

Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board

Invasive Species Management Policy

The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (UMIDB) recognises that invasive non-native species (INNS) can adversely affect watercourse conveyance, flood risk management, biodiversity, public safety, landowners, and the efficient operation of the Board's assets and services.

The Board is committed to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species and implementing effective management measures where they are identified. The Board supports an integrated management approach which prioritises prevention, monitoring, biosecurity, and non-chemical control methods wherever reasonably practicable.

Whilst the Board seeks to reduce reliance on chemical control measures over time, it recognises that herbicides and other approved treatments may remain necessary in certain circumstances as part of a structured and risk-based management programme. Any use of chemicals shall be justified, proportionate, legally compliant, and undertaken by competent persons.

Purpose and Scope

This policy ensures that UMIDB:

- Prevents, where reasonably practicable, the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Identifies and records invasive species affecting Board assets, operations, or land under its management.
- Utilises a structured, risk-based approach to invasive species management.
- Promotes the use of sustainable and environmentally responsible control methods.
- Ensures chemical control measures are used only where reasonably justified and as part of an integrated management plan.
- Protects biodiversity, water quality, infrastructure, and public safety.

This policy applies to:

- All employees, Board members, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and any other persons undertaking activities on behalf of UMIDB.
- All Board-managed land, watercourses, depots, pumping stations, access routes, and operational sites.
- Invasive plant, animal, and aquatic species which may be encountered within the Board's district.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

UMIDB is committed to fulfilling its obligations under:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019.
- Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Control of Pesticides Regulations.
- Plant Protection Products Regulations.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).
- Any Environment Agency requirements relating to herbicide use in or near water.
- Any other relevant environmental, wildlife, waste management, or drainage legislation.

Policy Commitments

UMIDB will:

- Maintain awareness of invasive species relevant to the South East of England.
- Monitor and record invasive species identified during routine inspections and operational activities.
- Assess the risks posed by invasive species to flood risk management, biodiversity, infrastructure, public safety, and operational effectiveness.
- Prioritise prevention and early intervention wherever possible.
- Apply biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of invasive species between sites.
- Consider non-chemical control methods as the preferred management option where effective and reasonably practicable.
- Utilise mechanical, physical, ecological, or biological control methods where appropriate.
- Permit chemical control measures where risk assessments demonstrate they are necessary, effective, and proportionate.
- Ensure herbicides are only applied by competent persons using approved products and methods.
- Seek to reduce overall chemical usage through improved planning, monitoring, and alternative management techniques.
- Maintain records of infestations, treatment programmes, and monitoring outcomes.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Board: Responsible for approving this policy and supporting appropriate resources for implementation.
- Clerk: Responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented and periodically reviewed.
- Works Manager: Responsible for operational delivery, monitoring programmes, treatment planning, contractor management, and record keeping.
- Employees and Contractors: Responsible for reporting sightings, following biosecurity procedures, and complying with management plans and site controls.

Invasive Species Reporting and Management

- Any identified invasive species infestation shall be:
- Reported to the Works Manager or designated officer.
- Recorded within the Board's asset or environmental records.
- Assessed to determine the level of risk and appropriate response.
- Managed through an invasive species management plan where necessary.
- Monitored following treatment to assess effectiveness and identify any recurrence.

Where chemical treatment is proposed:

- Alternative methods shall be considered first.
- Appropriate environmental permissions and consents shall be obtained.

- COSHH assessments shall be completed where required.
- Treatment records shall be maintained.

Monitoring and Review

The Board will maintain records of:

- Species identified.
- Locations and extent of infestations.
- Control measures undertaken.
- Chemical applications.
- Monitoring results and treatment outcomes.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, operational requirements, environmental guidance, or emerging invasive species threats.

Delivery Procedures

Identification and Reporting

Staff and contractors shall report suspected invasive species sightings as soon as practicable. Records shall include location, species (where known), extent, and photographs where possible.

Biosecurity

Plant, equipment, vehicles, boats, PPE, and machinery shall be cleaned and inspected where there is a risk of transferring invasive species between sites.

Management Planning

Significant infestations shall be managed through a documented plan identifying:

- Species present.
- Extent of infestation.
- Management objectives.
- Control measures.
- Monitoring requirements.
- Review dates.

Chemical Control

Chemical treatments shall form part of an integrated management strategy and shall not be relied upon as the sole long-term control measure where viable alternatives exist.

The Board's objective is to progressively reduce chemical dependency whilst maintaining effective control of invasive species and protecting operational assets, biodiversity, and public safety.