



Culverting Policy

Approval date: 20/04/2026	Approved by: Clerk
Applies to: Board Members, officers and employees of the Board, and any landowners, developers, or agents proposing or maintaining culverts within the Board’s district.	Linked Documents: Planning & Byelaw Strategy Watercourse Maintenance Policy
Frequency of review: 3 years	Next review date: April 2029

1. Purpose and Scope

This Policy sets out the Board’s approach to the approval, maintenance, and funding of culverts on watercourses within its Drainage District.

The policy applies to:

- Culverts on IDB-adopted watercourses;
- Culverts on non-adopted (riparian) watercourses where the Board has statutory control under Section 23 of the *Land Drainage Act 1991*; and
- Any culvert works that could affect the Board’s ability to maintain water levels or manage flood risk.

The Board recognises that culverting can have adverse impacts on flood risk, maintenance access, and biodiversity, and it will therefore generally seek to discourage new culverts unless there is a clear, demonstrable need.

2. Statutory Context

Under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991, consent is required from the Board for the erection or alteration of any culvert within its District.

The Board also has permissive powers under Section 66 to make and enforce Byelaws controlling such works.

Culverting proposals will be assessed against the Board’s Byelaws, technical standards, and environmental policies.

3. Replacement or Repairs to Culverts

The Board has adopted a hierarchical approach in determining the funding and responsibility for replacing or repairing existing culverts on its drains and those required for access to the main drains. All works undertaken by the Board shall be in accordance with the Board’s Health and Safety Policy and relevant legislation.

Culverts located on Board-adopted watercourses may be inspected as part of the Board’s routine asset inspection and maintenance programme.



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Where a culvert becomes blocked, damaged, or structurally unsafe, the responsible party identified in this policy shall arrange clearance or repair within a reasonable timeframe.

Where a blockage or failure presents an immediate flood or safety risk, the Board may undertake emergency works to restore flow or stabilise the structure and may recover reasonable costs from the responsible party where appropriate.

Scenario	Responsibility / Funding Approach
Culvert solely for the benefit of the Board's operations.	The Board may fund the full costs, seeking grant funding in the first instance, subject to available resources.
Historical agreement where the Board accepted part responsibility.	The Board may fund the agreed proportion of costs, subject to verification and available funding.
Culvert provides wider flood risk or environmental benefit.	The Board may fund full costs where cost-beneficial and funding is available.
Culvert offers potential operational benefit to the Board once repaired.	Costs may be shared between the landowner and the Board, subject to Board approval and reasonableness of cost.
Culvert solely for landowner benefit on an IDB-adopted drain.	The landowner is responsible for obtaining consent and funding all repair or replacement costs.

4. New Culverting Proposals

New culverts will not normally be permitted, except where there is no reasonably practicable alternative and the culvert design fully meets the Board's hydraulic, ecological, and maintenance access requirements.

In such cases, the applicant must obtain Land Drainage Consent and submit supporting hydraulic and ecological assessments where appropriate. The full cost of installation, including design, consent, and long-term maintenance, will rest with the applicant or riparian owner.

5. Byelaw and Access Considerations

All culverting works must comply with the Board's Byelaws, including requirements for unobstructed maintenance access to the watercourse. Where unconsented culverts are identified, the Board may require their removal or modification under *Section 24 of the Land Drainage Act 1991*.



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6. Environmental and Design Principles

In accordance with the *Land Drainage Act 1991* and Defra/Environment Agency “Policy on Culverting Watercourses” (2012), the Board operates a presumption against the culverting of watercourses, except where essential for access or where there is no reasonably practicable alternative. Any consented culvert must be designed to maintain flow capacity, enable maintenance access, and minimise adverse impacts on flood risk, water quality, and biodiversity.

The Board will have due regard to its duties under *Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* and the *Environment Act 2021*, seeking to conserve and enhance habitats and species, and will apply the *Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2009* where applicable. Where feasible, culverting or replacement works should deliver a net environmental benefit consistent with biodiversity net gain principles.

7. Review and Governance

This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislation or the Board’s Byelaws are amended. Implementation is delegated to the Clerk & Engineer, with financial oversight by the Finance Committee and operational delivery by the Works Manager.

Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Summary of Changes
1.0	20/04/2026	Initial policy approved