



**Cyfoeth  
Naturiol  
Cymru  
Natural  
Resources  
Wales**

# Background to the Water Framework Directive

## River Basin Management Plans

Natural Resources Wales is the Competent Authority for implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in Wales. We have responsibility for leading on and publishing the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for the Western Wales and Dee River Basin Districts (RBDs) - working in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary organisations (including water companies, local authorities, eNGOs, business & industry). The Environment Agency lead on publishing the Severn RBMP. We will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency and partners on the cross border aspects of the Severn and the Dee River Basin Districts.

In each River Basin District, we have a Liaison Panel made up representatives of the key sectors. This provides an open forum for co-deliverers to discuss and influence the development of the RBMPs and assist with implementation. RBMPs are produced and updated every six years. The updated plans are now published.

### Objectives

We aim to take a holistic approach to managing the water environment and ensure that we balance ecological, social and economic values in decision-making in order to:

- protect the water environment from deterioration
- achieve the wider objectives of other European Directives
- aim to achieve good overall status for surface and ground waters

The WFD establishes a target for all waters - Good Overall Status (e.g. insect, plant, fish life, chemistry) which is a measure of a healthy and robust ecosystem. Where it cannot be achieved, we must provide a reason why.

We have designated Heavily Modified Water Bodies where society has significantly changed the shape, form and characteristics of the water environment. For example we have created reservoirs to store drinking water, reinforced and raised banks to protect property from flooding and dredged channels for navigation. The target to aim for in these is Good Ecological Potential. We assess these modifications and activities to see whether actions have been taken to reduce their impacts on the ecology.

The RBMPs set objectives for water bodies and summarise the measures which stakeholders will deliver to achieve these outcomes for the water environment. Actions range from tackling urban and rural diffuse pollution, habitat restoration and mitigation of physical modifications (such as removal of redundant weirs), metal mines remediation, water efficiency and tackling invasive non-native species.

In 2009, 32% of Welsh water bodies achieved “good” or better status as required by the Directive. In 2015, this has improved to 39%.

### Evidence base

The valuation of environmental costs and benefits is an evolving and developing field. Knowing that the benefits are likely to justify the costs of implementing an intervention ensures that public finances are used appropriately and effectively. In order to develop a costed programme an ex-ante CBA was undertaken of what return in terms of public value could be expected from investments in Welsh waterbodies. For the consultation four scenarios were developed to help

explain and describe the outcomes that are achievable by 2021; the overall costs and benefits; apportionment of costs across the types of intervention and relative cost-effectiveness.

For the 2015 RBMPs, we have planned on the basis of our current understanding of existing resources. Alongside this we also assessed discounted costs and benefits for Natural Resources Wales planned measures to improve water bodies from bad, poor, and moderate status by 2021, in order to inform decision making:

- expected values were calculated based on the risk that an action could fail to meet objectives. For example, for catchment sensitive farming schemes not every landowner targeted will take up the recommended actions. Expert judgement was used at the local level to determine the risk of failure (of getting to good) for each bundle of measures.
- for each water body the risk that a bundle of measures could fail was ranked either as high, moderate or low in relation to the risk factor, e.g. landowner participation = moderate risk of failure.
- we have included factors for Natural Resources Wales staff time and input duration.

### Timeline & Engagement

The EU Directive and Government Guidance outlines the principle steps for developing the RBMPs.

Timetable for main river basin management products		
Delivery Date	Product	Consultation?
March 2016	UK RBMPs submitted to European Commission	No

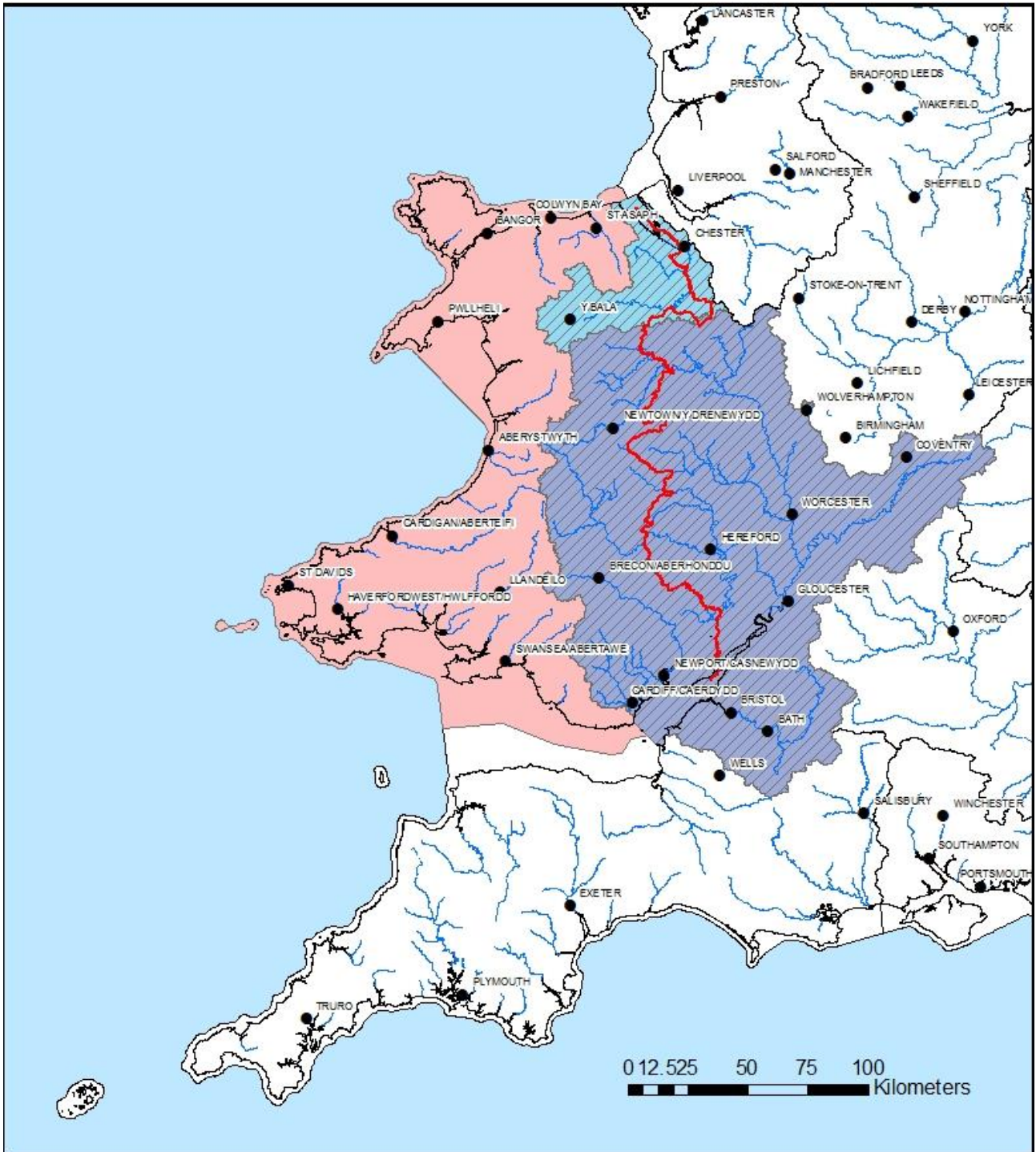
The 6 month consultation on the proposed update to the River Basin Management Plans closed on 10 April 2015. The consultation was an important step in shaping the development of the updated plans and gave stakeholders and delivery partners the opportunity to influence the approach. We received 101 responses from a wide range of groups and organisations and a summary of the responses can be viewed on our website. <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/environmental-topics/consultations/our-own-consultations-closed/?lang=en>

The Dee and Western Wales River Basin Management Plans are published on our website <https://naturalresources.wales/water/quality/?lang=en>

The Severn River Basin Management Plan is led by the Environment Agency and is published on <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015>.

### Next Steps

We will be moving to the delivery phase for the second River Basin Management Planning cycle. This will involve collaboratively developing a delivery plan with our partners, sharing the data and inputting into how the plans will fit with Area Statements under the proposed Environment (Wales) Bill.



### River Basin District - Wales

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|--------------------|---------------|--------------|
| ● Cities and towns | Western Wales | Cross Border |
| — National border  |               | Dee          |
| — Main rivers      |               | Severn       |