



An Independent Upper Medway

Now the dust has settled...

Post separation from the joint service agreement with the Lower Medway IDB, the Upper Medway IDB is ready to take giant steps towards improving the service it provides and offering modern solutions to the planning and actions required for effective land drainage.

The Board has now agreed to principal objectives that need further expansion so that we can begin to deliver upon the vision set out in late 2021. These objectives require us to work more effectively not only in-house but also externally by seeking closer working relationships with our strategic and industry partners.

What has changed since the last plan?

Aside from the obvious deviation of the Boards from a joint service agreement, there have been several areas that are no longer part of the next 5 years that would have previously been. Specifically, the talks with the North Kent Marshes, creation of a new depot and office, and the restructuring of the works teams. This has created some opportunities to look at other topics in a slightly more acute way, which should see an acceleration in delivery, particularly in relation to natural flood management projects and adoption of additional watercourses.

Key Objectives

The key objectives for the next five years are largely in place but with different focus on elements such as the adoption of additional watercourses, bigger collaborative works, and improving stakeholder engagement.

Administration:

Improve the efficiency of the collation, processing, and interpretation of stakeholder data and finances to better understand our main targets relating to works, governance, and future improvements.

Works:

Improve the efficiency of the existing work, look to increase influence in previously riparian only networks, and increase activity to be of financial benefit to the Board and district where possible.

Futures:

Continued review of existing practices, district interaction, and necessity of asset improvement and replacement. This will also include expansion or contraction of the district, scope of activity, and financial investments.

Administration

- Drainage Rating System (DRS) - moved into the cloud and creation of a stakeholder portal to ease and improve access to landowner information, billing, and communication. **In Action**
- Planning and Consents – The introduction of a potential source of non-public income to aid the creation and improvement of watercourses and administration of the district. **Completed**
- A full biodiversity review and program put in place to allow us to gauge our impact upon the ecosystem which we help maintain, highlighting key areas of improvement. The creation of robust conservation aims and desires that tie in with the Environment Agency, Natural England, and other partners and allow us to operate outside traditional time constraints without fear of reprisal. **In Action -BAP element completed**

- Consideration for adopting other key arterial and flood prone watercourses to show responsibility as a leading RMA within the Medway catchment. **In Action – Beginning March 2022**
- Implementation of social media communication line outside of website. **In Action – Instagram setup and active**
- Maintain and seek improvement for use of technology for Board operations. **In Action**
- Removal of paper from the office administration. **In Action**
- Maintain rate level in line with inflation. **In Action – Most recent rate was below inflation**
- Replacement of Works Supervisor. **Not Started – Must be finalised by July 2022**

Works

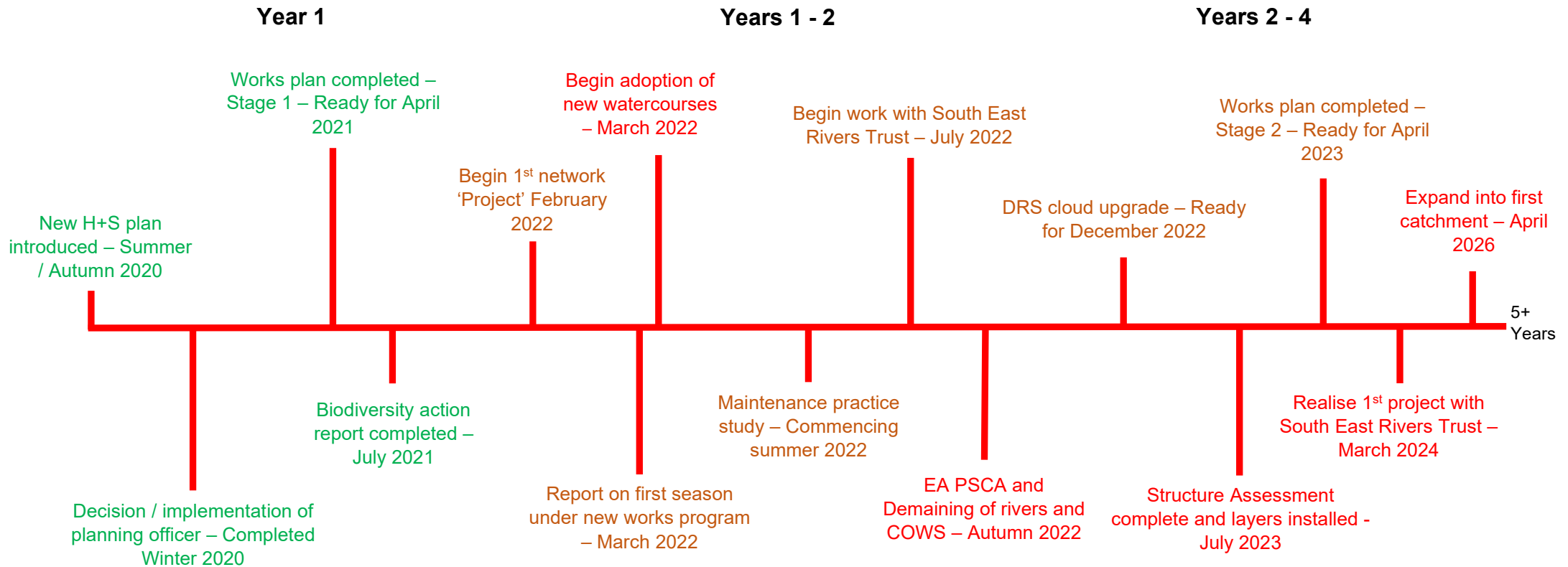
- Restructuring of workforce maintenance plans and tasking dependent on the time of year. **In Action – new ‘Project’ period introduced between new year and April.**
- Works Plan – survey of existing watercourses with the intention of creating more manageable reaches, better cost understanding and allowing for growth in the adoption of watercourses. **In Action – major body of work begun**
- Work on network related drainage on top of general IDB ‘critical’ watercourse. **NEW In Action – February 2022**
- Increase in level of private (rechargeable) works, with fully costed pricings and reasoning. **In Action – new 2022 costings to be approved by Finance Committee**
- Begin work with South East Rivers Trust on major NFM projects across the district – **NEW In Action**
- Asset survey across the district to understand the condition and utility of structures for both current drainage requirements and future storage and diversion of water to offline areas during peak times. This is empowered within Bylaw 4 of the IDB’s bylaws. **Not Started**
- De-maining of certain watercourses inclusive of some main river. This would include the adoption of watercourses that were taken on by the Environment Agency as Critical Ordinary Watercourses (COWs) in the past. **Not Started – Discussions with EA due to commence May 2022**
- PSCA with Environment Agency. **Not Started – Discussions with EA due to commence April 2022**

Futures

- Assess the introduction of the new Environment Bill that offers IDB’s greater scope for local governance and expansion.
- Determine how best to hold finances for longer term investment.
- Expansion of work force / contracts usage for increased works.
- Increasing funds raised with collaborative partners to fund NFM projects across the catchment.
- Purchase of new plant such as tracked chipper, culvert jetter, and other associated machinery to aid in the maintenance and response capability of the Board.

After the disruption of last year, we are still on track to either complete or action a lot of the plans we had originally but with some additional elements such as adoption of new watercourse (**commencing March 2022**), work with South East Rivers Trust (**In action**), and looking to jointly fund projects outside of the district that will benefit the Board and it’s activities.

Timeline of Events



Completed / Ongoing Tasks From Year 1

- Cloud integration for key elements (possibly dictated by new office and better internet capability). **Ongoing.**
- H+S Plan installed. **Completed**
- BAP Renewal. **Completed**
- HR overhaul ongoing from January 2021. **Completed**
- DRS Online. **Ongoing**
- Office Procedure and file redesign. **Completed**
- Removal of paper-based administration in favour of digital alternatives. **Ongoing.**
- IDB learning and involvement in SUDS and future schemes for water storage and diversion. **Ongoing.**
- Decision on need for further staffing according to catchment and work based rationale. **Not Started**