



## **Middle Level Commissioners and Administered / Associated Internal Drainage Boards**

### **Initial information**

You may have been sent a letter from us, because you have applied for Planning Permission from your local council. The development you have applied for is in the area covered by the statutory powers of Middle Level Commissioners (MLC), and / or the Internal Drainage Board (IDB), mentioned on your letter as 'The Authority'.

Please also see our 'Glossary' document for further descriptions of some of the terms used.

### **Background Information**

The MLC is a statutory corporation and IDB, providing flood defence and water level management within the Middle Level district. The MLC ensures that all surplus rain water or other water such as treated effluent (which is not required to support conservation, navigation or agriculture) is pumped out via a network of pumping stations into the River Great Ouse and then to the sea. IDBs are responsible for the more local water level management in their respective district. Most have pumping stations and most discharge their run-off into the MLC watercourses. Many of the IDBs are administered from the Middle Level Offices and their administration, engineering and financial work is carried out by Middle Level staff.

The MLC / IDBs gain the largest proportion of their income through rating and, amongst other things, use this money to invest in the maintenance, repair and improvement of key watercourses, embankments, pumping stations and other flood risk management structures, helping to protect the area from flooding. Occupiers of agricultural property receive an annual rate demand direct from the MLC / IDB. On non-agricultural properties, the District / Borough Councils or Unitary Authorities pay a Special Levy on behalf of the urban Council Tax payers in recognition of the work undertaken by the MLC / IDB to manage the flood risk to property and infrastructure from flooding from maintained watercourses

### **What this means to you**

Any rainwater (also known as surface water or run-off) that currently falls onto your land / garden will in part 'soak away' into the ground with the remainder slowly making its way into the local drainage system. The amount that soaks into the land, and the speed with which water enters the watercourses, depends on the geography and geology of the area in question. For example, very little water will soak into land which is clay based and the water which falls on it will quickly enter the watercourse if the land runs steeply towards it. When land is developed, for example by constructing an extension or a new housing development, the area of land that has been developed becomes 'impermeable' because the rain can no longer soak into the ground. The surface water is collected from roofs via gutters and drainpipes, and can end up in the drainage system very quickly. The local district drains may not be able to deal with this additional flow, and flooding may occur at the site, or further downstream / upstream. There are several ways that you can slow down the water arriving in the Board's system.

Any new or increased foul water produced by your development must also be taken into account. Many homes in this area discharge their foul water into an Anglian Water Sewer. This waste water is sent to a waste water treatment works, where it is cleaned and then (in most areas) released into the Districts drains. If you are adding a new bedroom to your

property, it is considered that the occupancy is increasing, and you will therefore be increasing the amount of foul water discharged.

It is your duty to show us that your development has considered flood risk, both to your site, and nearby properties. If you can prove that your development will not cause any extra water to enter the Districts drains, there is no charge to you. Any increase in surface water or foul water must be slowed as much as possible before discharging into the Districts drains, and there will be a one-off charge due to be paid depending on the amount and speed of water released. This charge is needed to help the Board maintain and improve their system to ensure that new development does not increase flood risk to existing land or property. You must complete the relevant forms and return them to us, with any required fees, to tell us how you are dealing with the water being generated by your development.

If any work is to be carried out in or around a watercourse, then consent needs to be given by the relevant Board before the works are carried out. Please complete the 'Application for Byelaw Consent for Works Affecting a Watercourse' form. Generally, consent is needed to carry out works within any watercourse, and in the maintenance strip of any protected watercourse. Please read the Byelaw Consent Advice and Glossary on the planning page of our website for further details.

Please see the flow charts below for a simplified version of the Consents and procedures needed. More detailed information can be found on the relevant advice documents on the Consent Page of our website. Please do contact us if you still need help, or if your circumstances are not shown here.