



Future Water Summary of Key points for Rivers Trusts

Overview

Full strategy available from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/strategy/pdf/future-water.pdf>

The Strategy builds closely on the Blueprint for Water's 10 steps to Sustainable Water (www.blueprintforwater.co.uk) although this is not referenced it follows some of the key themes of that campaign (Value Water, price water fairly, stop pollutants, support water-friendly farming, make polluters pay, clean up drainage from roads and buildings, retain water on floodplains and wetlands etc.)

It seems to provide a good link in for the sort of work Rivers trusts do at the catchment scale, though much of the focus is on demand management and price setting rather than resource management.

Positives

1. Strong endorsement of catchment management as method of reducing diffuse pollution, potable water treatment costs, sewage treatment costs (phosphorous especially), and surface water flooding
2. Catchment Sensitive Farming is to be given another 3 years (latest CSF Stakeholder guidance suggests that delivery of extended work will be done through 'Strategic Partnerships' with other bodies – could be a route in for Trusts)
3. Featured reference to Anglers as first line of defence for flagging water quality problems.
4. More power to the EA for the removal of barriers to fish migration

Negatives

1. Stated water quality target of 'majority rivers at Good ecological Status by 2030' seems unambitious given the WFD target of GES by 2015
2. DEFRA mention funding for ENCAMS for litter reduction related to water quality – Trusts/ART should be funded for their direct impacts on water quality
3. Despite much being said about how big business user water demand (>£500,000 pa) is going to be reduced (greater competition, free water efficiency audits) there is nothing about how Government is going to do the same – given that Government is the biggest employer in the country this looks like an omission.



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Items of Interest

1. Water Company Resource Management Plans are statutory and open to consultation – member Trusts to be asked to review their local ones and feed comments to ART?
2. Local Authorities will be required to produce 'Flood Plans' in consultation with stakeholders (after the Pitt Review Interim report) – Trust should be involved in production
3. Water Footprinting – concept to track normal and embedded water use
4. Economic Leakage Level (ELL) – Water Company target currently set as the balance between reducing leakage and adverse effects on customer bills. Proposal to review calculation to include greater reference to environmental and social impacts as well as the current assessment of economic impact. Could provide a useful lever for Trust activities?
5. Water Grids – National scale ruled out but regional ones still under consideration (e.g. current arrangements in North West and Westcountry)
6. Removal of automatic 'right to pave' from households unless permeable solutions are used – designed to combat creeping impermeability
7. An Adaptation toolkit is to be produced, including guidance on the role of land management in managing flood risk – suspect likely that CSF will be the source of this information but one to keep an eye on and to influence if possible
8. Water Companies have been piloting new tariff structures and metering proposals/implementation to incentivise demand reduction

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