

# East Harling Internal Drainage Board

## Policy Statement

Reviewed May 2023

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# **East Harling IDB**

## **POLICY STATEMENT ON FLOOD PROTECTION AND WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT**

### **Status**

Reviewed: May 2023

Review approved: June 2023

Next review: May 2026

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Purpose**

This policy statement has been prepared by East Harling Internal Drainage Board (EHIDB) to provide a public statement of the Board's approach to its management of flood risk and water levels in its area.

### **Background**

The Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has policy responsibility for flood and coastal defence in England. However, delivery is the responsibility of a number of flood and coastal defence "operating authorities" which includes the East Harling Internal Drainage Board.

The Government has published a policy aim and three objectives for flood and coastal defence<sup>1</sup>. To ensure a more certain delivery of the aim and objectives by the individual operating authorities the Government has also published a series of high level targets<sup>2</sup>. The first target requires each operating authority to publish a Policy Statement setting out their plans for delivering the Government's policy aim and objectives in their area. This will include an assessment of the risk of flooding in their area, and what plans they have to reduce that risk.

This Policy Statement fulfils that requirement. We are providing a copy to the DEFRA and the Environment Agency, Breckland Council, and Norfolk County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority). Copies are also available on the IDB web site [www.ehidb.org.uk](http://www.ehidb.org.uk) and by contacting the CEO.

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<sup>1</sup> Strategy for Flood and Coastal Defence in England and Wales MAFF and Welsh Office, September 1993

<sup>2</sup> High Level Targets for Flood and Coastal Defence Operating Authorities and Elaboration of the Environment Agency's Flood Defence Supervisory Duty MAFF, November 1999.

## **2. HOW THE BOARD WILL DELIVER THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AIM AND OBJECTIVES.**

East Harling IDB supports the Government's aim and objectives for flood defence. Our policy and approach will be consistent with them.

### **Policy Aim**

*To reduce the risk to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and coastal erosion by encouraging the provision of technically, environmentally and economically sound and sustainable defence measures.*

### **Objective (a)**

*To encourage the provision of adequate and cost effective flood warning systems.*

There being no flood defences, or warning systems, within the Boards District this Objective is not applicable.

### **Objective (b)**

*To encourage the provision of adequate, economically, technically and environmentally sound and sustainable flood and coastal defences.*

There being no fluvial or coastal flood defences, or warning systems, within the Board's District this Objective is not applicable.

### **Objective (c)**

*To discourage inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding.*

The potential impact on flood risk through future development in the Drainage District, or in the wider catchment draining to the District, is recognised fully by the Board and it will take an active role in the assessment of structure planning, local plans and individual applications to ensure flood risk is not increased. Where appropriate the Board will secure from Developers, and other direct beneficiaries, contributions to cover the cost of both immediate and longer term works necessary in ensuring that any potential increase in flood risk is removed.

### 3. FLOODING AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

#### Key Details of the District

- Length of watercourse maintained by the Board: 35.5 km
- Catchment area draining to and including the District: 260 km<sup>2</sup>
- Total area of the District: 27.3 km<sup>2</sup>
- Rateable area of the District: 2500 ha

#### Board Maintained Infrastructure

- Pumping Stations: nil
- Other Water level Control Structures: nil
- Critical Watercourses: nil
- Raised Embankments: nil

Passing through or adjacent to the District are the following assets maintained by the Environment Agency

- Main Rivers (River Thet): 11 km
- River Flood Defences: nil

#### Sites of Designated Environmental Interest

- Old Buckenham Fen SSSI: 34.8 Ha
- East Harling Common SSSI: 14.9 Ha
- Kenninghall and Banham Fens with Quidenham Mere SSSI: 48.9 Ha
- Cranberry Rough SSSI: 81.4 Ha
- Swangey Fen SSSI: 82.3 Ha

#### **Maintained watercourses**

Maintained watercourses are as follows:

- Caston – Stow Bedon
- Cranberry Rough - Swangey Farm
- Stonebridge – Larling
- Attleborough (North) – Swangey Fen
- Attleborough (Leys Lane) – Watering Farm/Breckland Lodge

- Puddledock (Old Buckenham) – Leys Plantation
- Ragmere (Old Buckenham) - Watering Farm/Breckland Lodge
- Roudham – Larling Road
- Quidenham – East Harling

Plans of the Board's District and maintained watercourses is available on the Board's website - [www.ehidb.org.uk](http://www.ehidb.org.uk) .or by application to the Board's CEO.

The principal watercourse (designated Main River) through the Internal Drainage District is the River Thet. This watercourse is maintained by the Internal Drainage Board on behalf of the Environment Agency under a Public Sector Cooperation Agreement.

Other non-maintained watercourses within the Internal Drainage District are under the supervisory control of the IDB.

### **Water Level Management Plans (WLMP)**

Water Level Management Plans are required under DEFRA High Level Target 10 to be prepared for relevant wetland SSSI's.

Plans have been prepared for the following areas

- Swangey Fen: prepared by Environment Agency in 1996
- Kenninghall and Banham Fens with Quidenham Mere: plan prepared by EHIDB in 2003.

### **Board Maintained Infrastructure**

The Board have no maintained pumping stations, water level control structures or raised embankments. There are no designated Critical Ordinary Watercourses (COWS) within the Internal Drainage District.

### **Standard of Protection**

Through the operation and maintenance of the river system the Board will endeavour to remove specific blockages and vegetation commensurate with maintaining flow in the river system. Periodic flooding of water meadows and low lying areas can be expected as part of the normal functioning of the river system.

## **Management of Flood Risks**

The nature of the Board's District is substantially rural with few dwellings at risk of flooding. In the event of flooding occurring it is mainly to agricultural land.

The IDB also has a duty to consider the flood risk to areas downstream from the Board's District and not in the Board's control to ensure that any developments within the Board do not increase the flood risk to those areas.

The Board are satisfied that there are minimal risks to human life arising from any failure or overspill from its maintained watercourses.

The Board monitor the condition of its watercourses and the impact of overspilling/flooding which could affect dwellings. Consistent with the established need a routine maintenance programme is in place to ensure that the condition of the watercourses is commensurate with the standards of protection which are sought.

The Board welcome from its agricultural ratepayers, Special Levy Councils, and members of the public, any comments on the condition of its system which could lead to any increased flood risk.

## **Environmental Measures**

As a Risk Management Authority East Harling IDB has nature conservation duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and 1994; the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; the Protection of Badgers Act 1992; the Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulation 1994; the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010; the Eels Regulations (England and Wales) 2009; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975, the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003; and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The Board will fulfil these in a positive way.

Much of the Board's watercourse maintenance work comprises vegetation control. Vegetation control will be undertaken sensitively to preserve and enhance the natural environment and improve the hydro-morphological characteristics.

When carrying out works, be it maintenance or improvement, and consistent with the need to maintain satisfactory flood protection standards, we will aim to:

- avoid any unnecessary or long term damage to all the natural habitats
- ensure no net loss of habitats covered by Biodiversity Action Plans, monitoring any gains and losses and reporting annually to the Environment Agency

- take appropriate opportunities to enhance habitats.

The Board will play its full role in sustaining Water Level Management Plans prepared for the SSSI's and, in conjunction with Natural England and other interested parties, review the plans in accordance with DEFRA guidance.



## **4. GOVERNANCE**

### **Organisation**

The Board is managed by the Chief Executive Officer who is appointed by the members of the Board, and has responsibility to the Board for the efficient operation of the Board, and for compliance with statutory requirements and legislation.

### **Regulation of Activities**

The Board will exercise as required its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and its Byelaws to ensure that activities in and alongside its drainage system do not reduce flood protection standards and increase flood risk.

### **Cooperation with Flood Risk Management Authorities**

The Board will cooperate with other, and where appropriate enter into agreements with, local flood risk management authorities (RMA's). The purpose of cooperative working is to benefit the flood risk management in the highland area draining into the Board's watercourses, and for the River Thet downstream from the Board's Internal Drainage District.

The Board has entered into a formal cooperation agreement with the Environment Agency to undertake works on the River Thet between Swangey and East Harling.

The Board will actively engage with Breckland Council and the Lead Local Flood Authority (Norfolk County Council) in entering into similar agreements.

### **Publicity**

The Board will seek to promote the need for works in its District and create a rational understanding among people who live and work in it as to what the flood risk is and the efforts made to control it. They will also seek to achieve directly and through local councils a culture within which the watercourses are seen as vital to controlling flood risk, whilst providing an interesting aquatic habitat and dissuading abuse of them through the dumping of waste or obstructing of flows in other ways. The Board will publish news information (such as planned maintenance works) on a regular basis on the website.

### **Access to the Board by the public**

The Board are listed in the local telephone directory giving the public direct access to the Board's Chief Executive Officer, contact details for all Board members and officers are available on the Board's website <https://ehidb.org.uk/>

The Board has a 24 hour emergency number giving access to the Board's Chief Executive Officer and the Board's Engineer.

The Board's web site ([www.ehidb.org.uk](http://www.ehidb.org.uk)) carries information on the Board: application forms for consent to carry out works: and on-going maintenance work.

### **Discharge Consent for Potentially Contaminated Discharges**

The Environment Agency has responsibility for Environmental Permitting of discharges from potentially contaminated water to the Board's watercourses. The Board have no formal role in the Environmental Permitting process but will work cooperatively with the Environment Agency to ensure that water quality within the Board's watercourses is to the highest standard.

### **Review of Policy Statement**

East Harling IDB will review this Policy Statement within a period not greater than 5 years.