



By email

30 May 2014

Dear Mark Rosenberg and Defra River Basin Planning Guidance Team

## **RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON VOLUME 3 OF RIVER BASIN PLANNING GUIDANCE**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on volume 3 of the River Basin Planning guidance.

Overall, we feel that this guidance is clearer than volume 2 with improved explanations of a number of issues such as, for example, climate change and how priority substances will affect an assessment of the technical feasibility of proposed measures.

CCWater considers that there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the second round of river basin planning,

- The involvement of non-water industry sectors, in tackling pollution that they are responsible for, must be further increased;
- Where water company investment is required, it must be paced and implemented in a way that is both acceptable and affordable to customers;
- Wherever possible, water company investments must also be sustainable and comply with the polluter pays principle.

Generally, we are pleased at the following features of the guidance, which all have an important bearing on these matters:

**An increased emphasis on partnership working, which can be an effective way to increase the involvement of other sectors.** We have maintained our view that other sectors need to be more involved in tackling the pollution that they are responsible for. During the first round of river basin planning, water customers were expected to bear the majority of the costs of implementing the Water

Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>1</sup> even though other sectors, such as agriculture, shared responsibility for this pollution.

**A continued emphasis on robust science and cost benefit analysis.** This is a vital element in gaining customer acceptance of the measures that will need to be carried out.

**Support for sustainable measures, such as catchment management schemes and payments for ecosystem services.** These can be a good way to tackle pollution at source in a more sustainable way, rather than relying on costly and resource intensive 'end-of-pipe' alternatives. We are pleased, therefore, that the guidance emphasises the process for supporting catchment management schemes and, in particular, that it supports the introduction of schemes that involve payments for ecosystem services (PES), such as the Upstream Thinking scheme operated by South West Water.

**Reinforcement of the polluter pays principle.** We strongly support the statements, in paragraph 14.14 of the guidance, that non-regulatory measures should not undermine the polluter pays principle and that PES should reward the delivery of additional services that go beyond regulatory requirements.

In addition, we feel that the guidance could state that enforcing the polluter pays principle, should take priority. The framework for implementing schemes that involve PES is relatively young and still developing. We consider that there is a risk that such measures could obscure the need to take regulatory or enforcement activity against persistent and deliberate polluters by rewarding them for changing their behaviour instead. The guidance needs to ensure that this does not happen.

We note that the framework for tackling urban pollution seems only lightly sketched. Urban pressures, such as industry and transport, can contribute significantly to the problems in some areas, for example in heavily industrialised areas. We suggest, therefore, that Defra and Welsh Government consider whether they can better promote the catchment management approach in urban areas.

Sincerely

**Sarah Thomas**  
**Policy Manager**

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<sup>1</sup> Defra (2009) - Impact assessments accompanying River Basin Planning Guidance Volume 2. This indicated that most water and sewerage companies were likely to bear over two thirds of the costs of WFD implementation costs in their areas, with several bearing over 90%.