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River basin planning: working together

Consultation response for the Anglian River Basin District

We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it **a better place** - for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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1 Introduction

The Water Framework Directive¹ (WFD) establishes new and better ways of protecting and improving rivers, lakes, groundwater, transitional (where freshwater and sea water mix) and coastal waters. River basin planning aims to develop new and better ways of protecting and improving the water environment.

River basin planning encourages the active involvement of everyone with an interest in water. We would like you to play a part in the planning and management process and help to produce a better water environment.

Overview of River Basin Planning: Working Together

In December we published River Basin Planning: Working Together (statement of steps and consultations measures). This document is the first step in developing a River Basin Management Plan for this River Basin District (RBD). It set out a timetable and programme for developing the River Basin Management Plans in the Anglian RBD. We worked closely with the Anglian RBD liaison panel to develop our plans.

We issued Working Together to help you understand what the river basin planning process will be in the Anglian RBD and how and when you can get involved. We asked what you thought of our proposed timetable and programme, and we wanted to know whether you think it will allow us to develop an effective plan and enable you to be involved in this process.

This was a public consultation and we welcomed everyone's views. The document was particularly aimed at those who are likely to be affected by or have an interest in the process for developing the River Basin Management Plan.

The consultation ran from 22 December 2006 to 22 June 2007.

¹ Further information on the Water Framework Directive is available at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd

2 List of respondents

In total we received 27 responses to our Anglian River Basin Planning: Working Together consultation. Twenty one of these were specific to the RBD, whereas six were sent to all RBDs.

See the table below for information on who responded to the Working Together consultation and which questions they answered or commented on:

(Data protection prevents naming individuals who have not given permission for their details to be made public)

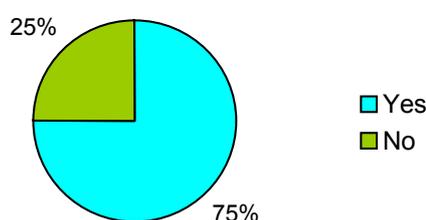
Organisation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
BASC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bedford Group of Drainage Boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boston Borough Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
British Dragonfly Society	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cam Valley Forum & RALSA	✓	✓	✓			
Carmarthenshire Fishermen's Federation / Conservation Committee, WSTAA	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
CLA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consumer Council for Water - eastern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cranfield University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Essex County Council	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forestry Commission			✓			
Lincolnshire chalk streams project	✓	✓			✓	✓
Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service	✓	✓			✓	✓
Quarry Products Association			✓			✓
Royal Yachting Association	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South West Water	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Waveney District Council			✓	✓		
Wildlife and Countryside Link	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Woodland Trust	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
No organisation			✓			
Not given	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Not given	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Not given	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Not given	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Not given			✓		✓	✓
Not given	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3 Summary of responses and action we will take

The following pages set out our responses to specific comments. We have summarised the representations received and have also summarised the action we will take to each response.

Topic: timetable

Q1: Does the proposed timetable allow the right amount of time for the different stages and tasks? (Please note that the Water Framework Directive sets some river basin planning milestones that cannot be moved).



Comment group 1: The timetable does not allow enough time for a meaningful and effective draft River Basin Management Plan to be produced given the uncertainty of the information and the number of parties to be contacted.

Response: Noted

Action: We are constrained by the December 2008 deadline imposed by Europe for publication of the draft River Basin Management Plans. We must make the best use of the limited time and resources available. For the first cycle we will do as much as we can, whilst accepting that we will have greater knowledge over time.

Comment group 2: We think there is more than adequate time given for consultation and probably too much. Perhaps it is also apt to ask whether the working groups will have enough time to deal with the information and issues arising.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: It is a statutory requirement that we must hold each consultation for a period of 6 months. However, throughout consultation periods we will continue to assess and discuss comments received in relation to our planning processes. This will help to ensure that working groups have adequate time to deal with any information and issues arising.

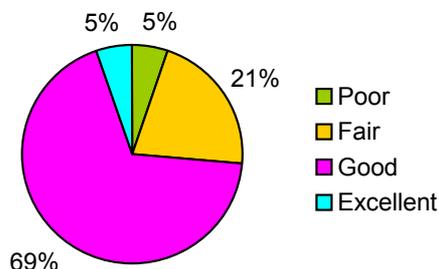
Comment group 3: We are concerned that the proposed timetable is being pressed ahead despite the lack of a satisfactory evidence base. Liaison Panel members feel undervalued due to the fact that the process is too structured.

Response: Noted

Action: For the first cycle we will do as much as we can, whilst accepting that we will have greater knowledge over time. We have recognised that liaison panels have found the processes they have been asked to follow difficult. We are now concentrating on providing guidance rather than instructions, which allows liaison panels a greater degree of flexibility.

Topic: access to information and consultation

Q2: To what extent are the access to information and consultation arrangements described here sufficient to meet your needs?



Comment group 1: We suggest the Environment Agency give all Liaison Panel members training in getting the WFD message across to their sectors. Also has the cost of communications, workshops and the like been considered?

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: We are currently providing active assistance to all Anglian River Basin District Liaison Panel members in developing effective communications with their sector groups. Outputs of our meetings with Liaison Panel members have been compiled into a communications strategy. This sets out agreed actions for the panel to communicate with sector groups and how the Environment Agency will support them in this responsibility. The costs of communications, workshops and meetings have been considered and budgeted for.

Comment group 2: The arrangements rely too heavily on internet access. To reach customers, a wide range of other methods should be employed. Information should be provided to sufficient local publications such as the trade press.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: Our Anglian RBD Liaison Panel communications strategy sets out a number of different ideas for communicating with those who have little or no access to the internet. We are working with panel members and Environment Agency staff to ensure that information on the WFD is included into a number of different publications and websites that target different sector groups. This strategy is available on request. For further information, see contact details at the end of this document.

Comment group 3: Working with key groups in a focused way could help their capacity to respond.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: Our communications strategy sets out ideas for how we can work with key stakeholder groups to put the WFD in place. This strategy is available on request. For further information, see contact details at the end of this document.

Topic: organisations and plans and strategies relevant to river basin planning

Q3: Which organisations should be added to the table of public, private and voluntary sector organisations? Please tell us why they should be included.

<p>Comment group 1: Seventeen of our consultation respondents suggested additional stakeholder groups to be added to Appendix 2 of the Working Together document. A suggestion was made that national bodies should be invited to send local representatives to stakeholder meetings.</p>
<p>Response: All suggested contacts have been noted and added to our Anglian RBD contact list. The Working Together Appendix 2 has been updated to include relevant stakeholder network groups.</p>
<p>Action: The Anglian RBD Working Together Appendix 2 contains details of communication networks that represent individual groups. We are working with these networks to agree cascade of relevant information to local representatives. Those who have expressed a specific interest or have been nominated to maintain an interest in River Basin Planning have been added to our Anglian RBD contact list. All interested groups on our contact list will receive copies of our River Basin Planning newsletters, giving advice on how they can become more involved in the River Basin Planning process.</p>
<p>Comment group 2: We are concerned that the interests of Anglers and recreational boaters should be properly represented.</p>
<p>Response: Noted and accepted</p>
<p>Action: We will strive to communicate effectively with all sector groups who have an interest in River Basin Planning. Our representative for the recreation sector on the Anglian RBD Liaison Panel is Peter Holloway. As a keen angler Peter sits on a number of committee and consultative groups. He therefore has excellent links for advising the Environment Agency on issues related to angling. The Environment Agency, as well as Liaison Panel representatives of the Internal Drainage Boards (Iain Smith) and the Broads Authority (Trudi Wakelin), support Peter in communicating with the recreation sector. For further information on how we plan to communicate with the recreation sector you can request a copy of our communications plan using the contact details at the end of this document.</p>
<p>Comment group 3: We disagree with the assertion on p12 of chapter 5 that members of the panel are co-deliverers. We believed that this had been amended to be a body of influencers.</p>
<p>Response: Currently our partners on the Liaison Panel have a mainly influencing role, however the WFD cannot be implemented by the Environment Agency alone and will require delivery by a wide range of organisations.</p> <p>We use the term co-deliverers to signify those organisations who are responsible for carrying out actions and others who can both represent the public and help drive changes in behaviour.</p>
<p>Action: No action</p>

Q4: Have we missed any plans and strategies relevant to river basin planning from the list in Appendix 1? Please list them here

Comment group 1: Nine of our consultation respondents suggested changes or updates to the strategies and plans that are included in Appendix 1 of the Working Together document. Five of our respondents felt that Appendix 1 forms a fully comprehensive list.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: All suggested contacts have been noted and used to update Appendix 1 of the Working Together document.

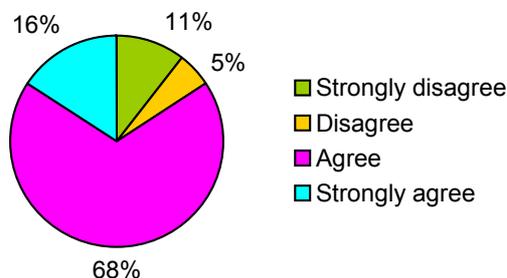
Comment group 2: The lists are comprehensive; however, there is a lack of any kind of detail as to how WFD will actually interact with these plans. This is particularly striking where these are Environment Agency led plans. We believe that a considerable opportunity for streamlining and simplification is being missed.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: We are working in parallel on the development of integrated River Basin Management Plans. For the first cycle, we will try to minimise duplication. For the second cycle, we are aiming to eliminate duplication.

Topic: stakeholder involvement

Q5: To what extent do you agree that our preferred option for using organisations and networks is an effective approach to involving people in river basin planning?



Comment group 1: We consider that there is an inadequate representation of recreational boaters in the Anglian RBD and that use has not been made of the existing networks of the Royal Yachting Association, British Canoe Union and Amateur Rowing Association.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: We are working to communicate with all sector groups who have an interest in River Basin Planning. The Environment Agency and the Liaison Panel support our representative of the recreation sector in communicating with a wide range of relevant organisations including the Royal Yachting Association, British Canoe Union and Amateur Rowing Association. We hope that sectors will be able to make the most use of existing networks in the same way that we plan to. This will help to avoid new administrative burdens.

Comment group 2: Option three covers all angles but we are not clear how these groups and networks are going to work together to deliver the River Basin Management Plan. It is hard to agree with engaging almost 300 groups if the mechanism for doing so has not been developed. We see this as a considerable oversight of this consultation document. Also, we are interested in the Task & Finish groups 'to examine a particular significant water management issue and provide recommendations on appropriate measures'. Who would be on this group and with what authority would they 'recommend appropriate measures'? There will be cost implications to involving people and some sectors cannot be expected to fund this.

Response: Noted and accepted

Action: We are committed to the active involvement of stakeholders throughout the River Basin Planning process. The Anglian River Basin District Liaison Panel will help development of the River Basin Management Plan by enabling us to combine technical expertise, rational decision making, and public values and preferences. This will ensure that the consultation arrangements during development of the River Basin Management Plan is

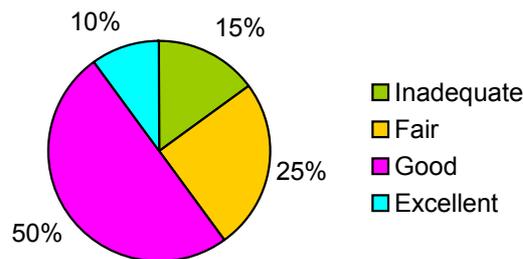
- Transparent - clear steps in process, clear outputs, evident to 3rd parties
- Consistent - across sectors
- Efficient - minimising duplication of effort
- Accountable - clear audit trail

The costs of communications, workshops and meetings have been considered and budgeted for.

Comment group 3: The plans talk vaguely of using Environment Agency or stakeholder-led processes or creating new forums. This spectrum is in principle fine. However, absolutely no detail is given as to which of these many options will actually be used in any given locality. The Environment Agency has had several years in which to consider how it will deliver local planning for the WFD; the current consultation suggests that we are still nowhere near to any concrete proposals. There is now a very urgent need for clear plans to be advanced for a structured programme of local engagement in each RBD. The 'Working Together' documents offer only a vague shopping list of possibilities. At this late stage in proceedings detailed and specific

proposals are desperately required.
Response: Noted and accepted
Action: The Environment Agency already has extensive engagement arrangements and we will try to maximise benefit from existing networks. If new dedicated groups are really needed, we will set these up as we progress.

Q6: To what extent do you think the participation methods described in Table 4 will achieve adequate stakeholder involvement in river basin planning?



Comment group 1: There must not be a reliance on one method alone (e.g. electronic) and budget considerations must be taken into account.
Response: Noted and accepted
Action: We will explore available consultation and communication opportunities. Methods of communication that we plan to use for River Basin Planning are detailed in our communications strategy, which is available on request using the contact details at the end of this document.
Comment group 2: We are concerned that the diverse interests of business and industry cannot be adequately represented in the River Basin Planning process through one or two representatives on the Liaison Panel. We want a National business forum that could engage specifically with the business and industry sector.
Response: Noted and accepted
Action: We are exploring available consultation and communication opportunities with the business and industry sector. A National Liaison Panel has recently been set up to discuss issues that relate to putting the WFD in place throughout England and Wales. This panel will act to advise the Environment Agency on how to raise awareness of river basin planning with for instance the business and industry sector on a National basis.
Comment group 3: You need to ensure adequate engagement with the East Midlands part of the RBD, perhaps through the Regional Assembly's environment group.
Response: Noted and accepted
Action: We are currently looking at ways that we can communicate with those areas of the district that fall into the East Midlands and South East government office boundaries. In particular, we actively engage with sector groups across the district through distribution of our quarterly newsletters and intend to strengthen our links with the East Midlands Development Agency and Regional Assembly and East Midlands Business Group.

4 Next steps

Developing a River Basin Management Plan

This consultation response document will be published on our website.

Our next consultation called River Basin Planning: Summary of Significant Water Management Issues is published for consultation between 24 July 2007 and 24 January 2008.

You will be able to view this consultation on www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd or contact Fran Sykes at the address below.

We plan to publish the draft River Basin Management Plan by 22 December 2008, and the final River Basin Management Plan (2009 – 2015) by 22 December 2009.

Further information about the Water Framework Directive, river basin planning and the Anglian River Basin District can be found on our website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/wfd.

Getting involved in river basin planning

If you would like further information about river basin planning in the Anglian River Basin District contact:

- Corporate Affairs Kingfisher House, Goldhay Way, Orton Goldhay, Peterborough. PE2 5ZR.
Email: anglianRBD@environment-agency.gov.uk

Please send details of your organisation and interests, and tell us how you would prefer us to communicate with you.

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