



Flood Policy

Approval date: 20/04/2026	Approved by: Clerk
Applies to: Board Members, officers and employees of the Board.	Linked Documents: Drought Policy Water Level Control Structures Policy Corporate Risk Register.
Frequency of review: 3 years	Next review date: April 2029

1. Purpose and Scope

This Flood Policy outlines the role of the Board in managing flood risk within its drainage district, in accordance with its statutory duties and powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991. It clarifies the Board’s operational responsibilities, partnership commitments, and approach to asset maintenance, incident response, and climate adaptation.

This policy applies to all land and infrastructure managed or influenced by the Board and complements the Board’s Watercourse Maintenance Policy, Environmental Policy, and Drought Policy. It is supported by operational procedures, site-specific Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs), and our Standard Operations Maintenance Manual.

2. Legal and Strategic Context

The Board is a Risk Management Authority (RMA) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. It has permissive powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to:

- Maintain and improve watercourses adopted by the Board.
- Construct and operate pumping stations and other flood control infrastructure.
- Issue consents and enforce conditions for works affecting ordinary watercourses.

The Board is not responsible for main river systems (Environment Agency), surface water (Lead Local Flood Authority), or public drainage (water companies). However, it actively contributes to the overall management of flood risk through local delivery, monitoring, and partnership working.

The Board works within the national flood risk framework set out by Defra, the Environment Agency (EA), and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), including the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans and Shoreline Management Plans.

3. Objectives

The Board’s objectives in managing flood risk are to:

- Reduce flood risk to people, property, land, and the environment.
- Operate and maintain flood risk assets to a high standard.
- Collaborate with other RMAs and stakeholders to achieve integrated water management.
- Respond proportionately and effectively to flood events.
- Build resilience to future climate-driven flood scenarios.



4. Operational Responsibilities

4.1 Routine Operations

The Board's annual maintenance programme is approved through its budget and reported in the annual maintenance summary. The Board;

- Maintain over 200km of adopted watercourses on an annual cycle, including weed cutting, de-silting, and obstruction removal.
- Operate and maintain pumping stations and control structures, including flap valves, sluices, and tilting weirs.
- Carry out regular inspections of assets during the flood season, and after significant rainfall events or EA flood alerts.

4.2 Pre-Flood Preparedness

The Board is not designated as an emergency responder under the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004* and does not provide 24-hour standby or immediate call-out services. Its role is to maintain drainage assets in a good state of repair and operational readiness so that they perform as intended during flood conditions.

The Board will therefore:

- Carry out seasonal readiness reviews, including generator testing and visual inspections of key assets ahead of the winter flood season.
- Ensure telemetry and water-level monitoring systems at critical sites remain operational, with data shared with the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Warning Service where relevant.
- Liaise with the EA Incident Room and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) where local conditions indicate potential flooding, to ensure information is appropriately shared.
- Maintain an internal duty contact arrangement for escalation of urgent operational issues during normal working hours. Out-of-hours calls will be referred to the EA's incident hotline or emergency services as appropriate.
- Review and document any significant issues arising from flood events to inform the annual maintenance and asset-management programmes.

4.3 Incident Management

The Board will take proportionate action to manage its assets during significant rainfall or tidal events, within the limits of staff availability and statutory powers. It does not provide an emergency call-out or response service under the *Civil Contingencies Act 2004*.



Flood Policy

During flood events the Board will:

- Monitor telemetry and asset performance data in real time where available and operate pumping stations or control structures remotely or on site when safe and practicable.
- Dispatch its workforce or contractors to undertake essential clearance of debris or minor remedial work only where safe access exists and conditions permit.
- Liaise with the Environment Agency (EA), Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), and where necessary the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to share relevant operational information.
- Maintain a record of water levels, pumping hours, and observed asset performance for post-event review.

All incidents are logged and reviewed by the Clerk & Engineer after the event to identify any maintenance or procedural improvements.

4.4 Post-Event Actions

Following a flood or severe rainfall event, the Board will:

- Inspect its assets and infrastructure, prioritising those critical to conveyance and public safety.
- Undertake or commission repairs and reinstatement works where appropriate and within available budgets.
- Conduct internal debriefs and participate in partner reviews where invited.
- Review relevant operational procedures, Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs), and maintenance programmes to incorporate lessons learned.
- Provide factual information or records to landowners, local authorities, or insurers on request, where appropriate and within data-protection requirements.

- 4.5** The Board will support recovery efforts within its statutory remit and work collaboratively with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) and local partners to improve community resilience and asset performance.

Following significant flood events, the Board will:

- Share operational data (e.g. rainfall, water levels, pumping hours, and asset performance) with the Environment Agency (EA), Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), and other partners to inform post-incident reviews.
- Respond to enquiries from landowners, local authorities, or partner agencies where these relate to the Board's maintained assets or drainage responsibilities.
- Communicate factual information through its website and stakeholder networks to clarify the Board's role, ongoing works, and any temporary access restrictions.
- Contribute to local or regional debriefs led by the EA or LLFA, identifying lessons learned and opportunities for joint improvements.
- Review and update its flood procedures, asset management plans, and maintenance schedules in light of post-event findings.



Flood Policy

The Board's objective after any major flood event is to ensure that its systems are reinstated, knowledge is captured, and coordination with partner RMAs is strengthened to reduce future risk.

5. Partnership Working

The Board recognises that effective flood risk and water-level management depend on strong local partnerships. As a Risk Management Authority (RMA) under the *Flood and Water Management Act 2010*, the Board will continue to work collaboratively with other RMAs and stakeholders to achieve efficient, sustainable outcomes across its district.

The Board will:

- Coordinate with the Environment Agency (EA), Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), and Local Resilience Forum (LRF) on matters relating to flood preparedness, asset management, and post-event review, while remaining clear that it is not a designated emergency responder.
- Participate in catchment-based initiatives and strategic flood-management projects, contributing local knowledge, data, and operational experience.
- Provide technical advice and asset data to inform local planning consultations, flood-alleviation schemes, and environmental-enhancement projects.
- Enter into Public Sector Cooperation Agreements (PSCAs) or similar arrangements where these support efficient joint delivery, cost-sharing, or cross-boundary maintenance with other RMAs.

The Board's partnership approach seeks to maximise local benefit, avoid duplication of effort, and ensure that investment in flood and water-level management delivers best value for the district and its communities.

6. Climate Resilience and Adaptation

The Board recognises that climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of flood events, sea-level rise, and periods of drought. It will continue to manage its assets and operations with a focus on long-term resilience and sustainable water-level management.

The Board will:

- Monitor national guidance and forecasts issued by Defra, the Environment Agency, and the Met Office relating to future flood risk, rainfall patterns, and sea-level projections.
- Incorporate climate-resilience principles into the design, refurbishment, and operation of pumping stations, control structures, and conveyance channels, considering whole-life costs and carbon reduction.
- Work collaboratively with partners and landowners to identify opportunities for natural flood management, habitat creation, and water-retention initiatives that deliver mutual environmental and flood-risk benefits.



Flood Policy

- Maintain awareness of the National FCERM Strategy (2020) and other relevant policy frameworks when developing local projects or business cases.
- Review Water Level Management Plans (WLMPs) and associated policies to ensure they remain effective under projected future climate conditions.

The Board's aim is to maintain reliable, adaptable, and environmentally responsible systems that safeguard people, property, and agricultural productivity within its district.

7. Landowner Engagement

Effective flood and water-level management relies on shared responsibility between the Board and local landowners. The Board will engage openly and proactively with its drainage ratepayers, riparian owners, and occupiers to promote good maintenance practice and clear communication.

The Board will:

- Inform drainage ratepayers of key maintenance periods, asset works, and access requirements through its annual correspondence, website, and other communication channels.
- Provide advance notice of planned pump operations, weed cutting, or machinery access where these may temporarily affect land use or access.
- Encourage and support riparian owners in maintaining their sections of watercourse responsibly and in accordance with the Board's Byelaws and the *Land Drainage Act 1991*.
- Promote awareness of the shared responsibilities for flood risk and land drainage, including links to relevant guidance published by the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority.

The Board's objective is to foster constructive working relationships with landowners, ensuring that watercourses are managed collaboratively, lawfully, and to the benefit of the wider catchment.

8. Limitations of Liability

The Board exercises its functions under the *Land Drainage Act 1991* and other relevant legislation using permissive powers, not statutory duties. These powers enable the Board to undertake works that reduce flood and water-level risk, but they do not create an obligation to carry out such works in all circumstances.

The Board is not liable for flooding or other impacts arising from:

- Breaches or overtopping of main rivers or coastal defences, which remain the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- Failure, obstruction, or poor condition of private or third-party drainage infrastructure, including culverts and water control structures not adopted by the Board.



Flood Policy

- Blockages or maintenance issues within non-designated or non-adopted watercourses.
- Extreme rainfall, tidal, or groundwater events exceeding the design capacity of Board assets.

The Board will act reasonably, proportionately, and within the limits of its statutory powers and available resources, taking all practicable steps to maintain its assets in good working order and to minimise risk to people, property, and the environment.

9. Flood Warnings and Public Information

The Board is not a designated flood warning authority and does not issue or maintain public flood alerts. Official flood warnings are issued by the Environment Agency, which remains responsible for national and local dissemination. Where appropriate, the Board will help to share verified warning information through its website, social media channels, or direct communications with affected landowners, to support public awareness and local preparedness.

10. Review and Governance

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or sooner following a significant flood event, material change in legislation, or major update to the Environment Agency or Defra flood-risk management framework.

The review will include:

- Evaluation of the Board's operational performance and lessons learned from recent flood or drought events.
- Assessment of coordination and communication with partner Risk Management Authorities (RMAs).
- Consideration of any changes in national policy, funding, or local risk that may affect the Board's operations.

The Clerk & Engineer will act as the Responsible Officer for this policy, ensuring that review findings are reported to the Finance Committee and that any material amendments are submitted to the Board for approval.

Version Control

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