UMIDB Environmental Policy 2027

This policy is supported by the Board's Environmental Policy Statement and sets out the organisation, responsibilities and arrangements through which its environmental aims will be delivered.

The Board recognises that environmental stewardship is fundamental to the effective management of water levels, flood risk, biodiversity and sustainable catchment management. We will seek to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the natural environment through responsible decision-making, active management and continual improvement.

This policy applies to all employees and, where relevant, Members, contractors, visitors, volunteers and others undertaking activities on behalf of the Board.

Policy Aims

- Protect and where reasonably practicable enhance biodiversity throughout the district.
- Maintain and implement the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Consider environmental impacts when planning, consenting and delivering activities.
- Promote sustainable land and water management practices.
- Prevent pollution and environmental harm arising from Board operations.
- Support improvements in habitat quality, water quality and ecological resilience.
- Apply biosecurity measures to reduce the risk of spreading invasive non-native species.
- Provide employees with suitable information, training and resources.
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders.
- Establish measurable environmental objectives and review performance regularly.

Leadership and Responsibilities

The Board

Approves environmental policies and significant revisions. It will ensure suitable review of environmental performance and support delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan by providing appropriate support and resources to the business, the Sustainability Committee, and the officers.

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee will exercise the Board’s delegated responsibilities for sustainability, conservation and environmental matters, providing strategic direction and oversight while reporting its decisions and recommendations to the Board. The Sustainability Officer will support the Committee's work and provide monitoring, reporting and professional advice on behalf of the Clerk. It will guide environmental policy and delivery, including the Biodiversity Action Plan, invasive non-native species, natural flood management, water quality and catchment planning; oversee delegated consent and enforcement matters; support relevant funding applications; promote effective partnership working and stakeholder engagement, and drive workflows to achieve the Board’s environmental objectives.

Clerk to the Board

The Clerk is responsible for maintaining the Board's environmental management framework and ensuring that suitable governance, reporting and review arrangements are in place. The Clerk will oversee the strategic and

governance aspects of environmental management, support the Sustainability Committee in exercising its delegated responsibilities, and work with the Sustainability Officer to ensure environmental objectives, policies, projects and performance are effectively delivered and monitored across the organisation.

Sustainability Officer

The Sustainability Officer is responsible for supporting the operational delivery of the Board's environmental objectives and providing professional advice to the Sustainability Committee, the Clerk and the Board on environmental matters. They will coordinate environmental projects and partnership initiatives, monitor environmental performance and emerging issues, support delivery of the Biodiversity Action Plan, and act as a key point of liaison with stakeholders, regulators and partner organisations.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors will ensure environmental risks are considered when planning and delivering work, and that appropriate environmental controls and procedures are implemented. They will monitor compliance and identify opportunities to enhance environmental performance.

Employees

Employees will follow environmental procedures and controls, comply with biosecurity requirements, and promptly report pollution incidents or other environmental concerns. They will also support the organisation’s environmental objectives through their day-to-day activities.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Working

The Board recognises that many environmental outcomes are achieved through collaboration and influence rather than through direct action alone. Effective environmental management therefore relies on maintaining positive working relationships with landowners, occupiers, local authorities, environmental organisations, regulators, communities and other stakeholders.

- Environmental considerations will be integrated into stakeholder engagement activities where relevant.
- The Board will seek opportunities to support partnership projects which contribute to biodiversity, water quality, habitat enhancement, catchment resilience or sustainable water management.
- The Sustainability Committee will promote effective engagement with stakeholders and partner organisations to support delivery of the Board's environmental objectives.
- Feedback, local knowledge and partner expertise will be considered when developing environmental initiatives, policies and projects.
- The Board will seek to maintain constructive relationships that support both environmental enhancement and the practical management of flood risk and drainage responsibilities.

Environmental Risk and Decision Making

Environmental considerations will be incorporated into strategic, operational, consenting and project-related decisions, with environmental risks and opportunities considered proportionate to the nature, scale and complexity of the activity. The Board will seek to avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse environmental impacts where reasonably practicable, identify opportunities for environmental enhancement, and ensure significant environmental matters are reported through the Sustainability Committee and Board as appropriate.

Sustainable Operations and Resource Management

The Board will seek to manage its activities in a manner that makes efficient and responsible use of resources while supporting long-term environmental sustainability. Environmental and sustainability considerations will be incorporated into operational planning, procurement, project delivery and asset management where reasonably practicable, with the Sustainability Committee reviewing opportunities to improve environmental performance, resource efficiency and the sustainable delivery of the Board's objectives.

Biodiversity and Habitat Enhancement

The Board will manage its activities to protect and, where reasonably practicable, enhance habitats and biodiversity. The Sustainability Committee will oversee delivery and review of the Biodiversity Action Plan, consider conservation priorities and recommend strategic actions or resources to the Board.

Watercourses and Catchment Management

Environmental impacts will be considered in the planning, consenting and delivery of watercourse and catchment management activities. The Sustainability Committee will provide strategic oversight of natural flood management, water quality and catchment initiatives, including relevant partnerships and funding opportunities.

Biosecurity and Invasive Species

Appropriate biosecurity measures will be applied to reduce the risk of introducing or spreading invasive non-native species. The Sustainability Committee will monitor strategic risks and priorities relating to invasive species and support coordinated action with partners where required.

Training, Information and Awareness

Employees and relevant contractors will receive suitable environmental information, instruction and training for their roles. The Sustainability Committee will help identify strategic awareness priorities and promote understanding of the Board’s environmental and conservation objectives.

Environmental Incidents and Reporting

Environmental incidents and concerns will be reported promptly, investigated and addressed in accordance with Board procedures. Significant incidents, material trends and associated corrective actions will be reported to the Sustainability Committee and, where appropriate, escalated to the Board.

Monitoring, Performance and Improvement

Measurable environmental objectives and indicators will be established, monitored and reviewed regularly. The Sustainability Committee will scrutinise performance, progress against the Biodiversity Action Plan and opportunities for continual improvement and will report recommendations to the Board.

Review and Governance

This policy will be reviewed at appropriate intervals and following significant legislative, operational or organisational changes. The Sustainability Committee will lead the detailed review and recommend amendments to the Board, which retains responsibility for approving the policy and significant revisions.