

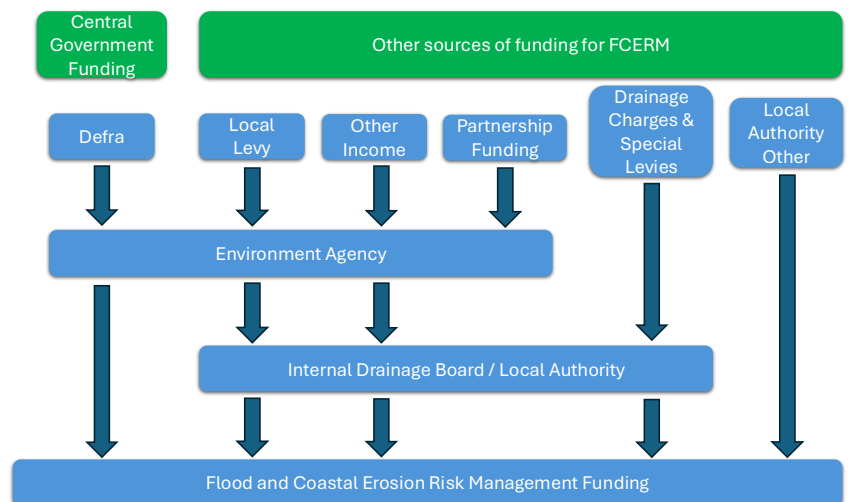
What is General Drainage Charge, Local Levy, and Internal Drainage Board Precept?

General Drainage Charge

The General Drainage Charge (GDC) is a statutory charge that applies to occupiers of agricultural land and buildings in the Anglian area that fall outside Internal Drainage Board (IDB) boundaries. It helps pay for local flood-defence work such as maintaining main rivers, sea defences, and tidal embankments. It only applies in Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and East Anglia, and is separate from charges made by IDBs or Internal Drainage Districts (IDDs).

Local Levy

The Local Levy is a local funding source raised through Council Tax and used only within the region. It helps boost partnership funding and bring in extra government funding, it allows some projects to start sooner, and it funds flood-risk projects, studies, monitoring, and community work across the region. It funds a range of schemes, including coastal protection, tidal and sea-flood resilience, main river and surface-water flood schemes, and Natural Flood Management. Support from the Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee in financial year 2025 and 2026 supports us to carry out routine maintenance at more locations, going beyond what central funding alone would allow.



Flood, Coastal, and Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) funding diagram

IDB Precept

The Environment Agency can require IDBs to contribute money each year through an IDB precept. This mainly supports maintenance work but can also fund wider flood and coastal-risk activities. In larger programmes, some of the funding may cover staff costs to manage the work, as long as it benefits the region it comes from. The Environment Agency also raises money through IDB precepts, GDC and selling assets.

Why is maintenance not guaranteed in specific locations or for individual landholdings?

Levies are not payments for specific works on a particular field or holding. Instead, it is a contribution toward the wider management of water levels and flood risk across the catchment.



Therefore, even where no direct intervention is planned on a specific piece of land, that land still forms part of the hydrological system that benefits from the overall management of watercourses, flood defences, and strategic planning undertaken in the area.

Levies are not linked to a promise of maintenance on any specific stretch of watercourse or any individual property. Work is prioritised based on risk, environmental need, and available resources across the whole catchment, not on a land-by-land basis.

This means that:

- No individual landowner is guaranteed maintenance
- Benefits may be indirect or strategic rather than visible on-site
- Timetables for intervention depend on catchment-wide priorities rather than individual holdings

How are the charge, levy, and precept fair and proportionate?

The GDC is set each year by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) and applied at a uniform per-hectare rate to all chargeable land in the Anglian area, ensuring occupiers contribute in proportion to the land they hold. Its fairness comes from using one transparent rate for all eligible land, operating within a statutory framework that restricts spending to flood and water management. This recognises that all land within a catchment both contributes to and benefits from the wider drainage system, even if the benefits are not specific to each site.

Local Levy is a local funding source set by RFCCs to support priority flood and coastal risk projects that national funding doesn't fully cover. Spending must show good value for money, align with national and local FCERM priorities, and maximise flood-risk benefits. The RFCCs must manage funds flexibly and fairly to meet regional needs. Local levy funding must be spent within the RFCC region it was raised in. It does not have to be spent in the same year. RFCCs usually maintain a balance of local levy funding.

An IDB precept must be spent in the year it is raised and cannot be carried forward, unlike Local Levy. The Environment Agency requires RFCC consent for both the level of precept and the programmes it will fund, meaning RFCC views directly shape how precept income is used. Precept is mainly used for revenue maintenance, but it can also support wider flood and coastal risk work when needed. In larger programmes, a small portion may be used for staff costs to manage and report on the work, provided this benefits the flood-risk region where the precept was raised.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you would like further information on riparian ownership, please use the contact details below:

Post - National Customer Contact Centre PO Box 544 Rotherham S60 1BY United Kingdom

Email - LNenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone - 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm)

Incident Hotline - 0800 80 70 60 - to report flooding, blockages, pollution, unusual changes in flow of water, collapsed or badly damaged defences (24-hour service).

