

WHY ARE INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS SO IMPORTANT TO THE UK?

Covering 1.2 million hectares of England (9.7% of the total land area) and 28,500 hectares of Wales (1.4% of the total land area), IDBs have a significant operational role within the following areas:

WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

IDBs' primary role is to manage water levels and reduce the risk from flooding within their districts. Much of IDBs' work involves the maintenance and improvement of watercourses and related infrastructure such as pumping stations, weirs, sluices, culverts and embankments within their drainage districts. IDBs are responsible for the maintenance of **over 22,000km of watercourses located within their districts.**

ENVIRONMENT

IDBs conduct their work in accordance with a number of **environmental duties, and aim to promote sustainability and the ecological wellbeing** within their districts. Every IDB has its own Biodiversity Action Plan and strives to maintain watercourses as sympathetically as possible. They have a specific duty to further the conservation and enhancement of all designated environmental sites within their districts, including **398 SSSIs.**

PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

IDBs play a key role in directly reducing flood risk to **600,000 people** who live and/or work within IDB boundaries, and **879,000 properties** (domestic and commercial). Notwithstanding this, the total infrastructure that complements these communities would also be greatly affected. Local Authorities pay a 'special levy' to IDBs for people, property and infrastructure, benefitting from their work.

INDUSTRY & COMMERCIAL ASSETS

Although primarily rural, some IDB districts also contain several other significant industrial or commercial assets: **42 caravan/leisure parks** and **68 major industrial premises** (including the Port of Grimsby & Immingham in the Humber Estuary, which is the **UK's largest port by cargo tonnage** – importing 20 million tonnes of oil and 10 million tonnes of coal per annum – and 13th largest in Europe).

RENEWABLE ENERGY SUPPLY

Currently over **30 onshore windfarms** and **6 planned (1 operational) bio-energy power stations** are located within IDB districts. Such sites will need careful water level management to avoid flooding or damage to associated infrastructure. Other renewable energy production techniques are currently being considered by IDBs with regards to powering pumping stations with micro-generation, such as solar photovoltaic, micro wind, hydro and combined heat and power plants.

AGRICULTURE

There are approximately **50,000 farms or land-holdings** within IDB districts in England & Wales growing crops and raising livestock for food. The service provided by IDBs underpins the food production of the majority in the most valuable and productive land in the UK, with **over 50% of Grade 1 agricultural land** in England situated within IDBs. Water level management by IDBs is an essential component to continuing the food security of the UK.

UTILITIES

Within England and Wales there are 201 operational major power stations that supply the UK's high demand for electricity. Of these **major power stations 56** are located within Internal Drainage Districts, **equating to 53% of installed capacity (potential maximum power output).** Water supplies (both domestic and commercial) rely on effective water level and quality management, all of which would suffer from no IDB action.

TRANSPORT

Approximately **129 miles of motorway** and **910 miles of railway** runs through IDB districts. Including major commuter links, such as the **A1, M4, M5 and the East Coast Mainline** connecting London to the South West, Wales, North East and Scotland. Without efficient and continuous water level and land management from IDBs, and communication with other transport authorities, loss of these transport routes would affect millions of commuters every year.

PUMPING STATIONS

The majority of IDB districts require pumping to some degree for water level management, the rest are reliant on gravitational flows to main rivers and estuaries. **53 IDBs** have more than 95% of their area dependent on pumping. **635,722 hectares of land in IDB districts rely on pumping** – almost 51% of the total. This is facilitated by at least **500 pumping stations.**