

Upper Ouse Water Management Board Job Description

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| Job title: | Catchment Engineer (Great Ouse Area) |
| Location: | Catchment of the Upper Ouse Water Management Board Based in Stewartby, Bedfordshire |
| Responsible to: | Chief Executive Officer * |
| Direct Reports: | 2 officers |
| Salary: | £55,000 - £65,000 |
| Hours | 37 (Full Time) although part-time would be considered. |

**Further to several successful years of partnership working, the Board is expected to formally join the Water Management Alliance (WMA) in 2026. The WMA is an established group of like-minded Drainage Boards who jointly administer their affairs. Upon the Board joining the WMA, formal line management of this role is expected to transfer to the WMA's Head of Catchment Services, on a timeline to be confirmed in due course.*

Context

The **Upper Ouse Water Management Board** is a local public authority that manage flood risk and land drainage within its catchment. The Board has permissive powers to undertake water management activities within their Internal Drainage District. The purpose of delivering this work is to reduce flood risk to people and property and to manage water in a way that meets the local needs of business and agriculture whilst also dealing with its obligations and commitments to the environment.

The Board maintains an arterial drainage network and exercises a general power of supervision over all matters relating to water level management within their district whilst conducting their work in accordance with a number of general environmental duties and promoting the ecological wellbeing of their districts.

The Board also uses its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 (including the Board's Byelaws) to ensure that development is carried out sustainably within the Boards' Drainage Districts and upland catchment areas. This is done by regulating works on, or affecting, the watercourses within the Drainage District.

The Board is newly constituted Board (order made January 2026, effective April 2026) further to the amalgamation of three pre-existing Boards who have worked together since 2001 from their shared base in Stewartby, Bedfordshire.

Role Overview

The role is focused on leading expert proactive engagement with new development and third-party works within the Board's catchment including major developments such as urban expansions, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and Universal Studios.

The post holder will be responsible for leading the Board's regulatory role, ensuring that development is carried out sustainably within the Boards' Drainage District and upland catchment area.

Role Description

The role will include the following tasks and objectives:

- Lead, supervise and coordinate the Board's regulatory role in determining applications for Land Drainage Consents, required as per the Land Drainage Act 1991 including the Board's Byelaws. This includes insuring all consent applications are processed in accordance with adopted policies, with due regard for relevant adjacent legislation and drafting / issuing legally compliant Land Drainage Consent documentation and application of relevant conditions.
- Lead on engagement with third party works by advising applicants and the Local Planning Authority on development proposals including Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and Special Development Orders (such as Universal Studios) in the Board's catchment. Provision of advice to Local Planning Authorities and applicants to promote best practice, ensure the Board's requirements are met and reduce the impact of development on flood risk locally.
- Lead the Board's efforts to ensure third party compliance with the Land Drainage Act 1991 (plus Byelaws) including leading the organisation's investigation of reports/complaints of non-compliance / infringements and both formal and initial enforcement proceedings.
- Work alongside the WMA Chief Operating Officer to ensure statutory compliance with the Reservoirs Act. This includes acting as the named contact within the DEFRA Prescribed Form of Record (The "Blue Book"), the primary point of coordination between the Panel Engineer, Supervising Engineer and the Board, for managing and coordinating inspections and visits, managing and procuring any works arising from inspections, preparing, testing and maintaining the emergency flood plan and reservoir safety documentation.
- Interpretation and analysis of detailed planning / development proposals and consent applications (including technical designs, plans and model outputs) to assess the likely impact of proposals on flood risk / drainage. This includes major infrastructure schemes.
- Leading the Board's response to general drainage enquiries from external customers such as public authorities, landowners and the general public, including drainage enquiries following flood events impacting private networks.
- Preparing and presenting reports for items to be considered by the Board.
- Consultation with internal stakeholders (engineers, environmental and operations teams) and analysis of existing data sources (maps, models, historic data).
- Supporting the provision of information requested with regard to Flood Risk Assessments or capacity of Board maintained drainage infrastructure.
- Attendance at site visits to assess proposals. Ensuring Health and Safety is paramount at all times and that Health and Safety objectives are promoted and achieved.
- Line management and supervision of team members (currently 2 officers).
- Application and adjustment of policies and procedures.
- Interpretation of relevant legislation to understand when consent is required.

- Leading and mentoring colleagues
- Maintaining accurate records of all planning/consenting/compliance cases reviewed and processed.
- Keeping knowledge current, by way of continuous professional development.
- Any other duties that may reasonably be required.

| Person Specification | |
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| Qualifications | |
| Essential | Desirable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relevant degree in engineering or water management-related subject. • Membership of a relevant professional accreditation body (e.g. ICE or CIWEM). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A masters degree in an engineering or water management-related subject • Chartership Status with a relevant professional accreditation body (e.g. ICE or CIWEM). |
| Experience | |
| Essential | Desirable |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of five years experience working in a senior technical role within the Water Management Industry or an engineering based role in a related field. • Experience liaising, corresponding and negotiating with a variety of stakeholders. • Experience working with land drainage engineering techniques and surface water management. • Experience interpreting plans, model outputs and other technical drainage information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working with legal documentation. • Experience creating or reviewing strategies or processes. • Experience identifying a need for procedural change, and implementing / managing change. • Experience mentoring or leading colleagues. • Experience working under the Reservoirs Act. |
| Skills/Knowledge | |
| Essential | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed understanding of the technical aspects of drainage design for new development (including SuDS design) and drainage infrastructure (including culverts and water control structures), hydraulic principles and drainage design software (such as Micro-drainage and hydraulic modelling). • A detailed understanding of Planning Legislation, including Development Consent Orders and the TCPA. | |

- The ability to interpret and apply technical information (e.g. British Standards, Codes of Practice, technical reports and plans).
- An understanding of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) including Land Drainage Law.
- An understanding of the Reservoirs Act.
- Ability to prioritise effectively and organise workloads to meet deadlines and to remain calm under pressure.
- Ability to analyse, interpret and communicate complex material, as well as having a methodical approach to work, demonstrating an attention to detail as well as accuracy in record keeping.
- Ability to competently use computer software such as Microsoft packages and GIS software.
- Well-developed written and spoken communication skills (including letter writing, presentation skills and interpersonal communication).
- Ability to work well with others at all levels both internally and externally.
- A full and valid driving licence.
- Ability to work independently
- An ability to deal with challenges and questions confidently, while being resilient and persuasive.
- Creative problem solving skills with an ability to identify areas for development and improvement.

Desirable

- An existing detailed understanding of Internal Drainage Boards regulatory and enforcement powers and procedures.
- An understanding of environmental policy and legislation (such as Habitat Regulations).
- A detailed understanding of GIS software.
- Leadership and mentoring skills.

Other Job Information (e.g. any special factors or constraints)

- You must be physically fit to walk around watercourse and drainage catchments (up to 15% of the role) sometimes in inclement weather conditions. Such areas are potentially difficult to access, dirty, remote and/or subject to dense vegetation.
- On occasion the post holder will be expected to work outside of 'normal' office hours to represent the Board at public meetings, events and committees.
- All work performed/duties undertaken must be carried out in accordance with relevant Water Management Alliance, Board and Departmental policies and procedures, within legislation, and with regard to the needs of our customers.
- Work within the public and Flood and Water Management sectors can involve dealing with new and emerging legislation. As such further duties or refinements of current workload may alter the remit of this role to meet the impact of new work areas in the organisation and/or relevant member Board's. This highlights the importance of the post holder in being an effective advocate for this service area and having a good insight into the wider remits of the organisation.
- You will be required to actively consider the impact of your working arrangements on the organisation's carbon footprint. Post holders should regularly review the necessity of printing hard copies of electronic documents and seek alternatives to work related travel where it is not essential and work objectives can be met by other means such as video conferencing.

Declaration and acknowledgement

As of the date stated below, the information in this job description is confirmed as accurate and reflective of the requirement of the role by the below named individuals. Please note the details of the job description will be updated should substantive changes to the role occur or be proposed.

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| Name: | Marcus Coleman | Cathryn Brady |
| Position: | Board & WMA Chief Executive | WMA Head of Catchment Services |
| Date: | 26 February 2026 | |