



Corporate Plan 2014 to 2016

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.

Published by:

Environment Agency
Horizon House
Deanery Road
Bristol BS1 5AH

Tel: 03708 506506

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

© Environment Agency

All rights reserved. This document may be reproduced with prior permission of the Environment Agency.

Further copies of this report are available from our publications catalogue:

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk>

Contents

Our Corporate Plan 2014 to 2016	Page 4
Our priorities	Page 6
Working with others	Page 9
Increasing the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion	Page 11
Protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity	Page 16
Improving the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth	Page 21
Working together and with others to create better places	Page 28
Ensuring that we are fit for the future	Page 36
Reporting on our performance	Page 40
Our resources	Page 42
Appendix 1: Environment Agency and Natural England: Triennial Review joint action plan	Page 44

Note: This Corporate Plan was approved by the Environment Agency Board on 6 February 2014. Additional funding for our Flood and Coastal Risk Management work and our Waste Enforcement work was subsequently announced during The Budget statement on 19 March. The impact of these additional resources is not currently represented within this plan, either in terms of increased budget or increased outcome delivery. We are still working to fully understand the benefits that these additional resources will bring and will issue an update to this plan in September 2014.

Our Corporate Plan 2014 to 2016

In 2011 we published our corporate plan for the period 2011 to 2015. Many of the ambitions we set out then remain at the heart of our plans and work for the future. But a lot has happened over the last 3 years. A new environmental body has been created in Wales, Natural Resources Wales. The government has carried out its first Triennial Review of the Environment Agency, jointly with Natural England, which concluded that both should be retained as separate bodies, but should work more closely together through a joint action plan.

Over the same period, the government has announced major new policies on the environment, including the Natural Environment White Paper, the England Biodiversity Strategy, the Water White Paper, the Waste Policy Review, the National Adaptation Programme, and the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy, all with significant new commitments to which we are making a contribution. In its drive to create growth in the economy the government has introduced a range of policies to reduce the administrative burden of regulation on business and remove barriers to growth. A draft Deregulation Bill has been published which will place a duty on non-economic regulators to consider how they can contribute to economic growth. The government has also introduced major reforms in the planning system. We have responded to these initiatives proactively and changed the way we work and how we work with others accordingly.

There are a number of important areas of work we will contribute to over the next few years. We will continue to reduce the risks of flooding for more households. We will further develop our strategic overview role on flooding, working with our partners on delivering the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. We will produce the Flood Risk Management Plans required by the EU Floods Directive. We will protect and improve the ecological status of more water bodies by developing and implementing a second cycle of updated River Basin Management Plans required under the Water Framework Directive and work with others to deliver improvements through a more integrated, catchment-based approach. We will work with the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) on reforming the water abstraction licensing system to support resilient economic growth while protecting the environment.

We will help promote growth and investment through a risk-based approach to regulation that aids compliance, improves performance and encourages innovation. We will use the additional funding that has been made available to continue our focus on tackling and reducing waste crime, which undermines legitimate businesses. We will continue to seek ways of reducing the administrative costs of regulation on businesses, minimising bureaucracy, and speeding up decision making and the timely issuing of permits. We will also address the need for regulatory frameworks for new sources of energy, including shale gas. And we will continue to improve the way we work as a regulator to support sustainable growth while protecting people and the environment.

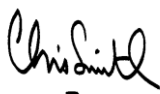
We will also need to respond to pressures on the environment that look set to increase over forthcoming years. The population in England will continue to grow, placing a greater strain on environmental resources and infrastructure. There could be more extremes in the weather with a changing climate, creating demands in

responding to droughts and more frequent and more intense flooding. Low rainfall over many months meant that the first 5 months of 2012 were in drought in many parts of the country. This was then followed by record rainfall and consequent repeated flooding in 2012 and a North Sea tidal surge that flooded coastal areas in 2013. Sea levels will continue to rise placing more pressure on coastal habitats and communities, and flood and coastal erosion risk management structures. The combination of a growing population, a changing climate and ageing assets will place increasing stresses on infrastructure including sewerage and water distribution systems and flood and coastal risk management structures.

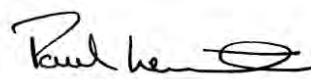
We will have an increasing level of grant-in-aid funding for capital investment in flood and coastal risk management schemes over the coming years. Investment in infrastructure is a key element of the government's strategy for economic growth. Investment in environmental infrastructure projects makes a significant contribution to the National Infrastructure Plan. We will work with others on a programme of agreed projects that will both reduce the risk of flooding and support growth through the creation of jobs and by bringing confidence to areas previously affected by floods. We will also work with Defra to develop a long-term plan for flood infrastructure that will identify new priority projects to be delivered and opportunities for improving efficiency, supporting businesses and economic growth, and providing benefits to other risk management authorities, including local authorities. But revenue funding for our environment and business function is reducing, placing pressures on some important areas of work.

This new corporate plan has been developed in response to these challenges and to ensure that our organisation is fit for the future. It recognises the importance of continuing to work in partnership to create better local environments that enhance people's lives and support sustainable growth. It sets out our priorities, the resources that we will allocate to them and the measures we will use to manage and report on our performance. It has been developed in the context of the policy priorities and business plans of government departments and our expected funding position to the end of 2015 to 2016 and also recognises longer-term objectives and commitments.

By continuing to increase our efficiency, by introducing innovative ways of working, by working in partnership with others, by continuing to develop a better regulation approach, by delivering outcomes in a 'yes, if' way, and by doing more for people and the environment with every pound of funding, we will make sure that we continue to maximise the delivery of results. We will have to prioritise our actions and reduce some of our activities. But we will also keep our ambitions high. In doing all of this we are dependent on the dedication and professionalism of people working in the Environment Agency. We will continue to develop a skilled and diverse workforce that is flexible and able to adapt to the changes ahead. We will invest in their personal development to support them in making both their individual and corporate contribution to creating a better place for people and wildlife.



Lord Chris Smith, Chairman



Dr Paul Leinster CBE, Chief Executive

Our priorities

Our plan is structured around our 3 main business areas: Flood and Coastal Risk Management; Water, Land and Biodiversity; and Regulated Business. This allows us to have a clear line of sight that runs through the priority areas of work, the activities that we will carry out with the funding available and the outcomes to be achieved.

The plan recognises that important areas of our work are cross-cutting and require integrated approaches that involve contributions from each of the main business areas. It also addresses how we will develop more integrated ways of working with others.

The plan also outlines our priorities in developing our staff and the organisation.

Our work is based on the following priority areas:

A changing climate

Addressing the causes and impacts of a changing climate remains a priority that runs through all of our work. Around half of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions are covered by regulatory and economic schemes that we operate. We also work with and through others to provide a targeted 'Climate Ready' service that helps organisations to increase their resilience to a changing climate and supports government in determining where further action is needed.

Increasing the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion

We will develop a better understanding of the risks of flooding and coastal erosion and how to manage and mitigate them. We will work with our partners and communities to manage these risks and reduce the consequences of flooding and coastal erosion.

Protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity

We will protect and improve waters so they are clean and healthy and make sure there is enough water for people, business, agriculture and the environment. We will work with others to promote more sustainable management of land. We will protect and enhance water and wetland habitats, fisheries and other aquatic life, and ensure that people can enjoy the water environment through angling and navigation.

Improving the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

We will work with businesses to help them comply with regulatory requirements. This will support sustainable growth without compromising environmental and public health. We will take action to improve the compliance of poor performers and to reduce environmental crime.

Working together and with others to create better places

We will continue to improve the way we work with our partners and customers, and involve communities. We will integrate the delivery of services with Natural England and across the network of Defra organisations. We will work with others to continue to improve incident management and the advice and support that we provide on

adapting to a changing climate. We will take a more integrated approach to our work in catchments and we will engage early with strategic spatial planning and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to help enable sustainable growth and avoid delays to development.

Ensuring that we are fit for the future

We will ensure that we can continue to deliver vital services and outcomes for people, business and the environment with the funding available by continuing to drive improvements in our efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, and finding innovative ways of delivering the required outcomes. We will use the best available evidence and knowledge to support decision making. We will build a skilled and diverse workforce by supporting the development and performance of our staff.

Our role

The Environment Agency's overall objective is to protect and improve the environment for people and wildlife and contribute to sustainable development by implementing the policies of government departments. In doing this we seek to take an integrated approach in which we consider all elements of the environment when we plan and carry out our work. It allows us to identify the best environmental options and solutions, taking into account the different impacts on water, land, air, resources and energy.

We contribute to the economy and support growth in many different ways. Our work in flood and coastal risk management helps reduce risks to people, properties and businesses, and serious disruption to infrastructure such as roads and railways, and vital services such as water and electricity supply. The economic benefits of investment in flood and coastal risk management considerably outweigh the costs of those investments. We help prevent hundreds of millions of pounds worth of damage from flooding and work with others to deliver a range of environmental benefits, including the creation of new and restored habitats for wildlife. Through our investment in flood risk management infrastructure we not only reduce the risks of flooding and the costs associated with flooding incidents, but also support growth by helping to create new jobs and by bringing confidence to areas previously affected by floods.

Our work as a regulator ensures that environmental and public health standards are met, helping to avoid the impacts and costs of poor health and improving the natural environment for beneficial uses. We work with businesses to reduce waste and save money, and help to ensure that the economy is ready to cope with a changing climate. By helping to restore previously degraded and contaminated local environments and reducing the risks of flooding, we contribute to the economic regeneration of neighbourhoods to benefit businesses and communities.

Our work in water resource planning and the regulation of water abstractions ensures there is enough water to meet the demands of a growing economy.

By applying risk-based approaches widely to our regulatory work, reducing bureaucracy, simplifying guidance, and speeding up decision making and processing times for permits, we are reducing the administrative costs of regulation for businesses and making it easier for them to do the right thing.

We also help to support sustainable growth through planning and development by improving our service as a statutory planning adviser and contributing to local strategic growth initiatives including LEPs and Enterprise Zones. By working closely with others including other statutory bodies we are improving the efficiency of our operations and providing better services for customers.

We are responsible to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. We work closely, and in partnership with, other agencies in the Defra network, other government departments, and with local authorities.

We have a presence across England with teams based in 16 Areas actively working in their local communities. Our work includes: regulation of major industry, flood and coastal risk management, river basin management and catchment planning, water quality regulation, water resource management, waste regulation, regulation of contaminated land, maintenance of navigations, fisheries management, conservation and ecology, and helping organisations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

We use and share technical and scientific data and evidence – our own and others’ – to understand the environment and underpin all of our work. We work with other organisations across the Defra network to report on the state of the natural environment in England and to assess the scale, nature and significance of current and possible future environmental issues.

We have 3 main roles:

Environmental regulator

Much of the environmental legislation that applies in the UK derives from European directives. Government departments transpose these requirements into regulations and we have specific powers and duties to implement them, working to better regulation principles. We use permits, authorisations and consents to set the conditions operators must comply with so that their activities do not adversely impact on people and the environment. The businesses we regulate include power stations, nuclear installations, the chemicals industry, the onshore oil and gas industry, food and drink manufacturers, metal processing industries, water companies, farms and waste management sites. We regulate water abstraction for drinking water, irrigation and industry. We also regulate commercial fisheries and license anglers and boat users. We target the activities that pose the greatest threat to the environment – a risk-based approach that means we make the best use of our resources.

Environmental operator

The Environment Agency plays a central role in managing flood risk. We have a strategic overview role for flood risk management from all sources, including rivers, the sea, groundwater, reservoirs and surface water. We support and work in partnership with local authorities, who are responsible for managing flood risk from surface water and smaller local watercourses. We engage openly with local communities to improve understanding of the risks from flooding and coastal erosion, provide flood warnings, and help develop and promote solutions that make them more resilient to flood events. Working alongside internal drainage boards and local authorities, we commission the design and construction of flood risk management

structures, and maintain and operate them. We also work with others to develop solutions using natural processes. When a flood happens, we work with the emergency services and local authorities to minimise the harm to people and property. We allocate water resources to sectors, making sure there is enough water for people, businesses, agriculture and the environment. We plan decades ahead so that society can respond to the changing pressures on water availability. We oversee the way that water companies plan so that supplies are secure and companies' environmental impacts are minimised. We work with water companies and other sectors to ensure that effective plans are in place to manage security of water supply and environmental impacts during droughts. We also work to protect and improve the environment. We create and improve habitats for fish and other water-based wildlife, and support species at risk. We work with others to provide angling and navigation facilities.

Environmental adviser and a conscience for people and the natural environment

It's our job to be an independent adviser on environmental matters, both within government and more widely. We advise policy makers in government when they are developing legislation and policy on environmental matters. At a local level we advise throughout the spatial planning process on environmental issues and we are a statutory consultee for land use planning. We advise local authorities on planning to prevent inappropriate new development in flood plains.

Working with others

We work with many different organisations including government departments, other government agencies, local authorities, businesses, interest groups and communities.

Working with people, communities and local authorities

We work with people, communities and local authorities across England to protect and improve local environments. We actively seek to work with and through others, providing support where others are better placed to lead. For example, we already work with over 500 flood groups across the country on issues such as flood warning and local resistance and resilience measures for properties.

We will continue to improve our ways of working with people, communities and local authorities by:

- **Understanding what communities want to achieve** – we will identify shared priorities and the best way of delivering them. For some we will provide support whilst on other occasions we will take the lead.
- **Being an expert adviser while respecting the role of local authorities** – we will continue to provide advice and information to local authorities. We will ensure that more of the environmental data and information that we hold is made available for others to use.
- **Building strong relationships with communities** – we will work with local communities to understand problems and concerns, develop ideas and find solutions.

- **Looking for opportunities to work as a partner** – we will continue to seek opportunities to work with partners, agree shared objectives and make sure that together we achieve clear outcomes for people and the environment whilst avoiding duplication. We will look at how we can involve civil society organisations in areas of work where we have mutual interests, benefiting from their skills and experience, for example in the co-ordination of volunteers.

Working with government departments

We are responsible to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and are part of Defra's network of organisations. We work with a range of government departments to support priorities in departmental business plans. We support Defra and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and work closely with other government departments, including the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), and the Cabinet Office to support cross-government priorities. We contribute to the government's policy development work, providing evidence, support and technical advice.

Working with other government agencies

We work closely with other delivery bodies including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, and the Marine Management Organisation to improve efficiency, effectiveness and customer services. This includes joint working on providing advice to planning authorities and farmers, organising customer services, planning of operational activities such as environmental monitoring, sharing of technical skills and expertise, and working with civil society.

Increasing the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion

A changing climate, rising sea levels, an increasing and ageing population, new housing developments and urbanisation, together with an infrastructure that needs to be maintained and upgraded, are all adding to the growing challenge of flooding and coastal erosion risk management. Recent major floods, the introduction of partnership funding, the economic situation, and the insurance market have, amongst many other factors, drawn attention and given more prominence to flood and coastal risk management.

Around 5 million, or 1 in 6, properties are at risk from flooding from all sources across England. The risks to people, communities and infrastructure including roads, railways, power sub-stations and water treatment plants are increasing. Of the 4,500 km of coast in England, around 1,800 km is at risk of coastal erosion (about 340 km of which is currently defended). Approximately 700 properties are vulnerable to coastal erosion over the next 20 years and a further 2,000 may become vulnerable over the next 50 years.

Sea level rise is already increasing the likelihood of both flooding and coastal erosion. Changing rainfall patterns and urban development are increasing the likelihood of flooding from surface water as well as from rivers. Problems in catchments prone to surface water flooding achieved a much greater significance following the 2007 summer floods and were a key feature of the series of flooding events that occurred during 2012. Development and the need for new homes have the potential to worsen the impacts of floods on people and property, unless carefully managed.

The primary focus of our work is to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion to people and property. This can bring many other benefits including improving the quality of the environment, protecting agricultural production, protecting critical infrastructure, improving health and wellbeing, creating opportunities for economic growth, and improving and creating habitats. We will work with our professional partners and with communities at risk so that together we can deliver these benefits to individuals, communities, businesses and the environment.

Our priorities and what we will do

Over the next 2 years our priorities are to:

- Help develop and promote a better understanding of flood and coastal erosion risk.
- Target resources to reduce the risk of flooding to communities with the highest flood risk.
- Reduce the consequences of flooding and coastal erosion.
- Ensure that investments in flood and coastal risk management provide economic and environmental benefits wherever possible.

We will contribute to meeting some significant national and European commitments.

We will:

- Develop our strategic overview role and demonstrate leadership in implementing the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy.
- Play our part in the implementation of the Flood and Water Management Act.
- Together with local authorities, produce Flood Risk Management Plans required by the EU Floods Directive.
- Improve and update our assessment of flood and coastal risk in England, incorporating climate change impacts.
- Review and update flood hazard and risk maps for England by 2019.

Help develop and promote a better understanding of flood and coastal erosion risk

We will:

- Improve evidence, information, and mapping and modelling tools to understand better the risks of flooding and coastal erosion and to support better decisions and greater resilience.
- Make flood and coastal risk information more accessible, taking account of social and technological change and opportunities, such as the increasingly widespread use of social media.
- Promote a greater awareness and understanding of the risks of flooding, particularly in those communities at high risk, and encourage and enable householders, businesses and communities to take action to manage the risks.
- Promote awareness and provide advice on the need to avoid inappropriate development in areas at flood risk and the need to manage land to avoid increasing risks.
- Develop and promote a better understanding of coastal risk, its management, and the emergency response required.
- Work with local authorities, coastal groups and others to ensure that strategic plans take account of evidence and knowledge.
- Work with other organisations to help them make the best use of our risk information, including the insurance industry.

Target investment to reduce the risk of flooding in communities with the highest flood risk

We will:

- Play our part in building, maintaining and improving flood risk and coastal erosion management infrastructure and systems, working in partnership with communities at risk.
- Carry out a programme of capital investment to protect more properties and, where possible, support economic growth and environmental improvements. We will aim to provide increased protection for at least 300,000 households between 2015 - 2016 and 2020 to 2021.
- Deliver greater value for money by achieving a further 10% efficiency within our capital programme.

- Assess the long-term investment needs of flood and coastal risk management.
- Continue to implement and enhance the partnership funding approach with other risk management authorities and beneficiaries to increase and broaden the funding for investment in flood risk management.
- Manage our flood and coastal risk management assets effectively and efficiently and work with others to enable them to play a greater role where they are better placed to do so.
- Work with local government to support better management of risk through the planning system to help ensure sustainable development and to reduce associated risk through location and innovative design. Work with and encourage communities to take action themselves, for example by forming flood support and action groups, sharing advice, carrying out training and producing practical guidance.
- Support and enable action by others to undertake maintenance, including channel conveyance, in line with good practice.
- Work with and support local authorities in developing flood and coastal risk management skills and knowledge, and the capabilities needed to implement the Flood and Water Management Act.
- Support coastal protection authorities in their work to manage coastal erosion risk, through co-operation over adjacent lengths of coast and by providing evidence, information and advice.
- Provide leadership in reservoir safety and ensure that other organisations managing critical national infrastructure are aware of their risk and take action to manage it.
- Modernise and effectively communicate our land drainage consent process.
- Prioritise and target maintenance activity to deliver the greatest benefits based on clear evidence.

Reduce the consequences of flooding and coastal erosion

We will:

- Maintain an effective and resilient capability to respond to flood emergencies.
- Continue to develop and support the joint Environment Agency and Met Office National Flood Forecasting Centre.
- Improve our flood forecasting, monitoring and warning capability to support better incident management response and to help others act promptly to reduce risk.
- Broaden the scope of our warning service, so that it can be tailored better to our customers' needs and has a clear focus on risk to life.
- Improve the communication of our forecasts and warnings so that they describe impact and uncertainty in ways that our partners and communities understand.
- Together with our partners, address the risk posed by surface and groundwater flooding. To achieve this we will make our service more effective by automating warning systems where possible, giving customers the ability to set up their own alerts for isolated risk spots and looking for more routes to get warnings to those that need them.
- Support local authorities with local flood resilience and resistance measures.

- Ensure that more partners develop effective flood plans, seeking community input and private sector support to ensure resilience and recovery.
- Enable and encourage more communities and individuals to develop effective flood plans, by providing data, information and easy-to-use web tools.
- Encourage businesses to consider the potential impacts of flooding on their premises, staff and supply chains as part of their business continuity plans.
- Work with our partners to promote the 'Flood Identity' to increase the reach of information about flood risk and the actions that people can take to protect themselves from flooding.

Ensure that investments in flood and coastal risk management provide economic and environmental benefits

We will work with Natural England and other partners to:

- Carry out an integrated programme of work to create new habitats and provide other environmental benefits that contribute to Water Framework Directive improvements, to England Biodiversity Strategy outcomes for priority habitat creation and the restoration of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and to EU Eel Regulation objectives.
- Promote a greater understanding of the role of habitat creation and use of natural processes to manage both flood and coastal risk, especially in rural locations where major engineering is not feasible.
- Work with nature using land management techniques to reduce flood risk, including creating new wetlands and coastal habitats that accommodate water, aid conveyance and benefit aquatic priority species.
- Support the government's growth agenda through delivery of flood and coastal risk management infrastructure. Our programme of capital investment in improved defences reduces the risk of flooding and supports investment and growth by bringing confidence to areas previously blighted by floods.

We will know we're succeeding when...

- No inappropriate new developments are located in areas at high risk of flooding from any source.
- Fewer properties are at risk of flooding from all sources.
- More people are aware of the risk of flooding to themselves, their property and the communities in which they live.
- Our flood warnings reach more people, businesses and organisations at risk.
- More communities at risk of flooding have flood action groups and more people know what to do when a flood occurs.
- Investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management increases from the private sector and other non-central government sources.
- Flood and coastal risk management assets meet their target condition.
- More water and wetland priority habitats are created and enhanced.
- More water and wetland SSSIs are in favourable condition and the status of aquatic priority species is improving.

Corporate plan measures and targets

Key performance measures	Targets		Unit
	2014/15	2015/16	
We reduce the risk from flooding for more households	165,000*	tbc*	Number of households protected
We maintain our flood and coastal risk management assets at or above required condition	tbc*	tbc*	% of assets at required condition
More households and businesses at high risk of flooding can receive direct warnings	66%	Replace with new measure	% of properties able to receive warnings
We achieve a proportion of funding for capital projects through contributions made by others	Set baseline	15%	% of funding contributed by others

* Targets under review while we assess the implications of the recent flood events on our assets and future investment programme.

Protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity

Our work in protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity provides a wide range of benefits to people, businesses, agriculture and the environment. The economy relies on a secure supply of water for many different uses such as supplying drinking water, producing food and drink, generating energy, and irrigating crops. Through our work in regulating water abstractions and discharges, and reducing pollution incidents we help to make sure there is enough safe water for water users and for the environment.

Our work in helping to improve the quality of water and land and the creation and the restoration of priority habitats for wildlife has been an important factor in the economic regeneration of cities and communities across the country. Millions of people visit rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters every year for recreation and relaxation, and benefit from improved water quality in activities such as angling, boating and water sports. Achieving water quality standards at beaches used for bathing underpins important tourist industries in coastal communities.

There has been great progress in restoring and improving the state of the land and water environment over the last 20 years. But significant challenges remain. Some water-related habitats and species have continued to decline. A growing population and a changing climate will place increasing pressures on the water environment and water infrastructure.

Our priorities and what we will do

Over the next 2 years our priorities are to:

- Protect and improve waters so that they are clean and healthy.
- Make sure there is enough water for people, agriculture, business and the environment.
- Promote more sustainable and integrated management of land and water.
- Enhance biodiversity in the water environment and wetlands and ensure the sustainable management of fish stocks.
- Promote opportunities for people to enjoy water and wetlands through angling and navigation.

Over this period we will carry out some significant tasks to meet national and European commitments. We will:

- Complete the first cycle of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) to improve more waters to 'good status' and protect others from deterioration.
- Develop and implement revised RBMPs through the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive.
- Work with others to provide leadership, expertise and information in taking forward the catchment-based approach across England to help deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife.
- Implement the more stringent water quality standards of the revised Bathing Waters Directive and work with others to address the sources of pollution at sites where further quality improvements are needed.

- Provide technical support to government in its proposals to reform the water abstraction licensing system, carrying out an assessment of options supported by catchment-based studies.
- Contribute to the England Biodiversity Strategy through the creation of priority habitats and restoration of SSSIs, and work with others to deliver the commitments of the Natural Environment White Paper.
- Through the EU Eel Regulation, contribute to the recovery of the European eel stock by implementing eel management plans.

Protect and improve waters so that they are clean and healthy

We will:

- Protect all water bodies and improve others where possible including those that are specifically designated for protecting wildlife, bathing, abstraction for water supply, and fish and shellfish production.
- Take action to ensure compliance with permits for water abstractions and waste water discharges, and to reduce damaging pollution incidents.
- Work with others to deliver the improvements that have been agreed in RBMPs.
- Identify practical and affordable solutions to remove physical barriers to achieving 'good status'.
- Work with others to address known sources of pollution. Restore a sustainable abstraction regime, assessing and tackling damaging abstractions to restore rivers and wetlands.
- Contribute to creating a cleaner, healthier estuarine and coastal water environment through our regulatory and advisory roles, working with other delivery partners, and through RBMPs.
- Better integrate the water company asset management planning cycle with RBMPs.
- Work with others to develop a more strategic approach to surface water management and sewerage planning. Help promote the benefits of sustainable drainage systems.
- Work with nature in managing water resources, reducing the risks of flooding and coastal erosion, preventing pollution and adapting to a changing climate.
- Work with others to bring about local environmental improvements including through Nature Improvement Areas and Local Nature Partnerships.
- Identify opportunities to work with volunteers and community groups.
- Develop a better understanding of the benefits that the water environment provides to society and the economy and how our work contributes to them.

Make sure there is enough water for people, agriculture, business and the environment

We will:

- Develop a strategic, long-term view of the future water needs of key sectors including public supply, energy and agriculture. Assess options for managing the balance of supply and demand to make sure that water supplies remain resilient.

- Promote a better understanding of the value of water to society, the economy and the environment. Work with key sectors to raise awareness of the need to reduce demand and use water more efficiently.
- Support Defra in developing a more flexible water abstraction system to deal with unsustainable abstractions, a changing climate and a growing population, that takes account of water quality as well as water quantity.
- Ensure that water companies' resource management plans address security of supply and strike a balance between developing new resources and reducing demand.
- Promote greater interconnections in the water supply system.
- Take a strategic overview of the quality and capacity of water and waste water infrastructure and promote more efficient and integrated approaches to managing the whole water cycle.
- Ensure that drought management plans take account of the impacts of a changing climate and more extreme weather.
- Make it easier for businesses to access water, and remove barriers to trading of abstraction licences.
- Work with other sectors to develop new water resources such as on-farm storage.
- Support innovation in water efficiency and water reuse, and ensure that water is only treated to the standard necessary for a particular use.

Promote more sustainable and integrated management of land and water

We will:

- Promote practices and incentives that encourage land managers to protect soil and water, minimise diffuse pollution, improve conditions for wildlife, and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing climate.
- Work with the farming industry to ensure that management planning for soil, nutrients, water use and waste becomes an integral part of business plans on all farms to both improve the environment and help to secure a healthy and sustainable supply of food.
- Work with Natural England and the Forestry Commission to target European Common Agricultural Policy funding to support environmental improvements and to encourage the take up of agri-environment schemes to improve land management, benefit biodiversity and help tackle diffuse pollution.
- Work with land managers to help them understand the implications of a changing climate for their business and how they can respond.
- Work with farmers, rural communities and relevant authorities to promote a better understanding of the relationship between land use and flood and coastal erosion risk in land management practices.

Enhance biodiversity in the water environment and ensure that fish stocks are managed sustainably

We will:

- Ensure we maximise the synergies between our water management, pollution prevention and flood and coastal risk management work to increase habitat extent, conserve and enhance wildlife, improve fisheries and deliver wider environmental benefits.
- Influence strategic land use planning and major development proposals to protect wildlife.
- Work to maximise the benefits of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in protecting and improving biodiversity in water and wetland habitats.
- Help to reduce the impact of damaging, invasive, non-native species.
- Deliver our contribution to the England Biodiversity Strategy by maintaining and restoring favourable conservation status at protected sites, creating and restoring priority habitats and enhancing populations of priority species.
- Work with partner organisations to take forward projects to improve and expand river and wetland habitats through the Wetland Vision for England.
- Work with others to conserve and maintain the diversity and populations of freshwater fish, salmon, sea-trout, eels, lampreys and smelt. We will play our part in the delivery of eel action plans in support of the EU Eel Regulation.
- Carry out the necessary surveys and investigations to underpin fisheries management, transfers and action plans.
- Take action to investigate and respond to incidents that damage fisheries and support the re-establishment and recovery of fisheries following incidents.
- Work with others to improve understanding of the causes of biodiversity loss and the measures that can be taken to prevent further loss, taking into account the potential impacts of a changing climate.

Promote opportunities for people to enjoy water and wetlands through angling and navigation

We will:

- Work with local communities, angling and navigation interests to provide opportunities for people to enjoy and benefit from the environment, and to address barriers to participation.
- Maintain the navigation assets we are responsible for in line with available funding.

We will know we're succeeding when...

- The status of surface, ground, estuary and coastal waters and wetlands is protected and more water bodies are achieving or are improving towards 'good status' or 'good potential' under the Water Framework Directive.
- Bathing waters meet the requirements of the revised Bathing Waters Directive.

- Over-abstraction of water bodies is reduced and fewer abstractions cause environmental damage. More water bodies have sustainable fish populations.
- More farms adopt practices that improve the management of nutrients, soils, water use, pesticides and waste.
- More freshwater, estuarine and coastal waters, and wetland habitats are created and enhanced.
- More water and wetland SSSIs are in favourable condition.
- Populations of threatened priority species which are dependent on water and wetland habitats are stable or recovering.
- People continue to engage actively in angling and navigation pursuits.
- Our navigation assets are maintained in target condition.

Corporate plan measures and targets

Key performance measures	Targets		Unit
	2014/15	2015/16	
We work with others to improve the quality of surface waters, groundwaters, coastal waters and wetlands	29% (1,818)	31%	% of water bodies at good ecological status
The quality of bathing water is getting better	93%	95%	% meeting revised Bathing Water Directive standards
We improve and protect rivers and wetlands damaged by unsustainable abstractions	88	86	Number of abstraction licence changes
We deliver our commitments to the England Biodiversity Strategy by:	1000ha by end of 2015/16		Hectares (ha) created and/or restored
- Creating new habitat			
- Restoring SSSIs	300 ha	300 ha	
Fewer salmon river stocks are at risk	10	9	Number of rivers at risk
We maintain our navigation assets at or above the required condition	80%	80%	% of assets at required condition

Improving the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

Regulation plays an important role in securing a clean and healthy environment. It helps to protect people and wildlife from harm, such as the health effects of exposure to harmful chemicals in air, water, soil and food, and the risks of flooding. It also safeguards vital natural resources, such as water in rivers and aquifers, and helps to ensure they are used sustainably.

A clear regulatory framework with agreed standards and targets has helped to drive major environmental and public health improvements over the last few decades. Regulation has played an important part in reducing emissions to air, discharges to water, the quantities of waste produced by businesses, and the number of pollution incidents. This has brought substantial benefits to society and the economy.

We have made significant improvements in streamlining our regulatory approach over recent years and in providing better services to those we regulate. We have also reduced the administrative costs of regulation for the businesses that we regulate. But we recognise that there is more to do and that we need to keep improving and updating our approach. In particular, we recognise the importance of facilitating sustainable growth while continuing to protect and improve the environment.

Our priorities and what we will do

Over the next 2 years our priorities are to:

- Support sustainable growth by making it easier for businesses to know what they need to do to comply with regulatory requirements, without compromising environmental and public health protection and improvement.
- Play our part in helping the UK meet greenhouse gas emissions targets.
- Take action to improve compliance of poor performers and reduce their impact on the environment.
- Reduce environmental crime, including waste crime, in order to protect both the environment and legitimate businesses.
- Work with businesses to reduce emissions, discharges and pollution incidents, and help to ensure that resources are used sustainably.

Over this period we will contribute to some significant national and international commitments. We will:

- Implement the EU Industrial Emissions Directive for existing and new activities, including the technical specifications and guidance on derogations, and Europe-wide definitions on best available techniques for industrial processes.
- Contribute to meeting the government's obligations and targets arising from EU waste regulations, including Trans-frontier Shipments and the Waste Framework Directive, and in taking forward actions from its Waste Policy

Review and the Waste Prevention Programme for England aimed at moving towards a 'zero waste' society.

- Support government in achieving its commitments under the Climate Change Act and the EU climate and energy package to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Improve energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy produced from renewable and low carbon sources, including by administering the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, Climate Change Agreements, and through our role in the environmental regulation of renewable energy developments. We will provide advice to government on the environmental aspects of developments in energy sources including nuclear power, shale gas and hydropower.
- Continue to improve our regulatory approaches, including supporting the government's programme of regulatory reform and implementing the Regulators' Code, to make it easier for businesses to understand what they need to do to comply with the law while ensuring that statutory requirements for environmental and public health protection continue to be met.

Support sustainable growth by working with businesses to help them comply with regulatory requirements, whilst continuing to protect and improve the environment and public health

We will:

Review, streamline and simplify permitting systems

- Continue to review and improve our regulatory approach to make things simpler for businesses, for example through single site licences, the removal of obsolete permit conditions, the use of exemptions and providing pre-application advice.
- Work with government to extend the Environmental Permitting Regulations framework to include water abstractions, impoundment licences, fish pass approvals and flood defence consents.
- Increase the use of standard permits and registrations or general binding rules, particularly for low risk activities.
- Seek opportunities for taking low risk activities out of regulation altogether, for example through the waste protocol approach that defines when waste ceases to be waste.
- Assess which aspects of regulation could be applied to whole companies rather than individual sites and activities, including billing for regulatory charges and submission of required data and information.
- Streamline the waste transfer note system by allowing businesses to use more flexible approaches to documentation, including electronic reporting.
- Work with government to review the Producer Responsibility Regulations with the aim of improving alignment of different regulations and reducing administrative costs to business.
- Encourage producers to take greater responsibility for how their waste is dealt with all the way through to final recovery, reuse or disposal.
- Review the permitting of water company activities, including the regulation of sewage works and associated anaerobic digestion and biogas activities, the

use of cold weather waivers, and the scope for increased use of seasonal permits and earned recognition schemes.

- Streamline the interface between environmental permitting and the process for planning permissions.

Improve guidance and information

- Ensure that we only ask for the data that we need and use, and we do not ask those we regulate for the same information more than once.
- Simplify and reduce the volume of regulatory guidance and ensure that it is simple, clear and quick to use, and users can be confident about what they need to do to comply with the law.
- Use customer insight from our National Customer Contact Centre and market research to identify the priority customer needs for guidance and how this can be best targeted, and involve customers in the development of the necessary guidance.
- Provide information systems that enable those we regulate to access what they need and to apply for approvals online through GOV.UK.
- Further reduce the burden of reporting and make it quicker and easier for businesses to meet data reporting requirements through the use of data portals.
- Investigate the feasibility of providing a single website for information on flood consents.

Introduce schemes that recognise and encourage good performance

- Develop, test and introduce schemes for implementing the principle of 'earned recognition'.
- Build on the current trials of third party assurance schemes as an alternative to some existing inspections, including the use of third party compliance checks and self-certification at company board level through an 'annual compliance statement'.

Improve the way we work with other regulators

- Work with other regulatory bodies in the Defra network, including Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation, to streamline licensing and approvals processes, and to implement an environmental account manager approach for complex developments.
- Continue to work closely with the Health and Safety Executive, in particular on the implementation of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH).
- Further develop a 'one-stop shop' approach for large infrastructure projects with the Planning Inspectorate.
- Explore the potential for further multi-agency working on waste enforcement.
- Make an active contribution to European and international networks to share learning and best practices on environmental regulation, including the European Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), the European Network of Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (NHEPA) and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE).

Play our part in helping the UK meet greenhouse gas emissions targets

We will:

- Implement the EU ETS, the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, Climate Change Agreements and support government in the further development of these schemes.
- Work with waste managers and others to understand better the contribution that landfill gas makes to climate change and to reduce uncontrolled methane emissions from landfill.
- Use our evidence and regulatory work to support the sustainable development and use of low-carbon technologies, including energy efficiency, bio-energy and other renewables, carbon capture and storage, and nuclear power, while minimising their environmental impacts.
- Work with the nuclear sector to ensure that designs for new nuclear power stations meet world class environmental standards.
- Fulfil our agreed roles in carbon capture and storage as a technical adviser to DECC, as a permitting authority, and in working with DECC to develop an emissions performance standard for power plants.

Take action to improve compliance of poor performers and reduce their impact on the environment

We will:

Take a business sector approach

- Further develop the sector-based approach that tailors the choice of interventions to the characteristics and performance of each business sector.
- Develop and nurture staff skills and expertise in specific sectors to understand and communicate priorities better. And we will be more responsive to both innovation and areas of concern within a sector.

Tackle the problems caused by bad neighbours and persistent poor performers

- Provide guidance and train our staff in addressing nuisance issues, including problems caused by noise, dust, litter and odours.
- Encourage producers to take greater responsibility for how their waste is dealt with all the way through to final recovery, re-use or disposal by using the waste stream approach to identify vulnerable areas where waste is moving from legitimate to illegal or non-compliant activities. We will use this intelligence to target appropriate regulatory action.
- Engage with trade associations so that they can help their members tackle issues that give rise to persistent complaints.
- Continue to develop our approach to build trust with communities around sites of high public interest, taking action to ensure that companies establish effective communications with neighbours, for example through community liaison groups, and local authorities are engaged where appropriate.
- Take timely and robust action against persistent poor performers, including enforcement, where necessary.

Focus on improving compliance

- Continue to develop our understanding of the root causes of non-compliance in different sectors and develop ways of stopping non-compliance and illegal activities quickly and effectively. Develop and apply a 'supply chain' approach, focusing on priority waste streams, using intelligence to identify the most effective point in the transfer chain using existing and new regulations including information from the Material Recycling Facilities (MRF) reporting requirements.
- Work with businesses to encourage the reuse and recovery of more waste and improve the quality of waste-derived products.
- Adapt our approach and develop the necessary staff skills to address the rapidly changing face of waste management with more waste now being subjected to innovative treatment technologies.
- Help to instil confidence and investment by industry by communicating our approach to compliance and enforcement clearly and ensuring operator competence requirements are met.

Streamline enforcement regimes

- Work with Defra and DECC to review enforcement powers and to develop a common and consistent approach to enforcement across new and developing regimes.
- Apply effective and proportionate sanctions for non-compliant activity, and where appropriate, replace prosecution with civil sanctions.

Reduce environmental crime

We will:

- Reduce the number of illegal sites, concentrating our efforts on those that pose the greatest risks.
- Use the full range of powers to tackle environmental crime including revocation of permits and removal of registrations.
- Use an intelligence-led approach to tackle waste and fisheries crime, sharing information and working with other enforcement agencies, including the police, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the National Crime Agency, local authorities and other regulators.
- Improve our evidence and information to understand the scale and nature of illegal waste exports. Work closely with the UK Border Agency and with regulators in other countries, including through IMPEL, to share intelligence and take action to reduce the illegal export of waste.
- Carry out targeted campaigns to address particular problem areas based upon an intelligence-led approach. For example, this may include campaigns to tackle particular types of activity such as illegal exports or specific problematic waste streams.
- Seek opportunities to remove the financial benefits of environmental crime, for example through confiscation orders.
- Improve our understanding of critical 'tipping points' which increase the risk of environmental crime, for example, when currency exchange rates encourage illegal exports, or market prices make recycling financially unviable.

Work with businesses to reduce emissions, discharges and pollution incidents, and help to ensure that resources are used sustainably

We will work with businesses to:

- Reduce the emissions to air of priority substances from regulated industries in line with European targets.
- Reduce the number of regulated industry sites that contribute to breaches of air quality objectives.
- Reduce discharges to water in line with environmental objectives and standards in EU directives, including the Water Framework Directive, the Bathing Waters Directive, and the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive.
- Reduce the number of pollution incidents.
- Increase the amounts of materials reused, recycled and recovered, and reduce the amounts of waste produced.

We will know we're succeeding when...

- Administrative costs of regulation to businesses are reduced.
- Fewer sites have band D, E or F Operational Risk Appraisal (Opra) scores.
- More regulated sites have suitable environmental management systems.
- The number of regulated industry sites that contribute to breaches of air quality objectives is reduced.
- Emissions of priority substances, including greenhouse gases, to air from sites we regulate are reducing in line with UK and EU targets.
- Discharges to water are reduced in line with environmental objectives and standards in EU Directives.
- There are fewer pollution incidents.
- There are fewer complaints relating to nuisances such as odour, dust and litter caused by regulated businesses.
- Water company performance against look-up tables and absolute permit conditions improves.
- Sectors we regulate use resources more efficiently and send less waste to landfill.
- More materials are reused, recycled and recovered, and the amount of waste produced is reduced.
- There is less waste and other environmental crime.
- The businesses that we regulate tell us that our guidance and advice are clear and easy to understand.

Corporate plan measures and targets

Key performance measures	Targets		Unit
	2014/15	2015/16	
We improve business compliance through supporting legitimate business to comply and by tackling the deliberately non-compliant	5% reduction	5% reduction	Sites in lowest compliance bands (D, E and F) for 2+ years
We reduce serious and significant pollution incidents	Oct-Dec 2013/14 baseline minus 1%	Jan-Mar 2014/15 minus 1%	Number of incidents
We reduce the administrative costs of regulation to businesses	£317 m cumulative in Spending review 2010 (SR10) period	Revise in consultation with Defra	£ million savings in administration costs for the businesses we regulate
We reduce the overall risk presented by illegal waste sites targeting our efforts on the highest risk sites	Reduce by 2% per quarter	Reduce by 2% per quarter	Number of high risk illegal waste sites

Working together and with others to create better places

We are increasingly developing more integrated approaches to our work to protect and improve the environment, bringing together our different functions and working with others in river catchments, in local communities and at individual sites. With major commitments to be delivered over the next 5 years, and reducing funding in our own and other public sector organisations with which we work, it is vital that we find more efficient and effective ways of working through more integrated delivery of our services with those of others.

Working with our partners

We work closely with other delivery bodies that are part of the Defra network including Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Marine Management Organisation to achieve better outcomes for people and the environment, to improve efficiency in our operations and to provide better customer services. This includes joining up on advice to planning authorities, land management and agri-environment schemes, advice on climate change adaptation, and monitoring and evidence. We are working together to improve the way that we carry out inspections, provide advice, and issue permits and licences. For example, we are developing an environmental account manager approach with Natural England and the Forestry Commission to provide a single point of contact where customers such as local authorities, farmers and developers require permits from the 3 organisations. We are a principal adviser to the Marine Management Organisation for developments in estuarine and coastal waters, through marine licensing and marine spatial planning. We are working with the Marine Management Organisation to streamline licensing arrangements in the marine environment.

We work with others to understand better the risks from flooding and coastal erosion and how they can be managed. This includes working with local communities, Defra and other central government departments, local authorities, the Local Government Association, the Association of British Insurers, the Association of Drainage Authorities, the National Flood Forum, Ofwat and other regulators, consultants and contractors, energy, water and other national infrastructure and essential service providers, emergency services, and professional and trade associations. We work closely with the Met Office, particularly through the joint Flood Forecasting Centre.

Our regulatory work involves partnership with many other regulatory bodies and agencies. We work with Ofwat and the Drinking Water Inspectorate in the regulation of the water industry and in planning future investment to ensure that the necessary environmental improvements are funded through price reviews. With the Health and Safety Executive we jointly regulate 850 major hazard sites, implement the COMAH Regulations, and help deliver technical and enforcement functions of the UK Competent Authorities for the EU REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals) and the CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures) Regulations. This involves assessing and taking action to reduce environmental hazards and risks from the manufacture, use and disposal of industrial and consumer chemicals.

We work with the Planning Inspectorate and local authorities to streamline the interface between the planning process and environmental regulation for large infrastructure projects and to simplify consultation. We work closely with the police, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and local authorities in tackling illegal waste activities. We engage with the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities in the regulation and protection of fisheries in estuaries and coastal waters.

We work closely with Natural Resources Wales, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on cross-border issues, such as river basin management, to co-ordinate activities at a UK level, and to share learning and different approaches.

We work with many different local organisations and communities across England. We work in partnership with local authorities and support each other in carrying out our individual statutory duties. We provide information and guidance to local authorities to support their management of coastal erosion and flooding from surface water, small watercourses and groundwater, and their management of bathing waters. We provide information and advice on the environment for local plans and are a statutory consultee on planning applications.

We work with local authorities, the emergency services and health authorities through local resilience forums to plan for, and respond to, incidents and emergencies.

We also work locally with a wide range of non-governmental organisations, including Rivers Trusts, Wildlife Trusts, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Angling Trust, National Parks Authorities, internal drainage boards and many others. We involve civil society organisations in areas of work where we have mutual interests, benefiting from their skills and experience, for example in co-ordinating volunteers. We work with local communities to find out what they want to achieve, understand problems and concerns, and develop ideas and find solutions.

Working with others locally to support planning, development and sustainable growth

We facilitate development and growth which protects and enhances the environment by taking a 'yes, if...' approach. Our Improvement Plan for planning and permitting demonstrates how we are improving our service as a statutory planning adviser, enhancing our relationships with major developers and infrastructure providers; progressing actions following the Penfold Review; and implementing a 'Single Voice' approach with other Defra delivery bodies and other government agencies where appropriate.

LEPs and Enterprise Zones are a cornerstone of the government's efforts to promote growth and job creation. Local Nature Partnerships aim to bring together social, environmental and economic interests to deliver healthy natural environments. By working closely with LEPs we can facilitate sustainable development and economic growth. For example, we will continue to work with LEPs on their strategies and investment plans to help identify partnership funding opportunities for local flood risk

improvements. We also have a role to play in proactively working with Enterprise Zones to avoid blockages, delays and any unnecessary extra work or investigations.

Through the 'Single Voice' initiative, we are seeking to drive changes in ways of working to deliver better services to local authorities, developers and other local partners through joint working with other Defra agencies including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, and the Marine Management Organisation. For example, the Defra network 'offer' to LEPs and City Deals sets out how Defra agencies will co-ordinate their activities locally to facilitate sustainable growth. This involves sharing our resources, networks and expertise; working in a way that makes us easy to do business with; and using our evidence and knowledge to help businesses grow sustainably. In addition, we will support 'Single Conversation' initiatives in priority areas to help join up the engagement of all major statutory planning consultees including the Highways Agency and English Heritage.

We will also work with Natural England to take forward the outcomes of Defra's Triennial Review and identify options for consolidating our planning advice processes in the best way possible to provide a seamless planning advice service to developers on environmental issues. We and Natural England will work together with other government agencies proactively to communicate a coherent offer to developers and government organisations so that they are better aware of the full range of services offered through our planning functions.

As part of the implementation of the Penfold Review, we are also better aligning our planning and permitting advice to help avoid any potential delays to non-planning consents. Where complex permitting issues exist we believe that joint working between developers, operators, planning decision makers and ourselves will be of benefit. We can provide advice at an early stage to give a quicker, more reliable indication of the likely outcome of planning and permitting applications. Where appropriate, we will work positively with developers to parallel track planning and permitting applications. Better aligning our planning and permitting advice should help reduce the costs and administrative burdens on developers and planning decision makers by increasing certainty over planning and permitting decisions.

Alongside other Defra network agencies we will continue to work collaboratively with the Major Infrastructure and Environment Unit to support the resolution of specific Habitats and Wild Birds Directives issues related to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) at the pre-application stage of the planning process to help avoid unnecessary costs and delays to developers.

We will also continue to support the Consents Service Unit (CSU) in the Planning Inspectorate which offers bespoke consent management service to support developers of NSIPs in co-ordinating and aligning multiple applications to consenting bodies.

We are working with other regulatory and advisory bodies that have a role in consenting coastal developments to agree the principles that will support sustainable growth in coastal zones. As part of this, an agreement called a 'coastal concordat' will provide the framework for the main regulatory bodies and coastal local planning

authorities to work together. It will streamline the consenting process and provide a better service to businesses.

Our priorities and what we will do

Our priorities over the next 2 years are to:

- Work with partners to develop our incident management capability further.
- Work with partners to take forward an integrated catchment-based approach.
- Contribute to creating better local environments that enhance people's lives and support a sustainable economy.
- Work with others to ensure that new and existing developments have a reduced environmental impact and a well-planned environmental infrastructure.
- Help people, the economy and the environment adapt to a changing climate.
- Put reducing and adapting to climate change at the heart of everything we do.

Over this period we will continue to develop more integrated approaches to the delivery of our work and how we work with others. We will:

- Develop and take forward a joint action plan with Natural England to drive greater integration in the delivery of services, including land management, planning advice, input to local strategic growth initiatives such as LEPs, environmental regulation, and environmental monitoring and reporting (Action Plan attached in Appendix 1).
- Take forward and embed the changes arising from the Defra network's strategic alignment programme which aims to develop a more consistent business model for Defra and its delivery bodies. We will work with others in integrating the delivery of corporate services, EU payments and evidence as initial priorities in the programme.
- Take forward the catchment-based approach, working towards greater integration of catchment plans, making our information available at the catchment level to support third parties to prepare plans, and working with others to identify appropriate sources of funding to deliver necessary environmental improvements.
- Engage with other regulatory and enforcement authorities to make the most efficient use of our joint resources.
- Work with others on local development plans and partnerships to promote sustainable growth.
- Support Defra in helping to embed climate change adaptation across government and develop our Climate Ready service to help other organisations adapt to a changing climate.

Work with partners to develop our incident management capability further

Managing incidents is an important and high-profile area of our work. As a Category 1 responder we work with government departments, agencies, the emergency services and local authorities to prepare for, respond to and recover from incidents.

Our mission is to reduce the consequences of incidents on people and the environment by playing our full part in multi-agency resilience, to be clear on our own and our partners' roles and responsibilities before, during and after incidents, and to ensure a timely response to major and significant incidents.

The outcomes we seek are:

- Communities become more resilient to environmental and flooding incidents. We support communities in being able to help themselves when faced with incidents.
- We sustain our 'think big, act early' approach to incident response. We have sufficient numbers of capable and confident staff ready for major incident response.
- We develop staff capabilities and skills. Staff receive the training they need when they need it and we harness modern technology to enable this.
- We are effective and efficient. We recognise that we need to balance the need for both effectiveness and efficiency so that we can demonstrate our incident management service is fit for purpose.
- We are prepared for our highest risks. Specific plans align with our generic incident management framework and ensure we are prepared to respond to any major incident. These include East Coast Flood, London surface water and COMAH site planning.

We will:

- Increase our focus on incident prevention, including investment in assets and advice to the businesses we regulate.
- Strengthen our capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from major incidents.
- Promote the use of our information to help individuals and communities to make effective decisions to protect themselves and become more resilient to the consequences of incidents.
- Improve partnership working incorporating a 'one public sector' approach to incident response.
- Make our incident management services more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

Take an integrated approach to our work in catchments

Through river basin management and catchment planning, we increasingly recognise the important interactions between land, water and biodiversity, between water quantity and quality, and between flood risk management and other aspects of environmental management. We are working to achieve greater integration across plans and activities in different functions to take advantage of the synergies between them. For example, by working with natural processes, measures can be taken to increase the retention of water in catchments, which can, at the same time, reduce the risks of flooding, benefit biodiversity and enhance the water resources available for supply, and prevent pollution.

We will:

- Develop and implement a more integrated approach to environmental planning and delivery at a catchment scale to maximise the benefits that can be delivered from available sources of funding.
- Seek and implement opportunities to exploit synergies between our work on flood and coastal risk management and programmes to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the England Biodiversity Strategy.
- Develop the catchment-based approach with partners across all major catchments and coastal waters.
- Implement a programme to embed the ecosystem approach and ecosystem service assessments in our work.

Contribute to creating better local environments that enhance people's lives and support a sustainable economy

We will:

- Engage early and proactively with local authorities, local partnerships and developers to progress key environmental outcomes relating to flood and coastal risk management, water resources, water quality, land quality and waste management.
- Work positively with strategic partnerships, such as LEPs and Local Nature Partnerships, to facilitate sustainable growth.
- Make the most of our resources by focusing our efforts on strategic planning and partnership working where the environmental risks and opportunities are greatest.
- Improve our customer service to local authorities, developers and communities as part of our 'Single Voice' approach to engagement with Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation and the Forestry Commission.
- Where appropriate, explore how we can align our local engagement and advice with other government agencies.

Work with others to ensure that new and existing developments have a reduced environmental impact and a well-planned environmental infrastructure

We will:

- Provide timely and high quality advice to inform planning applications, NSIPs, Local Plans and other strategic growth plans.
- Work with developers and decision makers to align better our planning and permitting advice to reduce delays and increase certainty over planning and permitting decisions.
- Work with Natural England to communicate a coherent offer to developers and government so they are better aware of the full range of our services around planning as well as developing a seamless planning advice service to developers.

- Work with the Marine Management Organisation and other partners to input to, and make decisions in accordance with, marine spatial plans and as a consultee on marine licences.
- Work with developers, utility companies and public bodies to help ensure that the environmental infrastructure associated with new development is planned for and is appropriate.
- Work with local communities, developers and local authorities to make existing developments more resilient to changing environmental conditions including flooding, drought and climate change.
- Work with policy makers to inform changes to national planning and environmental assessment issues so that environmental risks and opportunities are taken into account.
- Work with government to advise on the environmental aspects of new energy developments, including providing efficient regulatory frameworks for shale gas exploration and exploitation, and other sources of on-shore energy.

Help people, the economy and the environment adapt to a changing climate

We will:

- Provide a Climate Ready support service to help other organisations build capacity to adapt to a changing climate and to address the key activities identified in the government's National Adaptation Programme.
- Facilitate climate change partnerships and similar networks, and the sharing of best practice.
- Work closely with Defra and the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change to develop appropriate means of monitoring and reporting on the delivery of the National Adaptation Programme measures.
- Work closely with government to inform the commissioning of the second Climate Change Risk Assessment.

Put reducing and adapting to climate change at the heart of everything we do

We will:

- Monitor and manage climate risks to our organisation and factor climate risks into our programmes and plans.
- Help other organisations understand how a changing climate could affect them and how they should respond.
- Integrate the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into everything we do, and share our experience with others.
- Factor climate change adaptation into all our work.
- Use the best available evidence to inform our work on adaptation and mitigation.
- Ensure that our staff understand what climate change means for their areas of work and feel equipped to respond accordingly.

We will know we're succeeding when...

- Communities are better prepared for, and become more resilient to, environmental and flooding incidents.
- We achieve more benefits for people and wildlife with the funding available through more integrated planning and delivery of our work.
- Prioritised environmental outcomes are jointly agreed and delivered with local authorities and LEPs.
- Significant new development and regeneration sites have plans in place to address their environmental impacts.
- More organisations have implemented Climate Ready actions.
- The risks associated with a changing climate, and how to adapt to them, are integrated into our business plans and ways of working.

Corporate plan measures and targets

Key performance measures	Targets		Unit
	2014/15	2015/16	
We respond to planning application consultations and pre-application enquiries within 21 days	95%	95%	% responded to within target time
We contribute to the delivery of priority development sites	80%	80%	% of planned actions delivered

Ensuring that we are fit for the future

In the future we will be a smaller and simpler organisation. We will continue to focus on achieving the most we can for people and the environment, managing our resources carefully and providing excellent services. We will continue the work we have started on creating effective partnerships, sharing resources, expertise and information, and encouraging people to get involved in our work as volunteers.

We will continue to protect and improve the environment by creating a work environment in which we:

- Take a 'yes if' approach in all we do.
- Do more for people and the environment with every pound.
- Focus on outcomes not processes.
- Seek and embrace opportunities to work with others.
- Develop people and benefit from diversity.
- Support and trust each other to do the right thing.

We will continue to develop an organisation that attracts, develops and retains people from all parts of the community, valuing the different skills and abilities of everyone in the Environment Agency. We will develop people and ensure that they uphold the values – integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality – expected of everyone who works in public sector organisations.

We will use the following criteria as tests to make sure we are creating the organisation we want for the future. We will ensure that we:

- Optimise the delivery of environmental outcomes through an integrated, consistent approach.
- Maintain a firm commitment to people and place.
- Provide effective incident response and maintain technical and managerial resilience.
- Provide value for money and maximise the outcomes with the available funding.
- Maintain a role as a conscience for the general public and the natural environment.
- Engage effectively with others including local authorities, land managers, developers and businesses and support sustainable growth.

Our priorities and what we will do

Our priorities over the next 2 years are to:

- Make the best possible use of our funding to deliver more for people and the environment.
- Equip and train staff to achieve their potential and maximise their productivity.

- Provide a safe and healthy working environment.
- Recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- Provide a first class, professional service.
- Use evidence and knowledge to guide and inspire our own actions and the actions of others.
- Minimise our own environmental impact.

Make the best possible use of our funding to deliver more for people and the environment

We will:

- Manage public money prudently and wisely.
- Increase the level of partnership funding to deliver more for people and the environment.
- Support the government-wide approach to shared services for business support functions and continue to reduce their costs to maximise the proportion of our funding available for front line activities.
- Develop Information Technology systems to respond effectively to the government's 'cloud first' and digital strategy.
- Maintain our leadership on sustainable, value for money procurement.
- Manage our pension investments to the highest standards.

Equip and train staff to achieve their potential and maximise their productivity

We will:

- Develop the skills, capabilities and knowledge of our staff to equip them to achieve our aims and maximise their potential.
- Ensure that all our employees have personal objectives clearly linked to our corporate plan.
- Ensure that our sensitive information and our assets are secure.

Provide a healthy and safe working environment

We will:

- Provide positive and visible leadership.
- Proactively involve our workforce and partners in improving health, safety and wellbeing standards.
- Positively learn from incidents that do occur and actively engage people in the process.
- Constantly seek to improve our understanding of health and safety risks and our performance in managing them.
- Remain focused on minimising work-related injuries and ill health.
- Regularly review our health and safety systems and benchmark our performance with others.

Create a diverse workforce

We will ensure that:

- Our Board, Executive and Committees are more diverse and reflect the communities we serve.
- Our leadership in diversity is visible and allows all staff to fulfil their potential.
- Diversity and equality are embedded in our sustainable procurement programme.
- Feedback from staff shows that we continue to:
 - improve the way we respond to and benefit from diversity
 - become representative of the wider population
 - help staff to be professional and be themselves at work
 - ensure no one is unfairly disadvantaged
- Feedback confirms that we are inclusive in our approach to those we work with and are easy to do business with.

We will aspire to be the best we can, and will benchmark ourselves regularly to learn from others.

Provide a first class, professional service

We will:

- Deliver an excellent service to customers in line with our professional service standards.
- Ensure that our communications are appropriate for their audience.
- Converge our online content, tools and transactions on GOV.UK.

Use evidence and knowledge to guide and inspire our own actions and the actions of others

We will:

- Recognise that data, information and knowledge are valuable assets and manage them accordingly.
- Make more of our data free and more of it readily available for others to use.
- Complete the transformation of spatial environmental data to comply with the requirements of the EU INSPIRE (Infrastructure for spatial information in the European Community) Directive by 2019.
- Use environmental data to support and inform our decisions, and those of others.
- Play a key role in developing a more strategic and joined-up approach to evidence and environmental monitoring programmes across the Defra network and with other organisations.

Minimise our own environmental impact

We will:

- Measure and reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services that we buy.
- Take account of the total environmental impact of our business decisions.
- Seek opportunities to reduce our direct environmental footprint further.

- Treat our waste as a resource.
- Comply with environmental legislation, and learn from, and share, our experiences and practices with others.
- Help our staff understand the ways in which they can reduce the environmental impact of their work.

We will know we're succeeding when...

- We achieve more for the environment from every pound we spend.
- We manage our assets, including money, to the highest standards.
- We minimise lost time incidents and learn from every safety-critical incident.
- Our staff are confident that we have a positive safety and wellbeing culture.
- We have a diverse workforce that reflects the wider population.
- Our internal and external customers say we are providing a good service.
- Stakeholders agree we are good at working with them towards shared goals.
- We have the right level of knowledge, expertise and experience.
- The Environment Agency's environmental footprint is reduced.
- All our staff have personal objectives that are clearly linked to our corporate plan.

Corporate plan measures and targets

Key performance measures	Targets		Unit
	2014/15	2015/16	
We reduce our carbon footprint	33% reduction (from April 2006/07 baseline)	New targets to be set in 2015/16 strategy	Reduction in CO ₂
We have a diverse workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of staff recruited who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) • Proportion of executive managers recruited who are female 	3.9%* 50%	3.9%* 50%	% of staff % of executive managers who are female
We provide a safe place to work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost time incident (LTI) frequency rate • Health and safety actions implemented in target time 	Fewer than in 2013/14 95%	Fewer than in 2014/15 95%	LTIs per 100,000 hours worked % of actions completed
We manage our money effectively	100%	100%	% spend to budget

* This target will be fixed at the start of the year based on the % of BAME in post and a target that 5% of newly recruited staff will be BAME

Reporting on our performance

We will measure and report on our performance in implementing this plan through our corporate scorecard. Progress against the corporate scorecard will be reported to the Environment Agency's Board on at least a quarterly basis. The scorecard is also available to the public on GOV.UK and is updated each quarter.

In addition, on a 6 monthly basis, the Chairman and Chief Executive report on progress against the full extent of Environment Agency work to the Secretary of State and other Defra ministers.

Corporate scorecard: Measures and targets 2014 to 2016

Increasing the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	Unit
We reduce the risk from flooding for more households**	165,000*	tbc*	Number of households protected
We maintain our flood and coastal risk management assets at or above the required condition	tbc*	tbc*	% of assets at required condition
More households and businesses at high risk of flooding can receive direct warnings	66%	Replace with new measure	% of properties able to receive warnings
We achieve a proportion of funding for capital projects through contributions made by others	Set baseline	15%	% of funding contributed to by others

Protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity

We work with others to improve the quality of surface waters, groundwaters and coastal waters and wetlands**	29%	31%	% of water bodies at good ecological status
The quality of bathing water is getting better	93%	95%	% meeting revised Bathing Water Directive standards
We improve and protect rivers and wetlands damaged by unsustainable abstractions	88	86	Number of abstraction license changes
We deliver our commitments to the England Biodiversity Strategy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating new habitat • Restoring SSSIs 	1,000 ha by end of 2015/16		Hectares created and/or restored
Fewer salmon stocks are 'at risk'	10	9	Number of rivers at risk
We maintain our navigation assets at or above the required condition	80%	80%	% of assets at required condition

Improving the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth

We improve business compliance through supporting legitimate business to comply and by tackling the deliberately non-compliant**	5% reduction	5% reduction	Sites in lowest compliance bands
We reduce serious and significant pollution incidents**	Oct-Dec 2013/14 baseline minus 1%	Jan-March 2014/15 minus 1%	Number of incidents
We reduce the administrative costs of regulation to businesses**	£317m cumulative in SR10 period	Revise in consultation with Defra	£million savings in administration costs for business we regulate
We reduce the overall risk presented by illegal waste sites, targeting our efforts on the highest risk sites	Reduce by 2% per quarter	Reduce by 2% per quarter	Number of high risk illegal waste sites

Working together and with others to create better places

We respond to planning application consultations and pre-application enquiries within 21 days	95%	95%	% responded to within target time
We contribute to the delivery of priority development sites	80%	80%	% of planned actions delivered

Ensuring that we are fit for the future

We reduce our carbon footprint	33% reduction (from 2006/07 baseline)	Set new targets in 2015/16 strategy	Reduction in CO ₂
We have a diverse workforce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of staff recruited who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) • Proportion of executive managers recruited who are female 	3.9%*** 50%	3.9%*** 50%	% of staff % of executive managers
We provide a safe place to work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost time incident (LTI) frequency rate • Health and safety actions implemented in target time 	Fewer than in 2013/14 95%	Fewer than in 2014/15 95%	LTIs per 100,000 hours worked % of actions completed
We manage our money efficiently	100%	100%	% spend to budget

* Targets under review while we assess the implications of the flood events on our assets and future investment programme.

** Denotes measures that are reported quarterly to Defra Supervisory Board.

*** This target will be fixed at the start of the year based on the % of BAME in post and a target that 5% of newly recruited staff will be BAME.

Our resources

Income

	2013/14 Planned (£m)	2014/15 Planned (£m)	2015/16 Planned (£m)
Income from charges			
Environment Protection licences:			
Waste	61	60	57
Environmental Permitting Regime (EPR) Water Quality	56	55	55
EPR installations	29	28	28
Radioactive substances regulation (RSR)	12	13	13
Other income from charges	1	2	2
CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, Emissions Trading, Climate Change agreements	9	7	7
Abstraction licences	119	119	119
Rod licences	22	21	21
Craft registrations	6	7	7
Flood and Coastal Risk Management local levies	31	31	31
Other income (including Natural Resources Wales income)	51	35	34
Commercial income	10	9	9
Partnership funding	23	32	17
Total non grant-in-aid income	430	419	400
Funding from government sponsors			
Defra flood defence grant-in-aid - Capital	294	344	370
Defra flood defence grant-in-aid – Revenue	241	228	231
Defra grant-in-aid for other Environment Agency services – Capital	11	8	8
Defra grant-in-aid for other Environment Agency services – Revenue	102	95	68
Other grants and contributions	15	1	1
Total government funding	663	676	678
Total funding	1,093	1,095	1,078

Expenditure

		Funding streams	2013/14 (£m)	2014/15 (£m)	2015/16 (£m)
Increasing the resilience of people, property and businesses to the risks of flooding and coastal erosion	Working together and with others to create better places	FCRM grant-in-aid	517	572	601
		FCRM growth	18	0	0
		Partnership funding	23	32	17
		Internal Drainage Boards	8	8	8
		General Drainage Charge	4	4	4
		Local levies	39	31	31
		Other income	9	4	4
		Total	618	651	665
Protecting and improving water, land and biodiversity	Ensuring that we are fit for the future	Water Quality Charges	54	54	54
		Water Resources	119	119	119
		Fish Licence income	22	21	21
		Navigation Charges	7	8	9
		Environment and Business grant-in-aid	64	59	39
		Other income	22	5	5
		Total	288	266	247
Improving the way we work as a regulator to protect people and the environment and support sustainable growth	Working together and with others to create better places	Hazardous Waste	23	17	13
		Producer Responsibility	7	7	6
		Waste Transfer	7	9	10
		EPR Waste	30	29	27
		EPR Installations	27	28	26
		Climate Change	9	7	7
		RSR Charges	14	13	13
		Environment and Business grant-in-aid	37	30	26
		Other income	8	4	4
		Total	162	144	132
Other		Commercial	10	9	9
		Natural Resources Wales	16	11	10
		Unfunded Pensions	12	12	12
Grand total			1,106	1,093	1,075
Notes:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catchment Restoration Fund included in other income for 2013/14 but Environment and Business grant-in-aid for 2014/15 • Pollution incidents included within Other Income • COMAH included within Other Income • Environment and Business grant-in-aid expenditure allocated against delivery of outcomes 					

Appendix 1

Environment Agency and Natural England: Triennial Review joint action plan



This joint action plan responds to the recommendations of the Triennial Review of the Environment Agency and Natural England. The review concluded that the 2 bodies should remain as separate non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), retaining their current purposes and statutory roles:

- The Environment Agency's purpose is 'to protect or enhance the environment, taken as a whole' so as to promote 'the objective of achieving sustainable development'.
- Natural England's purpose is 'to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development'.

The Environment Agency and Natural England are NDPBs. Both organisations play key roles as part of Defra's delivery network supporting Defra to deliver its ministerial priorities of:

- growing the rural economy
- improving the environment
- safeguarding plant health
- safeguarding animal health

We are led and directed by our Boards whose Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Members are appointed by the Secretary of State. The Boards set the strategic direction for the 2 bodies within government policy and hold the Executive to account. As NDPBs both bodies carry out our statutory functions with technical expertise, impartiality and transparency.

The functions and capabilities of the 2 bodies are different and in response to the Triennial Review process, stakeholders confirmed that they value our distinct roles and expertise. However, the review also concluded that further joint working and reform is needed, and that we should be more customer-focused, develop effective partnership working and reduce regulatory burdens.

We remain separate and independent bodies, but work more closely together. This plan is about what we need to do as individual bodies and what we need to do together. It responds to the key themes in the review, which require us to:

- Deliver more integrated environmental outcomes from each of our key programmes.

- Improve the customer experience delivered by the 2 bodies, especially where we have common customers.
- Drive further efficiencies and innovations in service delivery.

Over the past few years, the Environment Agency's 'yes if' and Natural England's 'solutions-focused' approaches have helped shift organisational cultures to support the need to achieve economic growth and environmental objectives together. This plan builds on this work and also explicitly supports Defra's Ten Point Growth plan.

Further changes will be delivered through:

- Defra's Strategic Alignment programme, which is the principal vehicle for finding further efficiencies and savings in wider corporate services and support, across these 2 bodies and the wider Defra network.
- In the shorter term, the 2 bodies implementing savings agreed under the recent and previous Spending Reviews.
- The 2 bodies continuing to implement a major Regulatory Improvement Programme, delivering government's priorities under the Red Tape Challenge, the Smarter Environmental Regulation Review, the Habitats Directive Review, and the Law Commission Review of environmental legislation.
- Structural reorganisation in the 2 bodies to respond effectively to these policy, customer and financial challenges.

Working together

We already work well together, and have a history of joint working to achieve benefits for our customers and the environment. Across England, we share offices at 9 locations and are developing plans for others. We developed Catchment Sensitive Farming approaches as a joint venture, delivered by Natural England and evaluated by the Environment Agency; our spatial planning teams have developed joint working protocols and general working arrangements to deliver a better service to developers and local authorities (with only about 30 cases per year where we both object).

Our Improvement Plans for planning and permitting have already delivered significant reforms, including:

- Providing an enhanced pre-application service.
- Seconding staff to the Planning Inspectorate to help with permits and licences.
- Providing joined-up advice in priority growth locations.
- Developing a co-ordinated Defra support offer to LEPs.
- Improving licensing and permitting processes.
- Delivering Penfold and statutory consultees' targets.
- Implementing the Habitats Directive Review.
- Updating guidance to local authorities on flood risk and protected species, and contributing to updating CLG's planning practice guidance.
- 'Single Voice' work, for example publishing joint guidance for developers.

Reporting and progress against the actions in this plan will also be captured in the Improvement Plans.

Our joint action plan aims to build on this and deliver much more than specific outcomes. These changes will create a more coherent culture that will provide improved service to our customers. Our goal will be to ensure that what our customers receive is a similar experience even though we are separate organisations with separate responsibilities. Working together will be the norm and we will look for more opportunities to co-locate, and use our change programmes to embed specific roles for joined-up working at the operational level. We will also make the best use of the resources we collectively have to deliver joined-up outcomes at the local level. This will require us to work well at both the local and national level, and to be actively supported by joined-up thinking in Defra.

To support these goals, the plan contains some immediate actions:

- Committing to CLG's 'Big 5' reforms to statutory consultees' ways of working.
- More joined-up working with LEPs.
- Delivering the coastal concordat, streamlining consenting processes in coastal areas.
- Providing a single point of advice for offshore wind developers.
- Single account management for major developers when requested.

Longer term embedding of the culture will come from:

- Joining up our Water Framework Directive, biodiversity and flood risk planning to deliver multiple outcomes.
- More sharing of office locations over the next year and beyond.
- Creating joint working as the norm in our new structures.
- Jointly delivered monitoring.

To drive delivery of this plan the 2 Boards have appointed a non-executive Joint Sub-group that will meet regularly to oversee and support the pace of progress.

This plan is being driven by the Environment Agency and Natural England in consultation with Defra and other government departments. It recognises the different remit and focus of the 2 bodies, but steps up the level of joint working that has evolved over recent years to deliver:

- More for people and the environment.
- A better experience for customers.
- Increased value for money.

December 2013

Triennial action plan: summary of actions

Operational alignment

- Ensure that Environment Agency and Natural England local areas, despite differences in precise boundaries, are working closely together wherever possible and that Area Managers from each organisation have a dedicated point of contact.
- Share offices wherever possible and use opportunities of space being created. Presumption is that Environment Agency and Natural England will share offices in preference to other members of Defra network, assuming this works for the operational needs of both bodies.

Delivery of spatial planning advice

- Trial 4 approaches to joint working on spatial planning:
 - Align work on national infrastructure including common processes for customers and work with the Planning Inspectorate and Major Infrastructure and Environment Unit.
 - Joint working arrangements in a LEP.
 - Statutory consultee engagement in CLG's Big 5 consultees initiative.
 - Identify ways to provide a seamless co-ordinated service for planning applicants for overlap cases.
- Pilot joint charging arrangements for pre-application advice.
- Single agency advising on offshore wind development impacts.

Land management delivery

- Land management: see how outcomes can be maximised by taking an integrated approach.
 - Pilot local planning for multiple benefits from biodiversity, flood and water programmes in 2 counties / 2 catchments.
 - Habitat and biodiversity benefits delivered through flood and coastal risk management.
 - Ecological benefits delivered by Water Framework Directive.
 - Water quality and quantity benefits delivered by new Environmental Land Management Schemes.
- Data sharing for key customer groups from the new Common Agricultural Policy funding system.

Improving customer experience

- Customer: agree shared approaches including piloting or implementing:
 - Integrated advice to farmers and land managers.
 - Co-ordination of scheduled farm visits.
 - Integrated advice and single account manager for agricultural businesses.
 - Single account manager for developers.
 - Participation of both the Environment Agency and Natural England in meetings with developers' groups.

- Integrated advice for local authorities and LEPs.
- Common customer service approaches and standards.
- Coastal concordat.
- NDPB commitments on Red Tape Challenge, Smarter Environmental Regulation Review and other government reviews.
- Develop shared plan for engagement with developers to improve understanding of costs of meeting regulations.

Evidence

- Evidence and monitoring: seek to agree common or aligned approaches to:
 - Monitoring.
 - Data sharing.
 - Other options to consider, such as academic links and capacity building.

Joint working culture

- Agree a set of ground rules for when we are working together.
- Agree a route to resolve issues that are potentially contentious at a local level.
- Both new corporate plans to carry aligned sections on working together and the Triennial Review action plan.
- Use Environment Agency and Natural England change programmes to confirm consistent expectations and approaches.
- Investigate adoption of common customer service standards.
- Develop and promote joint escalation process for contentious cases.

Partnerships and innovation

- Environment Agency review of fisheries work.
- Natural England plans for commercial opportunities and reserve management.