

North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board
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Our Ref: GR/20250889/OUT

Your Ref: 20250889

08/01/2026

For the attention of Mrs Alison Webster

Dear Sir/Madam

Application: 20250889

Proposal: Outline planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and erection up to 40 residential dwellings, public open space and associated works. Approval is sought for the principal means of vehicular access from Chalk Road and all other matters are reserved.

Location: Buckland Farm Chalk Road Higham Rochester Kent

Thank you for your consultation on the above-referenced planning application.

The site is within the drainage district of the North Kent Marshes Internal Drainage Board (NKMIDB), and as the proposal stands, the surface water discharge will require land drainage consent in line with the Board's Byelaws (specifically Byelaw 3). Please find a copy of the Board's Byelaws https://lowermedwayidb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NKMIDB_Byelaws_DEFRA-approved.pdf. Any consent granted will likely be conditional, pending the payment of a Surface Water Development Contribution fee, calculated in line with the Board's charging policy (available at https://lowermedwayidb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/NKMIDB_Charging_Policy_Sept_2025.pdf). The one-off Surface Water Development Contribution is due to the Board to cover the increased flow and volume in its maintained drainage network.

Before we reach a land drainage consent application, the Board would like to raise concerns regarding the proposed reliance on the existing pipework to the north of the site as the primary surface water outfall. The supporting CCTV survey contained within Appendix F (Aquatech Drain Services, July 2025) identifies a number of defects within the drainage asset, which appear to go beyond routine maintenance issues. In particular, there is mention of root ingress resulting in approximately 80% cross-sectional area loss, and structural defects including a displaced joint. In addition, there were multiple pipe sections where the survey was abandoned due to root ingress or loss of visibility, so the pipe condition is unknown. The FRA refers to the culvert only as being "overgrown" and states that "clearance works will be required", however, this seems to be an underestimation of the work required to provide a suitable outfall for the lifetime of the development. Only part of this drain run is to be diverted which means the scheme still relies on the existing substandard pipe sections. It is stated that the pipe runs underneath the railway to the northeast of the site and into the Medway and Thames Canal, but the surveyed lengths do not include this critical end section and as such, we concur with KCC's comments that Network Rail and the Environment Agency should be contacted to confirm whether they hold any relevant records regarding this section.

In addition, the FRA does not clearly demonstrate that the culvert is within the applicant's control or that rights to access, maintain and remediate the asset can be secured in perpetuity; or the downstream system has adequate capacity, given the downstream flooding issues. Also, Highway

Authority consent is required for connection to a Highway drain; these issued are mentioned in correspondence with the LLFA, and therefore, there is insufficient detail to assess whether the outfall route is appropriate and viable.

Given the site levels, foul water from the development will need to be pumped to enable a gravity connection into the existing Southern Water foul sewer. Southern Water has agreed in principle to receive these flows but has also confirmed that improvement works to their network will be required to accommodate the proposed discharge rate of 0.36 l/s. The reliance on a pumped foul system introduces additional considerations, as pumps create long-term financial and operational liabilities for whichever party is ultimately responsible for their management. It is therefore important that the ownership, maintenance regime and resilience measures for the pumped system are clearly defined and secured for the lifetime of the development.

If the LPA are minded to grant permission, then it would be prudent to condition any permission that prior to development full schemes for surface water disposal based on SuDS principles and for foul water are submitted to and approved by the local planning authority and they are verified on site once constructed by a competent engineer. It would also be prudent to formally condition permission that prior to development a maintenance schedule is submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. It should specify ownership, a timetable for implementation, provide a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development and this plan should include the frequency of maintenance for each feature.

The LPA may also wish to consider a planning condition aimed at mitigating potential groundwater flood risk, requiring details of finished floor levels, the use of suspended floor slabs designed to create an appropriate void beneath the building, and the lining of drainage features with an impermeable membrane to prevent groundwater ingress.

For information

For an ordinary watercourse within the Board's District, land drainage consent is required from the Board for any works within the cross-sectional area of the channel of a watercourse, under the Land Drainage Act, 1991 and Byelaw 4.

With respect to a designated main river, this will come under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency, and they should be approached directly regarding any works that may affect the watercourse.

This response has been provided using the best knowledge and information submitted as part of the planning application at the time of responding and is reliant on the accuracy of that information. The Board would be very grateful if its comments were used in their entirety.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]
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