

BEDFORD GROUP OF DRAINAGE BOARDS

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

OPERATIONS

Review date: April 2022

To be reviewed every 5 years

Next review date: April 2027

Reviewed by: Joint Management Committee

Adopted by:

**Alconbury & Ellington Internal Drainage Board
Bedfordshire & River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Bedford Group is a non-profit making consortium of three Internal Drainage Boards committed to being a responsible business, conducting ourselves according to thorough ethical, professional, and legal standards.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. The Bedford Group has a vision to deliver appropriate water level management in a sustainable, carbon efficient and cost effective manner to the communities served within its catchments; in a way to minimise impact on the environment and protect and enhance ecological diversity for future generations.

3. COMMITMENT TO THESE PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. The Bedford Group Members Boards will do the following to comply with these principles:

- 3.2. **People:**

Stakeholders

We strive to work in partnership with ratepayers and other organisations to deliver watercourse maintenance and Capital projects efficiently, safely and with due regard to the environment. We endeavour to provide low carbon options where we can and choose sustainable design, material and construction methods where possible to do so.

Society

We aim to carry out our maintenance, construction and refurbishment practices in a manner designed to minimise disruption to our neighbours and lessen any impact upon the local environment, end users, the wider community and society.

Supply Chain

We treat our supply chain partners fairly and responsibly and work with our contractors and suppliers to ensure they operate in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

Employees

We create a safe and inspiring environment for our employees, enabling them to develop skills and contribute to the success of the business. The commitments to our staff and workforce are as follows:

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- Health and Safety - Health and Safety is our top priority. We are committed to continually improving the Health and Safety of our employees, contractors and those affected by our activities, including members of the public.
- Learning and Development – We promote training and learning opportunities for our staff to ensure they are equipped with the right knowledge and skill-set. This helps the business to run smoothly and allows the individual the scope for personal development.
- Equality and Diversity – We provide an inclusive working environment where everyone feels valued and respected. We are committed to equal opportunities and do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender, race, colour, marital status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or age.

3.3. The Planet:

Energy

We are committed to the UK governments target of carbon Net Zero by 2050 and are determined that our own activities and supply chains are aligned with these carbon reducing principals, toward the attainment of this target. We strive to improve our energy efficiency, reduce our carbon dioxide emissions and work with our stakeholders and suppliers to provide low carbon solutions to capital projects, maintenance activities and support projects researching or enabling carbon sequestration.

Resources

We will promote measures to recycle and minimise waste and reduce the consumption of natural resources during our business activities.

Environment

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that our operations are conducted in a manner that minimises our impact on the local environment whilst also considering the targets of the UK Governments 25 year plan for the Environment. We promote good environmental practice and seek opportunities to promote and enhance biodiversity during our day to day activities and discharging our duties.

3.4. Economic Viability:

Balanced sustainable solutions

We aim to work with ratepayers, our partners and stakeholders to provide sustainable solutions, as part of our daily operations and special projects that balance environmental, economic and social interests. We aim to ensure the effective use of resources and achieve value for money whilst undertaking our activities.

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Transparency and Good Governance

As a public authority we are open and upfront about our income, expenditure operations and activities. Such information is published regularly and is accessible to the public on our website or can be sought at source via a Freedom of Information Act request.

3.5. **Sustainable Development:**

Section 27 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Internal Drainage Boards to aim to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development when exercising their flood and coastal erosion risk management functions.

Resultantly, the Bedford Group Member Boards have adopted a joint Planning and Byelaw Strategy. This document provides guidance on how the WMA Member Boards will engage with their regulatory functions as well as the wider planning process with the aim of promoting sustainable development in sustainable locations.

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Version Control

Version	Changes made	Date
Version 1	n/a	??

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