



Rates and Levies Collection Policy

Approval date: 01/01/2026	Approved by: Board
Applies to: All staff involved in raising and collecting Drainage Rates and Special Levies.	Linked Documents: Finance Regulations Debt Policy Debt Procedure Scheme of Delegation
Frequency of review: annually	Next review date: April 2027

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Board raises Drainage Rates and Special Levies each year using powers afforded under Section 36 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The Board is designated as a public authority under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and raises Drainage Rates and Special Levies as part of its statutory funding arrangements.
- 1.2 Drainage Rates are collected from occupiers of agricultural land within the Drainage District as shown in Part 1 of the Register of Drainage Hereditaments, and Special Levies are collected from constituent billing authorities (Councils) on behalf of Council Tax and Business Rate payers.
- 1.3 When exercising this power, Drainage Rates and Special Levies must be made by the Board in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Land Drainage Act which will determine the amount and proportion of the Board net expenditure that is paid for by each Council and occupier of agricultural land within the Drainage District.

2. Minimising the Drainage Rates and Special Levies

- 2.1 To minimise the net funding requirement from Drainage Rates and Special Levies, the Board will always seek to maximise its income from other sources and minimise its expenditure. This approach is supported in the following ways.

Highland Water Contributions from the Environment Agency

Claims made in return from maintaining the Board’s drainage systems which receive water from outside of the Drainage District, in accordance with section 57 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Surface Water Development Contributions

Contributions from developers that are increasing runoff from impermeable land within and into the Drainage District in accordance with the adopted Development Control Charges Policy.

Land Drainage Consent fees

Charges made under the Land Drainage Act 1991 for administering and determining works affecting the Board’s land drainage interests.



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- Applications for available grant funding to reduce the cost of undertaking capital works.
- Rental income gained from renting out the First Floor of the Conqueror Court offices.
- Small scale third party contracting works in accordance with the Board's Rechargeable Works Policy.
- Maximise interest by investing monies in accordance with the Board's Investment Policy.
- Utilising Public Sector Cooperation Agreements to work in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities to deliver water level management services in the most cost-effective manner.
- Maintenance of adequate reserves in accordance with the Capital Financing and Reserves Policy.
- Ensuring best value for money by procuring plant, good and services in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

3. Setting of the Drainage Rates and Special Levies

- 3.1 Each November, the Board prepares its annual revenue and capital budgets together with the schedule of general and earmarked reserves, in accordance with the Capital Financing and Reserves Policy. On approval, the Finance Officer shall:
- Update the Register of Drainage Hereditaments to reflect any land that has ceased to be agricultural.
 - Notify each Special Levy paying Council and publish the approved certificate by 15 February, in accordance with Section 48 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Right to Appeal against the Rate

- 3.2 Occupiers of any hereditament within the Drainage District have a period of 28 days from the date on which the drainage rate is made to appeal against the rate to the Crown Court, specifying the grounds of the appeal, in accordance with section 51 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The right of appeal can be made by such an occupier on any basis other than the one in which they have appealed pursuant to section 45 of the Act.
- 3.3 The legislation does not provide special levy paying authorities with the same opportunity to appeal against the special levy, however, appeals can also be made by council taxpayers and business ratepayers directly, as occupiers of domestic and non-domestic hereditaments within the drainage district, in the manner prescribed under section 51 of the Act.



4. Collection of Rates

Drainage Rates

- 4.1 Drainage Rate demands will be sent to occupiers of agricultural land that are in Part 1 of the Register of Drainage Hereditaments on or before 1 April every year and the amounts due will be collected in accordance with the Board's Drainage Rates Collection Procedure.
- 4.2 Each Drainage Rate Demand is issued by post in its prescribed form, as set out in the Drainage Rate (Forms) Regulations 1993 and is due for payment on demand. Drainage Rate Demands may also be sent by email if requested by the registered occupier.
- 4.3 Payment methods are shown on the back of each Drainage Rate demand and occupiers may pay in instalments by special arrangement and by direct debit. Payments shall be credited to the financial year to which they relate, unless otherwise specified by the ratepayer in writing.
- 4.4 Where changes have occurred since the last Rate Demand was issued, and the Board has not been notified of these changes, occupiers should send any details to the Finance Officer with details of these changes. Contact details are included at the top of every Rate Demand.
- 4.5 Where changes are verified and approved, a revised Rate Demand will be issued. These Rate Demands will be clearly marked as 'Revised Demand'. Where changes are not approved, the original Rate Demand(s) must be paid, and the ratepayer will be notified accordingly.
- 4.6 Drainage Ratepayers with rates less than £10 in any one year are encouraged to receive their Rate Demands by email and pay in advance (up to five years); to reduce the administration cost of collecting relatively small sums of money each year. However, any Drainage Ratepayer may elect to receive their Rate Demand by email and pay in advance, regardless of the amount they owe, should they wish to.
- 4.7 Non-payment of Drainage Rates will be enforced under Section 54 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The Board will seek a Liability Order through the Magistrates' Court and will recover all associated costs, including court fees and collection charges. Where payment is received after the issue of a summons but before the hearing, the Board's collection charge will still apply.

Special Levy

- 4.8 Special Levies are due from 1 April and payable in two equal instalments on 01 May and 01 November each year. However, some Billing Authorities may elect to pay both instalments together on 01 May.
- 4.9 Collection of Special Levies from Billing Authorities is enforced by an application to the High Court for a Mandatory Order (which replaced the previous writ of mandamus).
- 4.10 Each Council should recover its Special Levy from Council taxpayers and Business Ratepayers that benefit from the drainage, flood risk and water level management service provided by the Board and indirectly by the Environment Agency, through its precept



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charge on the Board. Non-payment of Special Levies by a billing authority will be pursued through an application to the High Court for a Mandatory Order under Section 40 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.

5. Refunds Policy

- 5.1 Refunds are offered where a ratepayer has accidentally paid the Board more than is owed.
- 5.2 If a Ratepayer believes that the Drainage Rate is incorrect, they should advise the Board of this immediately.
- 5.3 The Board will consider requests to amend or refund Drainage Rates for the current or previous financial year only, in accordance with the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- 5.4 Refunds requested directly through Worldpay without prior agreement will be reclaimed from the payer through the courts, together with any fees charged by Worldpay and the Board's collection costs.

Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Summary of Changes
1.0	01/04/2026	Initial policy approved