

*Water Quality*

# Policy priorities for catchment management in England

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# Defra's objectives



- 1. Support and develop British farming and encourage sustainable food production**
  - Competitiveness, productivity, sustainability
- 2. Help to enhance the environment and biodiversity to improve quality of life**
  - Reducing pollution and protecting habitats
- 3. Support a strong and sustainable green economy, resilient to climate change**
  - Economy uses natural resources sustainably, reduce waste, adapt to climate change

# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WHITE PAPER

- Draws on the evidence of the recent National Ecosystem Assessment
- Commitments include:
  - Working with industry and environmental partners to reconcile the goals of improving the environment and increasing food production;
  - Better integration of policy
  - Reviewing how we provide advice and incentives for farmers and land managers
  - Assess the effectiveness of voluntary approaches;
  - Paid ecosystem services – to expand markets and schemes in which payments are made by the beneficiary of a natural service to the provider of that service;



# Water Framework Directive and Catchment Management



- Evidence from catchment research and elsewhere has greatly influenced policy thinking
- It has started to inform and shape our strategy for delivering the Water Framework Directive.
- Stakeholders have criticised River Basin Management Plans for not taking account of local issues and locally planned action. Many have pressed for a catchment-based approach
- Ministers have now committed to applying a catchment based approach to deliver the Water Framework Directive
- This may provide a way to better integrate policy and its delivery through an ecosystems approach

# 0 Pilot Catchments



- Environment Agency will engage stakeholders to identify issues, agree priorities and deliver catchment plans that support the WFD.
- We have invited other stakeholders to lead or “host” in 15 other catchments.
- The pilot catchments will:
  - Cover a variety of: scales; topography; pressures; political boundaries and, degrees of existing engagement
  - Provide proof of concept for WFD and help inform wider national roll-out across England’s 100 catchments
  - Test approaches for stakeholder engagement at a catchment and sub-catchment level
- We will formally evaluate progress alongside developing guidance and support tools
- It will run until December 2012 before roll-out to begin 2nd cycle River Basin Management Planning by 2014

# Policy Integration



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- Adopting a catchment approach for the Water Framework Directive provides opportunities to integrate other policies
  - Ministers have recently agreed to develop a more integrated policy framework
  - Achieving goals for water relies upon land management so needs the involvement of farmers, water companies and other sectors
  - Water supports ecosystems that underpin biodiversity and other Defra policies
  - We need to:
    - Align the demands we place on key sectors
    - Better target measures
    - Achieve multiple benefits
    - Improve efficiency of policy delivery
- We are starting to scope this across related policy areas

# framework for managing catchments...



Stages are likely to include:

- Gathering evidence of issues through local intelligence and catchment walking
- Producing a 'catchment report card'
- Agreeing priorities with stakeholders
- Agreeing a catchment action plan
- Allocating resources to deliver supporting actions at a sub-catchment level
- Monitoring and evaluating progress

## ongoing need for evidence, tools and guidance



Issues we still need to investigate include:

- How best to engage with stakeholders
- How to resolve cross-boundary/political issues
- How to prioritise actions to achieve multiple benefits
- How to target action and allocate resources

We hope to draw together and share learning from our 'pilot' evaluation on quarterly basis

Catchment science has achieved a great deal but we need to continue the good work.

# Summary



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## **Overall:**

- More integration of policy
  - Focus on production, competitiveness and sustainability
  - Working with industry and stakeholders
  - Ecosystem services
  - Developing catchment approaches
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- We need the science, social science and economic research to help us to do this