity.

3.4. UK Biodiversity Indicators

The latest (Dec 2025) update of the UK Biodiversity Indicators (UKBIs), produced each year by DEFRA and JNCC, give a snapshot of the current status of biodiversity in the UK, and track trends over time, showing whether aspects of biodiversity are improving, declining, or remaining stable.

The UKBIs are used in reporting the UK's progress against goals and targets agreed under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).** The UKBIs include 39 indicators, comprising 68 measures in total.

The overall summary for 2025 concludes that more indicators are deteriorating or showing no change than improving, over both the long and short term.

The table below is an extract of the full list of indicators and measures and includes those that could be influenced by the activities of the IDB. Regardless of the current status or trend of the indicator, its presence in the UKBIs is sufficient reason for it to be recognized by IDBs as one that should be a priority for action and therefore included as part of this BAP.

Table 1: Extract of the UKBI summary table of trends and status of indicators and measures as at December 2025

Key:	Deteriorating	Improving	Little or no overall change	Not assessed / Insufficient data

Indicator	Measure	Long term period	Short term period
Birds of the wider countryside and at sea	All bird species	1970 to 2024	2019 to 2024
	Breeding birds on farmland	1970 to 2024	2019 to 2024
	Breeding birds in woodland	1970 to 2024	2019 to 2024
	Breeding wetland birds	1975 to 2024	2019 to 2024
	Breeding seabirds	1986 to 2024	2019 to 2024
	Wintering waterbirds	1975/1976 to 2023/2024	2018/2019 to 2023/2024
	Breeding upland birds	1994 to 2024	2019 to 2024
Insects of the wider countryside (butterflies)	All species of butterfly	1976 to 2024	2014 to 2024
	Habitat specialist butterflies	1990 to 2024	2014 to 2024
	Generalist butterflies	1990 to 2024	2014 to 2024
	Farmland specialist butterflies	1990 to 2024	2014 to 2024
	Woodland specialist butterflies	1990 to 2024	2014 to 2024
Mammals of the wider countryside (bats)	Change in the abundance of bat populations	1999 to 2023	2018 to 2023
Plants of the wider countryside in the UK	Arable field margins		
	Bog and wet heath		
	Broadleaved woodland and hedges		
	Lowland grassland		
Status of priority species: distribution	Priority species distribution		
Status of priority species: relative abundance	Priority species abundance	1970 to 2023	2018 to 2023
Status of threatened species: species of European importance	Conservation status of species of European importance	2007 to 2019	2013 to 2019
Area of land in agri-environment schemes	Area of land under higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes	1992 to 2022	2017 to 2022
Extent and condition of protected areas	Total extent of protected areas on land	1950 to 2025	2020 to 2025
	Condition of Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest		
Habitat connectivity	Habitat connectivity		
Status of threatened habitats: habitats of European importance	Conservation status of habitats of European importance	2007 to 2019	2013 to 2019
Surface water status	Percentage of UK surface water bodies in High or Good ecological status	2009 to 2024	2019 to 2024
Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity	Non-governmental organisation and private sector spending on biodiversity in the UK	2010/2011 to 2023/2024	2018/2019 to 2023/2024
Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity	Proportion of medium and large UK businesses with ISO 14001 certification		
Pressure from invasive species	Number of terrestrial species establishments	1969 to 2024	
	Number of freshwater species establishments	1969 to 2024	
	Rate of establishment	1920 to 2022	2017 to 2022
Awareness, understanding and support for conservation	Awareness, understanding and support for conservation		
Status of pollinating insects	Change in the distribution pollinators in the UK		
Biodiversity data for decision making	Cumulative number of records in the National Biodiversity Network		
	Number of publicly accessible records at 1 square kilometre resolution or better		
Biodiversity information for conservation decision making	Number of records downloaded		2019 to 2024
	Number of download events		2019 to 2024
	Number of NBN Atlas users		2019 to 2024

3.5. Purpose

This BAP has been produced to demonstrate how the IDB fulfils its legal obligations to conserve and enhance biodiversity and sets out targets and actions that contribute to local, national and international strategies and policies.

While the IDB has a statutory duty to have regard for the environment whilst carrying out their functions, for example on or within drainage assets such as watercourses and their banks, the IDB has also to give consideration to how they can contribute to the enhancement of the wider environment.

It is not within the scope of this document to set out the IDBs' objectives and actions in relation to wider environmental topics, such as reducing carbon emissions or reducing waste. However, strategies to address such topics may be mentioned in connection to the enhancement of habitats and species, such as peatland restoration and carbon sequestration.

The opportunity to work together to support and enhance biodiversity in partnership with other organisations is sought wherever possible, as the IDB recognises the additional value working in such ways can bring to the overall objectives.

The intention is that biodiversity is fully integrated into the Board's activities, policies and procedures such as annual maintenance programmes, capital works projects, training and communications.

3.6. Vision

The IDB's vision is:

A drainage district where thriving wildlife is an integral part of delivering efficient and effective water-level management.

3.7. Aims

The aims of this BAP are:

- To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are fully considered throughout the IDB's operations;
- To enable more effective monitoring and reporting of progress and outcomes;
- To ensure that priority species and habitats receive effective action within defined targets within the drainage district;
- To identify targets and appropriate actions for other habitats and species of local importance within the drainage district. This includes invasive non-native species;
- To contribute to local environmental partnerships and strategies such as the Local Nature Recovery Strategies to ensure that programmes and priorities for biodiversity conservation are aligned and maintained in the long term;
- To raise awareness, within the IDB and locally, of the need for biodiversity conservation and reporting, and to communicate with the local and wider community about what actions the IDB is undertaking to support biodiversity.

4. The IDB BAP Process

4.1. The Biodiversity Audit

Middle Level Commissioners on behalf of Hundred of Wisbech IDB has conducted a biodiversity audit of its drainage district (Figure 1) and identified those habitats and species that would benefit from particular management or actions by the IDB.

This audit focuses on nationally important priority habitats and species, that is to say those that have been deemed of 'principal importance' in England under the NERC Act 2006. However, those that are not priority species or habitats, but may be locally significant for a variety of reasons have also been considered. Invasive non-native species have also been included.

The information gathered, which is presented in later sections, has been used to develop this IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.2. Objectives and Actions

Conservation and enhancement ***objectives*** have been identified for each included habitat and species. The action plan then details individual ***actions*** required to achieve the objectives, and the associated monitoring and reporting of progress and impact.

In order for this BAP to be as effective as possible, the actions have been devised to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-limited).

Procedural actions have also been considered allowing the Board to measure the way in which it considers and incorporates biodiversity across the whole range of its operations. These may involve changes to administrative, management and operating procedures.

4.3. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring is the on-going process of regularly collecting and analysing relevant information to determine whether the actions within the Plan are positively contributing towards the objectives, and to capture any additional benefit achieved. The Plan sets out how and when this monitoring will take place throughout the life of the plan.

The frequency and type of information reported is also defined by the Plan and includes the publication of progress reports in the public domain via the IDB's website and in accordance with the duty set out in the Environment Act 2021.

The overall plan will be updated at least every 5 years but as this is a dynamic document it may change more frequently. For example, in the light of routine monitoring or local strategy introductions, changes may be necessary to ensure an objective can be met.

5. The Biodiversity Audit

5.1. The Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage District

The drainage district is located to the north of the Middle Level Area.

The following outlines the key details of the District:

- Total area of the drainage district: **1419 ha**
- Catchment area draining to and including the District: **1419 ha**
- Area of agricultural land: **974 ha**
- Area of other (non-agricultural) land: **445 ha**

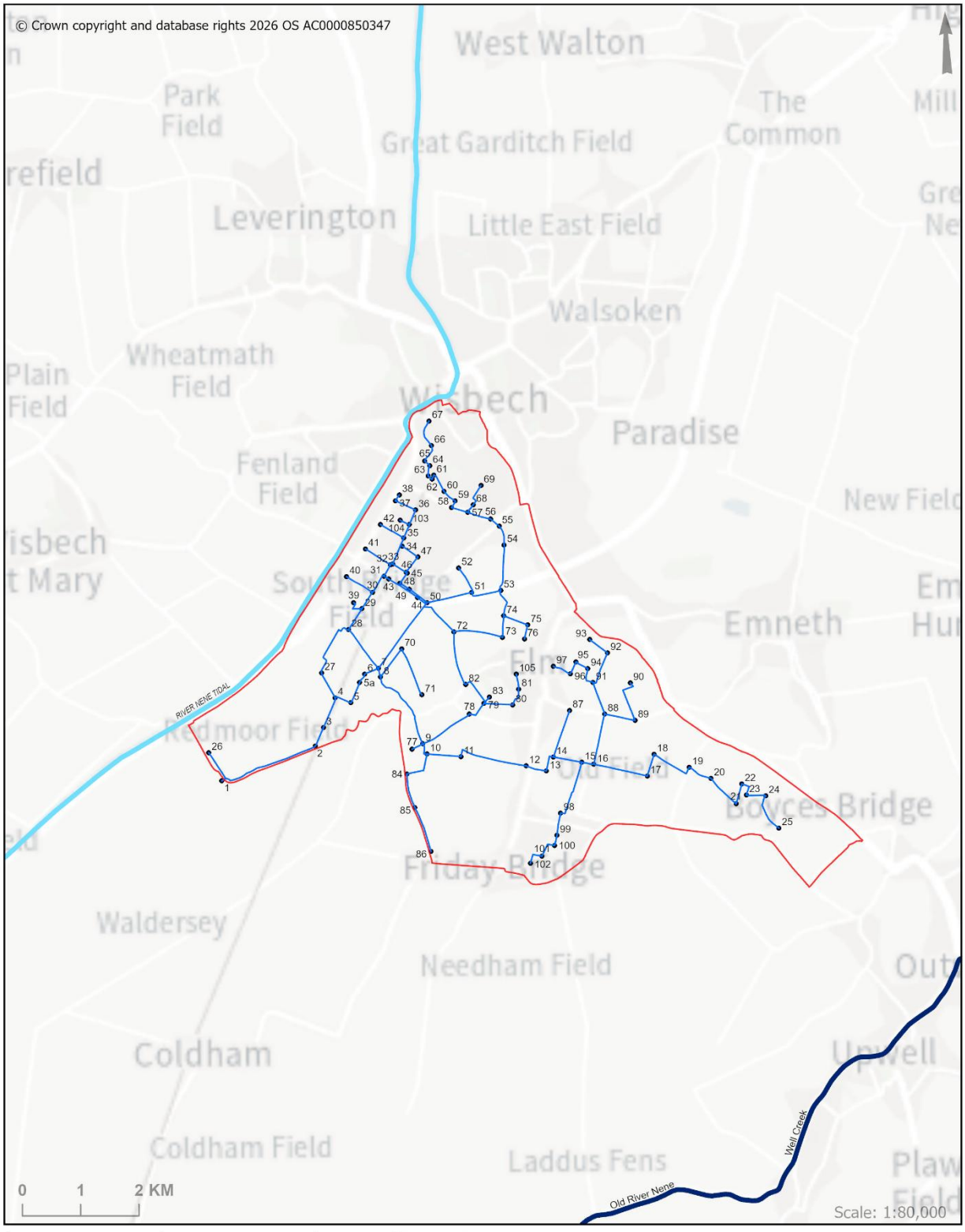
Assets for which the Board has operational responsibility:

- Water level control structures: 3
- Watercourses (maintained): 31 km
- Raised embankments: N/A
- Reservoirs: N/A
- Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS):
- Pumping Stations: N/A
- Extent of “other” land owned: Pond next to A47 Wisbech roundabout.

Assets within or adjacent to the District that are maintained by the Environment Agency:

- Main Rivers: 4 km
- Raised embankments/flood walls: 4 km
- Pumping Stations: N/A

5.2. Map of Audit Area (Drainage District)



© Middle Level Commissioners. All Rights Reserved.	**PROJECT TITLE:** Hundred of Wisbech IDB BAP 2026-2031	**AUTHOR:** Kate Pollard	**Legend** MLC Main Drains All IDB Drains Drain nodes EA Rivers
	DRAWING TITLE: Hundred of Wisbech IDB	**CHECKED BY:** SL	
		DATE: 23/01/2026	

Figure 1. Hundred of Wisbech IDB District

5.3. Geology & Soils

Bedrock in the local area is Ampthill Clay Formation - Mudstone. Ampthill Clay Formation-Mudstone. These sedimentary rocks are shallow-marine in origin formed between 163.5 and 157.3 million years ago during the Jurassic period. They are detrital, ranging from coarse- to fine-grained (locally with some carbonate content) forming interbedded sequences. This bedrock is overlaid with Tidal Flat Deposits - Clay and silt which are sedimentary superficial deposits formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period.

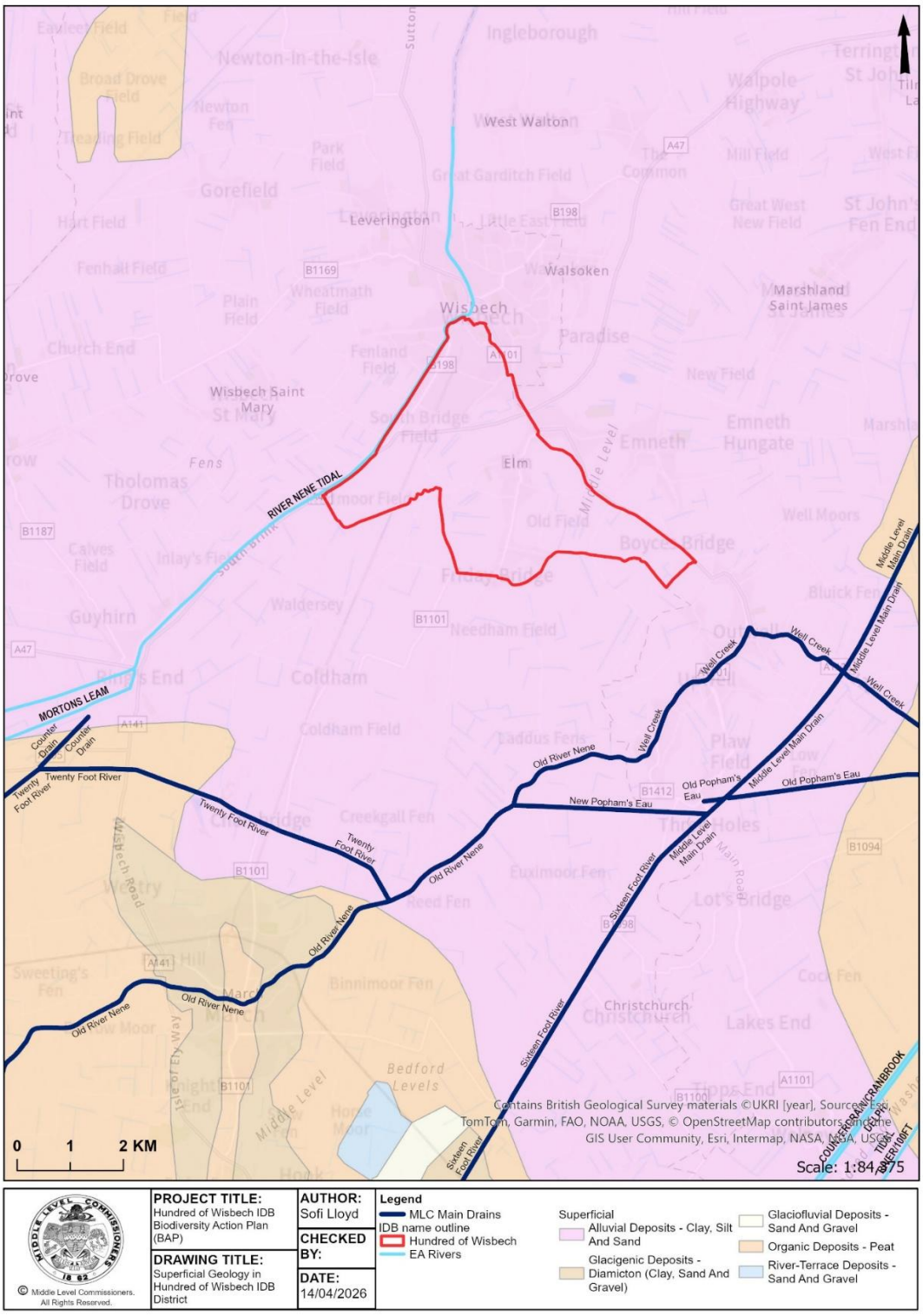


Figure 2. Hundred of Wisbech IDB map of superficial geology

5.4. Peat

Interrogation of all sources available as listed below determines that there is very little peat within the district. The Soilscapes data supports these findings showing predominantly *Loamy and clayey soils of coastal flats with naturally high groundwater* throughout the district. Anecdotally it is reported that during ditch cleansing works or bank reformations, small and thin pockets of peat are often encountered which is supported by the BGS borehole data available within the district.

- BGS Boreholes data - https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html?layer=BGSBoreholes&_ga=2.93480798.298319960.1728295174-1769537369.1728295174
- England Peat Map - https://england-peat-map-portal-ncea.hub.arcgis.com/
- Soil Surface Map (below) - LandIS - Land Information System - Soilscapes soil types viewer

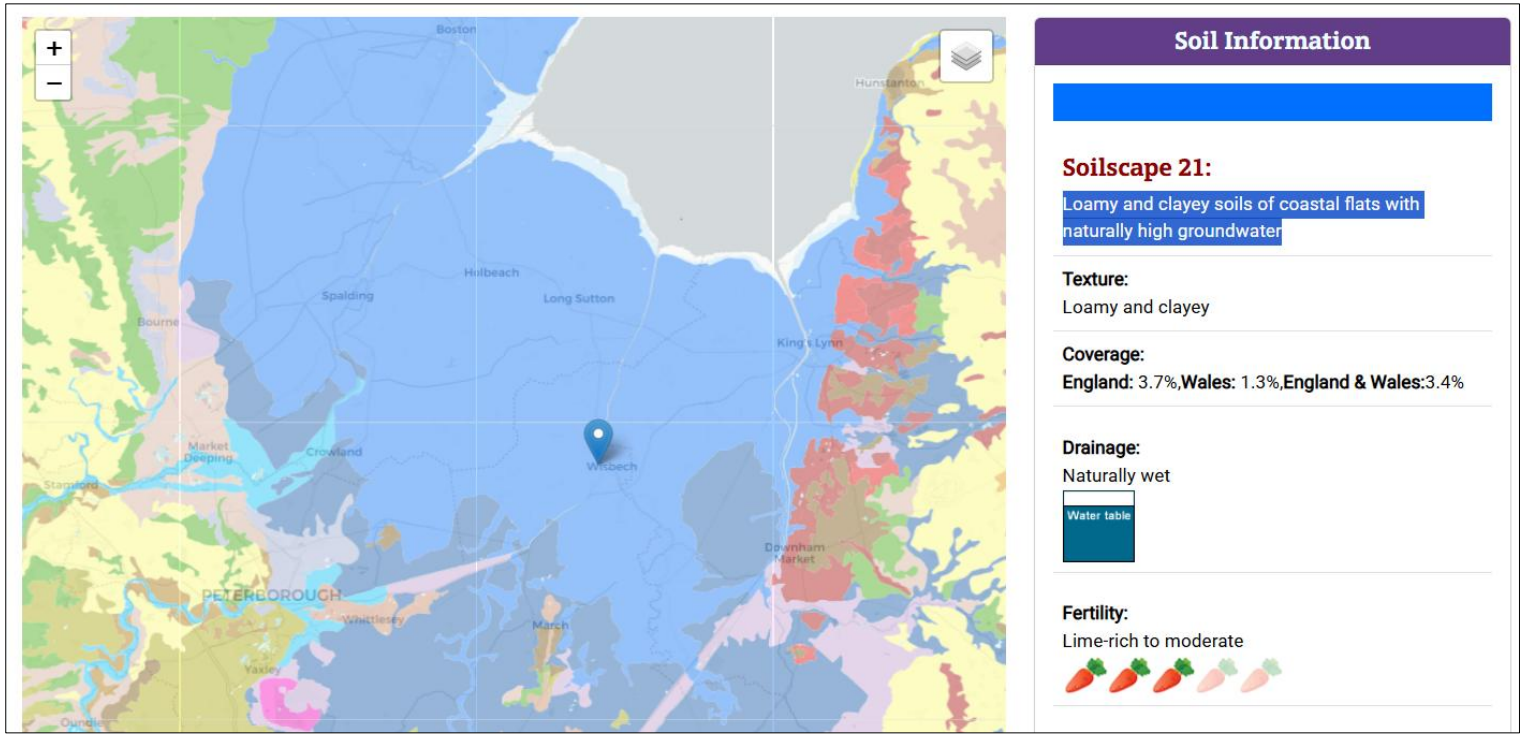


Figure 3. Hundred of Wisbech IDB map of soil types showing a predominantly "Loamy and clayey soils of coastal flats with naturally high groundwater"

5.5. Landscape Character

Natural England has divided the whole of England into a number of National Character Areas (NCA) based on characteristic landforms, wildlife and land use. For each NCA, there is a prepared profile that characterises the wildlife and natural features, identifies the influences that act upon those features and sets objectives for nature conservation.

Hundred of Wisbech IDB sits within the Fens NCA as shown in figure 4 below. The NCA has a number of environmental enhancement targets defined within it, called Statements of Environmental Opportunity, (SEO). As part of this BAP, these have been reviewed and those that can be influenced or controlled by the IDB have been included as part of the BAP objectives. The full list of environmental opportunities are included in Appendix I but a summary is as follows:

The Fens Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO):

- **SEO 1:** Manage the agricultural landscape and soils which allow the Fens to be a major provider of food and horticultural produce, while seeking to enhance opportunities for biodiversity.
- **SEO 2:** Manage the core wetland complexes and increase their connectivity by enhancing the main rivers, waterways and their associated riparian habitats and improve recreational access opportunities to the Fens.
- **SEO 3:** Plan for the creation of new coastal landscapes in the Wash area that are adapted and resilient to the impact of climate change, for the benefit of people and wildlife.
- **SEO 4:** Conserve, manage and enhance the Fens landscape and increase educational opportunities to access its geodiversity, archaeology and cultural heritage to enhance enjoyment and understanding for those who live and work in and visit the Fens.

5.6. Landscape Designations

N/A

5.7. Sites and Monuments (Table 2)

Feature Name	Designation	Desc.	Features Relevant to IDB
Wisbech – many listed buildings & conservation Area	Various grades of listed buildings and town conservation area	Wisbech town centre, particularly along the river Nene has a rich and dense concentration of listed buildings, within a conservation area, reflecting its affluent past as an important inland port.	None in close proximity to IDB drains and so unlikely to be influenced by IDB activity
Elm – many listed buildings	Various grades of Listed Buildings	Elm village is a conservation area and has a number of listed buildings within it.	None in close proximity to IDB drains and so unlikely to be influenced by IDB activity

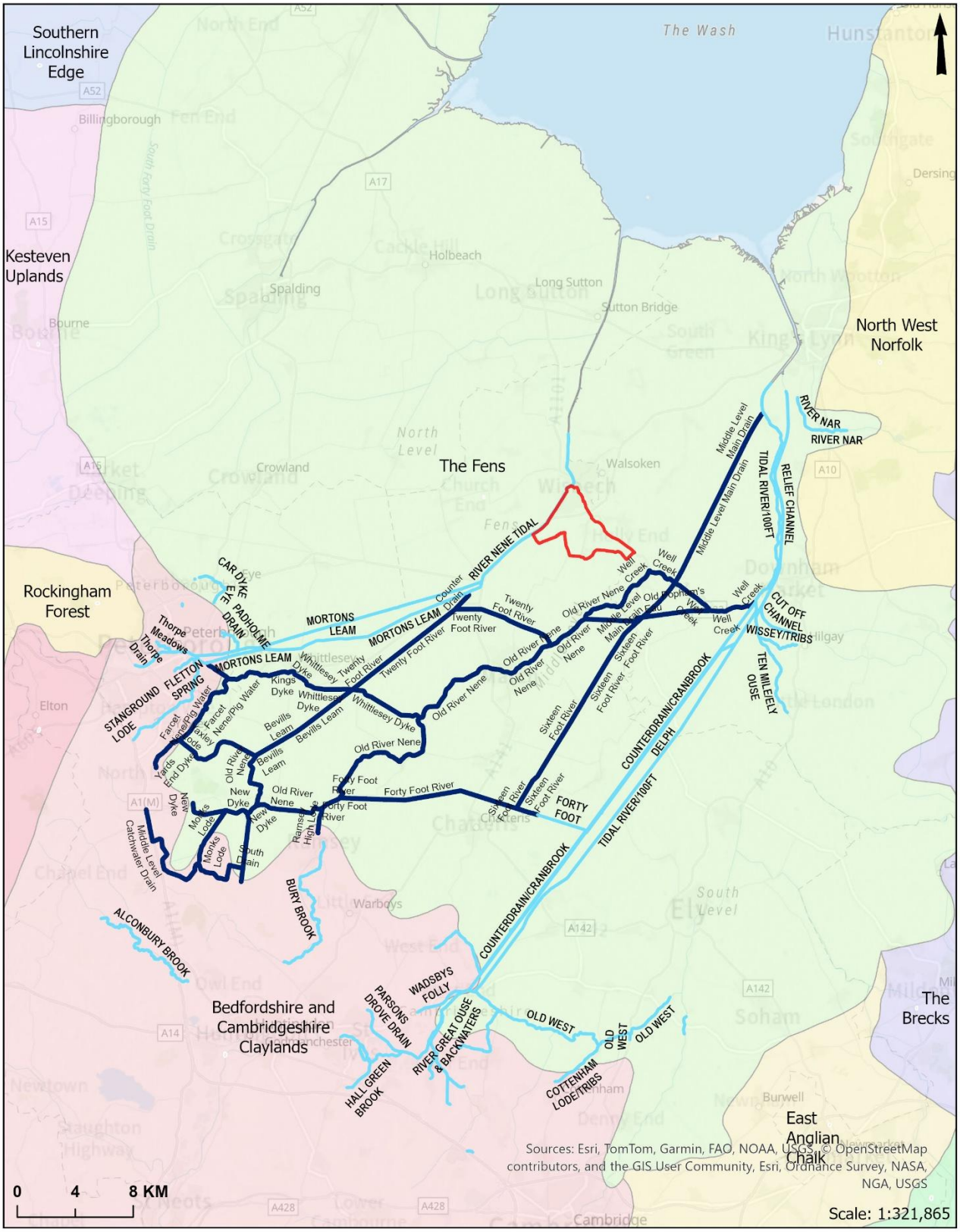
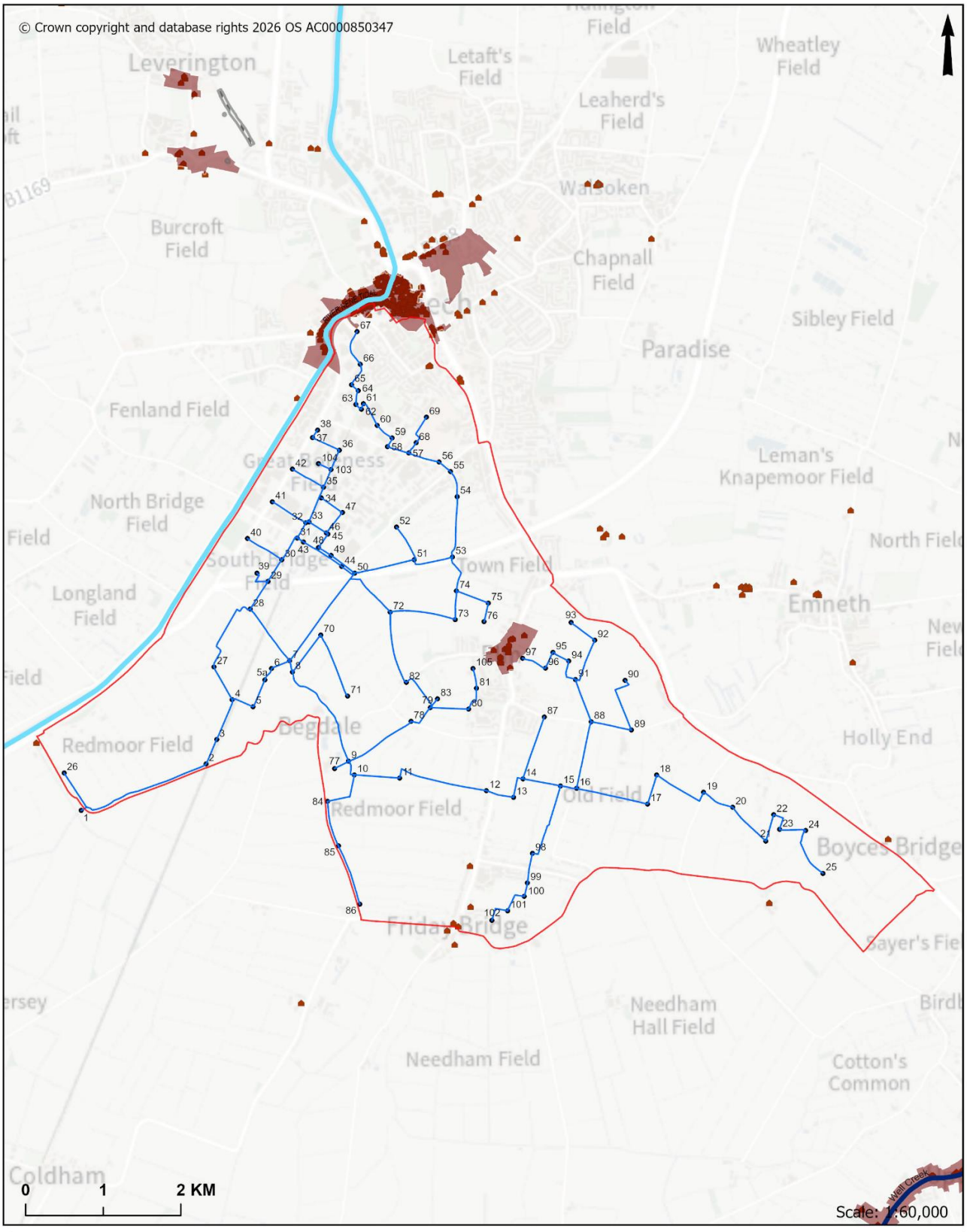


Figure 4. Map of Hundred of Wisbech IDB within the Fens NCA



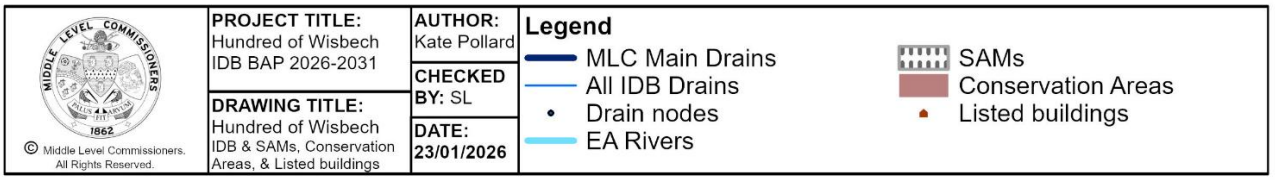


Figure 5. Map of heritage features within Hundred of Wisbech IDB Area

5.8. Tree Preservation Orders

There are a number of protected trees within the Hundred of Wisbech IDB Area, mainly situated around and between the main developed areas of Wisbech and Elm. There are some within close proximity to IDB drains which would need to be considered, and care taken, during IDB works to ensure no damage was caused to them. Any works required to them would require consent from Fenland DC.

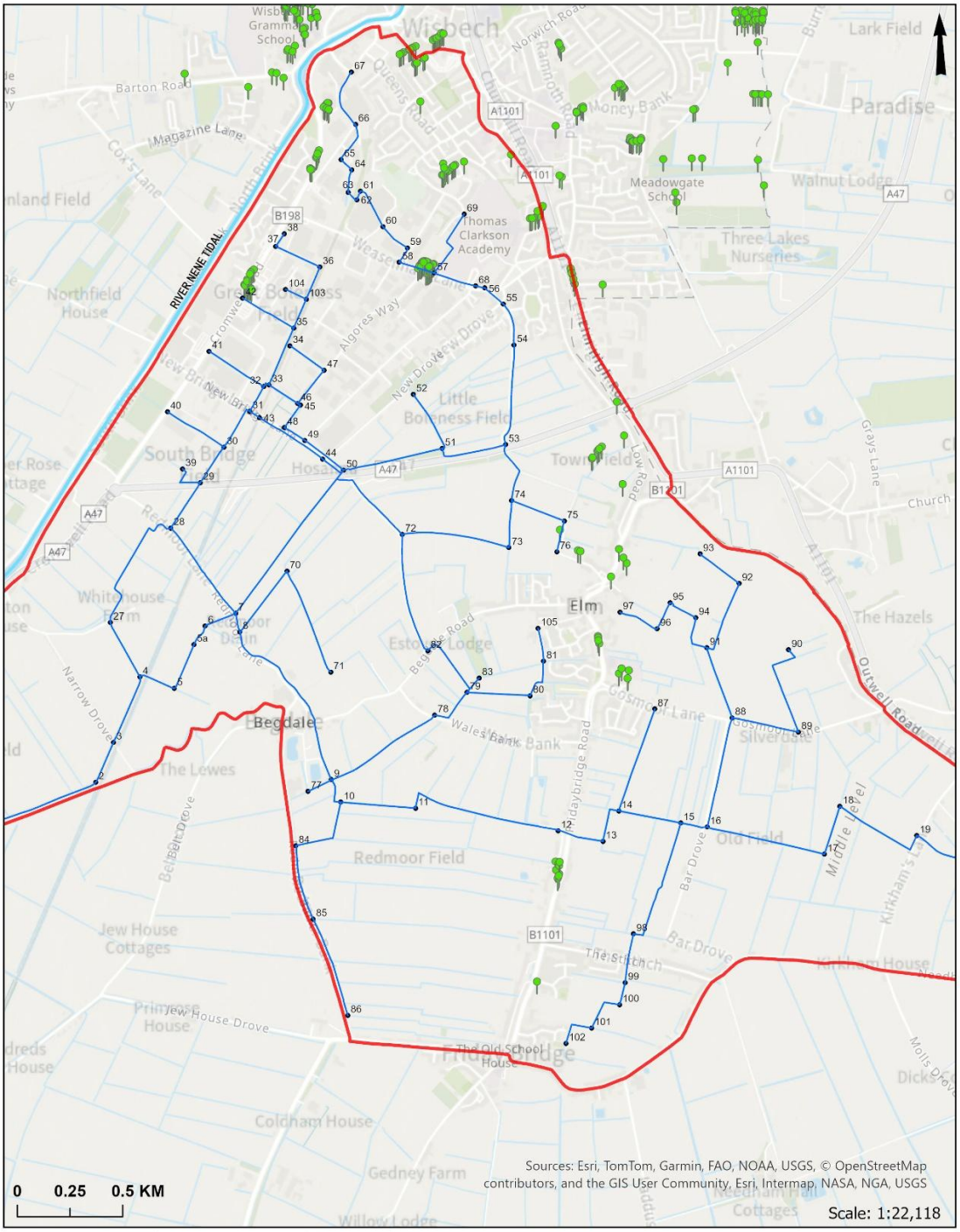


Figure 6 Map of Protected Trees locations within Hundred of Wisbech IDB

5.9. Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

5.9.1 Internationally Designated Sites

N/A

5.9.2 Nationally Designated Sites

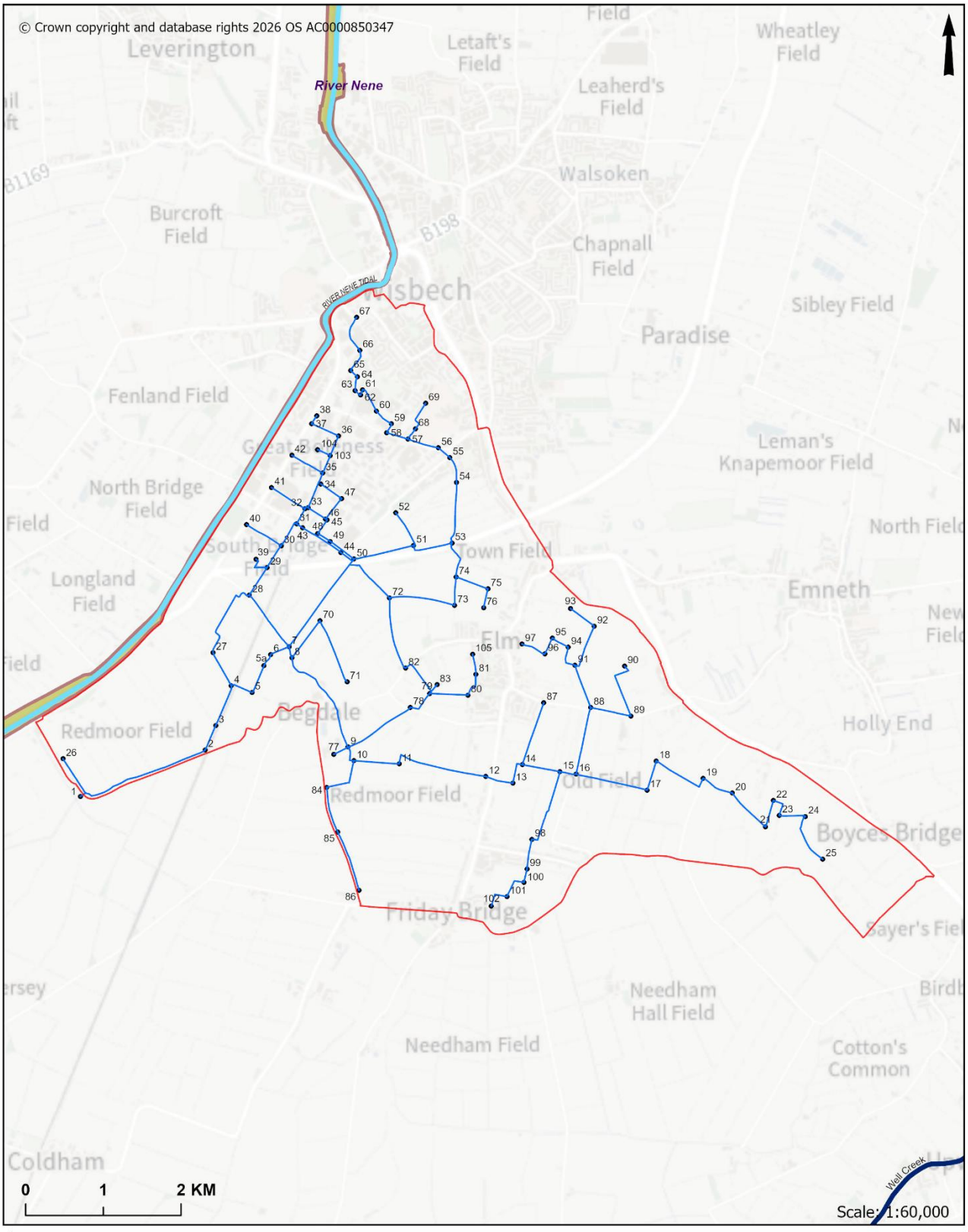
N/A

5.9.3 Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

N/A

5.9.4 Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites (Table 3)

Site Name	Assoc. WLMP?*	Desc.	Features Relevant to IDB
River Nene CWS	N	A major river which is not grossly modified by canalization or poor water quality. Part is a Grade C site in JNCC ISR. At least three species of Potamogeton spp. Nationally Scarce vascular plant species. Plant species which are rare in the county.	Outside but adjacent to IDB boundary. No direct outfalls to the Nene but water quality is a consideration.



© Middle Level Commissioners. All Rights Reserved.	**PROJECT TITLE:** Hundred of Wisbech IDB BAP 2026-2031	**AUTHOR:** Kate Pollard	**Legend**
		CHECKED BY: SL	MLC Main Drains; All IDB Drains; Drain nodes; EA Rivers; SACs; SPAs; SSSIs; NNRs; LNRs; Cambs linear CWS 2025; Cambs CWS 2025; Cambs protected road verges 2025
	DRAWING TITLE: Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Statutory & non-statutory nature conservation sites	**DATE:** 23/01/2026	

Figure 7. Map of Statutory & non-statutory Nature Sites in Hundred of Wisbech IDB Area

5.10. Habitat Audit Summary

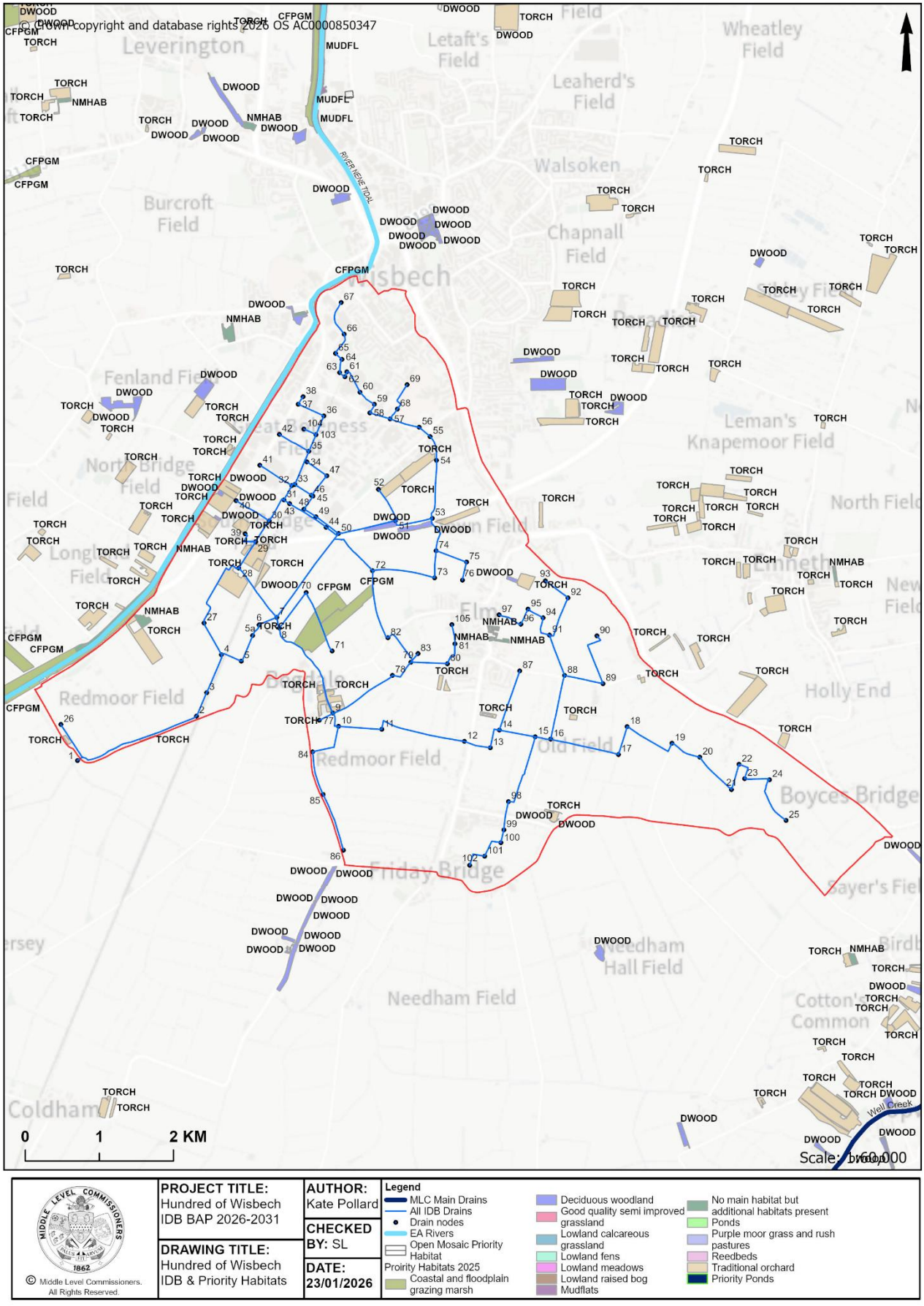
This habitat audit summary lists the UK and priority habitats that occur within the drainage district. A map of the Priority Habitats polygons within the district are shown in Figure 8. Linear and more general priority habitats are not mapped. Brief notes are included on the potential for the IDB to maintain, restore or expand the habitats present. its important habitats.

Table 4. Habitat Audit Summary

National Priority Habitat	National Status & Extent	Habitat classification	National Targets	Local Priority Habitat	Local Status and Extent	Local Targets	IDB Potential for Maintaining, Restoring or Expanding Habitat (high/medium/low)
Traditional Orchard	24,600 to 27,000 ha	**BNG:** Traditional Orchard **UKHab:** Grassland – Traditional Orchard	4,700 hectares of traditional orchards to be created or brought into favourable condition (25YEP)	Woodland (LNRS)	Significant but fragmented extent within district. The local area is known for its dense concentration of orchards stemming from their previously commercial but now declining heydays. Under pressure and being lost to development.	**W0 8** - Improve the management of traditional orchards and seek to expand them where possible.	**Low – Med –** Orchards traditional relied upon IDBs holding water levels high in adjacent drains in the summer months. Those that are adjacent to IDB drains could benefit, if restored, from IDB water level management..
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	220,000 ha in England approx.	**BNG:** Floodplain Wetland Mosaic **UKHab:** Lowland Meadow G3a / 19 (CFPGM) or 55 (Floodplain Wetland Mosaic)	Aim to improve natural function wherever possible as part of future restoration within the floodplain. Aim for the habitat to meet "good condition" as per BNG habitat condition assessments.	Wetland (LNRS)	Reasonably significant extent within district, 5ha.	**We3** -enhance and create floodplain wet grassland sites to better support breeding and wintering wetland birds (LNRS)	**Med** – Habitats adjacent to IDB ditches so could be influenced by water levels but are privately owned. Look for opportunities to support and encourage the favourable management of the habitat including via complimentary channel management..
Deciduous Woodlands	967,000 ha in England	**BNG:** Woodland **UKHab:** W1f7 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	By 2050 achieve a minimum of 16.5% of land covered by woodland/trees outside woodland Annual planting of 30,000 hectares (ha) of new woodland per year.	Woodland (LNRS)	Tiny scattered pockets throughout the district, locally very rare and highly fragmented	**Wo1** - better manage woodlands to improve resilience and structural diversity.	**Low** – Not on land owned or managed by the IDB. Use IDB networks to encourage its retention, favourable management and support its expansion if appropriate.

No Main Habitat	N/A	A “main" habitat type cannot be assigned but potentially significant habitats are still present	Protecting 30% of land and sea by 2030	Habitat Mosaic (LNRS)	Locally very rare, very small and highly fragmented	**M1** - Improve the diversity of habitats at a landscape and site-scale to increase the diversity and abundance of species and make them more resilient to climate change.	**Low** – Not on land owned or managed by the IDB. Use IDB networks to encourage its retention, favourable management and support its expansion/improvement if appropriate.

National Priority Habitat	National Status & Extent	Habitat classification	National Targets	Local Priority Habitat	Local Status and Extent	Local Targets	IDB Potential for Maintaining, Restoring or Expanding Habitat (high/medium/low)
Rivers & Streams	n/a	Fen Main Drains and drainage ditches	WFD - Improving at least 75% of waters to Good Ecological Status or Potential by 2027	Rivers, chalk streams & drainage ditches (LNRS)	Locally abundant	**RD5 -** enhance the network of fenland farm drainage ditches by providing habitat buffers and improving water quality	**High** – Manage ditches according to best practice & SOPs to maximise opportunities for biodiversity
Arable Field Margins	N/A	**UKHab:** C1a Arable field margins		Farmed Landscape (LNRS)	Locally abundant	**F1** - Increase the presence and quality of biodiversity rich arable field margins around farmland to improve the diversity of farmland species and provide habitat that is connected and more resilient to climate change.	**Med –** Encourage landowners in IDB network to establish good quality stewardship field margins



© Middle Level Commissioners. All Rights Reserved.	**PROJECT TITLE:** Hundred of Wisbech IDB BAP 2026-2031	**AUTHOR:** Kate Pollard	**Legend**
	DRAWING TITLE: Hundred of Wisbech IDB & Priority Habitats	**CHECKED BY:** SL	MLC Main Drains; All IDB Drains; Drain nodes; EA Rivers; Open Mosaic Priority Habitat; Priority Habitats 2025; Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; Deciduous woodland; Good quality semi improved grassland; Lowland calcareous grassland; Lowland fens; Lowland meadows; Lowland raised bog; Mudflats; No main habitat but additional habitats present; Ponds; Purple moor grass and rush pastures; Reedbeds; Traditional orchard; Priority Ponds
		DATE: 23/01/2026	

Figure 8. Map of Priority Habitats in Hundred of Wisbech IDB

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire, published on the 23rd December 2025, identifies a number of additional habitats that are of importance for conservation and creation within Cambridgeshire. There is potential for some such habitats to be created or restored within the IDB District. Those which could be directly influenced and/or supported by the Boards' activities have been mapped in the LNRS in Figure 8 and/or are detailed in the below table.

Table 5. LNRS habitats prioritized for action that are relevant to IDB Activities

LNRS Priority Habitat	Local Targets	Potential for Supporting / Influencing Habitat (high/medium/low)
Traditional Orchards (LNRS)	**Wo8A**– restore and enhance the biodiversity value of traditional orchards. Where possible ensure such enhancements deliver gains for cultural and landscape continuity and for the genetic diversity of fruit trees. Enhance grasslands under the fruit trees to create complementary species-rich habitats. **Wo8B -** Create traditional orchards close to existing traditional orchards. These should deliver enhanced biodiversity and heritage value through the planting of heritage variety fruit trees and the creation of species-rich grassland.	**Low – Med –** Orchards traditional relied upon IDBs holding water levels high in adjacent drains in the summer months. Those that are adjacent to IDB drains could benefit, if restored or created, from IDB water level management..
Woodlands (LNRS)	**Wo3A** – improve biodiversity by creating mixed deciduous woodland consisting of appropriate native or climate change tolerant (European only) species to increase resilience and diversity. Such newly created woodlands are to be within 2.5 kilometres of existing woodland, though in practice should be much closer (ideally within 500 metres). Newly created woods would ideally form a woodland block (or group of woodlands within 200 metres of each other) which are at least 40 hectares in size. Woodland creation would be expected over approximately 80% of the site area mapped under this measure, with the remaining 20% a mosaic of other complementary habitats such as species–rich grassland, scrub, ponds, and individual trees.	**Low –** not on IDB-owned land and unlikely to be influenced by Board Activities. However the encouragement, if possible, via IDB networks for planting on the highland sloping towards the catchwater should be made is it would likely reduce and/or slow flows into the catchwater
Urban Landscapes (LNRS)	**U2A -** Create new natural greenspaces prioritising areas at most risk of health impacts (as identified by the Environmental Justice Index). New natural greenspaces would be of a minimum 0.5 hectares in size, with larger sites preferable, to contribute to natural greenspace accessibility standards.	**Low –** IDB is unlikely to own land and have minimal access to land suitable for improvement of public access but may encourage and support landowners and developers within the IDB network to create opportunities for new greenspace and support urban greenspace projects.
Fen Droves (LNRS)	**U3B**– Map the locations of fen droves and identify remaining biodiversity hotspots, including for locally significant species such as elms and scarce invertebrate species. **F4B -** Identify all fen droves with important populations of elms or assemblages of invertebrate species and prioritise the protection and enhancement of the hedgerows and associated grasslands.	**High** – Use local knowledge within IDBs to map and identify ownership, provenance and status. Encourage and support landowners in IDB network to retain, survey, protect and enhance, particularly those adjacent to IDB drains or used to access and/or maintain IDB drains.

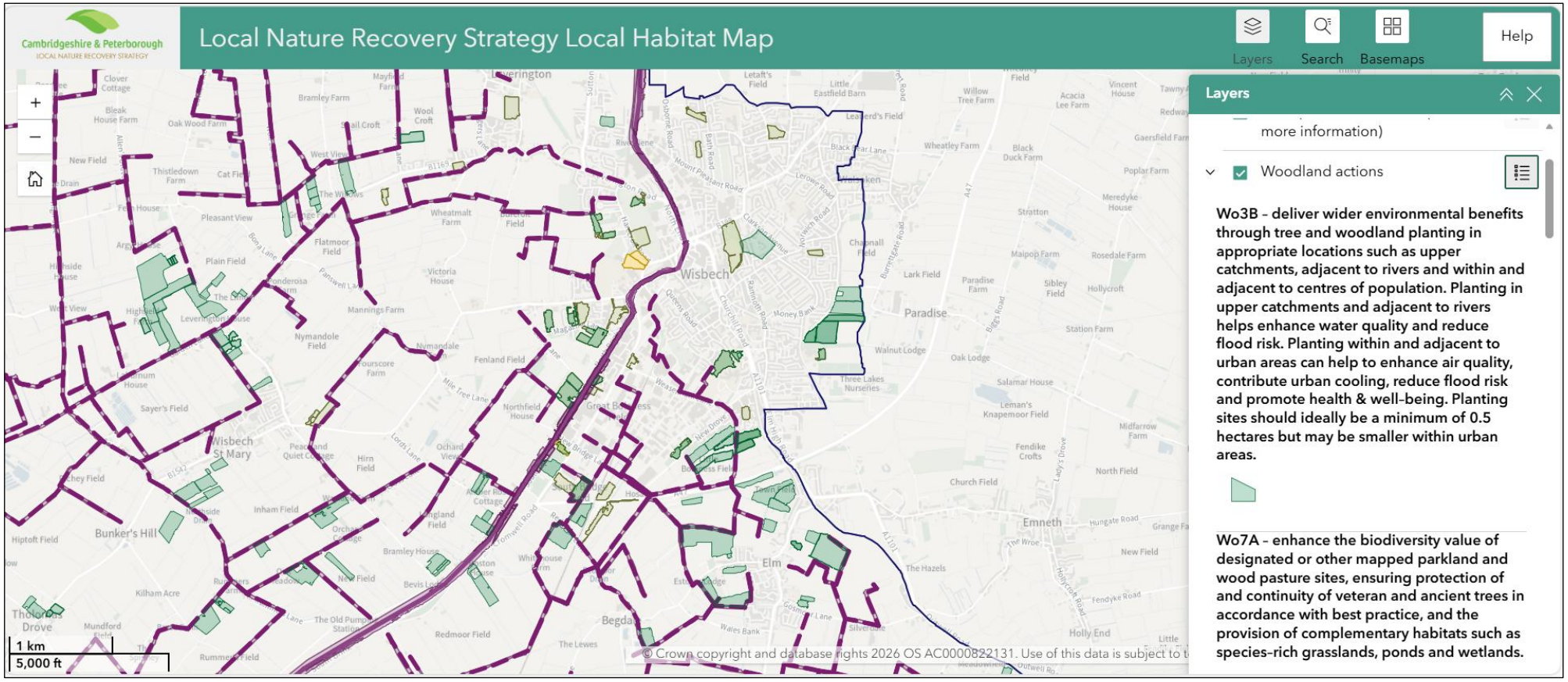


Figure 8. Mapped Priority Habitat Action Opportunities as detailed in the Cambridgeshire LNRS (published: 23rd December 2025) in Hundred of Wisbech IDB, available from this link: Local Nature Recovery Strategy or https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a1963a7dc51c4c259a8d19832b63f461 https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/climate-change-energy-and-environment/improving-the-natural-environment/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-local-nature-recovery-strategy#local-nature-recovery-strategy-published-5-0

5.11. Species Audit Summary

There are 67 protected, priority or other notable species that have previously been recorded within the district, as reported by the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC). Of these, 45 species are associated with the habitats the Board manages and so could be influenced by the Boards' activities. A table listing these species is provided below.

Table 6: Rare, protected, notable and priority species previously recorded within the drainage district:

Taxon	Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Potential for IDBs to influence	Species Info
Birds	Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	CPASI, WCA1i, LNRS	Yes. Manage existing boxes, fund and install new ones where necessary and support box surveys. Retain areas of taller bank veg to support small mammals.	*Species is still under threat from a range of factors relating to agricultural intensification and urbanisation. Erect and manage Barn Owl Boxes.*
	Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Moderate. Rotationally manage ditch vegetation to maximise diversity which will support better numbers of inverts for chick food. Encourage cereal retention options in stewardship agreements next to ditches. Record sightings.	*Dense hedge and scrub nesters*
	Cetti's Warbler	*Cettia cetti*	WCA1i		*Dense scrub nesters near water. Uses same nest sites across years.*
	Corn Bunting	*Emberiza calandra*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*A key farmland indicator species. Has had a dramatic decline nationally and has been lost from many areas of the county but still remains in good numbers locally. Availability of invertebrates in summer and seeds in the winter are key to its abundance. Manage ditch vegetation to maximise diversity which will support better numbers of inverts.*
	Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Will often use a reed warbler's nest to lay and egg for them to raise so can be present in nests in reeds.*
	Dunnock	*Prunella modularis*	Sect.41, UKBAP		*Hedge & scrub nesters*
	Grasshopper Warbler	*Locustella naevia*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Yes. Promote uptake of environmental stewardship riparian buffer strip options	*Prefers sites with a mixture of habitats including grassland, scrub and reedbed/wetland areas, therefore a good indicator of relatively wild habitats.*
	Grey Partridge	*Perdix*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Limited. Promote uptake of environmental stewardship riparian buffer strip options. Record sightings.	*Localised breeding species in the county, with the main populations in Cambs. in the South Cambs. chalk areas. Promote Environmental stewardship alongside IDB drains for a number of reasons*
	Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*	WCA1i	Moderate. Rotationally manage ditch vegetation to maximise diversity which will support better numbers of inverts for chick food. Encourage cereal retention options in stewardship agreements next to ditches. Record sightings.	*Tree nesters hunting across open habitats*
	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Dense hedge nesters*
	Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	WCA1i, LNRS	Yes. Check and maintain artificial nest sites. Retain bank-side trees / scrub as fishing perches and as a refuge for small fish which the bird eats. Record sightings.	*Check and maintain artificial nest sites. Retain bank-side trees / scrub as fishing perches and as a refuge for small fish which the bird eats.*

Birds	Lapwing	*Vanellus*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Limited. Promote uptake of environmental stewardship riparian buffer strip options to provide insect-rich foraging near nest sites.	*Ground nester in farmland. One of the most strongly declining birds in Europe but Cambs. is a stronghold*
	Lesser Redpoll	*Acanthis cabaret*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Moderate. Rotationally manage ditch vegetation to maximise diversity which will support better numbers of inverts for chick food. Encourage cereal retention options in stewardship agreements next to ditches. Record sightings.	*Tree nester in wet woodlands*
	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	*Dryobates minor*	Sect.41, UKBAP		*Nest in holes in trees near water*
	Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Ground & low scrub/hedge nesters*
	Marsh Harrier	*Circus aeruginosus*	WCA1i		*Ground-nesters using reedbeds and grassy margins*
	Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	WCA1i		*Hedge & scrub nesters*
	Reed Bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	Sect.41, UKBAP	Moderate. Rotationally manage ditch vegetation to maximise diversity which will support better numbers of inverts for chick food. Encourage cereal retention options in stewardship agreements next to ditches. Record sightings.	*Ground, or near to, nesting birds with broods into late August. Favour ditch edges and grass margins.*
	Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	Sect.41, UKBAP		*Nest low in hedges and scrub*
	Spotted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Dense hedge and scrub nesters*
	Swift	*Apus*	CPASI, LNRS		*Associated with buildings for nesting but may forage along drains and margins*
	Tree Sparrow	*Passer montanus*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Hedge & scrub nesters*
	Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia turtur*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Hedge & scrub nesters*
	Whooper Swan	*Cygnus*	WCA1i, LNRS		*Ground nesters in marshland and farmland*
	Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Ground nesters in damp channel margins and banks and agricultural margins.*
	Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Ground, or near to, nesting birds with broods into late August. Favour ditch edges and grass margins.*
Tree	Black-poplar	*Populus nigra subsp. betulifolia*	CPASI, LNRS	Yes. Look for planting opportunities. Identify those existing and conserve.	*One of the rarest native trees in Cambs. and Pboro. Under threat because of a lack of natural reproduction opportunities. Most trees present now are thought to have been planted but maybe not all. Natural habitat is river floodplains. Look for planting opportunities*

Flowering Plant	Common Meadow-rue	*Thalictrum flavum*	CPASI	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
	Fine-leaved Water-dropwort	*Oenanthe aquatica*	CPASI		
	Large-flowered Hemp-nettle	*Galeopsis speciosa*	RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU, LNRS		*Found in peaty fields and disturbed fen. Look out for in surveys*
	Marsh Dock	*Rumex palustris*	CPASI		
	Stinking Chamomile	*Anthemis cotula*	RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU		
	Water-violet	*Hottonia palustris*	CPASI, RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU, LNRS		*Found in still, shallow, base-rich, clear and not eutrophic waterbodies so it is a positive indicator. Found in fenland drains, although has declined here. Look for in surveys*
	Welsh Poppy	*Meconopsis cambrica*	NS		
Insect - dragonfly (Odonata)	Scarce Chaser	*Libellula fulva*	RLGB.Lr(NT)	Yes. Invertebrates use a wide range of plants as hosts for their larval stage and for feeding and egg laying in their adult stages. Aim to create and maintain the most diverse sward possible on banks, channel margins and in channel to support them by following a rotational vegetation management regime. Retain trees, hedgerows and scrub and plant more where possible. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
Insect - moth	Cinnabar	*Tyria jacobaeae*	Sect.41, UKBAP		
Reptile	Grass Snake	*Natrix helvetica*	Sect.41, UKBAP, WCA5, LNRS	Yes. Manage channels according to the SOP. Retain & create suitable habitat. Record sightings.	
Terrestrial Mammal	Harvest Mouse	*Micromys minutus*	RLGB.Lr(NT), Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Yes. Retain areas of uncut undisturbed marginal and bank vegetation for refuge and foraging and manage rotationally.	*GB Red List Near Threatened. Thought to have declined significantly due to agricultural intensification. Not commonly recorded in Cambs. and Pboro so population levels are unknown.*
	Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	RLGB.VU, Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS	Yes. More associated with mosaic habitats but IDBs must be mindful not to disturb scrub patches / weed screen piles / leaf piles after October as they may be hibernating. Fund hedgehog hotels, encourage leaf piles and don't keep things "tidy". Record sightings.	*More associated with mosaic habitats but IDBs must be mindful not to disturb scrub patches / weed screen piles / leaves after October as they may be hibernating. Fund hedgehog hotels, encourage leaf piles and don't keep things "tidy".*
	Otter	*Lutra*	HabRegs2, Sect.41, UKBAP, WCA5	Yes. Manage channels according to the SOP. Retain & create suitable habitat. Record sightings and field signs.	

Terrestrial Mammal	Water Vole	*Arvicola amphibius*	RLGB.EN, Sect.41,	Yes. Manage ditches according to the SOPs to ensure no burrows are damaged and marginal vegetation is maintained for optimal	*IDB ditches are stronghold for them. Ensure water levels of at least 30cm are maintained all year round, keeping summer/winter*

			UKBAP, WCA5, LNRS	wv habitat. Manage bank face vegetation rotationally to maintain/develop a favourable & diverse sward as optimal habitat for wv. Continue support for mink control project. Record in surveys.	*level fluctuations as small as possible. Retain marginal vegetation for refuge. Fund and support mink trapping.*
Terrestrial Mammal - bats	Brown Long-eared Bat	*Plecotus auritus*	HabRegs2, Sect.41, UKBAP, WCA5	Yes. Retain mature bank-side trees to provide suitable roosts for bats. Trim or pollard trees rather than remove them. Install bat boxes on bank-side trees or elsewhere in the district to improve roost provision. Provide bat boxes.	
	Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus*	HabRegs2, WCA5		
	Noctule	*Nyctalus noctula*	HabRegs2, Sect.41, UKBAP, WCA5		
	Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	HabRegs2, Sect.41, UKBAP, WCA5		

In addition, there are 80 species identified by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) that are a priority for nature conservation within Cambridgeshire. Some of these species are commonly associated with the habitats that the Board manages. While there are no known recent records of these species being present within the district, there is potential for them to be found, or for them to colonise, either naturally or via translocation if the habitats they prefer are managed favorably. There is therefore potential for the conservation status of these species across the county to be influenced by the activities of the Board.

Table 7: Species identified by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire as being a conservation priority in the county:

Taxon	Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status	Potential for IDBs to influence	Species Info
Amphibian	Great Crested Newt	*Triturus cristatus*	Bern-A2		*Favourable habitat in fen ditches*
	Northern pool frog	*Pelophylax lessonae*	WACA-Sch5_sect9.4b	Low. Create ponds where possible	*Ponds specific*
Birds	Bittern	*Botaurus stellaris*	Bern-A2	Moderate. Look for opportunities to create and manage reedbeds such as old pump drains. Record sightings.	*Look for opportunities to create and manage reedbeds such as old pump drains.*
	Eurasian curlew	*Numenius arquata*	BirdsDir-A2.2	Yes. Retain dense mature scrub stands i.e. bramble near water and manage extent rather than remove. Retain bankside trees and pollard rather than remove. Retain marginal and bank vegetation as much as possible and cut banks rotationally outside of bird nesting season. Trim hedges outside bird nesting season. Encourage farmers to establish stewardship margins alongside hedgerows and ditches for foraging. Record sightings.	*Ground nesters in rough/damp pasture*
	Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	BirdsDir-A2.2		*Nest in holes in trees near water*
	Bewick's swan (Tundra Swan)	*Cygnus columbianus bewickii*	Bird_RedList_GB_post2001-CR_NonBreeding		*Assoc with fenland fields and washes when overwintering*

Birds	Common Tern	*Sterna hirundo*	BirdsDir-A1	Yes. Retain dense mature scrub stands i.e. bramble near water and manage extent rather than remove. Retain bankside trees and pollard rather than remove. Retain marginal and bank vegetation as much as possible and cut banks rotationally outside of bird nesting season. Trim hedges outside bird nesting season. Encourage farmers to establish stewardship margins alongside hedgerows and ditches for foraging. Record sightings.	*Assoc with coastal and inland waterways. Summer visitor.*
	Coot	*Fulica atra*	BirdsDir-A2.1		*Ground nesting assoc with lakes and rivers/drains*
	Greenfinch	*Chloris*	Bird-Red		*Favours arable habitat*
Birds	House Martin	*Delichon urbicum*	Bird-Red	Yes. Retain dense mature scrub stands i.e. bramble near water and manage extent rather than remove. Retain bankside trees and pollard rather than remove. Retain marginal and bank vegetation as much as possible and cut banks rotationally outside of bird nesting season. Trim hedges outside bird nesting season. Encourage farmers to establish stewardship margins alongside hedgerows and ditches for foraging. Record sightings.	*Assoc with buildings for nesting but may forage along drains and margins*
	Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	W(NI)O-Sch1_part1		*Assoc with woodland edges, hedgerows, riverbanks and margins. Preys on small mammals*
	Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*	BirdsDir-A2.2		*Ground nesting assoc with lakes and rivers/drains*
	Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	BirdsDir-A2.2		*Assoc with coastal and estuary but frequently inland. Ground nesters*
	Red-backed Shrike	*Lanius collurio*	WACA-Sch1_part1		*Assoc with thorn scrub across a range of habitats. Prey on small mamms*
	Redshank	*Tringa totanus*	BirdsDir-A2.2		
	Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	Bird_RedList_GB_post2001-LC_Breeding		*Assoc with buildings for nesting but may forage along drains and margins*
	Black-tailed Godwit	*Limosa limosa*	WCA1i, LNRS	Yes. Seek local conservation projects to support / fund.	*ID opportunities for IDBs near Ouse and Nene washes to become involved in/fund conservation projects or create wetland sites*
	Common Crane	*Grus grus*	CPASI, LNRS	Moderate. Look for opportunities to create and/or restore reedbeds and wetland habitats. Manage ditches to maximise diversity.	*Now over a dozen pairs and a wintering population in excess of 80 individuals, making Cambs and Pboro a key county. Continued management of existing and creation of new areas of mixed wetland will bolster breeding numbers further - IDB action.*
	Black-necked Grebe	*Podiceps nigricollis*	Bern-A2	Yes. Retain dense mature scrub stands i.e. bramble near water and manage extent rather than remove. Retain bankside trees and pollard rather than remove. Retain marginal and bank vegetation as much as possible and cut banks rotationally outside of bird nesting season. Trim hedges outside bird nesting season. Encourage farmers to establish stewardship margins alongside hedgerows and ditches for foraging. Record sightings.	
	Garganey	*Spatula querquedula*	Bird-Amber		
	Motacilla flava	*Yellow Wagtail*	Sect.41, UKBAP	Retain marginal and bank vegetation as much as possible and cut banks rotationally outside of bird nesting season. Encourage farmers to establish stewardship margins alongside hedgerows and ditches for foraging. Maximise plant diversity for invertebrate abundance. Record sightings.	*Ground nesters in damp habitat & farmland*

Birds	Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	UK Amber List, LNRS	Yes. Look for opportunities to create / restore reedbeds and wetland habitats	*Requiring wet grassland / water meadow. IDBs Look for opportunities to restore / create reedbeds & wet grasslands and/or support conservation efforts within the district.*
Fish	Brook lamprey	*Lampetra planeri*	Bern-A3	Limited. Look for presence during surveys.	*A positive indicator for rivers and streams. It tends to be observed in the headwaters of smaller waterbodies (but may be present in the middle reaches of rivers). The species has a larval form which requires unpolluted and stable silt beds, thus if a river supports brook lamprey it could be considered as one that is in a better ecological condition and is exhibiting stability and naturalness of the river environment.*
	Spined loach	*Cobitis taenia*	Bern-A3	Yes. Desilt little and often to provide diversity of substrate for the filter-feeders	*Appears to be restricted to Trent, Welland, Witham, Nene and Great Ouse, with their associated waterways. Moreton's Leam is thought to contain the highest recorded density of spined loach in the UK and is designated an SAC for this reason, as are Ouse Washes Counter Drain and Old Bedford River. Have been found on occasion in the Middle Level system. Desilt little and often*
	European eel	*Anguilla anguilla*	RedList_Global_post2001-CR	Yes. Retain in-channel marginal vegetation to provide refuge from predators. If pumps are fish friendly, focus operation at night to enable migration. If pumps are not fish friendly, plan replacement to fish friendly pumps and/or eel passes to enable migration. Only desilt centre 2/3rds of channel.	*Spends most of its life in European rivers which flow into the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Baltic seas, and migrate to the western sub-tropical Atlantic where it breeds. Retain marginal veg as refuge for them.*
	Burbot	*Lota lota*	WACA-Sch5Sect9.4c		*Historically assoc with fenland waterways subject to reintroductions in the Great Ouse catchment*
Flowering Plant	Fen Ragwort	*Jacobaea paludosa*	RedList_GB_post2001-CR	Possibly. Identify possible reintroduction sites i.e. vegetated drains, old pump drains, dead end drains, reedbed peripheries etc.	*Look for reintro sites, particularly in vegetated drains, old pump drains, dead end drains, reedbed peripheries etc.*
	Frogbit	*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
	Greater Water Parsnip	*Sium latifolium*	NS-excludes		*Fenland characteristic species. Found parts of the Ouse Washes. Small populations remain vulnerable. Look for in surveys*
Flowering Plant	Milk Parsley	*Thysselinum palustre*	RedList_GB_post2001-VU	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
	Mousetail	*Myosurus minimus*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		
	Opposite-leaved pondweed	*Groenlandia densa*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		*Typical of shallow nutrient-poor calcareous waters. Mostly found in fen drains. Look for in surveys*
	Deptford Pink	*Dianthus armeria*	WACA-Sch8		*prefers unimproved margins; recorded in Sawtry (Monk's Wood) 2000-2019*

Flowering Plant	Early Marsh-orchid (cream-flowered)	*Dactylorhiza incarnata*	RedList_ENG_post 2001-LC	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
	Fen orchid	*Liparis loeselii*	Bern-A1		
	Flat-sedge	*Blysmus compressus*	Scottish_Biodiversity_List		
	Fly Orchid	*Ophrys insectifera*	England_NERC_S.41		
	Grass-poly	*Lythrum hyssopifolia*	WACA-Sch8		
	Least lettuce	*Lactuca saligna*	WACA-Sch8		*formerly common on river and ditch banks in East Anglia*
	Oxlip	*Primula elatior*	NS-excludes		
	Ribbon-leaved water-plantain	*Alisma gramineum*	WACA-Sch8		*fenland drain/ditch specialist*
	Small-flowered catchfly	*Silene gallica*	NS-excludes		*annual herb of cultivated and disturbed ground, mainly arable*
	Twayblade	*Neottia ovata*	RedList_GB_post2001-LC		*tolerant of a wide range of habitats including hedgerow, fen, wasteland and scrub*
	Cambridge Milk-parsley	*Selinum carvifolia*	RLENG.EN, RLGB.EN, WCA8, LNRS		*Known to be present in an IDB drain near Ramsey*
	Dyer's Greenweed	*Genista tinctoria*	CPASI, RLENG.VU, LNRS		*Good indicator of old permanent grassland of interest (including verges), particularly in the clay areas of Cambs and Pboro. Number of sites in Cambs and Pboro has been declining in recent decades and it is still under threat as many populations are small. Pboro IDBs*
	Fen Pondweed	*Potamogeton coloratus*	CPASI, NS, LNRS		*Fenland is the British stronghold. Shallow calcareous water. Most records in the Wicken and Whittlesey areas. Wetland habitats such as ponds and drains. All IDB surveys*
	Greater Bladderwort	*Utricularia vulgaris agg.*	RLENG.LC, RLGB.LC., LNRS		*Good indicator of high-quality wetland habitats as it is susceptible to eutrophication. At risk where populations are small. Look for in surveys*

Flowering Plant	Heath Dog-violet	*Viola canina subsp. ruppii*	RLGB EN. RLENG EN., LNRS	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	*In Woodwalton Fen, Holme fen & RUGR IDB only.*
	Lesser Water-plantain	*Baldellia ranunculoides*	CPASI, RLENG.VU, RLGB.Lr(NT), LNRS		*Only a few sites now have significant numbers. Under threat from a range of factors. Survey for them annually.*
	Long-stalked Yellow-sedge	*Carex lepidocarpa*	RLGB LC. RLENG LC. , LNRS		*Strong indicator of high-quality wet fen meadow habitats. Likely less than ten sites in Cambs and Pboro where it still occurs, at some of those in small numbers. Look for in surveys*
	Meadow Thistle	*Cirsium dissectum*	CPASI, LNRS		*Strong indicator of high-quality wet fen meadow habitats. Perhaps less than five sites in Cambs and Pboro where it still occurs. Look for in IDB surveys*
	Meadow Saxifrage	*Saxifraga granulata*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC		*Occasionally found on banks or in floodplains, indicator of good quality unimproved grasslands*
	Tasteless Water-pepper	*Persicaria mitis*	CPASI, NS, RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU, LNRS		*Found in the Ouse and Nene Washes and only found in a few sites outside of these and has been lost from some locations. Found in wet places in open vegetation, typically on nutrient-rich mud and peat that is exposed by a rapid 'drawdown' of water in the summer. Look out for in Ouse washes IDBs*
	Narrow-leaved Water-dropwort	*Oenanthe silaifolia*	CPASI, NS, LNRS		*Characteristic flood meadow species. Mostly restricted to a few sites in the River Great Ouse valley area. IDBs near Ouse washes only*
	Tubular Water-dropwort	*Oenanthe fistulosa*	RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU, Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Found in areas with winter flooding, including flood meadows and ponds. Look for around Nene and Ouse Washes IDBs*
	Slender Tare	*Ervum gracile*	RedList_GB_post2001-VU		
	Bog Pimpernel	*Lysimachia tenella*	RedList_GB_post2001-LC		
	Marsh Valerian	*Valeriana dioica*	RedList_ENG_post2001-NT		
	Great Burnet	*Sanguisorba officinalis*	NI_Priority		*Characteristic flood meadow and positive old grassland indicator species (although can be found in woodland). Associated with sites of natural history interest in Cambs and Pboro and has declined significantly. Many populations are small and so are under threat from destruction or neglect.*
	Saw-wort	*Serratula tinctoria*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC		*Strong indicator of a range of old species-rich habitats, including grassland and woodland edges. Has declined significantly nationally and locally. At the eastern edge of its range in Cambs and at many sites numbers are small so these populations are under threat. Now may only be present at less than ten sites in Cambs and Pboro.*
	Fibrous Tussock-sedge	*Carex appropinquata*	NS-excludes		
	Marsh Helleborine	*Epipactis palustris*	W(NI)O-Sch8_part1		
	Common Cottongrass	*Eriophorum angustifolium*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		

Flowering Plant	Fen Wood-rush	*Luzula pallescens*	RedList_GB_post2001-CR	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	*Found in Holme Fen, Needs ground disturbance*
	Marsh Lousewort	*Pedicularis palustris*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		
	Common Butterwort	*Pinguicula vulgaris*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		
	Hampshire Dandelion	*Taraxacum akteum*	NR-excludes		
	English Dandelion	*Taraxacum anglicum*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		
	Marsh Dandelion	*Taraxacum palustre*	RedList_ENG_post2001-VU		
	Water Germander	*Teucrium scordium*	WACA-Sch8		
	Fen Violet	*Viola stagnina*	RedList_GB_post2001-CR		
	Marsh Stitchwort	*Stellaria palustris*	RLENG.VU, RLGB.VU, Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Strong old wet grassland indicator. Present at less than ten sites in Cambs and Pboro and at risk in many of them. Look for in surveys near Nene, Ouse and WWF*
	Pepper-saxifrage	*Silaum silaus*	CPASI, LNRS		*Strong indicator of old species-rich grassland, especially damp grassland. Many populations are small and so are under threat from a lack of appropriate management and potentially development where sites are not protected. Look for in surveys*
Insect	Drab Wood-soldierfly	*Solva marginata*	RedList_GB_post2001-LC	Yes. Invertebrates use a wide range of plants as hosts for their larval stage and for feeding and egg laying in their adult stages. Aim to create and maintain the most diverse sward possible on banks, channel margins and in channel to support them by following a rotational vegetation management regime. Retain trees, hedgerows and scrub and plant more where possible. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	*Assoc with riverside trees esp willow/poplar*
Insect - Beetle	Zircon reed beetle	*Donacia aquatica*	NI_Priority		*Favours sedge dominated marginal habitat*
	Eyed Longhorn beetle	*Oberea oculata*	NR-includes		
	Mud Beetle	*Sphaerius acaroides*	RedList_GB_post2001-EN		
	Agabus uliginosus	*Agabus uliginosus*	Nb, RLGB.Lr(NT), LNRS		*Potentially a flagship species for seasonal pools. Found in a range of wetlands in isolated ponds or in seasonally flooded fen. Found at Wicken Fen, Woodwalton Fen and a relatively small number of sites outside of these. Look out for in surveys*
	Agabus undulatus	*Agabus undulatus*	CPASI, RLGB.Lr(NT), LNRS		*Most often found in fenland drains. Suitable flagship species for improved drain management as it is a distinctive species that is relatively recognisable Look out for in surveys*
	Donacia dentata	*Donacia dentata*	RLGB.VU, LNRS		*Very few known sites in Cambs and Pboro. Found in larger drains and rivers and feeds mainly on Arrowhead, Sagittaria sagittifolia. Relatively large and identifiable. Look out for in surveys*

Insect - Butterfly	Large copper	*Lycaena dispar*	WACA-Sch5_sect9.5a	Yes. Invertebrates use a wide range of plants as hosts for their larval stage and for feeding and egg laying in their adult stages. Aim to create and maintain the most diverse sward possible on banks, channel margins and in channel to support them by following a rotational vegetation management regime. Retain trees, hedgerows and scrub and plant more where possible. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC. .	
	Swallowtail	*Papilio machaon*	WACA-Sch5_sect9.4b		
	Grizzled Skipper	*Pyrgus malvae*	RLGB.VU, Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Active management is needed to maintain suitable habitat where the suitable food plants grow (such as Creeping Cinquefoil, Agrimony and Wild Strawberry). Relatively open, patchy grassland seems to be preferred where there is some periodic disturbance. This includes land by railway lines and brownfield sites.*
	Black Hairstreak	*Satyrium pruni*	RedList_GB_post2001-EN		
Insect - Caddis Fly (Trichoptera)	Erotesis baltica	*Erotesis baltica*	NR-includes		
Insect - Grasshopper	Large Marsh Grasshopper	*Stethophyma grossum*	England_NERC_S.41		
Insect - Moth	Scarce vapourer	*Orgyia recens*	RedList_GB_Pre94-VU		*Assoc with hawthorn/sallow in eastern England*
	Four-spotted	*Tyta luctuosa*	Nationally Scarce. UKBAP, LNRS		*Food plant is field bindweed so dependent on early successional habitats which are threatened by inappropriate management and eutrophication. May be more widespread and common than previously thought but more surveys are required to establish this.*
	Marsh Carpet	*Gagitodes sagittata*	RLEN EN., LNRS		*Present south of Benwick and Doddington & west of Coates.*
	Reed Leopard	*Phragmataecia castaneae*	RLGB VU. UKBAP, LNRS	Yes. Invertebrates use a wide range of plants as hosts for their larval stage and for feeding and egg laying in their adult stages. Aim to create and maintain the most diverse sward possible on banks, channel margins and in channel to support them by following a rotational vegetation management regime. Retain trees, hedgerows and scrub and plant more where possible. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	*Long-standing populations known only at Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen but recorded from a few other sites in this area of the county. The larval food plant is common reed.*
	White-spotted Pinion	*Cosmia diffinis*	Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Caterpillar feeds on elms. Disappearing from almost all its range except Cambs, which now comprises over three-quarters of its current British range.*
	Silver Barred	*Deltote bankiana*	RedList_GB_Pre94-VU		*Restricted distribution nationally. Species of fens, coastal marshes and bogs. Long-standing populations known only at Wicken Fen and Chippenham Fen in Cambs and Pboro.*
Insect - Orthopteran	Great Green Bush Cricket	*Tettigonia viridissima*	CPASI, LNRS		*Populations with sustainable numbers may only be present in less than five sites in Cambs and Pboro. Found in rough grassland with some scrub or on woodland edges. Look for in surveys near Nene and Ouse washes and WWF*

Insect - Spider	Wolf spider	*Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata*	NR-includes	Yes. Invertebrates use a wide range of plants as hosts for their larval stage and for feeding and egg laying in their adult stages.	*Favours damp ground level habitat; fen marsh damp woodland*

	Rosser's Sac-spider	*Clubiona rosserae*	NL, LNRS	Aim to create and maintain the most diverse sward possible on banks, channel margins and in channel to support them by following a rotational vegetation management regime. Retain trees, hedgerows and scrub and plant more where possible. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	*Only found in 1-2 sites in Britain, with recent records only at Chippenham Fen. Found in fens amongst cut sedge and reeds and in sedge tussocks.*
	Pardosa paludicola	*Pardosa paludicola*	NR-includes		
	Zora armillata	*Zora armillata*	NR-includes		
Mollusc	Large-mouthed Valve Snail	*Valvata macrostoma*	NR-includes	Limited. Look for presence during surveys.	*Look for in surveys*
	Witham orb mussel	*Sphaerium solidum*	NR-includes		*IDBs along the Ouse washes*
	Depressed river mussel	*Pseudanodonta complanata*	RedList_Global_post2001-VU		*Strictly assoc with large running water habitats*
	Taylor's Spire Snail	*Marstoniopsis insubrica*	RLUK Rare, LNRS		*IDBs along the Ouse washes*
	Desmoulin's Whorl Snail	*Vertigo moulinsiana*	HabDir-A2*		
Reptile	Adder	*Vipera berus*	WACA-Sch5_sect9.5a	Yes. Manage channels according to the SOP. Retain & create suitable habitat. Record sightings.	
Stonewort	Dwarf stonewort	*Nitella tenuissima*	RedList_GB_post2001-EN	Yes. Maintain a programme of rotational bank cutting and desilting little and often to support aquatic, marginal and terrestrial plants. Where found, and/or diversity is high, identify the historic management regime and maintain it as closely as possible to retain valuable species or make informed improvements to regime to enhance the stand. Look for in surveys, record presence & inform LERC.	
	Great Tassel Stonewort	*Tolypella prolifera*	RLGB.EN, Sect.41, UKBAP, LNRS		*Found in small alkaline water bodies which prefers slow-moving water and tends to grow in deeper water. A spring or summer annual and often occurs in quantity after ditch clearances.*
	Hedgehog Stonewort	*Chara aculeolata*	RLGB VU, UKBAP, NR, LNRS		*Only in some of the old Pboro brick pit sites in Cambs and Pboro. A freshwater species tolerant of slightly brackish water.*
	Bearded Stonewort	*Chara canescens*	WACA-Sch8		
	Tassel Stonewort	*Tolypella intricata*	RedList_GB_post2001-EN		
Terrestrial Mammal - Bats	Barbastelle Bat	*Barbastella barbastellus*	HabDir-A2*	Yes. Retain mature bank-side trees to provide suitable roosts for bats. Trim or pollard trees rather than remove them. Install bat boxes on bank-side trees or elsewhere in the district to improve roost provision. Provide bat boxes	*Thought to prefer pastoral landscapes with a mixture of deciduous woodland and other habitats. Roost mainly in cracks in trees.*
	Serotine	*Eptesicus serotinus*	CMS_EUROBATS-A1		
Trees	Native Elm	*Ulmus serrata*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC	Yes. Identify those left and conserve.	*Now rare due to Dutch elm so those left must be identified and conserved*
	Field Maple	*Acer campestre*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC		*common in hedgerows and scrub and planted on amenity land*
	Pedunculate Oak	*Quercus robur*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC		*ubiquitous species tolerant of waterlogging and may be growing along ditches and adjacent woodland*

Trees	Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*	RedList_ENG_post2001-LC	Yes. Identify those left and conserve.	*widely planted tree may be growing alongside ditches/drains*

	Small leaved lime	*Tilia cordata*	RedList_ENG_post 2001-LC		*widely planted tree may be growing alongside ditches/drains*
	Sweet chestnut	*Castanea sativa*	RedList_ENG_post 2001-LC		*present in the Middle Level; may be planted in hedgerow*
	Dark-leaved Willow	*Salix myrsinifolia*	RLENG.LC, RLGB.LC., LNRS	Limited. Look for presence during surveys. Retain where present	*Cambs holds the majority of the of the remaining southern / eastern England (likely) native sites for the species (less than five sites). Found in wet riverside woodland and fens. Look out for in surveys*
	Elm (various)	*Ulmus spp.*	RedList_ENG_post 2001-LC	Yes. Map droves across district	*Map droves and record Elm locations*

5.12. Invasive Non-native Species Summary

The IDB has identified the following aquatic and riparian invasive non-native species within or adjacent to the drainage district that are identified as likely to be influenced by, or impact upon the Board's activities. Some INNS species records have been excluded as they are not considered to be any greater detriment to the habitats managed by IDBs than some similar native species, and they are common throughout the district and Middle Level area so would be very difficult to control and/or eradicate. Only the most recent record from each specific location has been included.

Table 8: Aquatic & riparian invasive non-native species summary

Taxon Group	Common Name	Scientific Name	Location	Most Recent Date Recorded	Designations
Fern	Water Fern	*Azolla filiculoides*	Elm	26/08/2017	*WCA9ii*
Flowering Plant	Italian Alder	*Alnus cordata*	Wisbech	25/06/2014	
	Butterfly-bush	*Buddleja davidii*	Outwell	11/09/2019	
	New Zealand Pigmyweed	*Crassula helmsii*	Begdale	26/08/2017	*WCA9ii*
	Pale Galingale	*Cyperus eragrostis*	Elm	23/08/2019	
	Canadian Waterweed	*Elodea canadensis*	Redmoor Drain, Begdale	04/06/1997	*WCA9ii*
	Nuttall's Waterweed	*Elodea nuttallii*	Begdale	26/08/2017	*WCA9ii*
	Russian-vine	*Fallopia baldschuanica*	Outwell	11/09/2019	
	Japanese Knotweed	*Fallopia japonica*	Wisbech	28/06/2014	*WCA9ii*
	Giant Hogweed	*Heracleum mantegazzianum*	Elm	05/05/2018	*WCA9ii*
	Himalayan Balsam	*Impatiens glandulifera*	Halfpenny Lane ditch, Elm	04/06/1997	*WCA9ii*
	Curly Waterweed	*Lagarosiphon major*	Elm	26/08/2017	*WCA9ii*
	Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum	*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*	March Road shelterbelt, Friday Bridge	17/07/2014	*WCA9ii*
	Least Duckweed	*Lemna minuta*	Elm	26/08/2017	
	Parrot's-feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	Elm	26/08/2017	*WCA9ii*
	Winter Heliotrope	*Petasites fragrans*	Upwell	11/09/2019	

5.13. Water Level Management Plans

There are no Water Level Management Plans (WLMP) within the drainage district.

6. Habitat and Species Action Plans

6.1. Introduction

The following sections detail the objectives that the IDB has defined for each of the habitats and species that have been identified as a priority in the biodiversity audit, and that have the most potential to be influenced by the Boards activities, and the associated actions that will help to deliver each objective.

6.2. Habitat Action Plans

6.2.1 IDB Ditches

6.2.1.1 IDB Ditch Objectives:

1. *Develop and regularly review an Operations Manual to help to define the most favourable channel maintenance approaches for flood risk management and biodiversity, on a reach-by-reach basis.*
2. *Maximise the biodiversity value of IDB channels, banks and margins through sensitive management, all designed to support a wide range of species.*
3. *Enhance channel biodiversity via non-routine works where opportunities arise*
4. *Enhance channel biodiversity via a robust rigorous consenting process which requires developers to maintain the extent of natural habitat in the IDB district and compulsorily requires IDB habitat enhancement as development conditions*
5. *Improve the water quality in IDB channels through partnership working and incident reporting*

6.2.1.2 IDB Ditch Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Categorise / review categorisation of all IDB channels by flood risk to determine maintenance intensity and approach and document reasoning	• Map with channels coloured by risk category	2026 then annually	IDB	
			• Supporting table for above with reasoning	2026 then annually	IDB	
			• Minuted review of any changes from previous years categorisation and approval of current determination at Board Meeting ahead of works	2026 then annually	IDB	
	1b	Define/redefine and deliver most appropriate vegetation management approach/intensity for each IDB channel reach to manage flood risk and maximise opportunities for biodiversity. Favour the retention and rotational management of marginal and bank vegetation wherever possible.	• Map with planned veg management approach defined for each reach	2026 then annually	IDB	Ecologist
			• Documented confirmation that works were carried out in line with plan for each reach and if not, reasons why.	2026 then annually	IDB	Contractor
			• Minuted review of any changes to previous approach and approval of plan ahead of works at Board Meeting	2026 then annually	IDB	Ecologist
	1c	Define/redefine and deliver most appropriate desilting approach/intensity for each IDB channel reach to manage flood risk and maximise opportunities for biodiversity. Aim for regular and light desilting on a 3-year rotation approx. to mimic natural scour in periodic high flows.	• Map with desilting approach defined for each reach	2026 then annually	IDB	Ecologist
			• Documented confirmation that works were carried out in line with plan for each reach and if not, reasons why.	2026 then annually	IDB	Contractor
			• Minuted review of any changes to previous approach and approval of plan ahead of works at Board Meeting	2026 then annually	IDB	Ecologist

2	**2a**	Undertake routine channel maintenance in line with standard operating procedures (SOPs), best practice and in compliance with a range of environmental law.	• Spot checks during and after routine maintenance for SOP compliance	Annually	Ecologist	
			• Minuted report to the Board of compliance non/compliance for maintenance undertaken	Annually	Ecologist	
	2b	Survey a different sample reach of channel each year to benchmark biodiversity. Aim to identify areas of high biodiversity value and which areas could benefit from enhancement. Also aim to identify any correlation between diversity, habitat quality and management approaches.	• Chanel survey results and recommendations included in Board papers with summary review each year. • Results of surveys submitted to LERC	2026 then annually	Ecologist	IDB
3	**3a**	Ensure all non-routine channel works are assessed for environmental and ecological constraints and opportunities in advance of works. Identify and design-in opportunities to enhance channels using natural engineering approaches i.e. vegetated coir roll for bank toe stabilisation, hydroseeding, vegetated berms and diverse seed mixes.	• Minuted review of planned non-routine works and ecol. assessment requirements for forthcoming year at each Board Meeting. • Extent of habitat enhanced as a result of non-routine works reported annually in Board papers	2026 then Annually	IDB	Ecologist
4	**4a**	Review and update consent policies and A&G to ensure no net loss of watercourses to development. Aim to retain watercourses or create comparable new habitat and enhancing any impacted through imposition and enforcement of consent conditions.	• Updated consent policies and procedures available on website • Records of consents granted and outcomes. • Extent of watercourse created/retained/enhanced each year	2026 then Annually	Ecologist	Ecologist
5	**5a**	Develop/continue the local water quality stakeholder working group to tackle pollution and improve water quality in the district	• No. of pollution meetings attended in the year and outcomes detailed in Board meeting minutes	2026 then annually	IDB	Ecologist/ AW / EA / LA
	5b	Encourage all IDB networks to report instances of pollution within IDB channels promptly to both the IDB and the EA	• No. of pollution incidents reported in year.	Annually	IDB	Ecologist

6.2.3 Ponds

6.2.3.1 Ponds Objectives

1. *Retain, enhance and increase the number ponds within the District, to serve as stepping stones for aquatic and riparian species, by encouraging and supporting landowners/managers to create more and manage them favorably*

6.2.3.2 Ponds Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Develop a management plan for any ponds owned and/or managed by the IDB to maximise opportunities for biodiversity	• Mgmt plan drafted and approved	2027	Ecologist	IDB
	1b	Publish a note on the website detailing the value of ponds for biodiversity in the District and encouraging the retention, favourable management and creation of ponds, and signpost further advice & information.	• Ponds note on website	2028	Ecologist	IDB
	1c	Include brief flyer with rate demands promoting the retention, favourable management, creation and importance of ponds within the District, particularly near IDB watercourses to act as stepping stones for wildlife, and signpost further advice and guidance	• Flyer sent out with rate demand	2029	Ecologist	IDB
	1d	Audit the number of priority ponds in the District at the start and end of the BAP period	• No of ponds created in district in BAP Period	2026 & 2030	IDB	Ecologist

6.2.5 Arable Field Margins

6.2.5.1 Arable Field Margins Objectives

1. *Retain, enhance and increase the extent of arable field margins within the District by encouraging and supporting private landowners to do so, particularly adjacent to IDB drains, and encourage the establishment of new arable field margins wherever possible.*

6.2.5.2 Arable Field Margins Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Publish details on the IDB website of the benefits of retaining and creating good quality arable field margins for the IDB and for biodiversity and signpost further advice, including LNRS habitat opportunity map	• Post on the website	2026-27	IDB / Ecologist	
	1b	Develop a brief flyer encouraging the retention, enhancement and creation of field margins for the benefit of IDBs and biodiversity & signpost further advice, , including LNRS habitat opportunity map, and send with rate demands	• Flyer sent out with rate demand	2027 & 2029	IDB / Ecologist	Ecologist
	1c	Audit the extent of arable field margins at the start and end of the BAP period	• Map of extent of field margins in 2026 & 2031	2026 & 2030	IDB	Ecologist & Landowners/LNRS owner

6.2.6 Coastal & Floodplain Grazing Marsh (CFPGM)

6.2.6.1 CFPGM Objectives

1. *Retain, improve and increase the extent of CFPGM within the District by encouraging and supporting private landowners and developers to retain and manage existing CFPGM habitat favorably, primarily via assisting with favourable water levels, and creating or supporting the creation of new CFPGM habitat where possible and appropriate.*

6.2.6.2 CFPGM Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Identify CFPGM owners / managers adjacent to IDB watercourses and make contact to ascertain if the IDB can do anything to support the favourable management / conservation status of the habitat	• No. of CFPGM owners / Managers contacted	2026	Ecologist	IDB
	1b	Publish a note on the website detailing the value of CFPGM for biodiversity in the District and encouraging the retention, favourable management and creation of the habitat, and signpost further advice & information	• CFPGM note on website	2027	Ecologist	IDB
	1c	Include brief flyer with rate demands promoting the retention, favourable management, creation and importance of CFPGM within the District and signpost further advice and guidance	• Flyer sent out with rate demand	2028/2030	Ecologist	IDB
	1d	Audit the extent of CFPGM at the start and end of the BAP period	• Extent of CFPGM in District at the end of the BAP period is the same / greater that at the start.	2026 & 2030	IDB	Ecologist

6.2.8 Fen Droves

6.2.8.1 Fen Droves Objectives

1. *Identify and map all existing and defunct Droves within the district and confirm ownership, provenance and status, particularly those with IDB ditches adjacent to them and those that IDBs use as access to inspect and maintain assets.*
2. *Retain, protect and enhance Droves within the District by encouraging and supporting private landowners/managers to do so.*

6.2.8.2 Fen Droves Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	1a	Liaise with/enlist assistance of community groups, IDB members and rate payers to develop a register and map of Fen Droves within the district	• Map with Droves highlighted	2026-7	IDB	Ecologist / Community Groups
			• Supporting table detailing drove ownership, provenance, status i.e. PRoW. and any other relevant history	2026-8	IDB	Ecologist / Community Groups / Landowners
	1b	Publish findings of Fen Droves Register project within local community	• Publication of map and drove history via Parish News or similar and IDB website	2027-8	IDB	Ecologist / Community Groups
			• Summary of project findings in Board Report	2028	IDB	Ecologist
			• Provide map and details to LERC	2028	IDB	Ecologist
2	2a	Support/encourage biodiversity surveys of Fen Droves, particularly those along IDB ditches, to identify any enhancements that could be made to maximise biodiversity. **Annual channel biodiversity surveys could be expanded to incorporate this.*	• Number of survey reports with current & historic management approaches detailed along with enhancement recommendations made, provided to relevant landowner	2026-31	IDB / Ecologist	Ecologist / Community Groups / Landowners
			• Number of surveys & summary published in Board Reports			
			• Number of survey results sent to LERC			

6.2.9 Orchards & Woodland

6.2.9.1 Orchards & Woodland Objectives

1. *Create and restore woodlands and orchards within the District by supporting private landowners and developers to do so, primarily near IDB-managed channels, in line with the LNRS strategy, and deliver favourable water levels for the habitat*

6.2.9.2 Orchard & Woodland Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Promote the LNRS opportunity map via website, rate demands flyers and community groups to encourage woodland and orchard creation and restoration	• Promotion on website / rate demand flyers and community group comms	2028	IDB	Ecologist
	1b	Support woodland and orchard creation and restoration projects with funding or resources for creation or maintenance	• No of woodland projects supported	Ongoing	IDB	Ecologist / Landowners

6.3. Species Action Plans

6.3.1 Notes on species without specific actions

Some species have not been detailed specifically in this section, as actions to provide more, and better quality, habitat for them are delivered via other actions, mainly habitat and procedural actions. Such species include a range of flora that will be better supported via standard operating procedures (SOPS) for ditches, which aim to retain marginal and bank-side vegetation and manage it rotationally. Actions for habitats also encourage retention, creation and favourable management which will be of benefit to a range of species, such as the creation of arable field margins and reedbeds. Also, annual surveys aim to identify, record, report and protect many priority plant and animal species. SOPs and best practice IDB habitat management will also optimize opportunities for reptiles, many birds, invertebrates, other mammals, eels and fish.

6.3.2 Birds

6.3.2.1 Birds Objectives:

1. *Maximise habitat availability and quality for all birds that use IDB channels and margins for foraging and nesting, through sensitive routine channel maintenance activities*
2. *Improve opportunities for particular priority birds within the IDB District that could be impacted by IDB activities, with specific provisions*
3. *Improve understanding of bird population trends in District by recording and reporting bird sightings, particularly for priority birds*
4. *Protect and enhance bird habitats through non-routine works*

6.3.2.2 Birds Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Define and publish **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** for routine maintenance activities, in line with legislation and best practice, that consider birds, including: • Retention and rotational management of marginal vegetation fringes • Bank-side tree and scrub retention and management, • Rotational bank vegetation cutting • Scheduling work outside the nesting season i.e. mid-August onwards	• Published SOPs available on website which consider birds covering: ~ Channel vegetation management, ~ Bank vegetation management inc. trees and scrub, ~ Desilting, ~ Herbicide use	2026	IDB	Ecologist
2	**2a**	Map, retain, protect and increase bank-side trees for **KINGFISHERS** as fishing perches wherever possible, favouring trimming for access and conveyance rather than removal.	• Important Kingfisher fishing areas mapped & made available to works operatives	2027	Ecologist / IDB	Landowners, Community
			• No. of important Kingfisher areas equal or greater at end of BAP period	2031	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Community
	2b	Map, retain, manage, protect and create **KINGFISHER** nesting sites along IDB watercourses	• Kingfisher nest sites mapped & made available to works operatives	2027	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Community
	2c	Map existing **BARN OWL BOXES** within the district, maintain existing boxes, fund and install new ones either on IDB assets or by liaising with private landowners and communities	• Map of Barn Owl boxes in district	2027	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
			• Number of boxes maintained each year reported in Board Report	Annually	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
			• No. of Barn Owl boxes in district equal or greater at end of BAP period	2027-2031	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community

2	2d	Install on IDB assets, or encourage the installation of **SWIFT NEST BOXES** on private and community assets near IDB channels by funding next boxes and providing installation assistance where necessary	• Promotion of swift nest box installation and provision via website, community news and rate demands	2028	IDB	Ecologist
			• Number of swift boxes installed and map of them	Ongoing	IDB	Ecologist, Community, Landowners
3	3a	Encourage and support bird **SURVEYS.** **RECORD AND REPORT SIGHTINGS** of birds, particularly priority birds, and encourage others via IDB networks to do the same	• Publication to encourage surveys, recording and reporting to the ecologist and/or **iSpot/irecord** via: ~ Board Report ~ IDB website ~ Rate demand ~ Community communications	2026	IDB	Ecologist, Community, Landowners
			• Mapped sightings across the IDB District published with Board report	Annually	IDB	Ecologist
4	4a	Ensure all non-routine channel and asset works are assessed for impacts to birds and mitigations and enhancements are designed-in ahead of works, particularly scheduling works outside nesting season. Enhancements could include retaining valuable habitat, artificial nest box provision and using green engineering such as coir roll and enhanced seed mixes.	• Minuted review of planned non-routine works and ecol. assessment requirements for forthcoming year at each Board Meeting. • Enhancements that benefit birds as a result of non-routine works reported annually in Board papers	2026 then Annually	IDB	Ecologist

6.3.3 Mammals

6.3.3.1 Mammals Objectives:

1. *Maximise habitat availability and quality for all mammals but particularly priority mammals, that use IDB channels and margins for foraging and refuge, through sensitive routine channel maintenance activities*
2. *Improve opportunities for particular priority mammals within the IDB District that could be impacted by IDB activities, with specific provisions*
3. *Improve understanding of mammal population trends in District by recording and reporting sightings, particularly for priority mammals*
4. *Protect and enhance mammal habitats through non-routine works*

6.3.3.2 Mammals Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Define and publish **standard operating procedures (SOPs)** for routine maintenance activities, in line with legislation and best practice, that consider mammals, including: • Retention and rotational management of marginal vegetation fringes • Bank-side tree and scrub retention and sensitive management, • Rotational bank vegetation cutting • Scheduling work outside sensitive seasons	• Published SOPs available on IDB website which consider **WATER VOLES, OTTERS, HEDGEHOGS AND BATS** at least, covering: ~ Channel vegetation management, ~ Bank vegetation management inc. trees and scrub, ~ Desilting, ~ Herbicide use	2026	Ecologist	IDB
2	**2a**	Support **WATER VOLE** conservation through the mink control project	• Funding provided to support mink control project	Annually	IDB	Waterlife Recovery Trust
			• Number of mink control rafts hosted or funded on IDB watercourses	Annually	IDB	Waterlife Recovery Trust
			• Publication to promote the mink control project via posts on website, rate demand notices, Board meetings and community communications and no. of volunteers recruited	Ongoing	IDB	Waterlife Recovery Trust, MLC

	2b	Identify and protect known or potential **OTTER** holts (refuges) and create or support the creation of more along appropriate IDB channels	• Known and potential otter holts (refuges) mapped & made available to works operatives	2027	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Community
			• No of otter holts increasing along IDB channels	Ongoing	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Community
			• Promotion of otter holt creation and retention via website, community news and rate demands	2028-2030	IDB	Ecologist
2	**2c**	Identify and protect known and potential **BAT** roosts (in trees and structures) along or near to IDB watercourses and install or support the installation of bat boxes in appropriate places along or near to IDB channels	• Known and potential bat roosts in trees and structures mapped & made available to works operatives	2027	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
			• No. of bat roost provisions increasing along IDB channels	Annually	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
			• Promotion of bat roost retention and bat box installation via website, community news and rate demands	2027-2031	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
3	**3a**	Encourage and support mammal **surveys,** particularly priority mammals. Record and report **sightings** of mammals, particularly priority mammals, and encourage others via IDB networks to do the same	• Publication to encourage recording and reporting to the ecologist and/or **iSpot/irecord** via ~ Board Report ~ IDB website ~ Rate demand ~ Community communications	Ongoing	IDB	Ecologist, Community, Landowners, Volunteers
			• Mapped sightings across the IDB District & (non-sensitive elements) published with Board report	Annually	IDB	Ecologist

4	**4a**	Ensure all non-routine channel and asset works are assessed for impacts to mammals and mitigations and enhancements are designed-in ahead of works, particularly scheduling works outside sensitive seasons. Enhancements could include retaining valuable habitat, creation of artificial refuges and boxes, provision and use of green engineering such as coir roll and enhanced seed mixes.	• Minuted review of planned non-routine works and ecol. assessment requirements for forthcoming year at each Board Meeting. • Enhancements that benefit mammals as a result of non-routine works reported annually in Board papers	Annually	IDB	Ecologist

6.3.4 Trees

6.3.4.1 Trees Objectives:

1. *Identify and protect priority trees, particularly elm, black poplars and dark-leaved willow within the District*
2. *Increase numbers of black poplars*

6.3.4.2 Trees Actions

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Map and protect elm, black poplars and dark-leaved willow within the IDB district	• Map of selected trees & made available to works operative	2028	Ecologist / IDB	Landowners, Community
2	**2a**	Seek and progress opportunities to plant more black poplars in appropriate locations across the IDB district	• Publication to request opportunities to plant black poplar via: ~ Board Report ~ IDB website ~ Rate demands ~ Community communications	At least twice in BAP period	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community
			• No. of black poplar in District equal or greater at end of BAP period	2027-2031	IDB	Ecologist, Landowners, Volunteers, Community

6.3.5 Invasive Non-native Species (INNS)

6.3.5.1 INNS Objectives:

1. *Minimise the risk of introducing or spreading INNS through IDB activities*
2. *Identify, control and eradicate INNS from the District*

6.3.5.2 INNS Actions:

Objective ref.	Action no.	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Develop/update, publish and adhere to a biosecurity protocol for IDB activities	• Biosecurity protocol published on-line and made available to IDB operatives	2026	Ecologist	IDB
2	**2a**	Encourage and support all IDB networks to: • Improve their recognition of INNS • Report suspected INNS in and around IDB channels promptly • Follow good biosecurity procedures such as check-clean-dry protocols • Signpost further information	• Information published via: ~ Board Report ~ IDB website ~ Rate demands ~ Community communications ~ Information Boards	2027	IDB	Ecologist, Community, Landowners
	2b	Provide support to partners in IDB networks to control existing INNS within the IDB District	• No. of INNS control projects supported	Ongoing	IDB	Ecologist, Community, Landowners

7. Procedural Action Plan

7.1. Introduction

A number of procedural actions have been identified and detailed below. These aim to help to underpin all other actions to support and enhance biodiversity via IDB activities.

7.2. Procedural Objectives

1. *Improve IDB representative's and contractor's knowledge and delivery of biodiversity support through training*
2. *Maintain no net loss of trees and hedgerows as a result of IDB activity and consenting*
3. *Maintain a no-culverting policy which aims to maintain the extent of open ditch habitat in the District*
4. *Liaise closely with Parish Councils to improve knowledge and support for IDB work*

7.3. Procedural Actions

Objective ref.	Action number	Action	Measurable / Indicators	Completion date	Action Lead	Partners
1	**1a**	Ensure all staff including contractors have received biodiversity training within 6 months from the start date of this Plan, or as part of their induction, and refresher training provided every 3 years.	• Numbers of staff and trained and dates	2026 & 29	IDB	Ecologist
2	**2a**	Develop and publish a "no net loss" policy for trees and hedgerows	• Publication of approved policy on website	By 2028	IDB	
3	**3a**	Develop and publish a "no culverting" policy	• Publication of approved policy on website	By 2029	IDB	
4	**4a**	Deliver IDB updates at Parish Council meetings and request attendance of Parish Council at IDB meetings	• No of meetings attended by IDB and Parish Councils	Ongoing	IDB	Parish Council

8. Monitoring

Appropriate indicators have been set for each of the IDB's biodiversity actions. The individual action plans set out the indicators and measurables which will be used to assess progress and execution against the plan. The IDB will review actions and indicators at least annually.

The overall plan will be updated at least every 5 years but is a dynamic document so may change more frequently for example in the light of monitoring outcomes or changing priorities.

9. Reporting

The Board is responsible for ensuring that progress against the Plans' targets are routinely reviewed and reported, at least annually, at Board meetings to allow the Board to discuss and review BAP activity and to modify the BAP and actions to meet the objectives where necessary.

Annual summary progress reports will detail which actions have been progressed according to the plan, any new opportunities identified, risks and issues affecting the objectives or actions, and the contribution actions have made towards achieving the objectives. Recommendations will be made in the light of the monitoring outcomes.

Making this information available to a wider audience is important in increasing the understanding of the importance of the Boards' actions regarding biodiversity and inspiring people about biodiversity. As such, the IDB will make the summary reports available externally in the following ways:

1. *In the public domain via the IDB's website;*
2. *Provided to conservation partners and community groups such as Parish Councils to assist with further local biodiversity conservation planning;*
3. *Provided to local authorities in order to contribute towards their legislative biodiversity reporting requirements including the Local Nature Recovery Strategies;*
4. *The Local Biological Records Centre.*

10. Appendices

Appendix I – National Character Area 46 – The Fens Detailed Statements of Environmental Opportunity

Link to full Fens NCA - The Fens - National Character Area Profiles

SEO 1: Manage the agricultural landscape and soils which allow the Fens to be a major provider of food and horticultural produce, while seeking to enhance opportunities for biodiversity.
For example by:

- Maintaining the valuable, productive, open agricultural landscape of the Fens National Character Area (NCA) with its high-quality soils, many of which are classed as Grade 1 agricultural land, through sustainable farming and agricultural agreements to the benefit of food production, biodiversity, sense of place and climate change regulation.
- Increasing opportunities to manage and protect the remaining peat resource, for example by raising water levels, to maintain (or enhance where possible) the build-up of organic matter; and encouraging landowners and managers to pursue such activities.
- Encouraging landowners and managers to use sustainable farming methods that protect the soil, such as maintaining vegetative cover and using grass buffer strips to reduce soil erosion from susceptible arable fields in the autumn and winter.
- Encouraging the adoption of good practice to avoid soil compaction and maintain good soil structure.
- Encouraging landowners and managers to manage land to prevent peat from drying out, and to maintain wetted peat soils to reduce loss through compaction, oxidation and wastage.
- For mineral soils in the NCA, promoting management techniques to build up soil organic matter to help maintain and enhance soil quality.
- Encouraging farmers to use techniques such as establishing break crops to manage land and protect soil.
- Encouraging minimum tillage and greater use of organic manures, biosolids and digestates plus soil conditioners, which will help to ameliorate soil losses if pursued on sufficient scale.
- Encouraging the establishment of areas of semi-natural habitat such as reedbed and washland which slow the passage of water through the hydrological system.
- Restoring and managing traditional orchards where there is already a traditional pattern, for example around Wisbech, promoting the planting of new orchards of mixed fruit trees to encourage bees where they are absent, and promoting the expansion of traditional shelterbelts around orchards.

SEO 2: Manage the core wetland complexes and increase their connectivity by enhancing the main rivers, waterways and their associated riparian habitats and improve recreational access opportunities to the Fens.
For example by:

- Promoting the creation and restoration of wetland landscapes through co-ordinated and sensitive management of water resources in conjunction with Fens for the Future partners, including Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and the farming community.
- Managing key wetland sites, including Wicken, Woodwalton and Holme Fens, remnants of the original fen, together with the great washlands which will form the core wetland complexes.
- In addition to the existing core areas, developing extensions at Baston Fen, Great Fen and Wicken Fen as envisioned in the Wicken Vision, as well as new areas such as Lakenheath Fen, Needingworth and the Wissey Wetland, to create more and larger areas of wetland habitats.

- Improving the water quality and quantity in water bodies in the Fens and improving their habitat value by creating buffer zones and undertaking habitat enhancement works, and identifying means by which issues including diffuse pollution can be co-operatively tackled, thus making a valuable contribution to outcomes required by the Water Framework Directive.
- Critically assessing the engineered network of ditches, installing new water management mechanisms where necessary, to enable localised management of groundwater.
- Encouraging winter flood storage on appropriate areas of land, ensuring appropriate management and control of any water resource created, in accordance with Water Level Management Plans, promoting the reversion of existing flood-storage washlands to permanent grassland with extensive grazing regimes, and promoting the creation of new multi-functional washlands.
- Ensuring that sustainable flood risk management for the Fens is delivered through close partnerships.
- Promoting and establishing strategic, appropriately sized areas for biodiversity across the Fens to mitigate the impacts of local, summer storm-related catchment flooding, and to develop robust populations.
- Integrating and developing water resource management within flood management works and land management regimes, particularly at break point areas along the edge of the fen.
- Ensuring that the soils remain adequately hydrated to prevent erosion and maintain soil chemistry, especially where these soils could form ochre and become extremely acidic if dried and re-wetted.
- Promoting the creation of permissive and definitive access to increase opportunities for people to visit the Fens using sustainable transport methods; identifying the strategic gaps in the network and providing public transport in association with employment, heritage, education and recreation initiatives for local people and neighbouring towns and cities; and ensuring that existing projects with capacity such as Fens for the Future and the Fens Waterway Link address recreational and access issues.
- Identifying the strategic access gaps in the network and providing public transport in association with employment, heritage, education and recreation initiatives for local people and neighbouring towns and cities.

SEO 3: Plan for the creation of new coastal landscapes in the Wash area that are adapted and resilient to the impact of climate change, for the benefit of people and wildlife.
For example by:

- Seeking opportunities to reinstate intertidal salt marshes through realignment from arable to extensively grazed salt marsh, in line with the Wash Shoreline Management Plan.
- Seeking opportunities to create grazing marsh, reedbed and salt marsh throughout the Fens to compensate for losses of these habitats at the coast as a result of climate change and associated isostatic adjustment-induced sea-level rise, or where work carried out has damaged habitat.
- Seeking opportunities to identify and monitor key coastal active process sites.
- Replacing habitat lost from the coast through the East of England Regional Habitat Creation Programme.
- Planning for provision of permissive and definitive access (including the coastal access path) to increase opportunities for people to visit the Fens using sustainable transport methods.

SEO 4: Conserve, manage and enhance the Fens landscape and increase educational opportunities to access its geodiversity, archaeology and cultural heritage to enhance enjoyment and understanding for those who live and work in and visit the Fens.
For example by:

- Protecting and appropriately managing the historic environment, for its contribution to local character and sense of identity and as a framework for habitat restoration and

sustainable development.
- Improving the condition of heritage assets through appropriate measures and seeking to reduce conflicting or unsympathetic management regimes, while recognising the high potential in this landscape for undiscovered remains.
- Providing a wider understanding of the geological record of environmental change held within the peat and associated Quaternary sediments, and supporting demonstration projects and sites that illustrate the cultural history, successional fenland habitats and geodiversity of the Fens.
- Managing and conserving the geological exposures throughout the Fens by the removal of undergrowth and the prevention of fly-tipping on these sites, in addition to identifying and protecting new (key) sites as they are discovered.
- Making links between geodiversity, archaeology and cultural heritage, building towards an integrated approach with the surrounding natural environment/landscapes.
- Conserving and monitoring buried geological and archaeological remains that are under threat through erosion of peat, increased or inappropriate cultivation, drying out from dewatering for irrigation, and pressures from development.
- Conserving historic landmark buildings and earthwork sites together with their setting, especially on the settled fens and clay islands.
- Using understanding of the area's traditional and historic architecture, and its distinct patterns of settlement, to inform appropriate conservation and use of historic buildings and farmsteads, and to plan for and inspire any environmentally beneficial new development that makes a positive contribution to local character.
- Promoting understanding of the benefits and potential adverse impacts of wind farms and associated electricity transmission pylons, which are an increasing feature of the fenland landscape.

SEO 5: Seek partners to aid in the development and future provision of new, distinctive, Fenland economies.
For example by:
- By promoting fenland cuisine and food preparation using local ingredients.
- Promoting natural art and craft production (such as baskets, woven reed mats, screens and fences for garden or poultry/ animal management purposes) in order to diversify the economic opportunities and output from Fenland resources.

District Officer Report on behalf of Fred and Neil

We have been busy liaising with the WMA on several projects including the incinerator development, Thomas Clarkson and Wales bank to name a few.

We have also moved forward being able to access sites to carry out flailing in some instances with the help of the WMA enforcement team, who have been brilliant in their support.

We have walked most of the boards drains and are currently drawing up a flail mowing and maintenance plan with regards to maintenance HAC are still doing a great job and we have been involved with the Chairman and the WMA in drawing up a new contract.

We have introduced a new WhatsApp group with Nigel and his staff, this is working extremely well and has massively improved communication which in turn is benefiting the system. Thanks to Nigel and his staff for their input and co-operation. With technology in mind we have also been looking into an electronic monitoring system, which will help with several aspects including contract work, progress monitoring and environmental elements.

Costings for this are included with the estimates for this financial year. Matthew will be able to give more details at the meeting.

Fred and I have been paid for our services up to the end of March to enable them to be in the correct tax year so we are not submitting hours at this stage. We may add verbal comments at the meeting and will be glad to answer any questions

Neil Buttress, District Officer, Health and Safety Report and Environment Report

With regards to health and safety following on from our audit, all outstanding tasks have been completed in accordance to the report issued in November. The most difficult aspect was providing suitable conformity of our structures for structural stability. I contacted a King's Lynn company who wanted £3,000+vat to inspect them, however after searching for other companies we settled on *Shields Wilson Ltd* whose charges are £1,200 plus vat - this includes drawings and suitability statement of which Matthew is now in possession of.

Mark Shields noted in his report two minor issues, those being a reinforcement strut at the outfall weir, which Nigel will fix for us and one step riser at point 56 on Weasenham Lane, which was deemed a little too high. To resolve this Nigel and I, if he is happy with this, can write a risk assessment which is acceptable to all concerned - as it is only marginally high.

As an alternative, if it is the Board's wish, we would have to remove the structure and alter the riser. For any future structures *Shields Wilson Ltd* would be happy to quote to design to a certified specification, rather than retrospective action.

All signs have been checked and allocated what3word locations, of which the WMA are now in possession of and will be digitising them, which once completed will shortly be available to board members. Online maps of the network can be seen on the WMA website already - https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7a7d8962b15145e6ac847021e3519556/

With regards to environment, I had a lengthy meeting with Sofi Loyyd (Middle Level) and Caroline Laburn (Environmental Manager at the WMA) to discus and handover of our biodiversity action plan (BAPS). Following this meeting I met with Caroline and Dan from the WMA to finalise our BAPS for this year. We need to keep enhancing the environment, whilst not losing sight of the main purpose of our drainage system. With this in mind we would consider putting up owl boxes as a starting point. If anyone has any suggestions for a suitable position within our district please give this consideration.

I will be happy to answer any questions at the meeting.

Internal Drainage Boards – Remote auditing audit programme
2026/27 Internal Audit Arrangements

Strategic Risks

Governance

1) Review Constitution, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Award of Contracts and other procedures (I will obtain this data from your website)
2) Review Board agendas and minutes for the year (I will require the latest three meetings data – agendas and minutes please. Also include the latest meeting agenda)
3) Review any Committee agendas and minutes for the year (I will require the latest three meetings data – agendas and minutes please. Also include the latest meeting agenda)
4) The drainage board has published information on its website to comply with the Transparency Code for smaller authorities (I will obtain this data from your website)
5) The drainage board for the previous year correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (I will obtain this data from your website, and from sight of your Board minutes approving the dates set)
6) The drainage board has complied with the publication requirements as stated by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Please provide evidence that these have been complied with)

Risk Management

1) Review risk management policy and procedures (These should be on the website, but please provide if not)
2) Review risk register (If not on the website please provide)
3) Review process and procedures for how risk is managed on a day by day basis (A brief note on this please)
4) Review key objectives for the IDB and the risks associated with achieving these objectives (This should flow from the risk register)
5) Review the controls in place to mitigate these risks and see how effective they are. (These should be contained within the risk register. I may select a sample for review to confirm working as expected)

Operational Risks

Accounting Records

1) Review the accounting records for the IDB
2) Are these up to date and in balance (A current trial balance please and a copy of the profit and loss account and balance sheet at the time of the audit)

Expenditure

1) Review accounts payable (creditors) (An aged creditors list please)
2) Test a sample of payments made to verify they have been correctly paid. Check if possible the receipt of the goods. Check accuracy, procedures (purchase order system) and approval process – was this in accordance with Financial Regulations. (I will select my sample from the expenditure items reported to the Board meetings) (Copies of the supporting documents for the sample selected will be required)
3) Check treatment of VAT (included above)

Budget

1) Review the budgetary arrangements. (This should be available in the Board papers)
2) Review the precept of rates (Please provide the Board agenda and minute approving the penny rate for 25/26 if not already provided above)
3) Review how the budget is monitored (These should be included in the Board papers above)
4) Review reserves and the policy for these (Please provide latest reserves position and 5/10 year forecast that shows how general reserves are expected year on year in the future)

Income

1) Review accounts receivable (debtors) (An aged debtors list please – both general and rates)
2) Review debt collection procedures (Please confirm debt collection arrangements and dates)
3) Review any write off arrangements (Please provide details of any write offs – approval/procedures)
4) Review recording and banking of income (Please confirm banking arrangements particularly cash or cheque)
5) Test a sample of payments received to verify they have been correctly dealt with. Check accuracy and procedures – was this in accordance with Financial Regulations. (Please provide a list of debts raised in the year and I will select a sample for a more detailed review)
6) Check treatment of VAT (included above)

Petty Cash

1) Check the Petty Cash arrangements where held
2) Verify Petty cash is in balance, test a sample of transactions for relevance and accuracy and that a valid receipt is present. (Please provide a short note on petty cash and confirm VAT has been correctly treated)
3) Check treatment of VAT (included above)

Payroll

1) Review the payroll system
2) Test a sample of employees for accuracy of pay and treatment of variations including Tax and NI. (Please provide a summary of payments made to staff which includes all deductions both employee and employer)
3) Verify PAYE and NI requirements have been met (Please confirm and evidence that PAYE, NI and pension payments have been made to HMIC and LCC)

Asset Register

1) Verify the asset register is complete and up to date. (Please provide a copy of the asset register)
2) Verify where possible the asset and investment exists (I will not be confirming that any asset exists for this audit!!)

Bank

1) Verify and confirm bank reconciliations have been regularly undertaken. (Please provide a latest bank reconciliation)
2) Confirm end of year bank reconciliation (Year end follow up audit)

Accounting Statements

1) Verify accounting statements have been undertaken and reconciled to the cash book. (Please confirm and year end follow up audit)
2) Review and verify the audit trail of sums feeding into the accounting statements. (Year end follow up audit)

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

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

Information Commissioner - Data Protection Registration renewal	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Expenses in connection with Board meeting	130.90
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Hundred of Wisbech IDB and Waldersey IDB catchment study (Account From Royal Haskoning)	1,200.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Conversations with Board's Chairman concerning various issues, planning & development applications)	1,585.39
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges, stationery and travelling	11,896.56
Middle Level Commissioners - Court costs	1.00
Needham & Laddus IDB - Contribution in lieu of drainage rates (Drainage of land through Needham Bank) - 2025-2026	154.00
Environment Agency - Precept	8,890.00
Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment	24,866.38
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work, conversion of tractor, excavator and mower to white diesel, concrete washed, clearing charge, together with other drain maintenance	14,620.33
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2025	1,246.80
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Removal of diesel bowser	225.00
W Norman & Sons Ltd - District Officers fees from October 2024 to June 2025	720.00
Needham & Laddus IDB - Contribution in lieu of drainage rates (Drainage of land through Needham Bank) - 2024-2025	651.24
Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment	12,447.77
Mr N Buttress - District Officers fees from November 2024 to 9th June 2025	1,410.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work and other drain maintenance	12,803.53
PKF Littlejohn LLP - Audit Fee (2024-2025 accounts)	1,260.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Production of Board report, attendance at meetings, planning & development applications)	8,740.24
ADC (East Anglia) Limited - Jetting of pipelines, de-water silt slurry prior to disposal, CCTV unit to carry out post jetting inspection, waste disposal, damming of inlet and outfall ditch and auxiliary jetting unit required for working in school grounds	10,860.00
ADC (East Anglia) Limited - Jetting of pipelines, de-water silt slurry prior to disposal, CCTV unit to carry out post jetting inspection, waste disposal, damming and pumping, together with damming and de-watering	6,240.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply channel survey and CCTV survey of drainage, together with supply of Hundred of Wisbech IDB and Waldersey IDB catchment study (Accounts from EDI Surveys and Royal Haskoning)	75,530.40
Middle Level Commissioners - Administration charge, postages, telephone charges and internal audit fees (Whiting & Partners, 2024-2025 accounts)	13,647.41
Middle Level Commissioners - Renewal of insurances	1,028.50
Environment Agency - Precept	8,890.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Fees (Planning & development applications)	8,787.54
Mr N Buttress - District Officers fees from 10th June 2025 to 12th November 2025	1,770.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work, strimming, hedgecutting, removal of weed and teleporter work	11,769.13
Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment	24,866.38
Association of Drainage Authorities - Subscription 2026	1,309.20
AW Safety Management Limited - Additional health & safety visit on 4th November 2025	780.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Teleporter work, flail mowing and road brushing	731.40
Public Works Loan Board - Loan repayment	12,447.77
W Norman & Sons Ltd - District Officers fees from June 2025 to October 2025	450.00
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Quarterly maintenance work	11,057.53
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Hundred of Wisbech IDB and Waldersey IDB catchment study (Account From Royal Haskoning)	54,382.80
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply Board meeting lunch	116.17
Mr N Buttress - Purchase of pipe to make repair at the attenuation pond and meeting refreshments	127.21
Harrison Agricultural Contracting Ltd - Flail mowing and stow ways cleared by hand	390.00
Information Commissioner - Renewal of Data Protection registration	52.00
Middle Level Commissioners - Supply of Hundred of Wisbech IDB and Waldersey IDB catchment study (Account From Royal Haskoning)	22,941.60
	371,076.18

(NB - Amounts shown include Value Added Tax)

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026
GENERAL FUND

2026				2025			
Mar-31	Expenditure during the year			Apr-01	Balance brought forward		396,482.04
	Precept		17,780.00	2026			
				Mar-31	Rate income & Special levies	233,930.25	
	Rates, Insurances, Telephone	1,725.20			Less Irrecoverables	-	233,930.25
	Drainworks	66,654.76					
	Administration charge, Audit fee,				Interest on Deposit Accounts		19,434.42
	Printing, Stationery, Advertising etc	25,704.97			Consents and byelaws		550.00
	Fees (Planning Applications)	16,406.07					
	Joint Pumping Account-				Write Back of Provisions		1,658.23
	Payments due to Waldersey IDB	32,932.85	143,423.85				
					Grant-in-aid		
	Loan Charges - Principal	52,406.24			- District Wide Flood Alleviation Study		39,084.65
	Interest	22,222.06	74,628.30				
	District Wide Flood Alleviation Study		39,084.65				
	Balance carried forward		416,222.79				
			691,139.59				691,139.59

BALANCE SHEET

Liabilities			Assets		
		Capital Section			
Revaluation Reserve	(962,105.17)				
Public Works Loan Board -			Joint Pumping Station Scheme	239,500.00	
Loan outstanding	1,206,605.17	244,500.00	Land at Point 29 (attenuation lagoon)	5,000.00	244,500.00
		Revenue Section			
General Fund Account		416,222.79	Ratepayers' Account - Arrears		6,974.77
Capital Improvement scheme fund (Loan)		367,644.09			
Development Charges Account		32,995.71	Value added Tax		19,266.19
Joint Pumping Station Replacement Fund		184,069.79			
Sundry Creditors		107,332.66	Sundry Debtors		818.25
Contributions Holding Account		80,427.48			
Asset Replacement Fund		136,752.86	Balance in hand -		
Capital Realisation Account		54,976.73	Barclays Current Account	100,371.23	
Grant-in-aid		12,949.10	Barclays Business premium Account	1,265,940.77	1,366,312.00
		1,637,871.21			1,637,871.21

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Treasurers Account 2025/2026

1st April 2025			31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward		1,262,565.16	Payments made during the year	371,076.18
31st March 2026				
Receipts during the year				
Clerk's collection account	455,426.77			
Interest on deposit accounts	19,396.25	474,823.02		
Write back of old outstanding cheques		0.00		
			Balance carried forward	1,366,312.00
		1,737,388.18		**1,737,388.18**

National Savings - Treasurers Account 2024/2025

1st April 2025		31st March 2026	
Balance brought forward	5,358.53	Transfer to Barclays Bank Account	5,396.70
31st March 2026			
Interest on deposit accounts	38.17		
	5,396.70		**5,396.70**

Summary of Bank Reconciliations as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account

Balance per Statement as at 31st March 2026			100,314.78
Less unpresented cheques			0.00
Add outstanding lodgements	25/03/2026	Visa - Hearn	56.45
Balance per Trial Balance			**100,371.23**

Cash balances as at 31st March 2026

Barclays Bank PLc

Current Account	**100,371.23**
Business Premium Account	**1,265,940.77**
Treasury Deposit	**0.00**

National Savings

Investment Account per passbook	**0.00**
Total reconciled cash balances per accounts	**1,366,312.00**

Hundred of Wisbech IDB

Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 1	**Balances brought forward**			
	General Fund		396,482.04	
	Development charges account		32,015.71	
	Pumping station replacement fund		184,069.79	
	Asset replacement fund		504,396.95	
	Contributions holding account		78,927.48	
	Future works		54,976.73	
			1,250,868.70	**1,250,869**
Line 2	**Rates and Special Levies**			
	Agricultural rates		11,346.45	
	Special Levies		222,634.00	
	Penalty		0.00	
	Costs		-50.00	
	Write-off		0.00	
			233,930.45	**233,930**
Line 3	**Total other receipts**			
	Interest			
		General fund	19,434.42	
		Development charges account	0.00	
		Joint pumping account	0.00	
		Asset replacement fund	0.00	
		Future works	0.00	
	Consent applications		550.00	
	Private works		0.00	
	Discharge contributions		2,480.00	
	Write Back of Provisions		1,658.23	
	Grant in Aid		39,084.65	
			63,207.30	**63,207**
Line 4	**Staff costs**			
	Wages/salaries		0.00	
	National insurance contributions		0.00	
	Pension costs		0.00	
	Travelling expenses		0.00	
			0.00	**0**
Line 5	**Loan repayments**			
	PWLB - Principal		52,406.24	
	PWLB - Interest		22,222.06	
			74,628.30	**74,628**

Hundred of Wisbech IDB
Reconciliation between statement of accounts and Annual Return

Financial year ended 31st March 2026

				Per Annual Return
Line 6	**All other payments**			
	Precept	17,780.00		
	Rates, insurances, telephones	1,725.20		
	Repairs and renewals	0.00		
	Fuel - Expenditure in year	0.00		
	Drainworks	66,654.76		
	Administration	25,704.97		
	Fees	16,406.07		
	Development charges fees	0.00		
	Improvement works	39,084.65		
	Joint pumping	32,932.85		
			200,288.50	**200,288**
Line 7	**Balances carried forward**			
	General Fund	416,222.99		
	Development charges account	32,995.71		
	Pumping station replacement fund	184,069.79		
	Asset replacement fund	504,396.95		
	Contributions holding account	80,427.48		
	Future works account	54,976.73		
			1,273,089.65	**1,273,090**

Reconciliation

Line 1 + Line 2 + Line 3 - Line 4 - Line 5 - Line 6	1,273,089.65

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £15 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.

2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities **must** publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor **must** be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2026** been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from **www.nalc.gov.uk** or from **www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

ENTER PUBLIC WEBPAGE ADDRESS WWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.			
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.			
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.			
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.			
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.			
K. **If** the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")*			
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.			
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*			
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).*			
O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.			

P. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

ENTER NAME OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report **must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A — *has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*
10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.	✓		*has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chair SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBWWW.MIDDLELEVEL.GOV.UKBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures **must** agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	1,103,653	1,250,869	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value **must** agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	284,731	233,930	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	193,162	63,207	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	0	0	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	74,628	74,628	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	256,049	200,288	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,250,869	1,273,090	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. **must** equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,267,924	1,366,312	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – **To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	244,500	244,500	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	1,259,011	1,206,605	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	
11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions?			*For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date 26/05/2026

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

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit,** it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/ .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026 and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2025/26

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 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. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YYYY

HUNDRED OF WISBECH INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

BUDGET 2026/2027

	Approved Budget 2025/2026 £	Actual to 31st March 2026 £	Proposed Budget 2026/2027 £
1 Rates, Insurances and telephones	1,800	1,725	1,874
2 Drainworks (incl District Officer's fee & expenses and Environmental measures	95,000	66,655 [A]	95,000 [B]
3 Joint Plant Maintenance (with Waldersey IDB)	50,000 [C/D]	32,933 [C/D]	50,000 [C/D]
4 Administration Charge, Health and Safety Contract, Audit fee, Printing, Stationery, Advertising, Association of Drainage Authorities Subscriptions etc	25,650	25,705	26,365
5 Planning Applications	9,500	16,406	12,000
6 Environment Agency Precept	17,780	17,780	17,780
7 Loan Charges	74,628	74,628	74,628
8 Studies and Surveys	87,160 [E]	39,085 [E]	48,075 [E]
	361,518	274,917	325,723
Improvement Works - Funding	87,160 [F]	39,085 [F]	48,075 [F]
LESS Rents, Deposit Accounts Interest etc	20,000	19,984	29,750
General Fund - Use of Balances	20,378 [G]	0	11,500 [H]
Annual value - 3,151,953	233,980	215,848	**236,397**

GENERAL FUND			
Opening Balance	396,482	396,482	416,223
Rates Raised (2025/26 7.50p)	233,930	233,930	236,397
Write Back of Provisions		1,658	
Net Expenditure	233,980	215,848	236,397
Balances	(20,378)	-	(11,500)
Closing Balance	376,054	416,223	404,723

Rate Set - 2025/2026 7.50 p

Rate Requirement - 2026/2027 **7.5000 p**

Remarks

A - Includes:-

Contractors charges	57,497
District Officer Fees and Expenses	6,136

B - Includes provision for:

Contractors charges	38,400
Proposed Slubbing Programme	30,000
Additional Work/Fuel Changeover/Surcharge	14,000
Spoil disposal	5,000

C - Provision Based on New Calculation

D - Includes for New Electricity Contract

E - Joint Flood Alleviation Study

F - Funding (Joint Flood Allevation Study)

G - Use of General Fund 20,378

H - Use of General Fund 11,500

Hundred of Wisbech Internal Drainage Board

Rate and levy requirements

Under Section 37 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, the appropriate proportions in which the net expenditure of the Commissioners must be borne for 2026/2027 is:-

a) Proportion to be borne by the Agricultural Sector – 4.78%

b) Proportion to be borne by Special levies issued to:-

Fenland District Council –	94.67%	
Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk –	0.55%	
		95.22%

The product of a rate of 1p in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings is £1,507.

In 2026/2027 a rate of 1p together with corresponding Special levy would raise £31,519.

Revenue balance in hand on 31st March 2026 - £416,223

The estimated net expenditure of £236,397 in 2026/2027 is equivalent to:-

a) a rate in the £ on Agricultural land and buildings of 7.50p

b) a Special levy on Fenland District Council of £223,801 and

c) a Special levy on Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk of £1,298

In 2025/2026 a rate of 7.500p in the £ was raised together with a Special levy of £221,336 on Fenland District Council and £1,298 on Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk.

S JEFFREY

Chief Financial Officer

June 2026

WMA Policies for Adoption – Hundred of Wisbech IDB Meeting, 09 June 2026

	Policy	Link
1	Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members	Click Here
2	Arterial Infrastructure Policy	Click Here
3	Asset Prioritisation Criteria	Click Here
4	Biosecurity Policy	Click Here
5	Capital Financing and Reserves Policy	Click Here
6	Catchment Services Strategy	Click Here
7	Chairman's Allowance and Members Expenses Policy	Click Here
8	Chairman's Committee Terms of Reference	Click Here
9	Chief Executive's Management Committee Terms of Reference	Click Here
10	Communications Policy	Click Here
11	Complaints Procedure	Click Here
12	Culvert Replacement Funding Policy	Click Here
13	Current Charge-Out Rates for 2025/26 - Operations	Click Here
14	Data Breach Procedures	Click Here

15	Data Protection Policy	Click Here
16	Declaration of Members Interests Form	Click Here
17	Development Control Charges and Fees	Click Here
18	Division of Responsibilities: Chief Executive and Chairman	Click Here
19	Document Retention and Destruction Policy	Click Here
20	Drought Policy	Click Here
21	Election of Members Policy (Casual Vacancies)	Click Here
22	Employees Code of Conduct	Click Here
23	Environmental Responsibilities	Click Here
24	Financial Regulations	Click Here
25	Freedom of Information Publication Scheme	Click Here
26	Guidance to Local Authorities when making appointments to IDBs	Click Here
27	Health & Safety Policy	Click Here
28	Information Security and Systems – Acceptable Use Policy	Click Here
29	Drainage Rates and Special Levies Investment Strategy	Click Here

30	Members' Code of Conduct	Click Here
31	The Duties, Responsibilities and Liabilities of IDB Members	Click Here
32	Modern Slavery Statement	Click Here
33	Protocol on Virtual and Hybrid Meetings	Click Here
34	Control of Ragwort Policy	Click Here
35	Rate Levies and Collection Policy	Click Here
36	Rechargeable Works Policy and Staff Plan	Click Here
37	Filming of Public Meetings Guidance Policy	Click Here
38	Drainage Rates and Special Levies - Register and Map of Drainage Hereditaments: Maintenance and Inspection Policy	Click Here
39	Schedules of Reserved Matters	Click Here
40	Scheme of Delegation	Click Here
41	Risk Management Policy	Click Here
42	Safeguarding Public Money Policy	Click Here
43	Supplementary Guidance for Managing Procurement and Conflicts of Interest	Click Here
44	Supplier Performance Policy	Click Here

45	Sustainability Policy	Click Here
46	Management of Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy	Click Here
47	Whistleblowing Confidential Reporting Policy	Click Here

DISTRIBUTED TO:

MEMBERS:	**PAPER COPY PACK REQUESTED:**	**WATCHED ADA HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE MODULES:**
Brenda Barber		
Chris Boden		
Gavin Booth		
Neil Buttress (Vice Chairman)	Yes	Yes
Sam Clark		
Maureen Davis		
Michael George Day (Chairman)	Yes	
Henry Duncalfe		
Jan French		
Lucie Foice-Beard		
Nigel John Harrison		
Samantha Hoy		
Sidney Imafidon		
Dee Laws		
Francis David Leach (Deputy Vice Chairman)	Yes	Yes
Jonathan Leach		
Charlie Marks		
Alex Miscandlon		
Nick Pooley		
Dal Roy		
Chris Seaton		
Matthew Summers		
Ben Wales		

Officers:

Cathryn Brady	Head of Catchment Services
Marcus Coleman	Chief Executive
Olivia Follen	Business Support Manager
Sallyanne Jeffrey	Chief Financial Officer
Matthew Philpot	Chief Operating Officer