

# Environmental Policy

This Environmental Policy has been produced by the Danvm Drainage Commissioners (the Board) to set out how the Board’s activities associated with water level management comply with its legislative duties of environmental protection.

The Board recognises the need to positively demonstrate that its watercourse maintenance and capital operations are undertaken in a manner that appropriately manages flood risk but also safeguards nature conservation interests as part of its function, making a positive contribution to the environment.

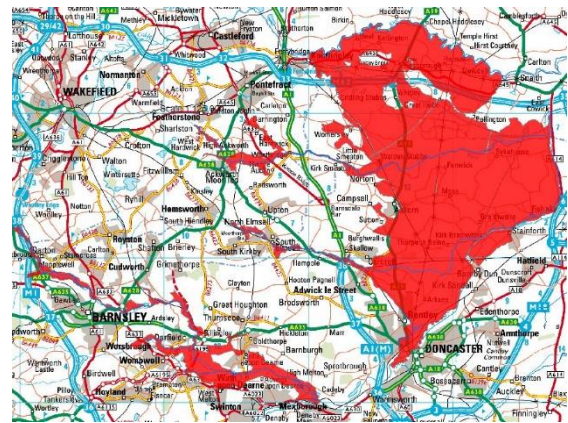
## Background


The Board is the relevant authority charged with the provision of sustainable water level management across its District. The District covers 21,526 ha of low-lying land in South, West, and North Yorkshire shown on the adjacent plan. The full extent of the district can be viewed in greater detail on the Board’s website at <https://www.shiregroup-idbs.gov.uk/idbs/danvm/>.

Land within the District has a lower level of flood risk than it would without the protection offered by a network of drains and other connecting ditches maintained by the Board. These predominantly man made, or heavily modified natural features demonstrate the significance water level management has made in creating the present landscape, previously a marshy floodplain.

Across its District, the Board has a supervisory role in respect of all matters relating to the drainage of land, set out in the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended).

The Board operates under permissive powers undertaking works and watercourse maintenance within its District. Direct maintenance is limited to those watercourses which form strategic arterial drainage of the District. These watercourses extend to 416km in length.



 Danvm Drainage Commissioners Boundary

## Statutory function

Internal Drainage Boards are subject to general environmental duties, requiring them to exercise their functions in such a way that minimises harm to interests of recognised importance or enhances those interests.

Function of the Board is provided for in the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended). The Act provides for general drainage of an IDB District and Flood Risk Management Works within that District.

General Drainage of the District includes the power to:

- maintenance of existing works
- to improve existing works
- to construct new works

Flood Risk Management Works within the District include activities:

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- maintenance of existing works
- operation of existing works
- improvement of existing works
- construction or repair of new works
- maintaining or restoring natural processes
- monitoring, investigation or survey of a location or a natural process;
- reduction or increase the level of water in a place
- to alter or remove works.

### Other beneficiaries of water level management

Management of water levels is also of value to

- Network Rail for the East Coast Main Line, Doncaster to Wakefield Line, Leeds to Goole Line
- Highways England for the M62, A1(M), and M1
- The Coal Authority
- Power stations and the National Grid
- Local Authorities of Wakefield, Doncaster, Barnsley, Rotherham and Selby with responsibility for A roads
- those living in urban areas.

The balance between several, sometimes-conflicting interests, can be fine. Current practices have evolved through the close co-operation between the Board and its stakeholders over many years.

### Maintenance

To manage water levels, Danvm Drainage Commissioners undertake routine maintenance operations on strategic watercourses considering the operational requirements of the catchment and the

impact of work on the conservation interest of the riparian environment.

Maintenance can include:

- the control of bank-side vegetation
- control of aquatic vegetation in the channel
- tree works where necessary facilitating access to the watercourse and
- de-silting when necessary

Maintenance is undertaken for the following primary reasons:

- Health and Safety criteria associated with de-weeding or de-silting operations permitting clear sight of the watercourse
- The control of successional processes and scrubby wood growth
- Provision of a clear passage for flow
- Provision of storage capacity during inundation events
- Inspection of watercourses and associated structures
- Stimulation of bank side vegetation maximising bank protection from erosion
- Conservation interests

To deliver a maintenance programme, the Board must comply with Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and registers its Exemptions for the use, treatment and disposal of waste arising from function.

To deliver any improvement works the Board must comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment (Land

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Drainage Improvement Works) Regulation 2017.

Management of water levels through pumped activity must deliver station compliance with Eels (England and Wales) Regulations 2010.

Where the Board's activity is considered likely to impact on a SSSI, the Board must comply with s61(c) Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) and consult Natural England before undertaking any operation or activities which appear likely to destroy or damage any flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the land is of special interest.

### Policy Aim

To manage water levels across the District enabling delivery of sustainable development using techniques causing minimal environmental damage whilst facilitating

- an adequate water supply for abstraction
- land drainage and flood risk mitigation.
- Management of nature conservation interests.

### Policy Objectives

To achieve its aim, the Danvm Drainage Commissioners will:

- deliver its maintenance programme following environmental best practice guidance developed in the Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual "Integrating wildlife and flood risk management".
- deliver its maintenance programme following its

Biosecurity Policy Procedures which seek to reduce the risk of spread of Invasive Non-Native Species

- register its Environmental Permitting Exemptions for the Use, Treatment and Disposal of waste arising from function.
- Seek to control the inappropriate use, alteration and culverting of drains and ditches within the District where this may have a detrimental effect on natural features of conservation.
- Promote the targets of its Biodiversity Act Plan associated with maintenance operations and capital works.
- Work with Natural England and others to promote the enhancement and protection of nature conservation interests, in so far as may be consistent with its operational functions.
- consider and implement ways of reducing its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with pumping activity and from vehicle and plant movement.

This policy was adopted by the Board 20 June 2014.

Reviewed by the Environmental Officer in 2017. Environmental Permitting Regulation update.

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