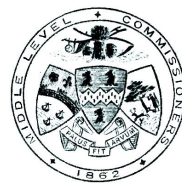
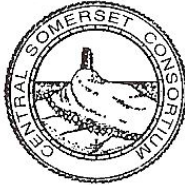


# A Vision for Internal Drainage Boards in England and Wales



**middle level  
commissioners**

**WITHAM FOURTH DISTRICT  
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**



**Vale Of Pickering IDBs**  
**Rye**  
**Thornton**  
**Muston & Yedingham**



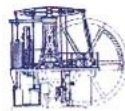
**Ely Group of  
IDBs**



**WHITTLESEY  
CONSORTIUM  
OF IDBs**



**Witham 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> District IDBs**



**NORTH EAST LINDSEY  
DRAINAGE BOARD**



**Newark Area Internal Drainage Board**

- Lower Wye IDB
- Powysland IDB
- River Lugg IDB



**Upper & Lower Medway IDBs**

- § Armthorpe IDB
- § Everton IDB
- § Gainsborough IDB

- § Haddenham Level DC
- § Lower Ouse IDB
- § Lower Severn IDB
- § Market Weighton IDB
- § North Somerset (2005) IDB

- § Ramsey IDB
- § Rea IDB
- § Rivers Idle & Ryton IDB
- § Strine IDB
- § Tickhill IDB

- § Upper Witham IDB
- § Welland & Deepings IDB
- § West Mendip IDB



## Who are we?

The Vision has been developed by the Association of Drainage Authorities on behalf of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) community in England and Wales. The Vision statement has been endorsed by the following organisations:

§ Alconbury and Ellington IDB  
§ Ancholme IDB  
§ Armthorpe Internal Drainage Board  
§ Ashfields and West Moor IDB  
§ Bedale and Upper Swale IDB  
§ Bedfordshire and River Ivel IDB  
§ Benwick IDB  
§ Black Drain DB  
§ Black Sluice IDB  
§ Bluntisham IDB  
§ Broads (2006) IDB  
§ Buckingham and River Ouzel IDB  
§ Burnt Fen IDB  
§ Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels IDB  
§ Cawdle Fen IDB  
§ Churchfield and Plawfield IDB  
§ Cod Beck IDB  
§ Conington and Holme IDB  
§ Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB  
§ Dearne and Dove IDB  
§ Downham and Stow Bardolph IDB  
§ Drysides IDB  
§ Dun DC  
§ East of the Ouse, Polver and Nar IDB  
§ East Suffolk IDB  
§ Euximoor IDB  
§ Everton IDB  
§ Fairham Brook IDB  
§ Feldale IDB  
§ Finningley IDB  
§ Gainsborough IDB  
§ Garthorpe DB  
§ Goole Fields IDB  
§ Haddenham Level DC  
§ Hatfield Chase IDB  
§ Holmewood & District IDB  
§ Hundred Foot Washes IDB  
§ Hundred of Wisbech IDB  
§ Isle of Axeholme IDB  
§ King's Lynn IDB  
§ Knottingley to Gowdall IDB  
§ Ladus District DC  
§ Lakenheath IDB  
§ Laneham IDB  
§ Lindsey Marsh DB  
§ Littleport and Downham IDB  
§ Lower Axe IDB  
§ Lower Brue IDB  
§ Lower Medway IDB  
§ Lower Ouse IDB  
§ Lower Severn IDB  
§ Lower Swale IDB  
§ Lower Wye IDB  
§ Manea and Welney District DC  
§ March and Whittlesey IDB  
§ March East IDB  
§ March 5<sup>th</sup> District DC  
§ March 6<sup>th</sup> District DC  
§ March 3<sup>rd</sup> District DC  
§ Market Weighton IDB  
§ Messingham IDB  
§ Middle Fen and Mere IDB  
§ Middle Level Commissioners  
§ Mildenhall IDB  
§ Muston and Yedingham IDB

§ Newark Area IDB  
§ Norfolk Rivers IDB  
§ North East Lindsey IDB  
§ North Level District IDB  
§ North Somerset (2005) IDB  
§ Needham Buriel and Birdbeck District DC  
§ Nightlayers IDB  
§ Nordelph IDB  
§ Northwold IDB  
§ Old West IDB  
§ Padnal and Waterden IDB  
§ Parrett IDB  
§ Potteric Carr IDB  
§ Powysland IDB  
§ Ramsey IDB  
§ Ramsey 1<sup>st</sup> (Hollow) IDB  
§ Ramsey 4<sup>th</sup> (Middlemoor) IDB  
§ Ramsey Upwood and Great Raveley IDB  
§ Ransonmoor District DC  
§ Rea IDB  
§ Reedness and Swinefleet DB  
§ Rivers Idle and Ryton IDB  
§ River Lugg IDB  
§ River Stour IDB  
§ River Wiske IDB  
§ Rye IDB  
§ Sawtry IDB  
§ Scunthorpe IDB  
§ Selby Area IDB  
§ Southery and District IDB  
§ South Holland IDB  
§ Sow and Penk IDB  
§ Stringsides IDB  
§ Stoke Ferry IDB  
§ Sutton and Mepal IDB  
§ Swaffham IDB  
§ Swavesey IDB  
§ Thornton IDB  
§ Tickhill IDB  
§ Tween Bridge IDB  
§ Upper Axe IDB  
§ Upper Brue IDB  
§ Upper Medway IDB  
§ Upper Witham IDB  
§ Upwell IDB  
§ Waldersey IDB  
§ Warboys Somersham and Pidley IDB  
§ Waterbeach Level IDB  
§ Welland and Deepings IDB  
§ Went IDB  
§ West Mendip IDB  
§ White Fen District DC  
§ Whittlesey IDB  
§ Witham 1<sup>st</sup> District IDB  
§ Witham 3<sup>rd</sup> District IDB  
§ Witham 4<sup>th</sup> District IDB  
§ Woodwalton DC

## Association of Drainage Authorities

The **Association of Drainage Authorities** (ADA) is the membership organisation for those involved in water level management. Its members include Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency Regional Flood Defence Committees and the Northern Ireland Rivers Agency. Associate Members include Local Authorities, Consultants, Contractors and Suppliers.

## Why do we need a Vision?

The flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) Framework within which Internal Drainage Boards will operate in the future is likely to be significantly different from that we see today. New legislation in the form of the Flood and Water Management (F&WM) Bill is proposed as well as outcomes from the:

- § Defra Review of IDBs
- § Pitt Review
- § F&WM Bill Consultation, Section 3.1 *'Possible reforms to the role and governance of IDBs'*
- § Water Framework Directive
- § The Flood Risk Regulations (2009)
- § Climate Change Act (2008)
- § future Government priorities

The Flood and Water Management Bill proposes that the Environment Agency will provide national overview of FCERM and Upper Tier Local Authorities will provide Local Leadership and coordination through strong and effective local partnership arrangements.

The future role played by other relevant authorities including IDBs within this new operating environment will need to encompass their anticipated new duties to cooperate with all other relevant authorities and to operate in a manner consistent with National and Local FRM Strategies through strong and effective local partnership arrangements.

IDBs have a proven record in delivering a sustainable, efficient and cost effective service focussed on the close management of flood and water levels for both the sustaining and protection of people, property, land and infrastructure. The new arrangements provide an opportunity for the strengths of the IDB model to be fully integrated into the Partnership approach that will be required for delivery of the high quality all encompassing FCERM service that is at the heart of the governments plans.

## Enhancing IDB Capacity

Following the Defra sponsored Review of IDBs in 2006 there was a clear acknowledgement by the Minister that the Government considered IDBs to have a significant role to play in future flood risk and water management delivery arrangements. This view was further reinforced within the Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's Report on the Summer Floods of 2007.

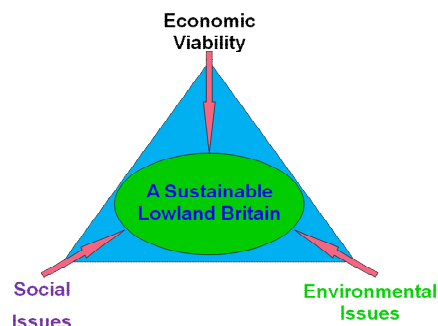
The Implementation Plan for Improvements to IDB Management Arrangements, which resulted

from the Review of IDBs, detailed issues of critical mass of expertise, resilience of organisation, financial sustainability, and transparent governance that should be considered and where appropriate addressed by all IDBs by 2013. The Minister in introducing these requirements to the IDBs requested their consideration of all possible models for administrative and service delivery but expressed a preference for IDBs to be organised on a 'sub-catchment' basis with a single IDB per unit.

With these proposals and within the very robust arrangements of IDB consortia and individual IDBs across England and Wales the IDB community is well placed to take on a locally focussed, catchment wide, enhanced role as the operating authority of choice for all members of Local Partnerships.

## THE VISION

Our Vision is of a future in which IDBs form a significant contribution to the sustainable use of areas of special drainage need within England and Wales. It will be a future in which IDBs are recognised as key participants of the Defra FCERM community providing water level management on a daily basis to the catchments they serve.



Vitally, it will be a future where IDBs are valued both for the roles they play in helping us deal with some of the challenges of the 21st century, and in improving and sustaining our quality of life.

### To realise this Vision we need IDBs to:

- § be recognised as competent FCERM authorities
- § play a full part in local partnerships
- § have a distinct role working with other relevant authorities
- § become 'delivery partner' of choice for Local Lead Flood Authorities and partners
- § build capacity and adjust to deal with new challenges
- § adapt in the face of climate change.



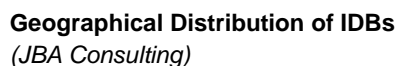
**Water level management** – IDBs believe in the principles of sound water level management through the close management of water levels – in watercourses or underground (groundwater) – for the purpose of reducing the risk from flooding and for sustaining all land uses and the environment.

These are areas that the Medway Letter sought to set boundaries for in 1933; in 2009 we should be building upon this solid foundation:

The Medway Letter (1933) in describing IDB Drainage Districts.

## IDBs will:

- § carefully **manage water levels within their drainage districts** for;
  - § land drainage,
  - § flood risk management,
  - § irrigation,
  - § and environmental benefit.
- § work within **hydrologically defined catchments**.
- § operate in **areas of special flood risk**.
- § **be recognised as the land drainage authority within their Districts**.



## PURPOSE

IDBs cover 1.2 million hectares of England (9.7% of England's total land area) and 28,500 hectares of Wales (1.4% of Wales' total land area), 90% of the indicative flood map zone 3 for England and Wales. 24 of the county councils in England include one or more IDB in their area as do six metropolitan districts, and 109 unitary authorities or district councils.

IDBs are geographically concentrated in the Broads, Fens in East Anglia and Lincolnshire, Somerset Levels, Kent, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire covering growth areas such as the Thames Gateway and Milton Keynes & South Midlands, and existing developed areas of the Thames gateway, East Midlands and the Humber Estuary.

Their 570 staff operate and maintain over 500 pumping stations, 22,000 km of watercourse, 174 automatic weed screen cleaners and have a part in providing flood risk management to 879,000 properties. They also have responsibilities associated with 398 Sites of Special Scientific Interest plus other designated environmental areas.

IDB Districts include the majority of England and Wales' highest grade agricultural land, urban areas providing 879,000 homes, industries of national importance and much of UK's critical infrastructure, including; 20 oil refineries and power stations, 68 other major industrial premises and 208 km of motorway. This essential and critical IDB activity must continue alongside and complimentary to any new role.

### **IDBs will:**

- § through the functions listed above, sustain land use, including **inhabitation, agriculture, industry, recreation and natural habitats**.
- § play their part in **delivering UK food security**:
  - § by providing and regulating irrigation and drainage for over a million hectares of agricultural land (including land of the highest quality).
- § contribute to the **security of civil infrastructure** within their Districts.
- § aid the sustainability of **rural and urban communities**.
- § help maintain Defra's commitment to the ABI over flood risk management to properties, and the consequent **availability of flood insurance**.



**Transport** – M62 passing through the Goole & Airmyn Internal Drainage District.  
(Lower Aire & Donn Consortia of IDBs)



**Housing** – Assisting planning authorities in Bedfordshire. (Bedford Group of IDBs)



**Maintenance** – Weed boat on the River Parrett.  
(Somerset Consortium of IDBs)



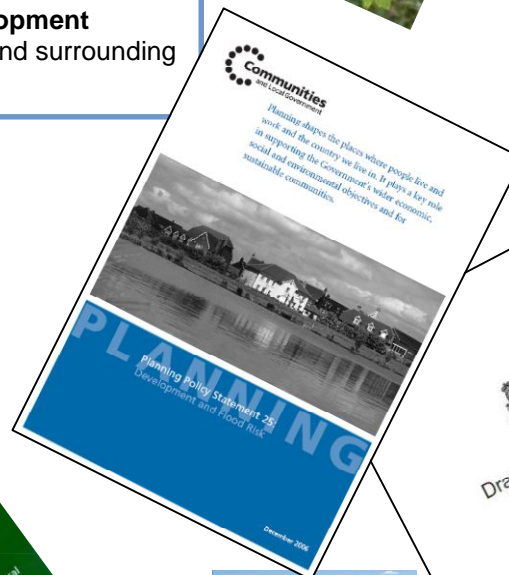
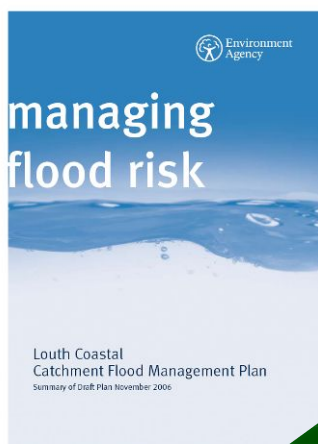
## DECISION MAKING

**Supervisory Powers** – For a water level & flood risk management Body to be effective within the boundaries they serve, that body requires suitable supervisory powers. These powers must ensure that a Body can participate in planning and development control processes on matters relating to watercourses, water level management and flood risk management, and in the provision of impartial advice and mediation where conflict occurs on drainage matters. Such powers provide IDBs with the ability to act proactively to ensure a reduction in flood risk and careful water level management.

IDBs provide a valuable service to the Town and Country Planning process by guiding and advising Planning Authorities regarding surface water management, flood risk and sustainable urban drainage especially within areas of significant urban growth.

### IDBs will:

- § **liaise with all relevant stakeholders**, FCERM delivery partners and Government.
- § conduct their activities with regard to Local and National Government strategies.
- § actively shape and comment on local and regional policy decisions.
- § **play an active role in development planning decisions** within and surrounding their Districts.



## REPRESENTATION & FINANCE

**Local Accountability** – IDBs strongly believe that flood risk and water level management decisions must be made locally with the assistance of the community served. The importance of local knowledge and accountability must not be overlooked.

Internal Drainage Boards provide the community with the checks and balances to ensure decisions made consider the wishes of the local community. They are enshrined in the philosophy that:

- § *'He who benefits – pays'* – IDB Special Levy and Agricultural Drainage Rates
- § *'He who pays gets a say'* – IDB Board representation.

**Financial security** – Long-term certainty of finance is essential to sound water level and flood risk management. Water level management is a daily job, requiring regular action, which must be planned well in advance. In contrast, flood risk mechanisms may only be tested infrequently but must meet the standards demanded of them on these critical occasions. Both activities transcend political and spending periods as currently set out by the Government.

Through mechanisms such as the Special Levy and Agricultural Drainage Rate, an IDB raises secured funds locally for local need. IDB highland water contribution from the EA to IDBs provides funding to contribute to additional water management pressures caused by water from higher in a catchment entering an IDB's Drainage District. The EA precept allows local funds raised by an IDB to finance works essential to the Main River within an IDB's Drainage District. These mechanisms may appear complex but ensure accountability and the appropriate degree of financial security to Internal Drainage Boards.

### IDBs will:

- § be representative of the communities they serve through **elected and appointed Board membership**.
- § **raise funds locally** for water level management.
  - § IDB Special Levy
  - § Agricultural Drainage Rates
- § **balance the priorities** and stakeholder views within their Districts.



**Knowledge sharing with Local Authorities.**  
(Lindsey Marsh Drainage Board)



**International Collaboration** – Henry Cator (ADA), Michael Scott (BSIDB) and Lino Tosini (CdB Delta Po Adige) discuss salt intrusion in the Po Delta, Italy.  
(Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board)



**Political engagement** – Discussing key issues with Huw Irranca-Davies MP.  
(Bedford Group of Drainage Boards)



**New St Germans Pumping Station** – Artists Impression  
(Middle Level Commissioners)



## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Internal Drainage Boards are uniquely equipped to make a vital contribution to the conservation of wetland wildlife.

Collectively, the IDBs are one of the biggest managers of freshwaters and wetlands in the country and thus have a significant role in maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. The thousands of kilometres of IDB ditches and drainage channels are biodiversity-rich networks comparable in conservation importance with England's hedgerows.

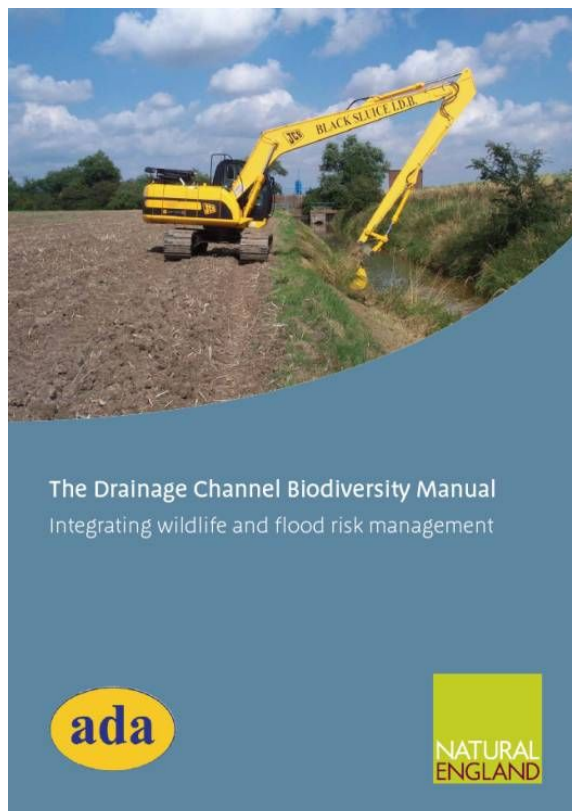
Water level management by IDBs supports distinctive wetland habitats and, more widely characteristic landscapes such as the Norfolk Broads and Somerset Levels. Hundreds of wetland plant and animal species that are targeted as priorities under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan can be found in IDB districts – from lichens to wildflowers and from insects to mammals. IDB drainage districts host scores of SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves.

ADA in collaboration with Natural England has produced *The Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual* to assist IDBs to fulfil their role as custodians of wetlands and watercourses and, importantly, help to tackle the challenge of making space for both flood waters and wildlife through the integrated planning and management of drainage catchments.

(<http://www.ada.org.uk/morenews.php?fs=&id=27>)

### IDBs will:

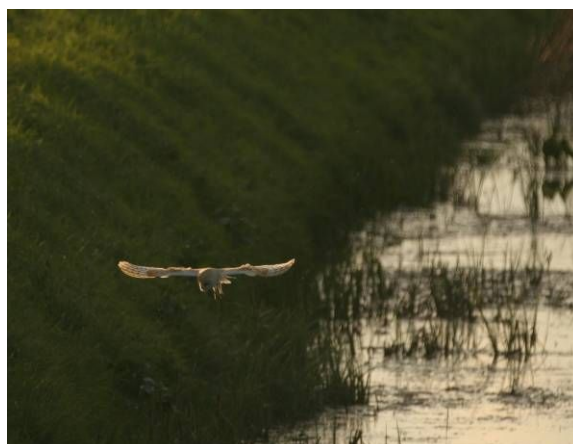
- § promote the **ecological wellbeing** of their Districts.
- § work to help **maintain and improve all SSSIs** and other designated environmental areas within their Districts
- § develop and implement IDB **Biodiversity Action Plans**
- § work towards reducing and mitigating their **climate change** impact.



**The Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual**  
(ADA Natural England)



**Helping the Community** – Ecology Group at Southlake Moor (Somerset Consortium of IDBs)



**Biodiversity** – A Barn Owl searches the margins of a Manea & Welney DC drain for prey.  
(Middle Level Commissioners)



## SUMMARY

### To realise this Vision we need IDBs to:

- § be recognised as competent FCERM authorities
- § play a full part in local partnerships
- § have a distinct role working with other relevant authorities
- § become 'delivery partner' of choice for Local Lead Flood Authorities and other partners
- § build capacity and adjust to deal with new challenges
- § adapt in the face of climate change.

### IDBs will:

## ROLE OF AN IDB

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  - § land drainage,
  - § flood risk management,
  - § irrigation,
  - § and environmental benefit.
- § work within **hydrologically defined catchments**.
- § occur in **areas of special flood risk**.
- § **be recognised as the land drainage authority within their Districts**.

## PURPOSE

- § through the functions listed above, sustain land use, including **inhabitation, agriculture, industry, recreation and natural habitats**.
- § play their part in **delivering UK food security**:
  - § by providing and regulating irrigation and drainage for hundreds of thousands of hectares of agricultural land (including land of the highest quality) in England & Wales.
- § contribute to the **security of civil infrastructure** within their Districts.
- § aid the sustainability of **rural and urban communities**.
- § help maintain Defra's commitment to the ABI over flood risk management to properties, and the consequent **availability of flood insurance**.

## DECISION MAKING

- § **liaise with all relevant stakeholders**, FRM delivery partners and Government.
- § conduct their activities with regard to Local and National Government strategies.
- § actively shape and comment on local and regional policy decisions.
- § play **an active role in development planning decisions** within and surrounding their Districts.

## REPRESENTATION & FINANCE

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- § **raise funds locally** for water level management.
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- § work to help **maintain and improve all SSSIs** and other designated environmental areas within their Districts
- § develop and implement IDB **Biodiversity Action Plans**
- § work towards reducing and mitigating their **climate change** impact.



## Photographic Acknowledgements

**Cover Photograph:** Reducing the risk to critical infrastructure. View of Cock up Bridge, Burwell Lode and Swaffham Internal Drainage Board channel, Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire with electricity substation in background. *I Moodie - ADA*

*Low-lying parts of England and Wales contain a considerable number of critical infrastructure assets and networks. To ensure their functioning, these systems require the continued careful water level management of the surrounding landscape to reduce flood risk and ensure safe working conditions.*

**Back Page Photograph:** Coir rolls pre-planted with emergent water plants provide a natural revetment that is water vole-friendly on the Sixteen Foot River near Bedlam Bridge.  
*C Carson – Middle Level Commissioners*

*The installation is part of the Middle Level Water Vole Support Project. This and other biodiversity friendly watercourse management techniques are promoted by the ADA/Natural England Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual.*

*(available from <http://www.ada.org.uk/morenews.php?fs=&id=27>)*

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