

Water Targets Expert Advisory Group: Abandoned Metal Mines and Agriculture Targets Cost-Benefit Analysis Summary

Meeting notes, Tuesday 14 September 2021, 10:05-12:00 on MS Teams

Defra and Environment Agency (EA) attendees

Expert Attendees: Penny Johnes (Chair); Paul Withers; Joseph Holden; Paul Whitehead; Kevin Hiscock; Karen Hudson-Edwards (guest expert); Charlotte Braungardt (guest expert); Adrian Collins (guest expert)

1) Defra Presentation

Defra presented on the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) for the proposed abandoned metal mines and agriculture targets.

2) Discussion

Discussion between Defra and members of the Water Expert Advisory Group included the following topics:

- The use of NWEBS (National Water Environment Benefits Survey) methodology to calculate the benefits of the abandoned metal mines and agriculture targets and how the value of the components in the methodology may change over time.
- The source for the costs used and the delivery mechanisms for the targets.
- The different treatment methods for addressing pollution from abandoned metal mines and their relative costs.
- The rationale for the use of FARMSOPER for the agriculture target CBA, the need to assess the environmental damage costs for total nitrogen and not just nitrate, together with those for total phosphorus and sediment fluxes from agriculture to water.

A summary of the advice and discussion from the Water Expert Advisory Group has been incorporated into the Detailed Evidence Report which accompanies our Environment Act 2021: environmental targets.