

Water for life and livelihoods



River basin management planning - England

Working Together Consultation: Acting on your feedback

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment and make it **a better place** for people and wildlife.

We operate at the place where environmental change has its greatest impact on people's lives. We reduce the risks to people and properties from flooding; make sure there is enough water for people and wildlife; protect and improve air, land and water quality and apply the environmental standards within which industry can operate.

Acting to reduce climate change and helping people and wildlife adapt to its consequences are at the heart of all that we do.

We cannot do this alone. We work closely with a wide range of partners including government, business, local authorities, other agencies, civil society groups and the communities we serve.

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Foreword

Protecting and improving the water environment is vital for people's health, for wildlife and for the economy. It is also a huge challenge. Action is needed from all parts of society and there are some difficult choices to be made. We, the Environment Agency, want to make sure that everyone can contribute to a debate on how water is managed.

In December 2009, we published 10 statutory river basin management plans, covering all of England and Wales. These outlined actions that many organisations would take to protect and improve the water environment – the rivers, lakes, estuaries, coasts, wetlands and underground water reserves which are so important to the health of the environment.

We are now reviewing and revising these plans before publishing updated versions in December 2015. We asked for your views on how everyone can work together to prepare the updated plans co-operatively and with a wide range of organisations. By working effectively together better solutions can be agreed to protect the things that matter most to people. This document provides an update on the progress being made with the actions put in place following your feedback

I'd like to thank everyone who has taken part in the Working Together consultation. Your views continue to improve the way we work. The progress we have made in emphasising a more local, catchment-based approach to river basin management planning illustrates our willingness to learn and change for the better. We look forward to making further improvements, working together to ensure there is water for life and livelihoods.



David Baxter
Head of Catchment Management
Environment Agency

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1. Introduction

We held the Working Together consultation to ask for your views on how we can all work more effectively and efficiently together to protect and improve the water environment. It was the first of three formal consultations that we are holding to help us produce revised river basin management plans.

River basin management plans describe what businesses, water users and others will need to do to protect and improve the water environment. We published the first plans in December 2009, covering the river basin districts in England and Wales. We have made progress in improving the health of waters, but there is more to be done. We are now reviewing and updating the plans, and will publish revised plans for England in December 2015.

Since 1 April 2013, Natural Resources Wales has been leading on river basin management planning in Wales and are reviewing and updating the plans for Wales.

A map of the river basin districts is shown in Appendix 6.1.

In the Working Together consultation we sought views on:

- how interested groups or individuals can work better together so that everyone has the chance to contribute to the river basin management plans (RBMPs) and can be involved in managing the water environment
- working in catchments
- how the Environment Agency can co-ordinate consultation over the RBMPs and flood risk management plans

The consultation ran for six months between 22 June 2012 and 22 December 2012.

[You can read the Working Together consultation response document on our website.](#) It shows the responses we received and the actions we have planned as a result.

We are now reviewing progress with the actions. This document details what has been happening since the consultation ended, and how the actions are being progressed.

2. Objectives of this actions review document

This document will:

- summarise the responses we received and the actions we have planned as a result
- review progress on the actions and provide an update on what has happened so far

3. The Working Together consultation outcomes

We received 272 responses to the consultation. Responses came from the water industry, local authorities, industry and trade associations, navigation authorities, community groups, local wildlife and river groups, research organisations and universities, individuals and private companies.

The responses cover a wide range of issues, and [you can read them on our website](#). Some of the comments were relevant to all the river basin districts and others were specific to a certain geographical area or action within an individual river basin district.

4. Key findings, actions and progress with actions

We asked five core questions in all the river basin district consultations. We included supplementary questions in some river basin districts.

This section summarises the responses we received for each question, the actions we identified and the progress we have made.

[You can read updates on the actions in the Dee and Western Wales river basins districts on the Natural Resources Wales website](#). Natural Resources Wales now lead on river basin management planning in Wales. References to actions in Wales have been removed from the tables in this section.

4.1 Opportunity to contribute to the river basin management plans

Q1 How do you think the Environment Agency can create an approach that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to the river basin management plans?		
Summary of responses	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>1.1: By engaging with the key stakeholders on local issues at a meaningful 'catchment' scale, and ensuring ownership of local plans by involving these stakeholders in decision making. The river basin district (RBD) scale provides a strategic overview.</p>	<p>We will improve local focus by ensuring that the next consultation, called Challenges and choices, provides information for the local catchment, as well as the river basin district.</p> <p>Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is promoting a catchment based approach for managing land and water in a co-ordinated way. This approach has been piloted in the majority of the 87 catchments in England over the last 12-18 months. Learning from the pilots and similar initiatives, and your comments, will be fed into the Defra policy framework available later this year. Our approach will be refined and updated using this framework, the pilot evaluation reports, and by implementing good practice identified in the catchment planning handbook. You can read about the approach on the Defra website.</p>	<p>The Challenges and choices consultation provides catchment and river basin district information. It also includes supporting local information and contacts to allow more local engagement. This consultation started on 22 June 2013, and you can view the catchment information and contribute on our website.</p> <p>In April 2011, we began piloting new approaches in ten catchments across England. This was followed with a further 15 pilots, established in January 2012 by external organisations.</p> <p>There are now 64 catchment groups operating in England's 87 water management catchments. These groups are implementing actions and building on the work of the pilots. The pilots demonstrated that working collaboratively at a catchment level brings about many benefits, including stronger relationships with partners, an improved and agreed understanding of the problems faced, and a greater commitment to action.</p> <p>Defra published their policy framework for the catchment based approach on 2 June 2013. It incorporates the lessons learned and understanding identified from the pilots. The catchment guide shows examples of good practice and techniques from partnership working. You can view general information on the catchment based approach and Defra's question and answer document outlining the policy framework on our website.</p> <p>Defra is providing a catchment partnership fund, totalling £1.6 million</p>

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	We have local events planned, such as a city-centre open day, and workshops with local stakeholders.	<p>in 2013-2014, to support organisations which host catchment partnerships. The Environment Agency is administrating the fund, and many groups and organisations are interested in hosting catchments. Funds will be allocated in September 2013, and we anticipate that coverage across the country will be significantly increased. In catchments where an organisation does not come forward to host, we will aim to establish partnerships where there is interest from others.</p> <p>Many local events are happening around the country – for more details see the review of actions for section 1.4.</p>
1.2: By taking a more targeted approach to ensure the involvement of decision makers from those organisations and groups most relevant to the local issues. Could involve formation of new groups. It is not possible to involve everyone but the Environment Agency shouldn't limit itself to those it has worked with in the past.	We will make a real effort to make river basin planning accessible to all through the Challenges and choices consultation. Each Environment Agency region is developing engagement plans which will include stakeholder analysis, work with liaison panels and a focus on identifying others who should be involved. Information from other sources, such as the catchment pilot programme is also being used to identify additional groups.	<p>We are identifying and contacting new groups to work with and using a variety of methods to engage with more people - for example, social media such as Twitter and Facebook.</p> <p>In the North West River Basin District (RBD), Catchment Delivery Officers started in June 2013 and have been working with new groups. For example, combined, targeted communication for the public about flooding is being planned with Cumbria County Council.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs, we are using social media in order to engage beyond those we have traditionally worked with. Each month is themed to coincide with seasonal events, such as the bathing waters during the school holidays and agricultural issues during harvest. We have engaged with the academic sector, and enhanced our links with health and wellbeing contacts by engaging with Primary Care Trusts and Local Nature Partnerships that have a remit for linking environmental issues with social, economic and health/wellbeing issues. Broader engagement with the conservation</p>

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	<p>Many of our regions are now employing catchment co-ordinators who will work at a local level.</p>	<p>sector has included contacting the county recorders for aquatic fauna and regional focus groups for amphibians, reptiles and bats. We have linked with the business sector via regional contact for the federation of small businesses.</p> <p>In Anglian RBD we are working closely with the water company on pilot projects looking at water issues in the region, using the new Integrated Catchment Management Group.</p> <p>You can see more about your river basin district and local catchments on our website.</p> <p>There is a contact for each of the catchments throughout England. The majority of catchments have a catchment co-ordinator employed by the Environment Agency.</p>
<p>1.3: By providing information about the issues and possible solutions in an inviting, more digestible, engaging form, using language people can relate to and via a range of formats and media. Processes should be open and transparent.</p>	<p>We are carrying out a project to identify better ways of involving people on environmental issues in the future.</p> <p>See how we are testing different ways of providing information, particularly in mapped or other visual forms.</p>	<p>In Summer 2014 we will consult on draft river basin management plans. They will describe what businesses, water users and others need to do to protect and improve the water environment. We will consult in a more innovative way, creating engaging documents, with detailed technical information available for those that want to access it. We are also looking into providing the local information in various forms, so that it is available for everyone to use for the relevant area.</p> <p>Good practice examples are included in our <i>Catchment pilot lessons portfolio</i>, and cover different ways to present information on a river and provide maps externally. You can read this publication on our website.</p>

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	<p>We are also developing a new method for storing and processing data. This will make it easier to share data; perhaps through a web interface.</p> <p>We will be working with Sciencewise, a national centre which provides specialist advice on public involvement and consultations. The aim is to host a series of workshops with the general public on the different issues affecting our water environment. The link is at: http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/</p> <p>To support the workshops, we are producing a two-page briefing and a technical summary for each of the five main pressures/issues: low flow, eutrophication, urban diffuse, agricultural diffuse, and habitat modifications.</p>	<p>We are exploring using online tools better in the future to provide information at different levels of detail as required by individuals and organisations, encouraging feedback and engagement.</p> <p>Information can already be viewed and shared in many ways - for example, data can be accessed via Datashare, and case-studies can be seen on Riverwiki. We are also encouraging catchment partnerships to share data. You can read more about ways to access data or be involved on our website</p> <p>The Sciencewise project is now underway and is asking for views from the general public on significant water management issues and the benefits of a healthy water environment. Workshops are being held around the country in September and October 2013 to engage with the public. The project will inform decision-making for the draft river basin management plans.</p> <p>Engagement workshops were carried out with sector groups to identify the main pressures on water management to help develop material for the Challenges and choices consultation. You can find out more about the main pressures on our website.</p>
<p>1.4: By harnessing what matters to people about water, and using imaginative ways of engaging people, such as riverbank events, river awards, focus groups or community forums</p>	<p>We will outline local events and different ways of reaching people in the engagement plans mentioned above.</p> <p>However, a large programme of local events can be very resource intensive. Organisations who would like to be involved in, or could provide</p>	<p>Many local events and different ways of reaching people are happening around the country. These include using social media, producing films and holding or attending workshops and events. Some examples are given below.</p> <p>In Northumbria RBD, 45 people attended a workshop to raise awareness of catchment working and help stakeholders develop bids for the Catchment Partnership Fund.</p>

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	<p>ideas, support or partnership for these events, should contact their local Environment Agency office.</p>	<p>In the North West RBD, we are working with the Angling Trust to provide information on water management and promote consultation. North West catchment delivery officers hosted a Catchment Partnership Fund workshop, attended by 31 people.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs we are working with groups including the Beane & Mimram partnership and the Adur and Ouse rivers trust. We held a local workshop to help farmers understand environmental legislation, and how best to reduce sediment run-off and pollution. We are producing catchment newsletters, for example, <i>Our river – working together for a healthier Medway catchment</i>, which provides information on a range of activities, including volunteering opportunities, project reports and investigations updates.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs we have produced two films for social media demonstrating some of the issues and ways in which we are working with other organisations or individuals. These include farmers attending a workshop to discuss land and river management; and working in a catchment group to improve a local watercourse. We have also held several workshops for farmers and landowners to discuss key agriculture and water management issues.</p> <p>In the South West RBD we have been running a series of bathing water engagement events. These have been used to talk to local people and holiday-makers about the water environment.</p>

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1.5: By driving further integration across different kinds of plans for the water environment and work that others are doing, for instance catchment pilots or work on flooding.	We will continue to embed participation across work streams wherever we can. This will include identifying what initiatives are already underway in each catchment, and making appropriate links between them where necessary.	<p>The updated river basin management plans, which we will produce in 2015, will take into account wider water issues such as flooding, a changing climate and drought. In some cases we manage these issues using additional more detailed plans.</p> <p>The approach to developing flood risk management plans has been agreed between Defra, Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales. You can see an overview of the approach to flood risk management planning on our website.</p> <p>The catchment-based approach aims to tackle environmental problems at a local level using stakeholder engagement. Focusing at this level means it is easier to integrate regulation, delivery, and collaborative working across water, land, biodiversity, flood risk and other key sectors. You can see more in the review of actions for questions 1.1 and 3 .</p> <p>In Anglian RBD we are communicating key messages to our Regional Flood and Coastal Committee group with the aim of making sure priorities and activities are closely aligned.</p>
1.6: By continuing with current engagement processes, but improving it where needed - for example, by using established groups better, or engaging earlier	<p>We will identify at an early stage the people and groups who could help us achieve better results by working together.</p> <p>We brought forward the next consultation, called Challenges and choices, to allow more time to use the feedback to shape future decisions.</p>	<p>To help prepare for the Challenges and choices consultation, we held a series of workshops with people from many different sectors between December 2012 and March 2013. In total over 250 stakeholders from a range of organisations attended the workshops. For more information, read our information sheet about the workshops. You can also read the resulting reports on our website.</p> <p>These workshops also identified the need for further engagement. A follow-up workshop on food and phosphorus was held in early 2013,</p>

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	<p>We will be contacting anyone who has expressed an interest in, or wants to be involved in this consultation. See more details in the response column in question 4 of this document.</p>	<p>and workshops on abstraction around the country in July 2013.</p> <p>We have held breakfast seminars as an additional way of reaching more people. In the Midlands our joint breakfast seminar with the British Land Reclamation Society to discuss land and water issues attracted nearly 40 delegates from the private sector, local authorities and the Canal and Rivers Trust. We are looking at running similar seminars in other parts of the country.</p> <p>Everyone who responded to this Working Together consultation (and left their email address) has received the response report and been provided with details on how to access the Challenges and choices consultation.</p>
<p>1.7: By ensuring the establishment of Natural Resources Wales does not distract effort from river basin planning</p>	<p>We will continue to work effectively on cross-boundary issues.</p> <p>We are working with partners in Wales to ensure that there are arrangements in place for planning and managing cross-border catchments following the creation of Natural Resources Wales on 1 April 2013. The Western Wales and Dee River Basin Management Plans will be coordinated by Natural Resources Wales, and the Severn by the Environment Agency.</p>	<p>Since Natural Resource Wales was created, we have continued to work collaboratively on cross-border issues. This also provides benefits in sharing ideas and approaches and learning from each other.</p> <p>The Severn RBD Liaison Panel and Dee RBD Liaison Panel provide jointly-owned ways for partners to discuss and work on cross border matters.</p>

Q1 How do you think the Environment Agency can create an approach that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to the river basin management plans?

Summary of responses	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>1.8: By investing in front line communication and engagement staff to enable collaboration and co-design, and to enable others to contribute ideas and issues to feed into the development of plans</p>	<p>We are training our staff to give them the skills they need. For instance, to develop better partnerships; to use social media to help engage with more people; to use collaborative and partnership working more effectively; and to provide better advice on accessing funding.</p> <p>Many of our regions are now employing catchment co-ordinators who will work at the local level.</p> <p>There may be more pressure on resources in future so we need to use existing resources effectively.</p>	<p>We have been running training courses to help our staff carry out national engagement work. This includes courses on improving how we work with other organisations, collaboration and using social media effectively.</p> <p>We have given staff a Challenges and choices communications pack to help them engage effectively.</p> <p>Defra has provided £0.6m of funding to support the catchment partnerships with training and tools. Together, we are developing a national training package for catchment groups.</p> <p>We are always looking at ways to use resources more effectively and working in partnerships can be one way to do this. In January 2013, we carried out a pilot scheme with the Wandle Trust where volunteers investigated and reported back on pollution incidents. This way of working engages with volunteer groups and empowers them. We benefited by receiving information about specific pollution, using it for river basin management planning.</p>
<p>1.9: By ensuring that the consultation process is as accessible as possible; for example questionnaires provided in variety of formats, and easy-to-use web-based consultation</p>	<p>We received constructive comments about our on-line consultation system and will make changes in time for the next consultation. We will also ensure that we provide a broader range of ways to contribute to the consultation such as via email, events and workshops.</p>	<p>We have made it possible for individuals and organisations to respond to the Challenges and choices consultation in a format that best suits them – on-line, in meetings, or by written correspondence.</p>

Q1b (Humber only) Do you feel the current arrangements for the liaison panel in a river basin district the size of the Humber allow for effective participation?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency action / response	Review of actions
1b.1: A number of consultees commented that the Humber River Basin District is too large a unit to engage with. Only organisations covering the whole or substantial parts of this area are likely to participate. Therefore it needs to be broken down into smaller geographical areas to allow more effective partnerships and delivery mechanisms to be created.	We have taken the decision to replace the Humber RBD Liaison Panel with two separate groups – the Yorkshire and the Trent/Ancholme Liaison Panels. These new panel areas recognise people's sense of place but remain large enough to maintain a strategic overview. We will develop an effective way of addressing issues which affect the whole river basin, and will make sure the next river basin management plan is cohesive and reflects the Humber as a whole.	The two new liaison panels are now in place.
1b.2: The Humber basin is large and difficult for a single panel of professionals to cover both in terms of knowledge and distance to attend meetings. It would be more effective if there was a Yorkshire panel and a Trent panel although more resource would be needed to support this	See answer above.	See reply above.
1b.3: Liaison panel (LP) expectations and aspirations can sometimes be different to the operational reality. The LP can sometimes feel it is still developing. This is partly due to the frequency of meetings, facilitation and limited communication between some LP sector members. LP members own organisational governance/set-up across the full RBD presents difficulties for their effective representation.	Replacing the Humber Liaison Panel with Yorkshire and Trent Liaison Panels will give us the opportunity to review membership and to reinvigorate these forums, improving participation, communication and delivery.	We are reviewing membership of these new liaison panels to reflect the shift towards catchment working. This will be done by the end of 2013, when the leads for the catchment partnerships will be in place. For the new Trent and Ancholme Liaison Panel we have the opportunity to have members that represent the whole of the catchment and appropriate sectors.
1b.4: The first river basin plans followed a narrow national protocol and template and therefore the opportunity to affect the nature and content of the plan by the liaison panel was	A single template format is used to help with consistency across all the river basins. The changes we are making to the liaison panels,	See review of action in 1b.3

Q1b (Humber only) Do you feel the current arrangements for the liaison panel in a river basin district the size of the Humber allow for effective participation?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency action / response	Review of actions
<p>limited.</p> <p>It is possible for the LP members to comment on the plan but is constrained by participation at a fairly superficial level. It still requires them to be able to find the time to work through large and complex packs of materials.</p>	<p>together with the catchment- based approach, should allow panel members greater opportunity to become involved in influencing the next river basin management plan.</p>	
<p>1b.5: During the first cycle, all significant discussions with stakeholders occurred outside of LP meetings. The result was no meaningful discussion of the principles, options or details of the classification or plan at the river basin level.</p>	<p>Not all the discussions can take place in the panel meetings, as timetables and deadlines for river basin management planning do not always coincide with those for other programmes. We will be looking for opportunities to get more people involved in the decision making process by working with partners on the liaison panels.</p>	<p>We have asked liaison panel members if they would like to be part of the national working groups we are setting up to help develop of the second cycle of river basin management plans.</p>

Q1c(Humber only) If not, can you suggest how the Humber Liaison Panel could be organised to increase awareness, understanding and involvement in the delivery and development of the Humber Basin District Management Plan?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency action / response	Review of actions
<p>1c.1: Greater clarity is needed over the purpose of the liaison panel in order for it to function effectively.</p> <p>By disseminating spatial information and questions prior to RBLP meetings to allow more meaningful discussion of data, questions and choices during the meetings.</p>	<p>We will be revising the terms of reference for the liaison panels to provide greater clarity to members.</p> <p>We will review the organisation of liaison panel meetings and the way material for those meeting is distributed.</p>	<p>We will be adopting the revised terms of reference which are being developed nationally for river basin district liaison panels.</p>
<p>1c.2: By developing a better understanding of why people and organisations want to engage more deeply and why the Environment Agency wants them to be more involved – this will help target future engagement.</p> <p>Workshops and seminars with a practical focus help understanding and show that action is taking place and that WFD is a force for positive change and worth spending time to engage and get involved.</p>	<p>We will work closely with liaison panel members and stakeholders to understand their needs, and to help us shape future engagement work as we develop the next river basin plan.</p> <p>We will be looking at a variety of opportunities to engage with people in order to highlight issues affecting the water environment.</p>	<p>The new terms of reference set out how liaison panels work with us and others. Liaison panel members will advise, contribute evidence and work with sectors and catchment partnerships to help develop river basin management plans.</p> <p>We will provide opportunities for site visits and joint meetings to build awareness of key issues and activities and improve working together.</p>
<p>1c.3: A number of consultees commented on the need for consultations to be carried out on a local basis regarding the issues surrounding local catchments then brought together to form a collective view of the catchment as a whole. There was a suggestion that this could be organised by organisations such as On Trent, perhaps at flood risk level.</p>	<p>The Environment Agency will be taking forward Defra's catchment based approach to help develop local delivery and engagement.</p>	<p>On 3 June Defra launched a policy framework so that the catchment-based approach is adopted more widely. You can read it on the Defra website.</p> <p>In each catchment, an Environment Agency catchment co-ordinator provides the link between its own specialists and the catchment partnerships. More on catchment working can be seen in section 3 below.</p>

Q1c(Humber only) If not, can you suggest how the Humber Liaison Panel could be organised to increase awareness, understanding and involvement in the delivery and development of the Humber Basin District Management Plan?

Summary of response	Environment Agency action / response	Review of actions
<p>1c.4: A number of consultees suggested there is a need for a separate strategic group to be formed, equivalent to the current river basin district liaison panel that is entirely dedicated to the catchment area of the River Trent. It could be a separate group to the Humber LP or a sub-group. This would allow greater representation which could be assisted by the East Midlands Environmental Link group who provide a good network to discuss issues from the environment sector.</p>	<p>We have taken the decision to replace the Humber Liaison Panel with two separate Trent/Ancholme and Yorkshire Liaison Panels. These will help improve communication and local delivery. We will still produce a single Humber river basin management plan.</p>	<p>We have created two new liaison panels.</p>
<p>1c.5: Consultees suggested forming an independently chaired Trent strategic co-ordination group which would be represented on a Trent liaison panel and formed from organisations with delivery responsibilities in the Trent catchment. This would result in improved liaison/learning/knowledge and deliver actions more effectively and efficiently.</p>	<p>We will be developing a Trent/Ancholme Liaison Panel. We will work with partners to explore how this will fit with other existing and future groups.</p>	<p>As part of the national review of liaison panels, we are currently working on a proposal to develop a collaborative approach to river basin district planning. We are waiting to find out who will be the catchment hosts on the Trent and Ancholme. A representative from each of the catchment groups should form the core of the new Trent/Ancholme liaison panel.</p>

4.2 Role of liaison panels

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
2.1: Better communication and feedback is required to create a feeling of partnership and co-operation and ensure relevant groups/individuals are aware of the LPs.	We will identify at an early stage the people and groups who could help us achieve better results by working together.	<p>We are reviewing membership of the liaison panels, ensuring that panels represent the key sectors relevant to the RBD water environment and include representatives of catchment groups. This should be completed by the end of 2013. Sub-groups are being used to broaden involvement of the liaison panel.</p> <p>We have invited representatives from liaison panels to be part of national 'portfolio groups' that help develop and work on priority national issues such as cost benefit appraisal.</p>
2.2: A better data sharing method for the liaison panel and others who might be interested, such as a web portal, that contains important papers, agendas etc would help disseminate outputs, facilitate participation and help with engagement. A better system of capturing feedback at different levels within organisations would be more useful.	<p>We are carrying out a project to identify better ways of engaging with people on environmental issues in the future.</p> <p>We are developing a new system for storing and processing data. This will make data sharing easier, perhaps via a web interface.</p>	<p>For more information on the draft river basin plans and sharing data please see the review of action response for question 1.3</p> <p>Read more about the national liaison panel on our website.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs we are looking at opportunities to share liaison panel papers, agendas and minutes through an external website, to make them more accessible to everyone. This should help to improve the visibility of the panel and help panel members share information within their sector.</p>

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>2.3: Clarity on the role of the liaison panel and a restructuring of the meetings may aid in increased effectiveness. For example focusing on particular aims; defining meetings into sections that require decisions or consultation, reporting and AOB. Setting tasks for all members, for example each member to engage a previously un-consulted stakeholder.</p> <p>There needs to be strong links between liaison panels in Wales and the WFD Stakeholder Forum. The reviewed ToR should reflect the need to strengthen the linkages between liaison panels in Wales and the Wales WFD Stakeholder Forum</p>	<p>Liaison panels were established in 2006. The terms of reference were updated in January 2010 and 2011 to provide more emphasis on partnership working, joint decision making, and working at a catchment scale.</p> <p>The liaison panels are now being reviewed. The comments from the Working Together consultation are being used to update their terms of reference.</p>	<p>Together with representatives of each river basin district panel, we reviewed the role and remit of liaison panels. Many useful comments have been made, and areas of good practice have been identified and shared with liaison panels.</p> <p>We have produced recommendations and drafted revised terms of reference, and are consulting liaison panels and others who are involved to ensure that all comments and suggestions for improvement are incorporated.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the cross-border Severn River Basin District are currently under discussion.</p>
<p>2.4: Make sure the real stakeholders are involved as much as possible and given due weight, through wider and more targeted representation on the liaison panels.</p>	<p>The comments from the Working Together consultation are being used in the liaison panel review, and to update their terms of reference.</p>	<p>We have invited representatives from liaison panels to be part of national portfolio groups, helping to develop work on priority national issues, such as cost benefit appraisal.</p> <p>The terms of reference require members to advise, contribute evidence and work together with sectors and catchment partnerships to develop river basin management plans.</p>

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>2.5: The majority of river basin districts are so huge that one liaison panel cannot do justice to the diverse range of water issues. We suggest splitting them into smaller areas to ensure the liaison panel works at a catchment scale.</p>	<p>The role of the liaison panel is to provide an overall strategic view. In some regions sub-groups are used to provide a local catchment view. This should be further explored at a river basin district scale as part of the liaison panel review.</p> <p>In the Humber river basin district we have taken the decision to replace the Humber Liaison Panel with two separate Trent/Ancholme and Yorkshire liaison panels. These panels will help improve communication and local delivery.</p> <p>The South East and Thames River Basin District Liaison Panels identify gaps in catchment working and help resolve these by putting the right people and techniques together. These panels have regular catchment updates on challenges and best practice. This is how the panel operates at a river basin and local scale, covering a wide range of diverse issues, and also enables information flow to and from national level.</p>	<p>The review of liaison panels has re-emphasised the importance of the relationship between catchment level and river basin district level planning and engagement. Liaison panels are examining their memberships and ways of working – including sub-groups – to see how they can best accommodate this need.</p> <p>The South West Agricultural Pollution group has been developed at the request from the South West Liaison Panel. It focuses on diffuse pollution, and is helping to make advice more efficient and effective, for example in the Tamar region, where there were several competing initiatives giving similar advice. Best practice from this group will be used in the new operational catchments across the South West RBD.</p> <p>We have now created a Yorkshire Liaison Panel, and a Trent and Ancholme Liaison Panel.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs, the liaison panels focus on providing advice, a strategic steer, tracking actions, decision making and implementation. There is strong representation from panel members who work directly with catchment organisations, but also representatives from larger organisations like local authorities. This is important because a range of views helps us understand our customers and target our communications in a way that has meaning to them.</p>

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
2.6: Regular, brief newsletters, sent to organisations in the affected area. Parish councils, civic societies and other community organisations should receive updates on findings and decisions that are being made as work progresses.	The comments from the Working Together consultation are being used in the liaison panel review to update the terms of reference, including how information is provided to interested groups and individuals. General information on local rivers and the main Environment Agency contacts for river basin management planning can be found at: http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/research/planning/33112.aspx	Liaison panel members have a responsibility to communicate effectively with their sectors and/or catchments to encourage and enable the necessary action, and feedback the decisions and work of the panel. The South East and Thames Liaison Panels have been asked to ensure that they circulate information as widely as possible amongst their contacts. We are looking at opportunities to store panel papers, agendas and minutes on an external website to make them more accessible to a wider range of people. This should help to improve the visibility of the panel and help panel members share information within their sector. Read about the national liaison panel meetings on our website.
2.7: I propose that you pay people to take part in the panel. You pay those on the regional flood and coastal committee.	We will consider this request carefully during the review of liaison panels	We have decided that liaison panel membership will remain voluntary. We are looking at efficient and effective ways of engaging people whose commitments prevent them from being involved in meetings during working hours, for example sharing information through websites to ensure it is accessible to everyone, and holding meetings at different times of the day.

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>2.8: At a strategic level the panels are made up of very diverse membership. For general discussion this is a good set-up, but perhaps for tackling more specific issues smaller specialist groups may be more effective.</p>	<p>The role of the liaison panel is to provide an overall strategic view.</p> <p>In some regions, sub-groups are used to provide a local catchment view. This should be further explored at a river basin district level as part of the liaison panel review.</p> <p>In the Humber river basin district we have taken the decision to replace the Humber Liaison Panel with two separate Trent/Ancholme and Yorkshire Liaison Panels. These panels will help improve communication and local delivery.</p>	<p>Liaison panels focus on providing advice, a strategic steer, tracking actions, decision making and implementation.</p> <p>The South East and Thames RBDs have strong representation from panel members who work directly with host organisations as well as representatives from larger organisations, such as local authorities. Liaison panels are therefore helping us to understand our customers and target our communications in a way that has meaning to them.</p> <p>In the South West RBD we were asked to engage more with users of estuarine and coastal waters. As a result we are running a workshop in September 2013 to bring interested parties together. It is being chaired by a member of the liaison panel and will discuss the significant issues affecting these waters.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs we held a marine meeting in September 2013.</p> <p>We have invited representatives from liaison panels to be part of national 'portfolio groups', helping to develop work on priority national issues such as cost benefit appraisal.</p>

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>2.9: Put the panel in charge of the process and have leadership, instead of being observers of an EA process. Then the EA can be technical advisors to the process instead of the controllers</p> <p>The liaison panels in Wales would support the WFD Wales Stakeholder Forum to take more of a leadership role at a strategic level, taking strategic decisions to support delivery of the RBMPs.</p>	<p>We are the competent authority with responsibility for producing the river basin management plans, but how we do this is different in different regions. We may chair the panels or co-host meetings.</p>	<p>As competent authority for the Water Framework Directive, the Environment Agency is responsible for producing the statutory plans, but we want to deliver these as collaboratively as possible.</p> <p>In the South East and Thames RBDs, liaison panel meetings are held at different organisations, with guests coming in to speak.</p> <p>In the South West RBD the regional director chairs the meetings and external members and guests attend quarterly meetings. These have in the last year included a PhD student working on external engagement, a guest talking about ecosystems services, Environment Agency staff providing updates on economics, and a guest from the Council for the Protection of Rural England. One of the members of the liaison panel will chair an event on behalf of the Environment Agency in September 2013, on coastal waters.</p> <p>In the Anglian RBD, three liaison panel members who represent key sectors for river basin district planning have been offered the opportunity to input into the second river basin plans. There is also interest from the Rivers Trust and Anglers Trust. We have had discussions with the Rivers Trust about delivering training together and providing evidence to the new and existing Catchment Partnerships.</p> <p>At the last two Northumbria and Humber (Yorkshire) liaison panel meetings there were presentations from panel members (water company and coal authority) and a catchment co-ordinator. We are looking at holding subsequent meetings at different locations rather than Environment Agency offices.</p>

Q2. In your experience, how can the river basin district liaison panels, National Liaison Panel for England and Wales Water Framework Directive Stakeholder Forum be made to be more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>2.10: By ensuring that Natural Resources Wales does not distract effort from river basin planning.</p>	<p>See 1.7 above.</p>	<p>We continue to work effectively with Natural Resources Wales on any cross-border issues.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the cross-border Severn River Basin District are currently under discussion.</p>
<p>2.11 Clarity on role of liaison panel, and how it links with other groups such as the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees. Improve links to other groups, plans and committees.</p>	<p>The review of liaison panels will put more emphasis on joint decision making and catchment working, including linking with other existing groups and plans. We are currently reviewing and improving the links between flood risk management plans and river basin management planning.</p>	<p>Liaison panels are being encouraged to develop an overview of regional delivery resource and priorities. This will guide investment decisions across catchments.</p> <p>We intend to hold national learning days and other joint working events to bring liaison panel members together for key planning work and help share good practice.</p> <p>The role of, and links with, liaison panels is being discussed at Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, especially relating to our review of integrated flood and environment planning.</p>

Q2b (South West Only) Do you play any role in the wellbeing of any water environment and its surrounding catchment? What could you do to contribute to integrated catchment management to help improve our water bodies by 2021 and beyond?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
2b.1: We have suggested a local group or organisation who could help you to influence land owners and land use for the benefit of the wider water environment. This includes ideas for habitat creation, reducing flood risk and managing water resources.	We will continue to work with our existing external partners and make contact with the new groups and organisations suggested.	In the South West RBD we continue to work with a variety of groups including Environment-Kernow and the Cornwall Agri-Group. The new catchment co-ordinators will ensure a good working relationship is maintained with current groups and any new groups that would like to work with us.
2b.2: We would like to work with you to encourage greener growth by engaging with the tourism sector, encouraging investment in green infrastructure and influencing local planning decisions.	We are keen to improve our understanding and use of evidence on the economic value of water in the South West. This will change behaviour to protect and improve the water environment. We will do this by making better use of the evidence we already have; contacting respondents to this consultation; initiating contact with more small and medium sized businesses and chambers of commerce; and exploring how we can work together more cooperatively in this important area.	We maintain a good working relationship with the Cornwall Association of Sustainable Tourism.
2b.3: We want to build on existing relationships and projects that we are already working on together. We can achieve more together if we align the way we plan our work and join up our thinking on how best to facilitate integrated catchment based delivery. This includes the use of an ecosystem services approach.	We will build on the partnership working which has been established during the first river basin cycle and will explore opportunities for more joint working with these, and other partners, to help improve the water environment. This will include honest discussions about who is best placed to achieve which outcome.	We have appointed new catchment co-ordinators and are developing operational catchments. This will help to build on the partnerships we have already developed during the first river basin cycle.

Q2b (South West Only) Do you play any role in the wellbeing of any water environment and its surrounding catchment? What could you do to contribute to integrated catchment management to help improve our water bodies by 2021 and beyond?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
2b.4: We could do more to help you improve the water environment if you put more resources into frontline engagement and improved the way you share your evidence with us.	Our objective is to deliver more for the environment from every pound we spend by focusing on frontline delivery. One of the ways we are doing this is by promoting more partnership working. Sharing our evidence is key to working successfully in partnership. We will make contact with these respondents individually to find out how we can provide the right information to facilitate this.	The Cornwall Sustainable Tourism group is currently leading on a project in East Looe, Cornwall on how the Environment Agency engages with others. The project is looking at how we engage, what is good and what needs to be improved.

4.3 Working at a catchment scale

Q3 What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses about working at a catchment scale?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
3.1: We had many responses to this question. Many felt that the scale of the catchment needs to be flexible so that it is relevant and suitable for its intended use.	Catchment- scale working is being promoted across England and Wales as the best approach to managing land and water in a co-ordinated way. In England, a catchment- based approach has been piloted in the majority of the 87 catchments over the last 12-18 months. The results reflect many of the benefits and disadvantages highlighted in this consultation. . You can read Defra's evaluation report on the pilot for more information. They will publish a	The catchment partnership fund (see 1.1) allows catchment sizes and the area covered by host groups to be flexible.
3.2: Working at a small catchment level was seen as having many benefits, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people and organisations can identify with it; • usually there is good knowledge of the catchment at a local scale; 		The catchment size in each partnership varies and is determined by the host organisation and stakeholders. The size may change as work in that catchment progresses. The Challenges and choices consultation

Q3 What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses about working at a catchment scale?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prioritising issues is easier within a small catchment: it can reduce duplication of effort and prevent wastage of valuable resources. 	<p>handbook on the catchment-based approach later this year. The responses we received from you are being used to update our catchment approach and feed into Government policy.</p>	<p>provides information at several different levels – from river basin district and larger catchments in the main documents, to sub-catchment and waterbodies in supporting information.</p>
<p>3.3: Some disadvantages of working at a small catchment level were also mentioned, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a risk of excluding expertise and professional advice available over a wider area; potential partners might be operating at a much wider scale; extra resources are needed for a catchment approach; there is a risk of losing the big picture when working at a small catchment scale and less opportunity to achieve economies of scale ; local authorities and some other organisations may find it difficult to work on all catchments within their wider area; there can be a lack of data in small catchments. 	<p>To read more about catchment management in your local area, visit our website.</p> <p>We will improve the local focus by ensuring that the next consultation, called Challenges and choices, provides information about local catchments.</p>	<p>A rich, healthy and diverse environment provides the maximum benefits to society and the economy. To help achieve this, we are focusing on catchments to better integrate regulation, delivery, and collaborative working across water, land, biodiversity, flood risk and other key sectors.</p> <p>Defra is promoting a catchment based approach. You can read more about their policy framework on their website</p> <p>As of September 2013, there are now 64 catchment groups operating in the England's 87 Water Management Catchments. These groups are now putting into action the recommendations of the pilots.</p>

In the Working Together consultation, Question 3b for Western Wales and the Dee asked: **What can the Environment Agency do to better support others in improving the water environment?**

Details of the responses received for this, the actions planned and progress with the actions can now be seen on the Natural Resources Wales website at: www.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or by contacting Ceri Jones at ceri.jones@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Natural Resources Wales now lead on river basin district management planning in Wales.

Q3 b (Severn only) The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently under-represented within a largely sector-based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>3b.1: The Bath River Group has been convened to represent a wider view of the use of the river in the city of Bath, but this group's terms of reference specifically precluded them from considering flood management. It is hard to imagine how the value creation potential of the normal river can be maximised without taking account of the value destruction potential of the same river in spate.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with our existing external partners, and we will make contact with new groups and organisations to explore how we can work in partnership with the Bath River Group.</p>	<p>We will promote the Challenges and choices consultation and raise awareness of water management through workshops.</p> <p>We have been working with the Bath River Corridor Group, Bath River Group, and Bath and North East Somerset Council's major projects and planning policy teams. Together we will identify what is needed in the future to mitigate flood risk. This should help bring forward regeneration in the riverside zone of the City of Bath.</p>

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Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
3b.2: Widen partnership to include representation from fishery groups under LFG's to engage on fishery matters to support the EA in addressing the micro issues facing the catchment.	We will continue to work with our existing external partners and will also be identifying new priority partners at the catchment level. This will include making contact with fisheries groups to explore how we can create working partnerships.	By the end of 2013 we will have finished our review of the new liaison panels, to reflect the shift towards catchment working and the creation of Natural Resources Wales.
3b.3: Generally need more passionate stakeholders.	We are reviewing membership of the Severn Liaison Panel, but, to keep the size of the panel manageable, and given the cross border implication, it won't be possible to include every organisation. We will make sure that the representation is balanced.	See above.
3b.4: Need to include someone to represent the barriers to fish movement, i.e. angling associations to get fish moved to Bristol Avon catchment.	The Wye and Usk Foundation currently sit on the liaison panel. We will be reviewing the liaison panel membership but, to keep the size of the panel manageable, and given the cross border implication, it won't be possible to include every organisation. We will make sure that the representation is balanced.	See above.
3b.5: Farming practices on a local level needs representation.	National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association currently sit on the liaison panel. We will be reviewing the Severn Liaison Panel membership but, to keep the size of the panel manageable, and given the cross border implication, it won't be possible to include every organisation. We will make sure that the representation is balanced.	See above.
3b.6: Need to include stakeholders from the sporting and leisure groups, i.e. British Canoe Union, Canoe England, Canoe Wales. Inland Waterways boat owners association and Canal and Rivers Trust.	The Canal and Rivers Trust is on the liaison panel. We will be reviewing the liaison panel membership but, to keep the size of the panel manageable, and given the cross border implication, it won't be possible to include every organisation. We will make sure that the representation is balanced.	See above. We are working with Natural Resource Wales on developing of the Severn Liaison Panel.

Q3 b (Severn only) The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently under-represented within a largely sector-based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>3b.7: Need to review stakeholder representation, i.e. liaise more with third sector or seek their views. Invitations to catchment groups excluded some organisations. The EA representatives on these matters need stronger voices.</p>	<p>We are reviewing the liaison panel representation following Defra's pilot catchment approach. We are looking to extend this approach more widely.</p>	<p>The new catchment-based approach will provide a clear understanding of the issues in the catchment. It will involve local communities in decision-making by sharing evidence, listening to their ideas, and working out priorities. Local issues will be addressed in a cost effective way and protect local resources.</p>
<p>3b.8: The Environment Agency should consider working more with public and third sector organisations such (Keep Wales Tidy) to raise awareness about the consequences of careless waste disposal. Could be supported with supplementary information on the causes of pollution and how individuals can help prevent it, using social marketing and social media tools.</p>	<p>As part of the catchment approach we are reviewing the liaison panel representation. We will make sure we are talking to the right people at the right level.</p> <p>We currently work with local organisations such as 'Keep Britain Tidy' (KBT). We are working on an existing project with KBT called 'Riverside Care' which is concentrating on raising local awareness of Water Framework Directive (WFD) issues.</p>	<p>We are committed to the new catchment based approach of working. We have appointed catchment co-ordinators for each of the operational catchments across the South West RBD. During 2013-2014, we will develop catchment plans. This will let us continue working with a range of groups who are interested in improving the water environment.</p> <p>We are increasingly using social media, such as twitter and facebook, to engage with more individuals and organisations. See the links to social media on our website. We have a social media plan, and plan to run a campaign about the pressures affecting the water environment.</p>
<p>3b.9: Environment Agency should also work in partnership with others to access funding to make changes necessary; take action to improve water quality and ensure public engagement and involvement in river improvement and management activities.</p>	<p>We are looking for partnerships with organisations on projects that will achieve Water Framework Directive enhancements.</p>	<p>Through the existing catchment partnerships we are working with a range of groups who are interested in improving the water environment. We will be looking to work with further groups when new catchment partnerships are in place.</p>

Q3 b (Severn only) The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently under-represented within a largely sector-based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
3b.10: Create sub-groups of the panel which are responsible for a catchment or number of catchments, and act as a conduit to the panel to allow local voices to be heard. Review the composition of the panel, and assess where the main contributions have come from to date and adjust accordingly.	We will look at the liaison panel membership to see how we can get the best representation from organisations across the river basin area/catchment. We will be rolling out the catchment approach and seeking to involve more people as appropriate	The new catchment-based approach will provide a clear understanding of the issues in the catchment. It will involve local communities in decision-making by sharing evidence, listening to their ideas, and working out priorities. Local issues will be addressed in a cost effective way and protect local resources.
3b.11: The EA must develop ways of working with delivery partner representatives on WFD issues at a more local level.	We will be identifying priority partners to work with at the catchment level.	Following our review of liaison panels, we are looking at the catchment hosts and how this will be managed as part of the new liaison panel structure for the Severn.
3b.12: Continued government resourcing of the catchment pilots will be necessary to continue the work they have successfully started.	We plan to take a catchment approach to continue the work through to implementation stage.	We are committed to the new catchment-based approach of working and have appointed catchment co-ordinators for each of the operational catchments. The new catchment- based approach can help deliver local actions in a cost effective way.
3b.13: Need a strong chair at meetings to manage large panel meetings to ensure they are productive.	We will review who is most appropriate to chair the liaison panel meetings.	The revised structure of the Severn Liaison Panel will address this issue.
3b.14: Provide EA Water Framework Directive data on web site to provide information to local authorities as well as catchment areas.	We are improving how we currently share our data with existing partners. In addition to the current data sharing system, www.Geostore.com/evironmentagency , we are developing a new system called the Catchment Planning System. This will enable us to share Water	We have a variety of ways that data can be shared or viewed - for example, our data can be accessed via data share, and case studies can be seen on Riverwiki. We are also encouraging catchment partnerships to share data. Visit our website for more information on

Q3 b (Severn only) The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently under-represented within a largely sector-based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
	Framework Directive information with stakeholders more easily.	these and other ways to access data or be involved.
3b.15: Use plain English and less EA jargon.	We promote the use of plain English in all our communications.	We promote the use of plain English and have used professional editorial support in the Challenges and choices consultation to ensure that the documents are user-friendly.
3b.16: Environment Agency should review advertising to increase individual responses.	Advertising is governed by Defra spending restrictions. Future engagement plans will be more catchment-based.	When the consultation was launched, we placed adverts in nine publications across England, with an estimated readership of around half a million. We are using social media to spread the word about the Challenges and choices consultation.
3b.17: Improve communications between liaison panels and delivery partners by cascading information and highlighting key points. Provide support in planning events to enable participants to diarise key dates in advance.	We are expecting new guidance soon on how we provide information. We expect liaison panel representatives to feed information back to their sector. Communication should be a two-way process.	We are continuing to improve and develop communications with Severn Liaison Panel members to ensure we are working well together.
3b.18: Improve the River Basin District Management Plan (RBDMP) consultation process by providing legible data to the liaison panels so that panel members do not become over-whelmed by the volume of information.	We are expecting new guidance soon on how we provide information. We expect liaison panel representatives to feed information back to their sector. Communication should be a two-way process.	We are continuing to work with liaison panel members to ensure that the right level of information is circulated.

Q3 b (Severn only) The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently under-represented within a largely sector-based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>3b.19: Ensure that as many areas of work are integrated as possible, particularly flood management, agricultural activities and wider ecosystem services provision, to avoid duplication of effort and reduce the potential for key links to be lost.</p>	<p>We will integrate WFD into other work areas.</p>	<p>Committee meetings now include information on WFD and the Challenges and choices consultation.</p> <p>We are working with key stakeholders, such as the National Farmers Union (NFU), on agriculture. We wrote an article on the consultation and WFD for the NFU's Farmer and Growers magazine in July/August 2013.</p>
<p>3b.20: More clarity required on where the plan is expected to deliver a regulatory role and where there are opportunities for proactive engagement.</p>	<p>We will integrate WFD into other work areas.</p>	<p>Comments from these consultations are being taken into consideration for the draft river basin management plan.</p>

4.4 Working with the Environment Agency in developing the river basin management plans

Q4. How do <u>you</u> want to work with the Environment Agency in developing the river basin management plans?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>4.1: Interest was expressed at being involved in all areas of the planning process, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct involvement in catchment planning • attending catchment workshops • being consulted as issues arise • help develop the evidence base • part of a specialist group to lead on specific issues • help identify relevant stakeholders • provide a way of linking with local communities <p>Other contributions were offered, such as awareness raising, developing training and work experience programmes, carrying out projects in catchments, hosting catchment staff, and help in sourcing funding.</p>	<p>Thank you for your many offers of involvement or support. All of those who responded will be contacted by the relevant region.</p>	<p>All those who responded to this Working Together consultation have been contacted about the Challenges and choices consultation.</p> <p>Many of those who responded are already working with us. For example, in the South East and Thames RBDs we are working with the Zoological Society of London to monitor elver migration; we provide local catchment updates to the farming sector and others; and are writing articles for angling publications giving the angler's view.</p> <p>We have put up posters at lock sites, and used forums to cascade information to reach a wide audience.</p> <p>Across England we have contacted a wide range of groups about river basin management planning and the Challenges and choices consultation. This includes a broad range of sectors: academia, agriculture and rural land management, angling and fisheries, charities, community groups, NGOs (such as Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) organisations, national parks, rivers trusts and local records centres), central government, marine, industry, manufacturing and other business, local government (including MPs, highways, transport), navigation, recreation (including boating), tourism, and utility companies.</p>

Q4. How do you want to work with the Environment Agency in developing the river basin management plans?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>4.2: A range of methods and approaches were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved on-line methods / resources such as forums and websites • improved use of existing groups • alignment with existing plans and work areas • use of new initiatives to reach wider variety of groups • face- to-face meetings and workshops • at the right scale to engage those working together: either local catchment or larger • clear information such as information packs and newsletters, at appropriate times in the process 	<p>You can read about our catchment-based approach on our website. We are trying out different ways of providing information, particularly in mapped or other visual forms. We will use this to help identify useful ways to provide information in future. We are looking at how best to align this process with other work areas such as consultation for Strategic Environmental Assessment and flood plans.</p> <p>We are developing a new way of storing and processing data. This will make it easier to share data, perhaps using the internet.</p> <p>We received constructive comments about our on-line consultation tool and will make changes that will be visible in the next consultation. We will also ensure we provide a broader range of ways to contribute to the consultation such as email, events and workshops.</p> <p>We are acting on feedback to improve how we work with others.</p>	<p>You can read good practice examples in our Catchment Pilot Lessons Portfolio. This also covers different ways of presenting information for a river, and how to provide maps externally.</p> <p>In the South West RBD we were asked to engage more with users of estuarine and coastal waters. We ran a workshop event in September 2013 which brought interested parties together.</p> <p>Catchment Delivery Officers hosted a Catchment Partnership workshop in the North East RBD which was attended by 31 people.</p> <p>By July 2014 we will have published the draft river basin management plans. They will describe what businesses, water users and others need to do to protect and improve the water environment. We are writing these plans in a more innovative way, creating engaging documents with detailed technical information available for those that want to access it. We are also looking into providing the local data in various forms, so that it is available for everyone to use for the relevant area.</p> <p>We are exploring using online tools better in the future, to provide information at different levels of detail and scales. This will encourage feedback and engagement.</p> <p>We have made it possible for individuals and organisations to respond to the Challenges and choices consultation in a format that best suits them - on-line, in meetings, or by written correspondence.</p>

Q4. How do you want to work with the Environment Agency in developing the river basin management plans?

Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>4.3 There was wide support for the Environment Agency to act as co-ordinator and single point of contact, but also a request for more clarity on our role.</p>	<p>We are the competent authority with responsibility for developing the river basin management plans and carrying out consultations. We also have a regulatory role. We may also host meetings or partnerships, or co-host with others.</p> <p>Our role in promoting a catchment- based approach is being developed by government and will be clarified in due course.</p> <p>There is a single point of contact in each region - the River Basin Programme Manager. You can find out more on our website.</p> <p>If you would like to see general information on your local rivers and the local Environment Agency contacts, visit our website.</p>	<p>As mentioned previously, Defra is promoting a catchment based approach. You can read more about their policy framework on their website. It incorporates the lessons learned and understanding captured through the pilots. The framework sets out our role and highlights the crucial role of our catchment coordinators. They provide the link between the Environment Agency and the catchment partnerships; promoting good communications and providing support to collaborative catchment working as a whole.</p> <p>The Cornwall Sustainable Tourism group has been running a project in East Looe looking at how we engage with our stakeholders, what we do well, and what we could do better.</p> <p>We also have a member of staff working within the Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group in North Somerset as a way of learning and improving our working relationship with such groups.</p>

4.5 Co-ordinating river basin management plans and flood risk management plans

Q5. How do you think consultation on the river basin management plans and flood risk management plans can best be co-ordinated?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>5.1: There were some responses favouring separate consultations and plans, but the majority supported integration or joint consultations or plans. Some of the reasons given were that this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures that links between flood plans and river basin management plans are made where needed • provides efficiencies from carrying out consultations over the same timescale • ensures joint issues are more easily seen • allows joint benefits from both to be more easily identified 	<p>As a result of the responses we have received we will now set out our preferred approach to developing Flood Risk Management Plans to Defra and the Welsh Government.</p> <p>This approach will focus on how we can work in partnership so that consultation on flood risk management plans is co-ordinated alongside those for river basin management plans.</p> <p>You can get further details on the approach on our website.</p>	<p>In June 2013, Defra, Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales agreed the approach to developing Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). This approach consolidates information for all sources of flood risk in one place, co-ordinated in each catchment. It also sets out our intention to align the consultations on draft FRMPs and draft river basin management plans.</p> <p>Together with Defra and Natural Resources Wales, we have prepared guidance that reinforces this approach. You can see an overview of the approach to flood risk management planning on our website. This will be updated once we have had feedback from risk management authorities.</p>

Q5. How do you think consultation on the river basin management plans and flood risk management plans can best be co-ordinated?		
Summary of response	Environment Agency planned action	Review of actions
<p>5.2: Some responses related to the way the consultation was carried out. There was support for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultations to be carried out at local geographic scales and using existing local groups to ensure better local involvement • effective communication systems so that all who want to be involved to be able to be consulted 	<p>We will improve local focus by ensuring that the Challenges and choices consultation provides information at a local catchment as well as river basin district level.</p> <p>Through the Challenges and choices process and consultation we are making a real effort to make river basin management planning accessible to all. The regional engagement plans include stakeholder analysis, work with liaison panels and a focus on identifying others who should be involved.</p>	<p>The Challenges and choices consultation provides information at a catchment level.</p> <p>The Challenges and choices consultation documents are available on our website. Paper copies can also be made available. Comments can be submitted in many different ways, including email, by letter or at a meeting or event.</p> <p>Interim guidance on the approach to developing FRMPs sets out a need to ensure there is co-ordination across catchments. This will ensure that flood risk management complements water management. The guidance also advocates drawing on established local flood risk management partnerships. This will ensure that flood risk management planning can support the existing partnership arrangements and utilise existing networks and groups.</p>

5 Next steps

The actions detailed in this document are helping us to work better together in river basin management planning. The revised river basin management plans will direct hundreds of millions of pounds of investment in the period 2016-2027 and deliver benefits to society.

Choosing where and what to invest in, who should pay, how fast action should be taken and how best to deliver a range of benefits to society is a complex process with significant impacts. Feedback from consultations helps to shape how this is done.

The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales will continue to work together in delivering the cross-border actions set out in this document.

We are holding two further formal consultations in this round of the river basin management planning process. These consultations will further help raise awareness of the challenges facing our water environment and provide opportunities for discussion on how they can be tackled. See Appendix 6.2 for more detail on updating the river basin management plans.

1. Challenges and choices (significant water management issues) consultation (6 months consultation starting summer 2013)

The Challenges and choices consultation seeks views on what are the most significant issues for each river basin district, and how you think these issues should be tackled. This consultation started on 22 June 2013 and closes on 22 December 2013. [Visit our website to find out more and contribute.](#)

2. Draft river basin management plans consultation (6 month consultation starting summer 2014)

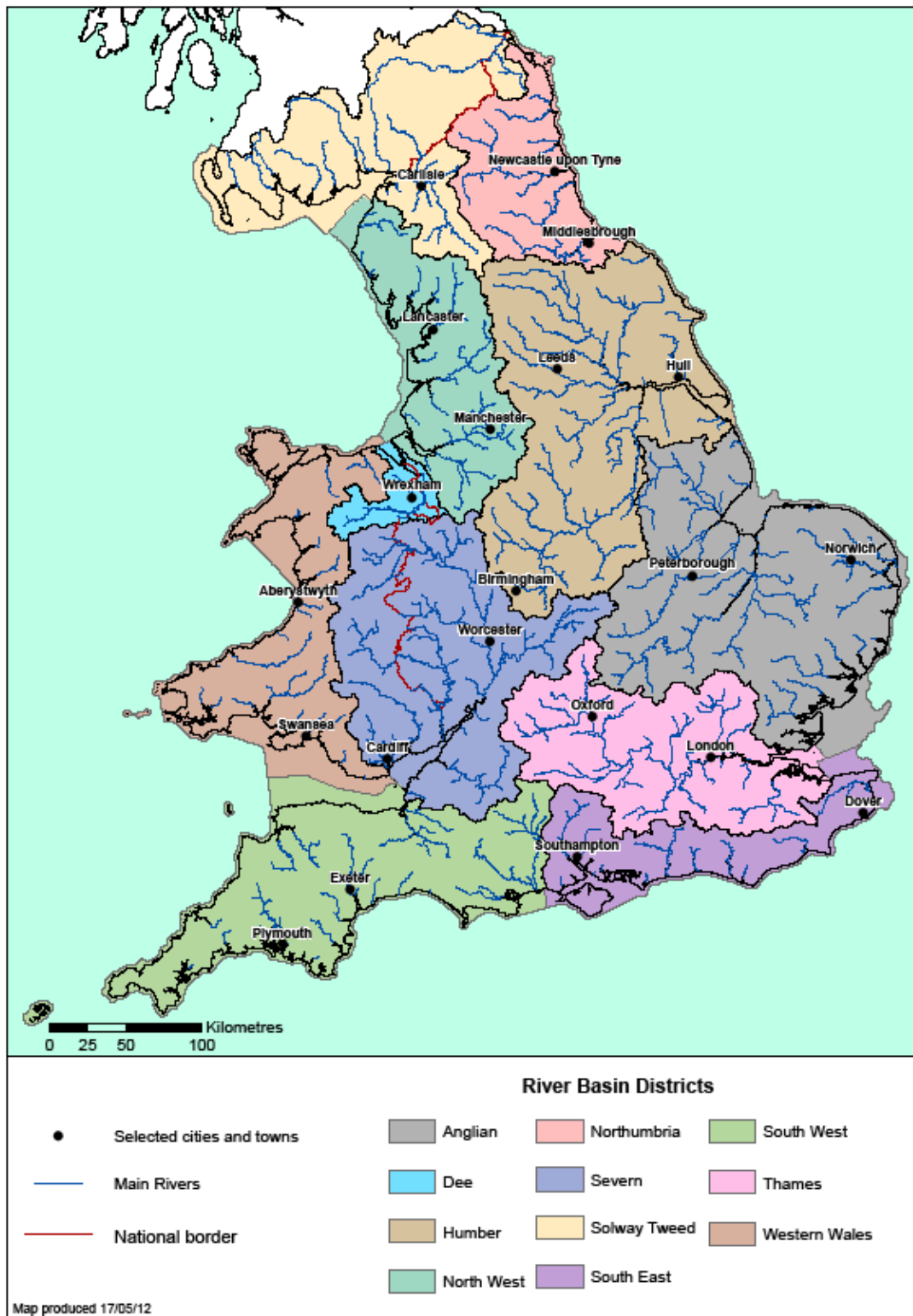
This consultation will seek your views on the draft river basin plans and how we will work together to improve the water environment to 2021 and beyond.

[To find out how to get involved or get more information on these consultations, visit our website.](#)

We will update the webpage above and its links, as each consultation begins and when it is complete. We will produce a summary of responses received shortly after the consultation has closed and then a response document three months later which details our planned actions.

6 Appendices

6.1 River basin district map for England and Wales



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6.2 Steps to updating the river basin management plans

Stage	Date and duration	What's the purpose?
Working together - consultation	June 2012 6 months	<p>"How should we all work together to update the river basin management plans?"</p> <p>Asking how you want to be involved</p> <p>Explaining the key steps in the river basin management planning process for Cycle 2</p> <p>Establishing a network of contacts for cycle 2 planning</p>
Challenges and choices - engagement	June 2012 to May 2013 Approx 12 months	<p>"What are the most significant water environment issues, what are the options for tackling them and which do you prefer?"</p> <p>Improving the evidence base that will be used to inform the review of the river basin management plans</p> <p>Seeking broad agreement about the principles behind taking action</p>
Challenges and choices - consultation	June 2013 6 months	<p>"Have the significant issues been fairly summarised and what can be done about them?"</p> <p>Sharing the latest evidence including results of investigations and assessment of the risk of water bodies deteriorating or not achieving their objectives</p> <p>Seeking views on how to prioritise action</p> <p>Explaining catchment plans and how they relate to the river basin management plans</p>
Follow up engagement	October 2013 to May 2014 Approx 8 months	<p>Following the consultation, the Environment Agency will consider the responses and where necessary facilitate further engagement for groups of stakeholders where there are areas which need further discussion.</p>
Draft river basin management plans - consultation	July 2014 6 months	<p>"Does this draft plan set the right level of ambition for the water environment and a strong commitment to deliver?"</p> <p>Estimating the likely state of the water environment in 2021 and 2027.</p> <p>Proposing water body objectives</p> <p>Outlining who would be involved to achieve these outcomes in 2021 and 2027, how much it will cost and the benefits</p>
Follow up engagement	October 2014 to August 2015 Approx 11 months	<p>Following the consultation, the Environment Agency will consider the responses and where necessary further develop the content of the plans with delivery partners to ensure the updated plans are the best possible and fully supported</p>
Published river basin management plans	September – December 2015	<p>"This is the plan to address the issues"</p> <p>Publishing proposed river basin management plans in September and submitting to Government for approval. The approved RBMPs will be published in December. These plans will be used as a framework to direct planning and action and to track progress in each river basin district</p>

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