EXPLANATORY DOCUMENT TO

THE PUBLIC BODIES (ABOLITION OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEES) ORDER 2012

2012 No. [XXXX]

1. This explanatory document has been prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and is laid before Parliament by Act.

2. Purpose of the instrument

2.1 This instrument abolishes the Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RaLFACs), in England.

3. Matters of special interest to the [Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments *or* the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments]

3.1 None.

4. Legislative Context

4.1 This instrument is made under the Public Bodies Act 2011. The Public Bodies Act lists public bodies by schedule according to the Government's proposed reform. The Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RaLFACs) have been included in Schedule 1 (bodies which can be abolished by secondary implementing legislation).

4.2 This instrument should be considered in conjunction with the instrument abolishing the Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committees (REPACs), in England, which has also been laid in Parliament.

5. Territorial Extent and Application

5.1 This instrument applies to England only.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 Caroline Spelman, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has made the following statement regarding Human Rights:

"In my view the provisions of the Public Bodies Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (Abolition) Order 2012 are compatible with the Convention rights."

7. Policy background

- What is being done and why

7.1 The RaLFACs Committees are independent advisory non-departmental public bodies established by section 13 of the Environment Act 1995 with section 13 (5) providing specific provision for establishing a Committee in Wales (see 7.7 and 7.9 regarding administrative competence of the Committees). The RaLFACs provide advice to the Environment Agency, Government and other interested persons on matters considered appropriate and relevant to fisheries.

7.2 The Committees remit covers all the political boundaries for England and Wales. There are 7 regional Committees in total; in the South East, South West, Midlands, North West, Anglian and Yorkshire & Humberside and Wales. Appointment of the Chairs for the Committees is made by Minister. Welsh Ministers appoint the Chair for the Committee in Wales. Welsh Ministers are consulted prior to the appointment of the chairs in England in accordance with the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) Code of Practice.

7.3 Section 13 specifies that the Environment Agency has a duty to consult RaLFACs on any of its proposals that relate generally to the manner in which the Agency carries out its functions in relation to its statutory duties to maintain, improve and develop salmon fisheries, (sea) trout fisheries, freshwater fisheries and eel fisheries; and in respect to its statutory functions in matters relating to recreation, conservation or navigation. It must also consider any representations made to it by RaLFACs, whether in response to such consultation or otherwise in regard to those functions (also see 7.29-7.30). RaLFACs themselves do not have any statutory duties imposed on them.

7.4 The RaLFACs membership scheme is detailed in **Annex A** and draws on members with experience in fisheries; water based users, including water related sport and recreation; wildlife, including conservation, ecology and biodiversity; and navigation where the Environment Agency has operational responsibilities.

7.5 The proposal to abolish RaLFACs (and REPACs) was announced by the Government on 14 October 2010 as part of its Arms Length Body Review. Following public consultation, the Government has decided that the RaLFACs (along with REPACs) should be abolished as Arms Length Bodies to establish more flexible non-statutory engagement arrangements at a more local level. The Committees make a valuable contribution to the work of the Environment Agency through provision of advice on environment protection, maintaining, improving and developing fisheries as well as recreation, navigation and conservation issues. However, having the Committees on a regional statutory basis creates a degree of inflexibility and inefficiency. A non-statutory approach would allow more flexible community and civil society engagement in both advice and delivery which would better meet current needs and policy objectives. Such a structure would have the flexibility to evolve as needed without the constraints of a prescriptive statutory remit at the regional level. It will better address local priorities

while working with partners and communities to deliver improved local engagement. This will enable civil society to take the lead where appropriate, rather than the current focus on just advising the Environment Agency on a regional basis.

7.6 The UK Government is clear that policy development is the role of Ministers, who are accountable to Parliament. In carrying out policy development, the Government will continue to work closely with communities, civil society, delivery bodies and stakeholder representatives, including such groups / bodies as Local Authorities, River Basin Liaison Panels, River Trusts, England and Wales National Fisheries Group. In addition, the Government believes it is more efficient and effective to have flexible non-statutory arrangements that can enable communities and civil society to be empowered to deal with specific local issues, encouraging wider collective responsibility and more local scrutiny and accountability of how the Environment Agency delivers environmental priorities. It will help communities and environmental partners both work with, and challenge the Environment Agency, Defra, local authorities and other responsible stakeholders to help them deliver the Water Framework Directive and other important environmental improvements at a local level.

7.7 In Wales, it is not proposed to change the status of the RaLFAC and REPAC. These 2 Committees are managed separately from the English Committees by the Environment Agency Wales. They will remain in the public sector as bodies operating only in Wales subject to the requirements of the proposed Single Environment Body in Wales currently the subject of a separate consultation by the Welsh Government [which closed on 2 May]. The Welsh Government plan to vest this new Body in April 2013. The creation of this Body has no impact on the instruments to abolish RaLFACs (and REPACs) in England as the Welsh Government and Welsh Ministers only have competence in relation to the Welsh Committees and the Welsh Committees have no functions in relation to England.

7.8 Abolition of the RaLFACs will yield savings of around £225,388 per year[1] to the Environment Agency / Government in respect of the costs the Chair's salaries and expenses associated with running the Committees plus the costs to the Environment Agency of the small secretariat which supports the Committees (see **Annex B** for a detailed breakdown of cost savings). Although the Welsh Committees are outside the scope of this policy proposal, it should be noted that the Welsh Government cover all costs associated with the RaLFAC (and REPAC) in Wales.

7.9 This instrument is made using powers in the Public Bodies Act 2011 to abolish RaLFACs in England only. There are no RaLFACs committees (or REPACs Committees) established in England which extend into Wales i.e. cross border bodies. This means that -

(a) the order does not require the consent of the National Assembly for Wales under section 9(6) of the Public Bodies Act 2011. The abolition of the RaLFACs established in England is not within the legislative competence of the Assembly "as if it were

[1] Based on 2010/11 costs

contained in an Act of the Assembly" (which the Welsh Government have confirmed); and

(b) No consultation with the Welsh Ministers is required (the Welsh Government have confirmed this) under section 63 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 since this is not the exercise of a function in relation to a cross border body referred to in Section 63 of the Government of Wales Act 2006.

A summary of the provisions of the instrument is included as **Annex C** to this document. The abolition of the Committees in England does not require the consent of the Welsh Government even though the instruments abolishing the Committees relate to primary legislation that also makes provision for the Committees in Wales. The Welsh Government has been consulted on the instruments abolishing the Committees in England; they are content since the instruments relate to Committees in England only and the English Committees have no functions in relation to Wales. This process was in addition to consultation with the Welsh Government on the policy proposals required under the Public Bodies Act 2011 in advance of the formal consultation period. The Secretary of State has written to Welsh Government Minsters, informing them of the Government's intention to abolish RaLFACs (and REPACs) and lay the draft statutory instruments in Parliament to abolish these English Committees.

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Satisfying the requirements of section 8(1) of the Public Bodies Act 2011

7.10 Section 8(1) of the Public Bodies Act 2011 provides that a Minister may make an order under sections 1 to 5 only if the Minister considers that the order serves the purpose of improving the exercise of public functions, having regard to—

(a) efficiency,
(b) effectiveness,
(c) economy, and
(d) securing appropriate accountability to Ministers.

7.11 The Minister considers that abolition of RaLFACs (and REPACs) will lead to an improvement in the exercise of public functions with particular impacts resulting in greater efficiency, effectiveness, economy and accountability. The rationale for the proposed abolition of RaLFACs should be considered in conjunction with the proposed abolition of REPACs.

Efficiency

7.12 The Environment Act (95) provides the statutory obligations for Regional & Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RaLFACs) and Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committees (REPACs) in England and Wales. These statutory Committees currently provide advice to the Environment Agency but within prescriptive regional remits which creates a degree of inefficiency and inflexibility. Localism and Big Society agendas require the Environment Agency to more directly engage with civil society, the

public and business. A non-statutory approach would provide greater flexibility and remove statutory constraints which would enable civil society and local communities to be empowered to take the lead where appropriate.

7.13 Defra and the Environment Agency are committed to developing innovative and effective ways to engage and work closely with local communities, customers and stakeholders. To underpin this, the Environment Agency has developed a number of high level principles (see **Annex D**) in discussion with the existing Committee Chairs and members as well as local and national stakeholder groups. These high level principles are grouped under 3 themes, as below, with an example of a high level principle under each.

a) What matters for engagement: Local flexibility – making sure that the right engagement happens in the right place to achieve local buy-in, adapting appropriately to local needs and priorities.

b) How the Environment Agency will work with customer groups: Transparently – using local websites and social media to provide better access to local data and evidence to help people understand environmental quality and concerns in their areas. For example, the Environment Agency is engaging with the Yorkshire anglers, by answering questions through web-chats hosted by the Yorkshire Fishing forum website.

c) What the Environment Agency will do: Work holistically, for example ensuring that Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) and Water Quality and Management issues are considered together at catchment and local levels. The Environment Agency will work with Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) and Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) to ensure that environmental protection and biodiversity matters are considered; and that Flood and Coastal Risk Management matters are considered at River Basin Liaison Panels.

7.14 Each of the Environment Agency's 6 operating regions in England has developed a model, with their existing Committees and through discussion with local stakeholders, for their approach to future engagement. A broad range of interactions are proposed. The regional engagement models (see **Annex E**) show the relationship between the various fora from national strategy through to local action and delivery. The models are region specific and they will evolve over time based on continual review by the groups involved against environmental priorities thus ensuring the models for engagement are the right ones, involving the right individuals / groups at the right time.

7.15 Case studies of some of the engagement approaches that are being developed and/or are being trialled in some of the regions are detailed in **Annex F-I**. For example, the Environment Agency North West engage with angling and fisheries stakeholders in a number of ways – and at a number of local levels. An example of this is working with a range of local fishing clubs through local consultative associations including engaging

with the Bowland Game Fishing Association via its membership of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association. They meet with the Chairman of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association every two months to discuss issues relating to the Ribble (see **Annex G** for further details).

7.16 The use of the web and social media is also increasingly important for engaging with stakeholders, customers and communities. For example, some social media opportunities have developed because of the proposed abolition of the Committees – showing the innovation encouraged through the high level principles for the new approaches framework. EA North West, have developed a virtual forum on 'LinkedIn' to comment on major environment issues in the region, particularly those involving pollution, climate change, waste and sustainable development. The group originated from the North West REPAC Chair who has been instrumental in setting it up. It already has approximately 100 members. Although initial help is being given by the Environment Agency, it is hoped the forum will embrace other regional partners, including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, Chambers of Commerce, CBI, Universities and others. Further case studies of the effective use of social media are detailed in **Annex H**.

7.17 By freeing resources through abolition of the regional Committees, the Environment Agency will be well placed to build on the existing local networks as well as implementing new engagement methods and ensure delivery is fully informed from both the local and national perspectives. It is intended that this network of arrangements will evolve over time and as necessary, to make sure they reflect key Government and environmental priorities, local needs and the best practical way of delivering outcomes on the ground. As the models will be different for each locality they will not themselves be subject to formal monitoring or evaluation but will be underpinned by the consistent high level principles detailed in the consultation. It is these high level principles that Defra will review progress with the Environment Agency against within two years of the new engagement principles taking effect, if the Committees are abolished as proposed. Ahead of that review the Environment Agency will undertake some stakeholder engagement to allow local and national customers and stakeholders to comment on how the new approaches have been embedded. Any learning from this review will be embedded into the High level Principles and used by the Environment Agency to focus its engagement work.

Effectiveness

7.18 The detailed nature of the relevant legislative sections in the Environment Act 1995 has constrained the Committees from evolving easily to tackle modern approaches and challenges such as that needed to meet the needs of the Water Framework Directive in a holistic way and at the catchment/local level. More flexible non-statutory arrangements will enable more proactive local engagement and greater local accountability. The new arrangements will build on existing good practice, allow civil society to play a greater and more effective role in delivering local environmental outcomes, and encourage further transparency of environmental data and information. The new approach proposed would aim to empower local communities to have greater

involvement and a clearer voice about the delivery of environmental outcomes in their local area. The Environment Agency would provide data and information and encourage communities and civil society to be involved in tackling environmental priorities in their local area. This would provide direct local scrutiny of the work of the Environment Agency but also brings greater responsibility for local communities, partners and NGOs to work with the Environment Agency to tackle the environmental challenges we face.

7.19 Effective local stakeholder engagement and partnership are key to successful delivery on the ground. A non-statutory structure would have the flexibility to evolve and better address local priorities and would facilitate the engagement of civil society and local communities and partners in delivery. Abolition of the Committees would free-up resources for reinvestment to achieve this. If the Committees were not abolished it would be necessary to continue to appoint paid chairs and meet the requirements of Environment Act 1995. There would be the added complexity and cost of getting the level of local/civil society interaction needed to deliver environmental outcomes while still having to service regional committees not best suited to local engagement. In practice the roles of Committee members would need to be changed to make this happen whilst still meeting the statutory requirements. The risk would be that ineffective committees would still have to be funded whilst also having to provide and fund the new non-statutory framework and approaches required to deliver environmental outcomes

Economy

7.20 Abolition of RaLFACs will yield savings of around £225,388 per year with most of this coming from the salaries of the paid Chairs of the Committees (see **Annex B**). There are no impacts on Environment Agency staffing. Abolition of RaLFACs will result in no Environment Agency redundancies as the resource will be redeployed into ensuring the success of the flexible engagement arrangements. Environment Agency staff costs will certainly also be required for the future engagement approaches which will better reflect the way Government wants its arms length bodies to work in general.

7.21 It is intended that the savings made from abolishing the Committees will be reinvested proportionately into supporting the engagement models of the future approaches. There are no overall savings from the abolition in economic terms i.e. it is expected that there will be a zero net cost /benefit associated with abolition on the assumption that the total savings delivered from not paying the Chairs nor servicing the Committees will be the total amount available to reinvest into the future engagement approaches.

7.22 The intention of abolishing the Committees and implementing the flexible, non-statutory engagement approaches is to help communities and environmental partners both work with, and challenge the Environment Agency, Defra, local authorities and other responsible stakeholders to ensure they deliver the Water Framework Directive and other important environmental improvements at a local or catchment level. It will enable local communities to have the flexibility to engage with their environmental stakeholders and partners in the most appropriate way for each local area and utilising resources

economically. The key principles will be around local flexibility to ensure the right engagement in the right place at the right time, focusing on: outcomes and value for money; empowering communities to take the lead; transparency with better access to evidence to help people understand local issues; an inclusive delivery platform; and working in partnership with all stakeholders.

Securing appropriate accountability to Ministers

7.23 The function of the Committees is limited by prescriptive statutory remits to provide advice to the Environment Agency rather than having a role to encourage / facilitate delivery of environmental outcomes. A key reason for proposing the abolition of the Committees is to encourage wider collective responsibility and more direct local scrutiny and accountability from customers and communities into the Environment Agency on how environmental priorities are delivered. It will help communities and environmental partners both work with, and challenge the Environment Agency, Defra, local authorities and other responsible stakeholders to help them deliver the Water Framework Directive and other important environmental improvements at a local level.

7.24 It is intended that this network of arrangements will evolve over time and as necessary based on continual review by the groups involved. We will ensure the models for engagement are the right ones; that they reflect key Government and environmental priorities, local needs and the best practical way of delivering outcomes on the ground. For example, new approaches are being developed on working in partnership with regulators and community liaison groups to reduce the risk of flooding. There will also be feedback through national sector groups, such as the England and Wales National Fisheries Group, and through the River Basin Liaison Panels.

7.25 The proposal is that the Committees are replaced with more fluid, flexible arrangements for each of the Environment Agency's operating regions. These regional models themselves will not be subject to formal monitoring or evaluation and as they will be different in each locality – having the right engagement at the right time with the right individuals / groups - but these models will be underpinned by the consistent high level principles detailed in the consultation. Defra will review progress with the Environment Agency against the high level principles within two years of the new engagement principles taking effect, if the Committees are abolished as proposed. Ahead of that review the EA will undertake stakeholder engagement to allow local and national customers and stakeholders to comment on how the new approaches have been embedded which is in addition to a wide number of direct feedback mechanisms that currently exist including correspondence, complaints. Any learning from this review will be embedded into the High level Principles and used by the Environment Agency to focus its engagement work.

7.26 The proposed new arrangements are already being trialled in many areas as the Committees and the Environment Agency were keen that alternative arrangements were in place to minimise gaps in the transitional period should the Committees be abolished. The success of the new arrangements will be monitored in outcome terms. The

Environment Agency Board – who have regional as well as national portfolios – will provide an additional national / local level of scrutiny and are keen to ensure that these future approaches are effective. The Government has clearly set the Environment Agency a priority to work with others to deliver environmental outcomes.

Satisfying the requirements of section 8(2) of the Public Bodies Act 2011

7.27 Section 8(2) of the Public Bodies Act 2011 provides that a Minister may make an order under sections 1 to 5 only if the Minister considers that—

(a) the order does not remove any necessary protection, and

(b) the order does not prevent any person from continuing to exercise any right or freedom which that person might reasonably expect to continue to exercise.

7.28 The Minister considers that the conditions in section 8(2) are met. RaLFACs statutory functions as advisory bodies have no impact on personal protections, rights or freedoms. It follows that abolition of RaLFACs (and REPACs) functions will not remove any necessary protection nor prevent any person from continuing to exercise any right or freedom which that person might reasonably expect to continue to exercise.

7.29 RaLFACs (and REPACs) have a statutory consultation role under the Environment Act 1995 [section 13: (1) (b), (2) (a) and (b), (3) (a) and (b)] which places a duty on the Environment Agency to consult any of the advisory committees on any proposals that relate to the Agency carrying out its functions in the relevant regions in relation to maintaining, improving and developing salmon fisheries, trout fisheries, freshwater fisheries and eel fisheries, as well as matters that relate to recreation, conservation or navigation.

7.30 The abolition of RaLFACs (and REPACs) would have no impact on these consultation procedures. The proposed future engagement arrangements aim to enable the Environment Agency to consult with a wider group of stakeholders than the Committees current membership remit, to provide a more holistic and multi-functional engagement approach to tackling environmental issues. Engagement will be focused when, where and with whom it is needed to act and deliver on priority outcomes. Where RaLFACs (and REPACs) were previously used to obtain views on consultations, the Environment uses an ‘e-consultation’ tool which allows customers and stakeholders to share their views and comments on all of the Agency’s consultations which are now published online.

Parliamentary activity during the passage of the Public Bodies Bill

7.31 An amendment to remove both RaLFACs and REPACs from Schedule 1 was tabled during the passage of the Act in the House of Lords. In the debate [21/12/2010], tribute was paid to the work and value of both sets of Committees, with some concerns raised about the successor arrangements that will be put in place and what stage the discussions had reached at that point in relation to policy development and the

implementation progress of any new arrangements. The Government's response can be found in Hansard[2] . The amendment was withdrawn.

7.32 An amendment to remove RaLFACs from Schedule 1 was tabled during the passage of the Act in the House of Commons. In the debate [13/09/2011], tribute was paid to the work and value of the Committees, with some concerns raised about engagement of stakeholders in the future arrangements, resource impacts, succession planning, arbitration. The Government's response is detailed in Hansard[3]. The amendment was withdrawn.

- Consolidation

7.33 None.

8. Consultation outcome

8.1 The Government has carried out consultation in accordance with section 10 of the Public Bodies Act 2011. This consultation was a single consultation covering the proposed abolition of both the RaLFACs and REPACs. The requirement of section 11(3) of the Act has also been met in that more than twelve weeks have passed since that consultation was begun.

8.2 In preparation for the Arm's Length Body Review, and prior to the announcement in October 2010 on the Government's proposal for substantial reform of a large number of Public Bodies, the Chairman of the Environment Agency wrote to the Secretary of State proposing options for reform of the Committees in England. The Chairs of each of the Committees in England were subsequently informed of the Government's proposals for reform by letter from the Secretary of State. Since then the Chairs and Committee members have worked in conjunction with the Environment Agency to develop the proposals for the flexible engagement arrangements which includes the high level principles and the regional engagement models.

8.3 On 1 November 2011 the Government launched a public consultation. The consultation invited views from [46] organisations, and from the Chairs and members of the RaLFAC and REPAC Committees on the Government's proposal to abolish RaLFACs and REPACs in England. A list of those consulted is at **Annex J**. The consultation also sought views on the high level principles underpinning the flexible arrangements and the regional engagement models. The 12 week consultation closed on 23 January 2012. 44 responses were received. The consultation document and summary of responses is available on the Defra website[4].

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[2] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/101221-0003.htm

[3] http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmpublic/publicbod/110913/am/110913s01.htm

[4] http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/11/01/consultation-epacs-rlfacs/

8.4 The consultation was also discussed with the Defra Civil Society Advisory Board[5] who were broadly supportive of the proposals and the proposed future arrangements and gave helpful feedback on how the arrangements could be further improved.

8.5 Of the 44 responses received: 13 stated they were 'for' abolition of both sets of Committees; a further 2 responses solely stated they were 'for' abolition of RaLFACs. Those who were in favour of abolition supported the course of action for a variety of reasons. Some Committees were not perceived as being efficient and effective against their remit nor fully engaging relevant stakeholder groups e.g. coarse anglers. There was concern that the Committees did not provide value for money in terms of the resources invested to support them. There was general agreement that a flexible, non-statutory approach was the right way forward and would address stated issues with the current approach which was seen by some respondents as stereotyped, undemocratic a 'closed shop', dysfunctional, and lacking a holistic viewpoint. There was a positive response to involving and empowering civil society and local communities to be part of delivering solutions.

8.6 7 responses stated they were 'against' abolition of both sets of Committees; a further 17 responses solely stated they were 'against' abolition of RaLFACs. The majority of responses disagreeing with the abolition of the Committees were in the North West region. Those who were in against abolition of the Committees supported their continued existence mainly because the Committees were seen as vehicle for independent and objective advice to the Environment Agency; there was concern that this would be lost upon abolition. In particular fisheries respondents were not assured that the 'voice' of current RaLFACs stakeholders the Committees represent will be effectively 'heard' through groups currently proposed in the regional engagement models. Also the knowledge, expertise and experience of the members of the Committees and their good quality advice that they afforded to the Environment Agency would be lost.

8.7 5 other responses did not fall into either the 'for' or 'against' categories. 1 response did not agree with abolishing as proposed but did not agree with the current statutory status quo either and suggested 'modernising' current arrangements.

8.8 There were more responses to the consultation from the North West than any other geographic region and the responses from the North West tended to be more opposed to abolition – especially with regards to RaLFACs. The main reason for this was that respondents were not assured that the 'voice' of current RaLFAC stakeholders which the Committees represent will be effectively 'heard' through the groups currently proposed in the regional engagement models. The Environment Agency in the North West has, and continues, to work closely with partners and stakeholders to develop the future approaches to engagement and to ensure that they can continue to benefit from the experience and expertise of the community if RaLFACs (and REPACs) are abolished. This includes setting up workshops with local stakeholders to understand what additional measures would help to establish the future approaches to engagement in the North West.

[5] http://blogs.defra.gov.uk/3rd-sector/2009/03/advisory-board-members-announced/

A further case study to demonstrate engagement with fisheries stakeholders in the North West is shown at **Annex G** of this document.

8.9 68% responses supported the high level principles under-pining the flexible engagement models; all other responses except one, which disagreed, did not mention the high level principles. 70% of responses supported the more flexible and region specific approaches being developed to allow more engagement at the local level; the rest of responses on this issue except one, which disagreed, made no mention of the regional approaches. Of those responses against abolition of the Committees, there was still support for the high level principles underpinning the regional engagement models – 50%. Similarly, 54% of responses against abolition of the Committees still stated support for the regional approaches.

8.10 There were suggestions for developing the high level principles to be more explicit on partnership recognition, and the engagement of experts in policy making. The high level principles have since been reviewed and 2 have been developed further to reflect feedback received from the consultation.

8.11 The principle described in 13 (ii) of the consultation document on partnership recognition now states: 'In partnership – the Environment Agency will not always lead new groups or local environmental work. Instead the Environment Agency will work with and inform others i.e. civil society, private and public organisations to achieve the necessary local outcomes in the most appropriate way'.

8.12 The principle described in 14(v) of the consultation document on the use of experts now states: 'Provide advice to inform Government policy making - using intelligence gathered from customers and experts to inform delivery and the policy-making process'.

8.13 The Environment Agency has committed to keeping these principles under review and will evolve them as appropriate – in consultation with customers and Defra - to ensure that they work in the most appropriate way to deliver local and national priority environmental outcomes as well as Government priorities. This will ensure that the future approaches to engagement remain flexible and focused, evolving over time.

8.14 There were also a number of issues and gaps identified with regards to the regional engagement models, although the majority of these were in relation to the abolition of the RaLFACs. All of these issues are documented and the Government's response to address them is in the summary of responses document.

8.15 There was concern that if RaLFACs were abolished that there could be a gap in how fisheries stakeholders will be able to engage. The Government response is that we are satisfied that there are already a number of alternative ways for fisheries stakeholders to engage with the Environment Agency and that any significant gaps identified in the mapping will be addressed in the new arrangements as they evolve. Defra has, following the consultation, reminded the Environment Agency that the fish farming / aquaculture

sectors must be included in the regional models where locally appropriate as this sector was flagged as having been omitted. The Environment Agency North West - where the largest numbers of concerns were raised - are holding further workshops with stakeholders over the next few months to identify any remaining gaps / concerns and identify what more can be done, collaboratively with partners. Two case studies are included to show how more detail on how fisheries stakeholders can and do engage with the EA – in the North West and South West respectively. This includes the extensive use of consultative and stakeholder groups and the Angling Trust. These are shown at **Annexes G** and **I**.

8.16 The UK Government has decided that, notwithstanding the responses in relation to the North West, RaLFACs (and REPACs), should be abolished in England. The Government has decided that the Environment Agency's statutory regional and local advisory Committees are no longer required to provide advice on environmental protection and fisheries policy. A plethora of other engagement arrangements has also grown up around the Committees which suggests that the Committees are not fully representative of the wide range of stakeholders they were set up to represent nor are they able to provide a more holistic and multi-functional engagement approach to tackling and acting on environmental issues. Instead the Environment Agency will implement non-statutory, flexible engagement models to seek views from representative stakeholders and other experts but also to empower to deliver solutions at a local level under the Big Society and Localism agendas. Engagement under the new approaches will be flexible to focus when, where and with whom it is needed to act and deliver on priority outcomes. The Government no longer sees a case for the RaLFACs and REPACs to continue in their current role, nor does it see any reason to put in place an alternative statutory or non-statutory advisory body. This position is strengthened by the fact that there are there are already a number of engagement initiatives that enable to Environment Agency to gain advice from customers and stakeholders that are being developed and trialled because of the proposed abolition of the Committees and they are delivering successes (see **Annexes F-I** for case studies in the North West, South West, on the a catchment pilot and on the use of social media).

8.17 In reaching this decision the Government also took into account the very low number of responses to the consultation [44]. The polarisation of responses to the consultation from the North West indicates the high level of interest, organisation and engagement in that area on fisheries matters. The Government assesses that the low number of responses to the consultation and that responses against abolition are mostly specific to one region suggests that few stakeholders believe that retention of RaLFACs (and REPACs) is not sufficiently important to their interests, or broader environmental interests, to express a view.

8.18 The Government published its response[6] to the consultation on 21 May 2012. This set out the key areas where representations had been received and the Government's proposed way forward in the light of those representations

[6] http://www.defra.gov.uk/consult/2011/11/01/consultation-epacs-rlfacs/

8.19 As detailed in paragraph 7.9 the Welsh Government has been consulted on the policy proposals and the draft instruments abolishing the Committees in England only.

9. Guidance

9.1 This instrument abolishes RaLFACs in England only. Abolition of RaLFACs does not require guidance to be provided to stakeholders or enforcement agencies.

10. Impact

10.1 There is no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies. There will be no regulatory costs associated with the future arrangements. The proposed change will be managed on a cost neutral basis - see paragraph 7.21, there are no overall savings from the abolition in economic terms. The regional Advisory Committees are currently funded solely by the Environment Agency. If the Committees are abolished, then the Environment Agency will wholly reinvest funds saved (approximately £0.5m per annum from abolition of RaLFACs and REPACs in England combined) into supporting the establishment of the future approaches to engagement i.e. it is expected that there will be a zero net cost /benefit associated with abolition.

10.2 As stated above in 7.20, abolition of RaLFACs will yield savings of around £225,388 per year with most of this coming from the salaries of the paid Chairs of the Committees. There are no impacts on Environment Agency staffing. Abolition of RaLFACs (and REPACs) will result in no Environment Agency redundancies as the resource will be redeployed into ensuring the success of the flexible engagement arrangements. Environment Agency staff costs will certainly also be required for the future engagement approaches which will better reflect the way Government wants its arms length bodies to work in general. We are satisfied that with the reinvestment of the savings from abolishing the Advisory Committees and the reprioritisation given to the Environment Agency through the substantial reform agenda and its corporate plan that there will be no substantial additional staff cost impacts. We believe that by working differently the EA will be able to work in this way without a significant additional burden to their staff.

10.3 There is no impact on the public sector beyond the savings which will accrue from abolition (see paragraphs 7.20-7.22).

10.4 The abolition of RaLFACs and REPACs will have no regulatory or other cost impact on business or charities. Impacts on public bodies have a threshold of £5m. The Government assessed the requirements to carry out an Impact Assessment against Better Regulation criteria and concluded that an Impact Assessment was not required for the proposals.

10.5 The new arrangements largely build on existing good practice which is already happening alongside the Committee structures as a response to act and deliver on environmental priorities which the Committees are unable to fulfil because of their

restrictive advisory and/or regional remit. There are already a number of engagement initiatives that are being developed and trialled because of the proposed abolition of the Committees. Additional arrangements will only be put in place if there is an identified gap in engagement to fill following the proposed abolition of the Committees and where appropriate will provide the opportunity for civil society groups to take the lead if they would like (see the case studies in **Annexes F-I**).

10.6 If the Committees were not abolished it would be necessary to continue to appoint paid chairs and meet the requirements of Environment Act 1995. There would be the added complexity and cost of getting the level of local/civil society interaction needed to deliver environmental outcomes while still having to fund and service regional committees not best suited to local engagement. In practice the roles of Committee members would need to be changed to make this happen whilst still meeting the statutory requirements. The risk would be that ineffective committees would still have to be funded whilst also having to provide and fund the new non-statutory framework required to deliver environmental outcomes.

11. Regulating small business

11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

12. Monitoring & review

12.1 Monitoring of the abolition of RaLFACs (and REPACs) is not necessary as no further action is required once the Orders comes into effect and RaLFACs (and REPACs) functions cease. The Chairs will cease to be Committee Chairs if the legislation is passed – they currently have contracts until December 2012 which can be amended beforehand if required. Committee membership, which is voluntary, declined significantly following the announcement that the Committees were proposed to be abolished in October 2010. Those that remain involved are consulted / engaged with electronically by the Chairs and were very involved in designing the new arrangements for future engagement.

12.2 The future engagement arrangements will be monitored and reviewed as set out in paragraphs 7.25-7.26 above. Defra will review progress with the Environment Agency against the high level principles within two years of the new engagement principles taking effect, if the Committees are abolished as proposed. Ahead of that review the Environment Agency will undertake stakeholder engagement to allow local and national customers and stakeholders to comment on how the new approaches have been embedded. Any learning from this review will be embedded into the High Level Principles and used by the Environment Agency to focus its engagement work.

13. Contact

13.1 Amanda Thomas or Brian Collins at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Tel: 020 7238 4399 / 4801 or email: amanda.thomas@defra.gsi.gov.uk / brian.collins@defra.gsi.gov.uk can answer any queries regarding these instruments.

Annex A

REGIONAL AND LOCAL FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RaLFAC) KNOWN AS FISHERIES, ECOLOGY AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FERAC) CURRENT MEMBERSHIP SCHEME (INFORMAL)

Environment Act 1995

This informal scheme has been drawn up by the national RaLFAC (FERAC[7]) Committee Chairs in discussion with the Environment Agency to support the amended Terms of Reference (republished March 2010).

It sets out the aspirations for the future role, composition and membership of RaLFACs, which will be achieved by June 2012.

1.0 Overview

1.1 The Environment Agency has a duty under section 13 of the Environment Act, for each Region (and Environment Agency Wales) to have a committee in relation to its statutory duties for fisheries, recreation, conservation and navigation. These are known as the Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committees (FERAC) and are approved by Defra (and subsequently Welsh Government).

1.2 Members are appointed for their personal skills, interests and experience and do not represent any particular organisation.

2.0 Membership numbers

2.1 The overall size of the committee will be 16. This includes the RaLFAC Chair and 15 members.

2.2 The 15 members include:

- 13 members representing interested sectors and/or with relevant skills and experience;
- The Chair of the Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committee (REPAC), or a relevant nominee, from that Region/Wales.
- One Chair from a *Flood Defence Committees (FDC), or a relevant nominee, from that Region/Wales.

[7] FERACs – Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committees is the informal and usual term for the statutory Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RaLFACs)

* Where there is more than one FDC in the Region/Wales it should read that "The Chairs of the Flood Defence Committees (FDC) are welcome to attend, but only one will be a full voting member at any time. This will be agreed between the Chair of the RaLFAC and the FDC Chairs of that Region/Wales in advance of the meeting."

Addendum: Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) were set up under the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 replacing Regional Flood Defence Committees.

2.3 Where a Region/Wales has significant additional navigation responsibilities the number of members representing interested sectors and/or with relevant skills and experience can be increased to 15, by agreement with the Regional Director/Director for Wales.

3.0 Composition

3.1 As required by statute Members should have skills, interests and experience relevant to the local environment, the statutory remit of the RaLFAC Committee and the diverse needs of the Region/Wales. This may include:

- Fisheries
- Water based users, including water related sport and recreation
- Wildlife, including conservation, ecology and biodiversity
- Navigation where the Region/Wales has operational responsibilities

3.2 In addition, and as far as the regional priorities and size of the committee allows, other Members may be appointed who have other skills/experience, such as:

- Environmental science
- Management professionals
- Riparian owners

3.3 They should be appointed at the discretion of the Regional Directors/Director for Wales and in consultation with the Committee Chair.

Annex B

SAVINGS FROM ABOLISHING THE RaLFACs

Based on 2010/11 costs, the total savings will be approximately £225,388.

The majority will be £122,947 for the Chairs' salaries (each Committee has a Chair paid approximately £18,000 per annum for 5 days per month).

Other costs saved will be:

Chairs' national insurance	-	£10,243
Chairs and members expenses	-	£25,410
Meeting costs	-	£7,473
Post and printing	-	£4,912 (estimate)
EA Staff costs	-	£54,402 (estimate)

SAVINGS FROM ABOLISHING THE REPACs

Based on 2010/11 costs, the total savings will be approximately £192,831.

The majority of savings are from the for the Chairs' salaries £123,487 (each Committee has a Chair paid approximately £18,000 per annum for 5 days per month).

Other costs saved will be:

Chairs' national insurance	-	£10,500
Chairs and members expenses	-	£12,355
Meeting costs	-	£8,059
Post and printing	-	£3,430 (estimate)
EA Staff costs	-	£35,000 (estimate)

EA staff costs will certainly also be required for the future engagement approaches which will better reflect the way the Government wants its arms length bodies to work in general. The savings identified above for EA Staff costs will be reinvested into the future arrangements.

Annex C

SUMMARY OF THE RaLFACs (ABOLITION) ORDER 2012

Article 1 – citation and commencement.

Article 1(2) provides that the Order comes into force on the day after the day on which the Order is made.

Article 1(3) provides that Article 3 (repeal of the entry relating to Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees in Schedule 1 to the Public Bodies Act) comes into force the day after the Order comes into force.

Article 2– abolition of RaLFACs.

Article 2 (1) abolishes RaLFACs which were established under sections 13 of the Environment Act 1995 in England and Wales except the committees established in Wales (the Welsh Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees).

Article 2(2) provides that the duties of the Environment Agency under subsection 13(1) cease to have effect - except in relation the Welsh Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees.

Article 3 – repeals and revocations.

Article 3 repeals the entry in Schedule 1 to the Public Bodies Act in relation to Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees.

Annex D

HIGH LEVEL PRINCIPLES

We will continue to keep these principles under review and will evolve them as appropriate – in consultation with customers and Defra - to ensure that they work in the most appropriate way to deliver local and national priority environmental outcomes as well as Government priorities. This will ensure that the future approaches to engagement remain flexible and focused, evolving over time.

What matters for engagement:

i) Value for public money – effective engagement that is focused on priority environmental outcomes, does not overlap where others could do the job better and is realistic of our resources.

ii) Delivering Government and Defra priorities – by empowering communities and civil society groups under Big Society principles, working with local authorities through localism, working with other Defra arms length bodies (Natural England, Forestry Commission etc) to maximise effectiveness and through local level delivery of the Water Framework Directive.

iii) A focus on outcomes – focusing on priority environmental outcomes and working with communities and partner organisations to achieve the most we can together.

iv) Local flexibility – making sure that the right engagement happens in the right place to achieve local buy-in, adapting appropriately to local needs and priorities.

How the Environment Agency will work with customer groups:

i) Transparently – using local websites and social media to provide better access to local data and evidence to help people understand environmental quality and concerns in their areas. For example, the Environment Agency is engaging with the Yorkshire anglers, by answering questions through web-chats hosted by the Yorkshire Fishing forum website.

ii) In partnership – the Environment Agency will not always lead new groups or local environmental work. Instead the Environment Agency will work with and inform others to achieve the necessary local outcomes in the most appropriate way.

iii) Constructively – behaving in an open, honest and customer focused manner; listening, encouraging and motivating others, see Annex F below which describes a case example of a pilot catchment.

What the Environment Agency will do:

i) Evolve the River Basin Liaison Panels (RBLPs) – Working with Defra and key stakeholders / partners to make sure the River Basin Liaison Panels are a representative, challenging and effective group that can enable the delivery of cycle 2 of the Water Framework Directive.

ii) Trial new ways of working – for example the catchment based approach – the Environment Agency has set up 10 'Pilot Catchments'. Through these, the Environment Agency will deliver Water Framework Directive objectives by working locally with communities, customers and stakeholders.

iii) Work holistically – ensuring that Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) and Water Quality and Management issues are considered together at catchment and local levels. The Environment Agency will work with Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) and Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) to ensure that environmental protection and biodiversity matters are considered; and that Flood and Coastal Risk Management matters are considered at River Basin Liaison Panels.

iv) Work with other organisations in the Defra family – the Environment Agency will work with Defra and the Defra family to ensure that pilots, projects and initiatives are joined up wherever that is appropriate, that the most relevant Defra delivery body leads on the most relevant outcome, and that customers receive an integrated and timely service.

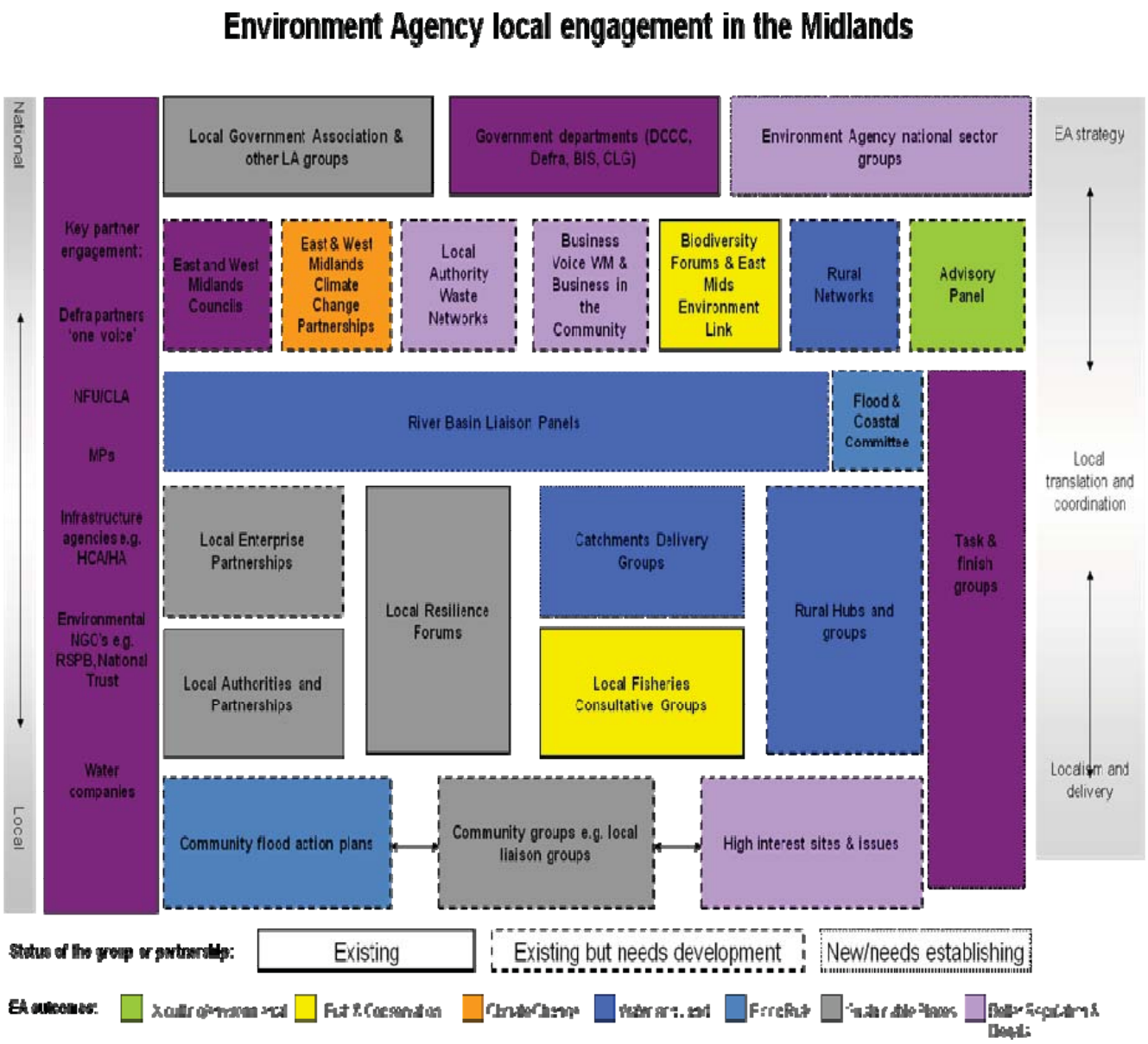
v) Provide advice to inform Government policy making - using intelligence gathered from customers to inform delivery and the policy making.

It should be noted that there were suggestions from the formal consultation for developing the high level principles to be more explicit on partnership recognition, and the engagement of experts in policy making. Delivering on the commitment above, the original set of high level principles was reviewed by Defra and the Environment Agency resulting in 2 high level principles being further developed:

i) the principle described in 2(ii) on partnership recognition to now state – 'In partnership – the Environment Agency will not always lead new groups or local environmental work. Instead the Environment Agency will work with and inform others i.e. civil society, private and public organisations to achieve the necessary local outcomes in the most appropriate way.'

ii) the principle described in 3(v) on the use of experts to now state – 'Provide advice to inform Government policy making - using intelligence gathered from customers and experts to inform delivery and the policy-making process.

Figure 1: Environment Agency local engagement in the Midlands region



A new approach to regulators working in partnership

The Environment Agency is always looking for innovative ways to make our regulation more effective and risk based. By working with other regulators, we can respond effectively to any concerns raised by the local community. We can also help businesses reduce their impact on the environment, lift the regulatory burden on well performing businesses and tackle illegal activities.

The Environment Agency has developed a joint approach, by using a specific waste site in Staffordshire as a pilot. The site has four regulators, Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council, the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency. By working together, we were able to engage more effectively with the community and help the site become more compliant and reducing its impact on the local environment. We will continue to use this partnership approach with other sites.

The result of working together was a more joined up approach to regulating the site. Outcomes included:

- improved and more consistent communications with the operator and local community
- agreeing priorities and timing of activities
- a more strategic view of the best course of action at any one time
- better planning
- improved sharing of intelligence and information

The approach has been recognised as an innovation and effective approach to regulating similar types of sites. As part of the project a toolkit was developed which has enabled this approach to be used at other local sites.

Community liaison to reduce risk of flooding

The Environment Agency seeks to help communities to understand and manage their flood risk more effectively by being more prepared and co-ordinated.

Following the floods in 2007, the Environment Agency has been working with community groups, such as Much Wenlock Flood Action Group, to help reduce the flood risk in their town. The town is affected by rapid flooding from surface and river water. Much Wenlock does not have a flood warning service, so preparation in the community is vital.

The Environment Agency helped the Flood Action Group to write a flood plan and to introduce a new alert system, giving residents more time to prepare for flooding. The Environment Agency has also helped the group to work with the community on ways they can help protect their homes and prepare flood plans for individual households.

The Environment Agency will continue to find ways of helping communities take a lead in reducing their own flood risk and preparing better for flooding, when it does happen.

Working in partnership with industry and the local community at local sites

The Environment Agency aims to improve the way we communicate with the public around the sites we regulate. We want to be more open and better understand public concerns, interests and how they want to talk to us or get information. There are many examples where we have developed our approach to working closely with site operators, local residents and others to resolve issues.

At a composting site the Environment Agency regulates in Gloucestershire, residents had concerns about odour and flies. We have been working in partnership with the local District Council and the community via a liaison group to resolve concerns from the community regarding odour and fly annoyance from the site. We have brought together local partners, including the operator, local councillors and the MP to attend the liaison group depending on the issue we are talking about. This has helped everyone understand local concerns, each other's point of view and how the site is regulated. The Health Protection Agency and Primary Care Trust have recently attended to answer questions from residents.
The operator has taken action to reduce the site's local impact, and by providing a forum for constructive discussion and information sharing, the concerns of residents have been addressed. One of the improvements made by the operator on the site has been a physical re-design and refurbishment of the odour treatment system. We have also done some additional monitoring, so we have an accurate base line to assess the ongoing improvements, as a result of the operator's action.

The Environment Agency will facilitate the setting up of more local groups in the future. This will help us work more closely with the local communities, operators and the local authority to address local concerns and help reduce the environment impact of our regulated sites

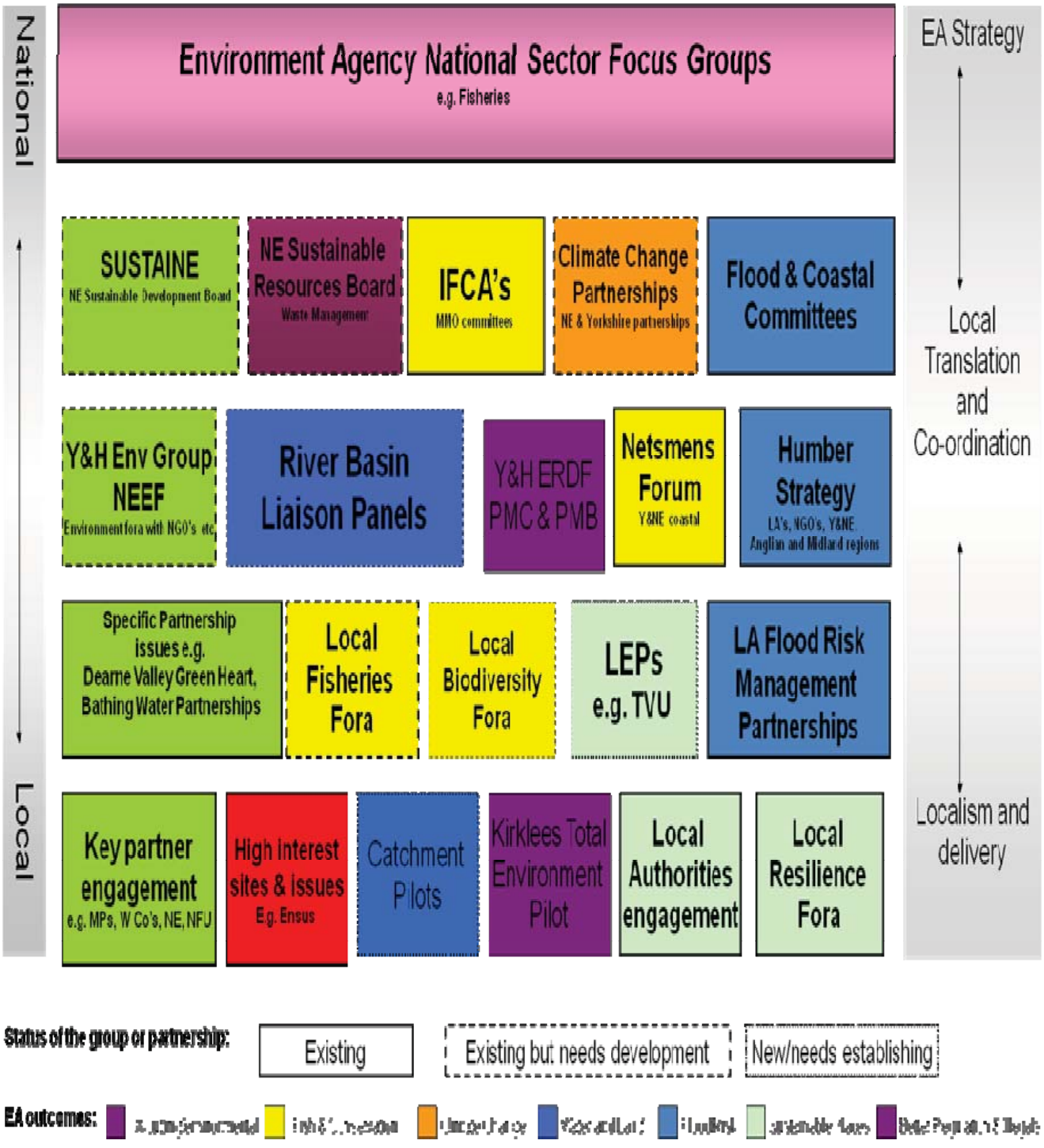
Developing the role of the Midlands Regional Advisory Panel (RAP)

The Midlands Region is developing a programme of RAP meetings for this year with topical items for discussion. These will act as the task and finish groups set out in our model. The topics will reflect our current engagement priorities and will involve some external partners or experts, depending on the topic. During this transitional year, the Region will also look at the future of RAP in line with our proposed model and their role as our critical friend.

We've mapped how we engage with our current customers and partners, at various spatial levels. This has informed our choice of topic areas, and helped us identify new or developing groups and forums which we'll need to work with more in the future. At each RAP meeting we'll present an update on our engagement.

Our next RAP meeting will discuss how we work with partners at all levels to deliver improvements in our water environment, under the Water Framework Directive. We'll particularly explore our relationships with local authorities and the challenge of presenting the aims of the Water Framework Directive in a more customer focussed way. This will help them to spot opportunities and better integrate the actions into their work and activities. This discussion will not duplicate the work of the Liaison Panels, but be complementary, as it'll drill down into specific issues in greater detail.

Figure 2: Environment Agency local engagement in Yorkshire and North East region



Engaging locally

Staff within the Environment Agency Yorkshire Area are invigorating communications with fisheries customers and others with an interest in waterways at a local geographic level. This builds on good practice in other areas and suggestions from an event in December 2010 attended by both RaLFAC members and staff to look at improved engagement in the sectors. For example, the Environment Agency is engaging with the Yorkshire anglers, by answering questions through web-chats hosted by the Yorkshire Fishing forum website.

Area teams are focusing on engaging with customers as part of the solution rather than the Environment Agency solely leading meetings or events. The Environment Agency has also taken advice from professionals on how to engage where there are complex issues. This approach is being used successfully in discussions with different recreational users of the River Dearne.

The Environment Agency will continue to facilitate the Netsmens Forum. This has developed into a very successful group where netsmen are happy to work proactively with the Environment Agency. This will be vital in maintaining key customer involvement in the development of byelaws and other local regulations.

The Environment Agency is working on developing the River Basin Liaison Panels to develop a clear role and drive delivery. The aim is to improve co-ordinated communications with other local engagement including across Environment Agency boundaries to make us truly accountable to our customers.

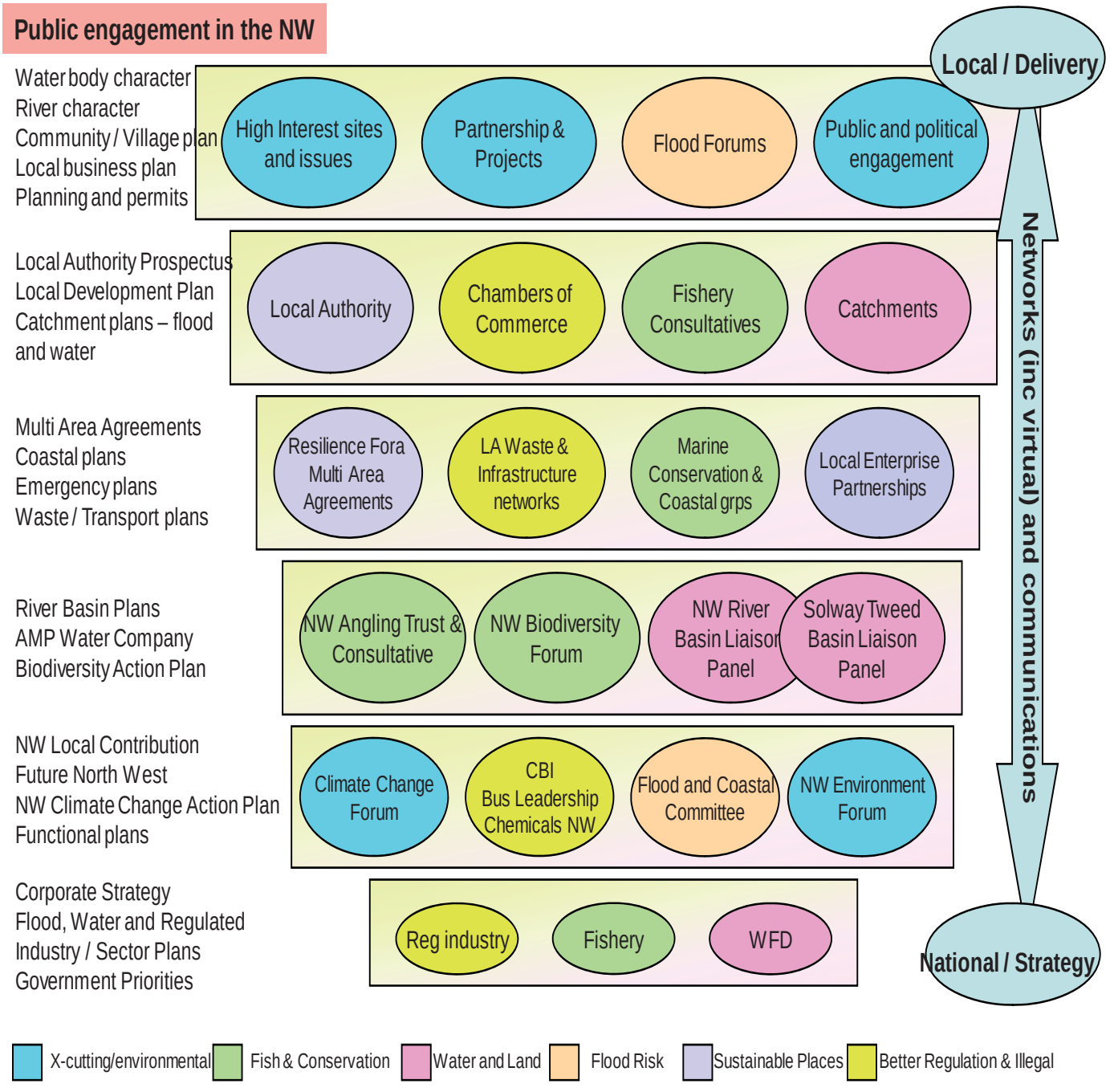
Area and Regional Office Managers all have prioritised engagement plans.

The **South Holderness liaison panel** has helped to develop an ongoing and open dialogue with communities and key partners. The Environment Agency is unable to secure funding to continue the maintenance of some defences in this area so it is a highly contentious subject, but have been working together with this representative group to tackle challenging funding issues and are developing a joint action plan.

Hemlington Lake is an artificial lake in one of the more deprived parts of Middlesbrough, created to provide flood protection for parts of the town downstream. The lake was subject to anti-social behaviour, abuse and vandalism. As part of the wider **Middlesbrough Clean Becks partnership** the project was a catalyst for a group of interested residents to set up a formal Friends of Hemlington Lake group. This group was actively involved in implementing the project, has instilled great pride in the neighbourhood and is passionate about looking after and improving it.

The Environment Agency is dealing with several applications for **EfW (energy from waste) plants**. At Allerton Park in North Yorkshire the Environment Agency began planning their approach over 3 months prior to receiving the application. Efforts were concentrated on those most affected by the proposals, visiting Parish Councils and meeting local residents groups to explain the Environment Agency's role in the planning and permitting process. By being proactive, open, honest and clear about alongside technical know-how, the Environment Agency is helping to build trust with communities, individuals and pressure groups during this early part of the process.

Figure 3: Environment Agency local engagement in the North West region



Public Engagement in the NW – the framework

Principles for engagement

- Engagement will be about environmental outcomes; build on what exists and works; enable integration and cross functional working; drive value for money; provide clarity of purpose and linkages between the local and nationwide forum inc inter-regional opportunities. Address short and long term issues.

Local

- We will continue to reinforce the range of existing arrangements. These include putting our efforts into responding to local needs on issues of high public interest and contention such as the many energy from waste proposals in Cheshire as well as supporting and equipping those wishing to actively improve their local environments. In addition we will specifically work with the big society vanguard project in the Eden Valley to enable their ambitions around sustainable green energy to be developed. We will also work with Keep Britain Tidy in developing a network of local river and beach care groups commencing in and around the Ribble catchment.

Local Authorities

- Over the last 12months we have agreed with the NW Local Authorities joint environmental priorities. These are being reviewed in the light of the spending review and public sector reform. Particular opportunities for engagement include how we support: the protection of people and property in relation to flood risk; the improvements to quality of life through effective regulation and criminal enforcement; the enhanced local environment through sustainable development and infrastructure planning.Working in partnership on this entire agenda will be essential if we are to achieve our joint ambitions.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- We will work with the members of LEP's across the NW as they evolve into their new roles. We anticipate assisting in their capacity building, particularly with respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation. We will also review our role in terms of economic development as their agenda and needs crystallise over the coming months.

Catchment fora

- In the NW we will be setting up three 'catchment pilots' to test different models of engagement and action in diverse landscapes and cultures. The three catchments will be the Irwell, Ribble and Windermere / Leven. In addition we are developing a number of bathing water groups to support and lead on tackling the issues of diffuse pollution along the NW coast, in particular Fylde.

River Basin

- The North West and the Solway Tweed River Basin Liaison Panels will continue to provide a strategic planning and monitoring role in terms of the water framework directive and the NW ambition.

Industry and Business

- In addition to the range of national 'sector groups' we will work with the North West Confederation of Business and Industry, Institute of Directors, Chambers of Commerce and NW Business Leadership Team to develop our regulatory roles and approaches and support them in terms of resource efficiency and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- We will work in partnership with United Utilities to maximise the environmental improvements to the NW through their actions.

Rivers trusts, Angling Trusts and Consultatives

- These traditionally well established and active organisations exist across the NW at a range of levels and continue to provide excellent opportunities for engagement in terms of NW environmental priorities, (particularly water framework issues and fishery management) and the use of EA resources. The recent Marine Management Organisation and Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities add to this framework.

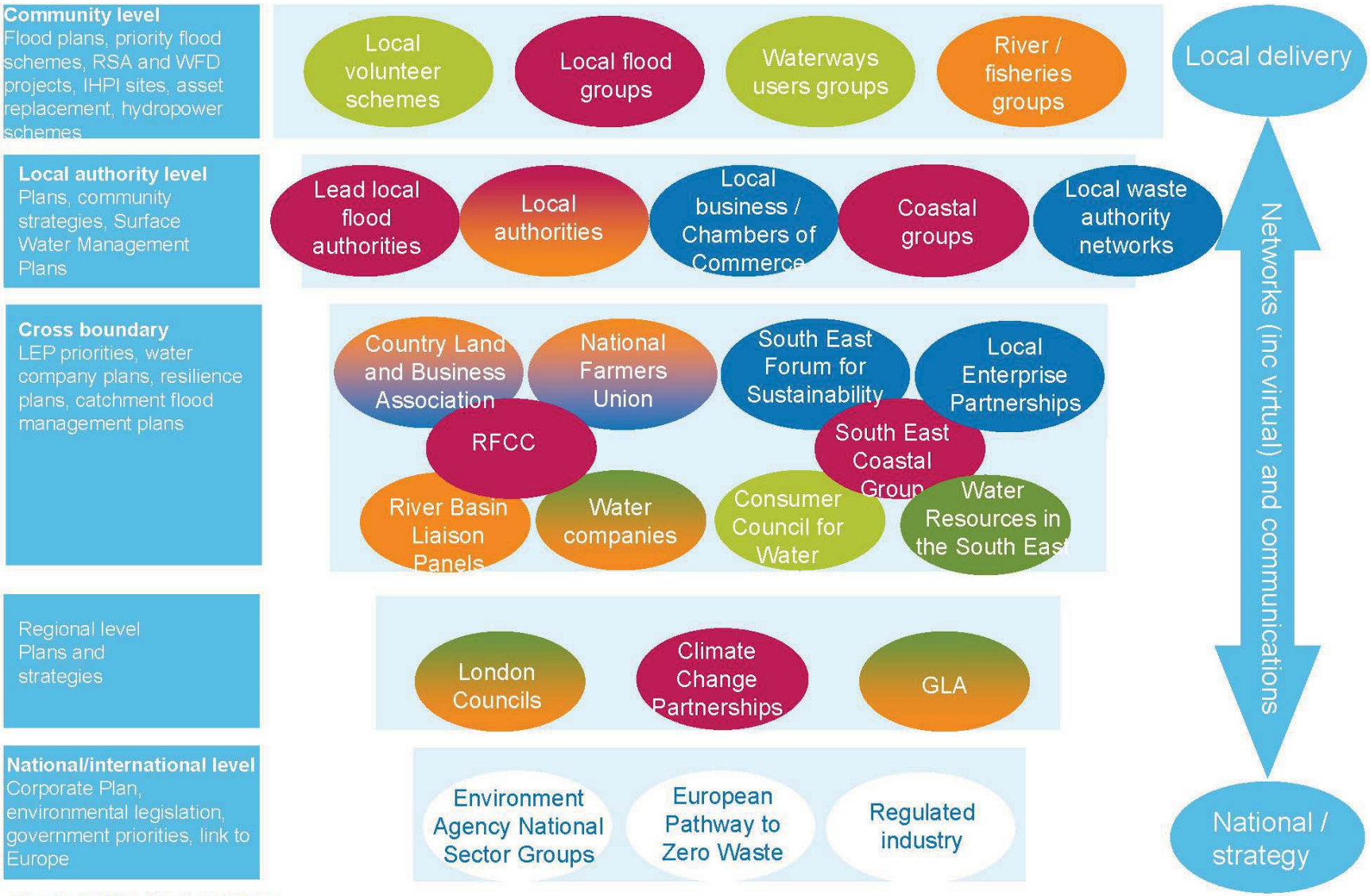
NW

- We will continue to work with the existing climate change partnership across the NW and in the months ahead support the handover of many issues to the LEP's and other delivery bodies.
- We will be arranging discussions with environmental organisations to help align resources and actions in support of NW and government priorities.

Virtual

- Enabling better access to information and more informal web based social networking is being explored as ways of enhancing the level and diversity of public engagement across the NW.

Figure 4: Environment Agency local engagement in the South East region



Key: Priorities for South East

- Working with people and communities to reduce the risk of flooding and its consequences for households and businesses.
- Protecting and improving the quality of our rivers, lakes and bathing waters, making sure they are clean for everyone to enjoy.
- Making sure there is enough water for people, business and the environment to use by monitoring and licensing how water is taken out.
- Working with businesses to reduce their impacts on the environment and to provide a level playing field for legitimate operators. For example we take firm action on illegal waste operators to support legal operators.
- Building on our work with customers and partners to develop a sustainable future for our three waterways – the Thames, the Medway and Rye Harbour.

Public Engagement in the South East

We work with partners and community groups locally to achieve results. This is at the heart of our approach to engagement in South East. Highlights of how focussed engagement with local groups and communities achieves results for people and the environment include:

Water Framework Directive (WFD) - two of the Defra-selected pilot catchments, the Lower Lee and the Adur and Ouse are in South East**.** They are designed specifically to encourage greater public participation**.** The first collaborative meeting for the Lower Lee took place recently with Thames 21, Groundwork, London Wildlife Trust and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority helping to shape plans for the scheme.

Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme - as a result of engagement, the perception of local communities moved from it being a scheme driven by creating habitat for birds, to one focussed on creating a nature conservation area for local people to enjoy plus improved flood protection.

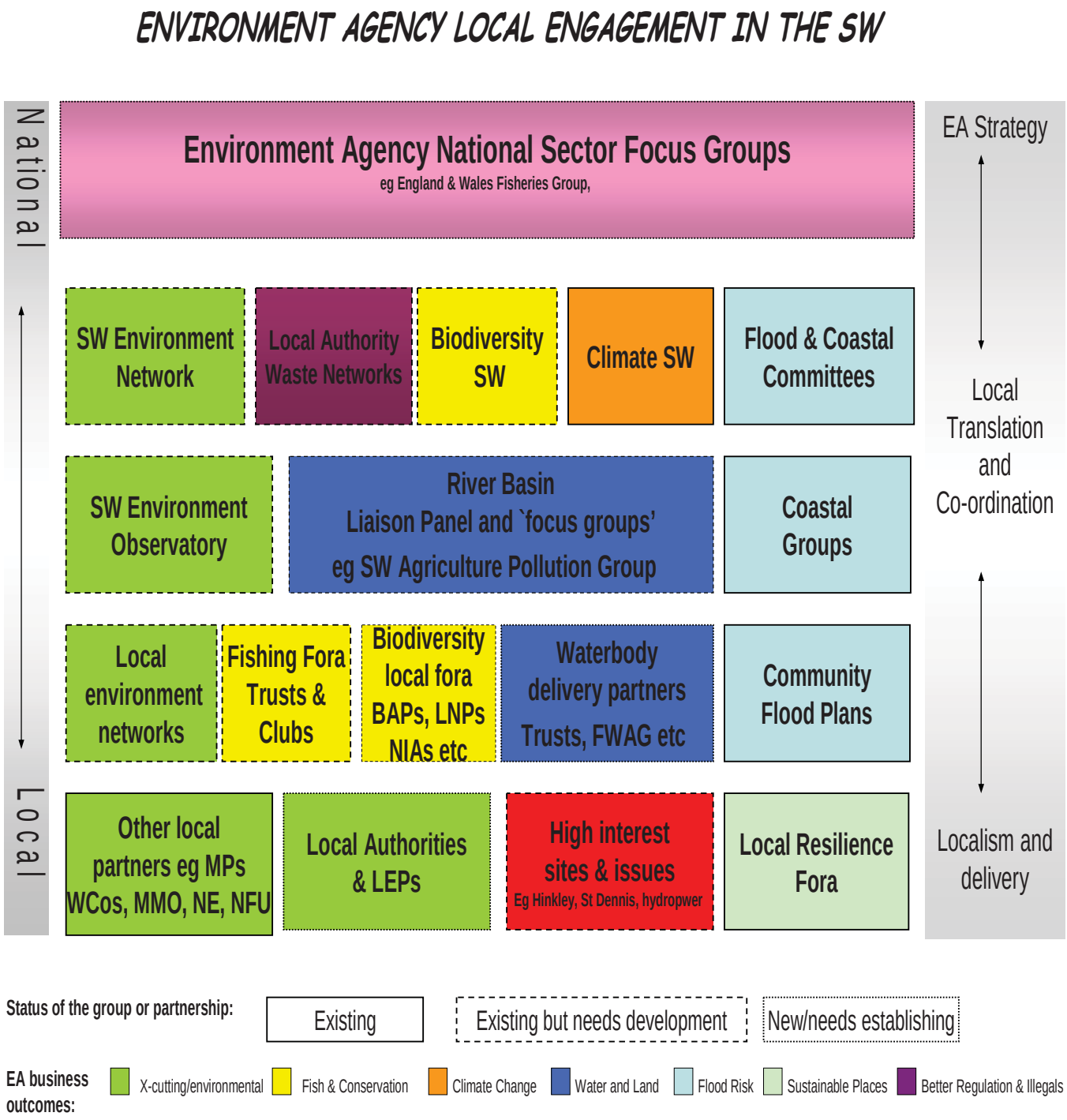
Padworth Material Recycling facility - knowing the local community had strong objections to this new Energy from Waste (EfW) facility we worked in partnership with the operator, Veolia, to set up a liaison group which included members from the local action group, parish council and local authority. We have an ongoing relationship and have recently extended the consultation period re: the permit application at the request of the group.

Westmill Landfill Energy from waste plant proposals - We met with the local campaign group opposing the plans to build an EfW plant at this already contentious landfill site ahead of the permit application. We created this opportunity to explain our role in permitting and regulating EfW plants, how local people can get involved, and importantly, what scope they have to influence us.

FishActive - digital engagement with the Sussex fisheries community - FishActive, www.fishactive.com is a web based forum in Sussex created in partnership with Fish and Fly, www.FishandFly.com. Designed to engage a wide audience in discussion, this will be a two way flow of information and the delivery of fisheries and biodiversity outcomes. Other initiatives will include electronic 'Where to Fish' guides, i-phone applications and a booking system to link anglers to fisheries.

In addition, we regularly meet with and listen to the advice of local councillors and their chief executives, MPs and MEPs.

Figure 5: Environment Agency local engagement in the South West region



Current Engagement in the South West

In the South West the environmental outcomes that we need to achieve drive the partnerships we have in place. For example: the West of England Partnership

The South West is an area of significant growth especially around Bristol, Bath and Weston Super Mare. There is significant tidal and fluvial flood risk, with 54,000 properties at risk and extensive infrastructure to maintain and upgrade as sea levels rise. Urban combined sewers are already under strain from high flows and tide locking which means urban river water quality is poor. There is also high growth planned with 100,000 new homes by 2026. The West of England Partnership is a voluntary partnership of local authorities formed to share knowledge and develop an evidence base and vision for development across the area.

Our particular focus is on identifying flood risk infrastructure needs - by jointly commissioning and funding flood studies for example at Avonmouth and Severnside - and ensuring that timely investment comes forward to upgrade defences.

We have sharpened our focus on the partnership reducing and rationalising our points of contact into a single virtual team with a lead contact. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the partnership (together with NE and FC). This demonstrates our commitment to work with them and ensures our input is timely and effective. The MoU sits alongside a shared action plan.

The overall outcome we are looking to achieve is Sustainable Growth.

Water Framework Directive

We will not be able to able to achieve our target of getting 43 per cent of South West water bodies into Good Ecological Status (GES) under the Water Framework Directive without working closely with individuals and organisations. To achieve this we have developed a strategic and local approach to engagement. Each tier of engagement from the South West River Basin Liaison Panel down to local engagement at the 'cluster level' will cover the main sector pressures and interests including:

- Water companies
- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Biodiversity/ conservation
- Community and locally elected politicians

We are working to the principle of informing widely and genuinely engaging with those who can help us achieve the necessary improvements in water quality. For example:
The Agriculture Pollution Prevention Group is a Focus group for SW River Basin Liaison Panel, on agriculture impacts on water environment. The Environment Agency currently chairs the group. The group brings together Water Companies, West Country Rivers Trust, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Natural England, National Trust to find solutions and take action to deliver the Water Framework Directive and achieve good ecological status in our water bodies.

Sites of high public interest

Within the South West we engage with individuals and local communities on a range of sites of high public interest including permits applications for energy from waste plants, new nuclear power stations and habitat creation schemes. Listening to the views of others helps us to take account of concerns that we wouldn't otherwise be aware of. We value the responses we receive as they help us to ensure that we make the best decisions for people and the environment.

Future Engagement Opportunities

Engaging locally with our fisheries customers

At present, staff within the Environment Agency are already talking to a wide range of fisheries interests via different local groups and meetings. These include, fishing club and river association AGMs, local fisheries fora, local seminars, events and one-to- one contact in the field or on specific issues and sites. We do want to remain well engaged with key players and interests in order to deliver environmental outcomes but need to think differently as a result of reducing resource about how we engage.

We can for example;

- Explore with the local fisheries foras, opportunities to review their membership to increase the range of interests they contain.
- Look at existing or new initiatives such as establishing a new local forum, or making best use of existing regular local seminars, such as are held in Devon over salmon interests or Wessex (north) around coarse fisheries to improve knowledge.
- Look at a way to liaise with a range of representatives, for example, Angling Trust SW on freshwater fisheries.
- Work with national colleagues to ensure any national Environment Agency fisheries customer forum, incorporates local views, interests and needs.

Bathing Waters

There are 25 priority bathing waters across the South West that are at risk of not meeting the requirements of the revised bathing waters directive. Pollution sources include sewage and diffuse pollution in both urban and rural areas. We are working closely with water companies, local communities and businesses (including farmers) to tackle the causes of pollution.

Local authorities

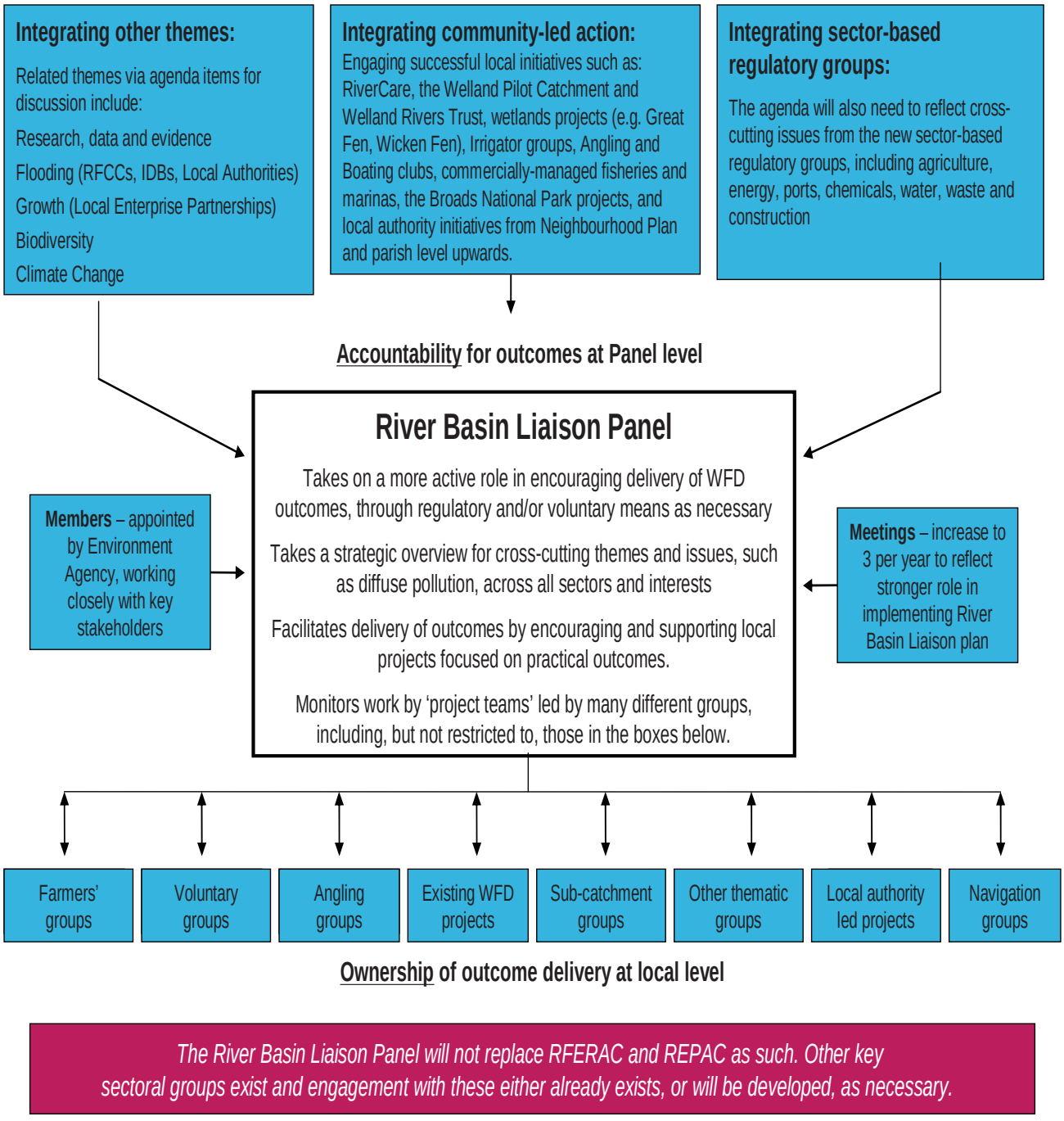
We are working closely and co-operatively with our local authorities in the South West.
In Devon and Cornwall, our priority local authorities are the four unitary authorities: Cornwall, Torbay, Plymouth and Devon with particular emphasis on Cornwall (a relatively new unitary authority) and Torbay. We also chair Environment Kernow and are a key member of Environment Devon Group.

In Wessex our priorities are the City of Bristol, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset and West Dorset District Council.

We also have representation in groups such as The West of England Partnership (WEP) which brings together four unitary authorities - Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council - and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. It co-ordinates high level planning to improve the quality of life of its residents and provide for a growing population.

We have to take every opportunity to meet with local authority councillors and officers and we will use events and meetings to develop these contacts, for example inclusion on Strategic Partnerships.

Figure 6: Environment Agency local engagement in the Anglian region



Future Engagement - Anglian

THE ROLE OF THE RIVER BASIN PANEL

It is proposed that:

- The Panel will continue to take forward its work to implement the Water Framework Directive (WFD), will be strengthened, building on its good work to date. It will continue to focus on the WFD: it is not proposed to widen its remit.

- Alongside the Panel's existing planning role (for the second River Basin Plan), it will also encourage and support practical projects set up to deliver environmental outcomes required by the WFD in sub-catchments, or to tackle cross-cutting themes.

- The Panel will encourage existing local initiatives which help achieve WFD outcomes, and ensure best practice is captured and shared. This will help to support new groups and projects where necessary, and identify the most resource-effective way to lead such activity. Decisions will be based on sound environmental data and evidence.

- River Basin management will be promoted at a scale that best suits those the Agency is working with to deliver WFD outcomes, while ensuring a strong overview of progress and priorities through the Panel. This could be at catchment level – as in the Welland pilot project – or through the natural work areas of Rivers Trusts or through Neighbourhood or Parish plans.

- The Panel will provide an important means for continuing to engage with key groups formerly represented through the REPAC and RFERAC committees which have an interest in WFD, including the Angling Trust Regional Freshwater Forum, conservation groups such as the RSPB and catchment-level navigation groups, including the Great Ouse Boating Association.

BUILDING ON EXISTING ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed that:

- The Agency will work harder to reflect the concerns of local communities in its actions and priorities, through the use of catchment engagement officers working at a local level. Their role will be to identify good ideas, partnerships and funding, and make appropriate links to deliver project outcomes

- Where local communities lack the capacity to lead local projects, the Agency will work with them through its partners in the public and voluntary sectors. Where appropriate, the Agency will also put communities in touch with existing good practice (e.g. the Welland River Trust success in leading the Welland WFD pilot catchment) to try to develop new groups or structures which will be able to take forward local aspirations for a better environment.

- The Agency is currently working with groups such as the Fisheries Consultative Forum and the Navigation Group to ensure they are fit for purpose and representative of the post-committee stakeholder landscape. Where necessary, we will support the development of new arrangements which build on existing 'localism' best practice – for example, the good work of Anglian Water's RiverCare project in engaging local communities to care for their local stretch of river.

- As a regulator, the Agency will continue to work with individuals who hold licences and permits including regulated farms, manufacturing businesses, anglers and boat-owners in order to actively seek feedback from these key groups, and maintain links with issues on the ground.

- We will continue to explore new and innovative ways of engaging with local stakeholders, including 'meet the Regional Director' forums, the use of social media projects such as Earth Chattering, and continuing use of quick-response media such as Twitter and Facebook.

ANNEX F

Case Study: a pilot catchment in action

In England and Wales there are one hundred catchments[8]. We want to engage with delivery partners at a catchment (local) level to encourage greater local participation and achieve more for communities and the water environment. In England, we are hosting pilots to trial improved ways of engaging with local organisations. These pilots are one of the ways that the Environment Agency is taking forwards the new approaches to engagement. We have included this case study as a real example of how we are working with others to deliver real environmental outcomes.

The pilot catchment approach provides the opportunity to work with experts in civil society to enable us to deliver outcomes for people and the environment. This doesn't just include technical experts but experts in their locality and communities. It provides an opportunity for us to develop new ways of working with partners, engaging in range partnership working.

The Environment Agency has a number of partnership agreements with stakeholders. Defra encourages the Environment Agency to engage in a range of formal and informal methods of partnership working. We have drawn up collaborative working principles based on good practice and experience of working with our partners. This builds on our extensive 'Working with Others' programme that has supported improved engagement on a range of issues.

Working in this way helps to ensure that environmental matters are considered in a holistic and multi-functional way. Moving away from an advisory committee structure enables the Environment Agency to invest resource in working with partners and communities to deliver outcomes in a flexible way.

Specific Case Study

The Adur & Ouse Partnership was established in October 2011, with support from a number of organisations. The Partnership is hosted by the Environment Agency as one of ten initial Defra led pilot catchments, but has been developed collaboratively with all interested parties agreeing to commit time and resource. The Partnership exists to:

Improve local waters in the Adur and Ouse and achieve more ambitious environmental goals by:

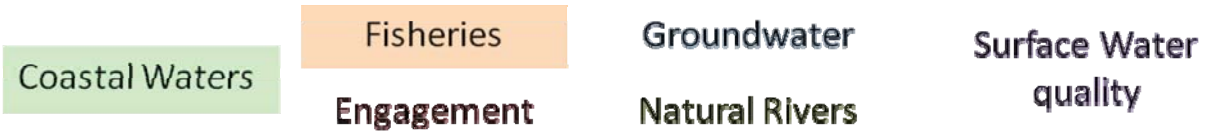
- Working together to understand the issues.
- Discussing and agreeing on outcomes and priorities.
- Sharing information and resources.
- Working together to tackle difficult issues that require multi-agency input.
- Working collaboratively to deliver work on the ground to achieve the agreed outcomes.

[8] A catchment is an area with several, often interconnected water bodies (rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal waters).

A core steering group provides direction and co-ordination for work in the Adur and Ouse catchment; this group has 12 members who meet monthly:

- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Brighton University
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust
- South Downs National Park
- South East Water
- Southern Water
- Sussex Wildlife Trust

The Adur & Ouse Steering Group collaboratively developed six work themes and have agreed to form sub-groups (task & finish groups) to pursue each theme.



Adur & Ouse task & finish groups will understand the complex issues within the Adur and Ouse catchment by drawing on a wide range of expertise. This understanding will stem from robust evidence gathered from the wider Adur & Ouse Partnership and local communities. The evidence will be used to underpin all action in the Adur and Ouse catchment and form the basis of the Adur & Ouse Catchment Plan.

The Steering Group made an active decision to have a dedicated fisheries theme to ensure that the Adur & Ouse Partnership were engaging with the widest range of the angling community. As the Adur and Ouse pilot catchment also includes coastal waters, sea anglers and commercial fisheries will also be included in projects and engagement.

Projects supported by the Adur & Ouse Partnership and led by the Environment Agency are following the ‘Working with Others’ approach to engagement. Some examples are the Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitat (MORPH) project and the Sussex Coastal Habitats Inshore Pilot Project (SCHIP).

MORPH is a catchment wide project combining river and floodplain restoration. The Environment Agency has held several public drop-in sessions in village halls to discuss the project, and feedback has shown that 90% understood why we are doing MORPH ‘quite well’ or ‘very well’ and 91% feel that restoration of the river and floodplain is the right thing to do. One to one engagement is now taking place at site specific locations, ensuring that people are truly involved throughout the project.

The SCHIP aims to develop a better and shared understanding of the habitats, species and pressures on the Adur and Ouse coastal water body. The Environment Agency and the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) held a series of participatory workshops to gather evidence from the local community for the project. We are also looking at how the wider

marine community can help gather data to assist in the assessment of the health of our marine environment.

We are utilising a number of communications channels to increase awareness of the Adur & Ouse Partnership. One example is the use of an independent website, www.fishactive.com, to post online information targeted at anglers and people interested in the water environment. This website also hosts the Adur & Ouse blog and also provides a forum for people to feed their views into the Partnership.

ANNEX G

Case Study: Future engagement arrangements with fisheries stakeholders in the North West Region

Background
The Environment Agency has been working closely with the RaLFAC[9] Chairs and members and with other fisheries and angling groups through local managers since the Government announced proposals to abolish RaLFACs in autumn 2010.

There were more responses to the consultation from the North West than any other geographic region and the responses from the North West tended to be more opposed to abolition. The Environment Agency in the North West has, and continues, to work closely with partners and stakeholders to develop the future approaches to engagement and to ensure that they can continue to benefit from the experience and expertise of the community if REPAC and RaLFAC are abolished.

Engagement with fisheries stakeholders in the North West
EA North West engage with angling and fisheries stakeholders in a number of ways – and at a number of local levels – for example frontline environment management teams engage with local fisheries consultative and clubs, providing information to those with fisheries interests and seeking views on fisheries matters and our performance so that this can inform how we provide our service – locally and nationally.

EA North West works with a range of local fishing clubs through local consultative associations. For example, they engage with the Bowland Game Fishing Association via its membership of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association. EA North West meet with the Chairman of the Ribble Fisheries Consultative Association every two months to discuss issues relating to the Ribble.

EA North West also maintains strong links with the North West Regional Consultative Council (representing all the Consultatives in the North West), the North West Angling Trust and the Angling Development Board capturing concerns regarding national technical, strategy or enforcement issues. They attend individual Consultative Council meetings, Regional Consultative Council meetings and meetings of the Angling Trust.

EA North West works closely with the IFCA (Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority) on fisheries technical and enforcement issues related to the marine environment. This has worked particularly well on developing a sustainable fisheries approach for the North West shellfish fisheries.

EA North West works on the development of Marine Conservation Zones with a wide range of stakeholders from fishers to local authorities and the Marine Management Organisation and

[9] FERACs – Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committees is the informal and usual term for the statutory Regional and Local Fisheries Advisory Committees (RaLFACs)

promotes work across the north of the country on fisheries projects - this has resulted in greater investment in fish passes and barrier removal in partnership with local communities.

Customer feedback is also very important whether received at local or national level key points from engagement, meetings, correspondence or complaints and commendations related to angling and fisheries and is shared between local and national teams and acted upon as necessary.

River Basin Liaison Panels are being evolved in the North West to ensure they can better enable delivery of environmental outcomes. To support this local catchment groups, involving angling representatives, are being established. The North West River Basin Liaison Panel provides a clear line of sight between national and local decision making including our catchment pilots. EA North West is seeking feedback from the RBLP on their delivery of improvements.

EA North West work with external bodies, such as the Bowland Game Fishing Association, to make sure that they are communicating with members in the most effective and helpful way. In partnership with customers and stakeholders, a number of workshops are being set up over the next few months. These will ensure that EA North West can learn from local needs and further evolve their proposed future approaches to engagement.

EA North West is developing their use of digital engagement via social media and their website. They offer feedback via the website and participate in local web-based fisheries forums. They will continue to explore new innovative ways of communicating and engaging with local partners in this way.

EA consultations are available nationally online via the EA e-consultation tool. EA North West will use all their local engagement networks to draw attention to EA consultations that are relevant to local North West fisheries groups.

The Angling Trust is establishing Angling Trust regional forums, which will broadly reflect the Environment Agency operational regions. These provide open forums where any Angling Trust members, or others with fisheries interests, can discuss matters of local or national concern. Local Chairs are being appointed to these Forums. The Forums will provide a clear line of sight for fisheries and angling issues and interests to be raised from local to national level and vice versa. EA North West are supporting the establishment of a North West forum and will attend once it has been established.

ANNEX H

Case Study: engagement with stakeholders using social media

Background

Web and social media are very important to the Environment Agency in engaging with partners, customers and communities. We have made significant developments in this area over the last year and are committed to making further progress. We see this as an important way to work with others to deliver environmental outcomes – especially with the proposed abolition of the REPAC and RaLFAC Committees.

Social media helps the Environment Agency to engage with our customers, build communities and increase efficiency. We are committed to using it effectively to complement and improve the existing partnership working approaches and to increase local accountability and scrutiny of the organisation.

Nationally the Environment Agency has used social media to achieve environmental outcomes in several ways, including our iPhone applications for flood warnings and bathing waters. A few other examples – including social media opportunities that will help engagement if the REPAC and RaLFAC committees are abolished – are given below.

Social media engagement on environment protection in the North West

EA North West, have developed a virtual forum on LinkedIn to comment on major environment issues in the region, particularly those involving pollution, climate change, waste and sustainable development. The group originated from the North West REPAC Chair who has been instrumental in setting it up. It already has approximately 100 members. Although initial help is being given by the Environment Agency, it is hoped the forum will embrace other regional partners, including Natural England, the Forestry Commission, Chambers of Commerce, CBI, Universities and others.

The members of the forum are made from people in the North West who have had some relevant experience in the issues confronting the Environment Agency, including light-touch regulation, climate change, waste and sustainability. The forum also has several requirements for members, including having several years experience in an environmental field and a willingness to comment.

There is also a ‘news’ website, ‘Environment NW’, being developed and led by the Environment Agency. This will initially be filled with Environment Agency news, but selected by lay people. Once up and running smoothly (August/September 2012), the EA will encourage other North West environmental organisations (including Natural England, the Coastal Forum, Wildlife Trusts and Local Economic Partnerships) to use this open website for their news and events.

Engaging with fisheries and angling communities via social media

EA Yorkshire and the North East have been using social media to improve communication with local angling groups. Previously the fisheries team had tried a number of traditional communication approaches for example, quarterly newsletters, EA website and face-to-face

forums. The problem with these events was that they tended to be attended by the same representatives.

Social media is now playing an important part in engaging with local angling groups. A member of the EA fisheries team uses Twitter to promote their work. To date this officer has 161 people following his "tweets" which is above average for an individual.

The EA have also set up web chats through online angling communities. For example, with the permission of the administrators at www.yorkshirefishing.net they offered anglers a two-hour online questions and answers session with our Fisheries and Biodiversity team. Anglers were invited to submit their questions before the Q&A session. On the day 50 anglers were online viewing the session at one time, and 135 posts were received on a total of 21 different subjects. The session was received positively by anglers online who said they would benefit from a follow-up.

Social media – working in partnership
Social media has been an important part of developing EA partnership work with other organisations. For example the Fish Active website www.fishactive.com which has the full support of the Angling Trust and other key fisheries associations and interest groups. It is designed to provide a central resource for all matters of interest to the fishing community and a platform for constructive debate on matters of local as well as national interest.

Incident management
Social media also offers the opportunity to exchange real time information and allow accessibility and transparency of date. This has allowed for good results with regards to environmental protection. For example, an incident in November last year relating to a lorry turning over on the M1 and spilling its load of brewers' waste which was threatening the River Rother and it's important fishery. The incident trended on Twitter as the Marmite Spill and was the most discussed, emerging topic on Twitter in the UK at that time. The EA used the opportunity to proactively promote their role in preventing any harm to fish in the River Rother. EA tweets reached an audience of nearly 74,000 via 68 re-tweets. Within minutes of tweeting the EA had calls from both ITV Calendar and BBC Look North who went out to film environment officers testing for pollution in the river.

Customer and Stakeholder engagement panels
We have developed new online panels that will enable us to seek customer and stakeholder views about aspects of our service. We'll be using these to seek views across all aspects of our business – and they will be an additional tool for engagement.

E-Consultations
All of our consultations are published online using our 'e-consultation tool' which allows customers and stakeholders to share their views and comments with us and shape our decisions. Previously REPAC and RaLFAC Committees were used to obtain views on consultations – now everyone is able to comment using this system. We will use the national and local groups and approaches detailed in the consultation to ensure people are aware of this service / specific consultations.

All of these approaches will help to support the Environment Agency's future approaches to engagement and allow communities to be reaches in a flexible and effective way without the traditional structure of Advisory Committees. The EA are committed to using social media to provide information transparently – nationally and locally – and to enable partnership working with civil society.

ANNEX I

Case Study: EA South West future engagement with fisheries and biodiversity stakeholders and partners

EA South West (EA) has a number of ways to engage with angling and biodiversity stakeholders – and have developed this further since the proposed abolition of RaLFAC. Key examples are detailed below.

South West Rivers Association
The South West Rivers Association (SWRA) is a political lobbying body representing around 20 salmon and sea trout rivers in the South West. The SWRA were the body who, during the Fisheries Review of 2000, recommended that fisheries work and money should be taken out of the Environment Agency and given to private bodies. Two SWRA/EA meetings per year are attended by managers to discuss our high level approach to fisheries matters, including operational delivery. The EA also attends their quarterly Council meetings to answer questions of policy enactment around hot topics such as fish stocking, netting and land-use impacts.

Rivers Trusts
There are 2 Rivers Trusts in the South West – West country Rivers Trust (WRT) in Devon and Cornwall, and Wessex Chalk Stream and Rivers Trust (WCSRT) in Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. The EA has regular high level liaison meetings with each Trust to discuss partnership working and to share best practice. The WRT have taken on many projects related to Water Framework Directive (WFD) delivery, including fish passes and habitat improvements. Many of the local fisheries interests are supportive of the rivers trust activities. With WCSRT, the EA are helping to fund a Project Officer to help them build capacity to deliver WFD improvements. We're developing a National Memorandum of Understanding with Rivers Trusts to make our partnership working even easier and to allow us to share data more easily.

Environment Agency-led liaison
EA South West holds a local fisheries Forum meeting twice a year in each area. These are aimed specifically at angling interests and include representatives from rivers trusts, salmon netting and fish farming. The agendas are set jointly with local members inputting their own issues and initiatives. Generally, these meetings are funded and hosted by the Environment Agency. In addition locally specific Coarse Fish Seminars are held throughout South West as many of the other meetings are salmon/trout-centric. These Seminars are attended by around 100 external people from coarse fishing clubs, private fisheries, fisheries consultants and anglers. They aim to raise and debate issues of local concern and provide a mechanism of linking local people to national strategies.

The EA also runs some specific issue-led meetings such as the Hampshire Avon Salmon Group about issues specific to salmon stocks on this specially designated salmon river. Local interested people attend and the meeting is used to educate, inform and direct local support for action on the ground. The EA attend a regional Hatchery Forum led by river associations, in order to guide local interests in their fish stocking programmes and to ensure best use of resources, including fish for spawning.

External-led liaison
The national Angling Trust (AT) holds a quarterly regional forum meeting. EA South West provides funding nationally to support an AT Regional Officer to help build up the effectiveness of these regional forum meetings.

The Angling Development Board (ADB) is tasked with promoting angling across the country. EA South West has committed funding to provide a local ADB Angling Development Officer to help build civil society capacity so as to move towards more of a 'Big Society'-led approach to developing and promoting angling locally.

In Devon, local fishing associations have set up River Association Partnership Meetings in order to liaise with local EA staff to help deliver a more integrated, civil society approach to river improvements, especially directed at Water Framework Directive work. These have been very well received and have already led to projects on the ground led by external people with expert advice from EA staff.

Wildlife Trusts have also set up partnership meetings following the proposed cessation of RaLFAC. EA staff attend many of these meetings to discuss joint working and to ensure co-ordination of workplans.

Individual angling clubs hold Annual General Meetings to which EA staff are invited so as to give the grass roots angler the information normally only supplied to club officials in high level meetings. This is a great way of gathering local issues and intelligence. At these meetings the EA receive a lot of feedback on how they are doing as an organisation and on how they are seen to be spending rod licence money. This feedback helps the EA to develop ways of working and to prioritise their work to fit local needs.

Post- RaLFAC electronic network
The South West RaLFAC Chair has set up an electronic group of interested fisheries and biodiversity externals to which is sent a regular briefing of local and national issues. This ensures that those from RaLFAC, along with a much bigger added audience, receive up to date information and briefings on fisheries and biodiversity matters. This will be continued and developed into the future.

ANNEX J

List of Consultees for the consultation on future arrangements for RaLFACs and REPACs

It should be noted that this list of consultees is not exhaustive. We welcomed views from anyone expressing an interest in the consultation. Although not specified on the list, all the RaLFAC and REPAC Committee Chairs and members were engaged with as part of the formal consultation.

Agricultural Industries Confederation
Angling Development Board
Angling Trust
Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries
Association of Rivers Trusts
British Canoe Union
British Metal Recycling Association
British Trout Association
British Waterways
Business in the Community
Campaign for Protection of Rural England
Canoe England
CBI
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Chemical Industries Association
CIWEM
Consumer Council for Water
Country Land and Business Association;
Countryside for All Group;
Drinking Water Inspectorate
English Heritage
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
Forestry Commission
Freshwater Biological Association
HCA
Health Protection Agency
Highways Agency
Inland Waterways Association;
Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities and the Association of IFCAs
Institute of Air Quality Management
Local Government Group
National Farmers Union
National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations

National Parks Authority
National Trust
Natural England
OFWAT
Royal Society of Chemistry
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Salmon and Trout Association
Sustainable Eel Group
Water UK
Wild Trout Trust
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Wildlife Trusts
Woodland Trust