

## Challenges and Choices 2019-2020

Guide to External workshop response

[Version 4] December 2019

**Audience:** External groups

### Workshop approach

#### Two week before the session

Ask participants to read through the briefing below. Consultation link here:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/>.

Agree in advance:

- i) whether to respond by challenge(s) or sector(s)
- ii) which questions to complete -just Question 1 or more?
- iii) which river basin(s) your response relates to – All or just 1 or 2 (with the Severn, is it all the Severn or just the Severn in England).

If you just answer Question 1 allow 1 hour. Allow 2 hours for more questions.

#### On the Day

- 1 Nominate a note taker and a timekeeper for the workshop. Outline how long to spend on each question depending on which questions your team will answer.
- 2 Set up a live link to the consultation <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/> and watch the introductory film together ([Small Changes, Big Picture](#)).
- 3 Share the water story narrative. If you have a general response to this consultation, or one that does not fall under the challenges, put your comments here - Question 1 – the Water Story. Participants read and make notes individually.
- 4 Discuss the group's response. Is there a consensus? If yes, capture this. If not, make a note of the differing views.
- 5 Select another topic area the group has agreed to answer questions about. Watch the film relating to this (see links below). Discuss your comments. Is there a consensus? If yes, capture this. If not, make a note of the differing views.
- 6 When the group has answered the questions, pass your comments to the note taker to write up the responses. Share these with the group after to check understanding, making amendments if needed.
- 7 Collate responses onto the proforma and submit the response via <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/environment-and-business/challenges-and-choices/>

### Need to know

- We are seeking your views on the challenges our waters face and the choices and changes we all need to make to help tackle those challenges.
- Your responses will: help shape the management of the water environment. The information gathered through this consultation will help us update the current river basin management plans, starting with the publication of draft plans in 2020; and will help us consider how some of the current approaches to the management of water in England will need to change in response to a changing climate and a growing population.
- The Environment Agency (EA) Challenges and Choices (C&C) consultation covers England's waters in Anglian, Humber, North West, South East, South West, Thames, Severn (England **and** Wales) and Northumbria river basin districts. For responses on the River Dee please use the Natural Resources Wales (NRW) consultation (this ends on 22 December 2019). For responses on the Solway Tweed please use the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) consultation.
- You can collate a team response, or individuals can respond individually. The consultation is open to all Defra family members.
- Not all questions have to be answered – just Question 1 can be answered.
- Please respond by 24 April 2020.

### The Questions

Question 1 is a useful introduction to read and make notes or make the main submission. See the water story narrative below.

1. The way we treat water today will shape all our futures. What changes can you make to improve the water we rely on?

### **Climate and biodiversity crisis**

2. What more can we do to tackle the impacts of climate change on the water environment and what additional resources (including evidence, targets, tools and additional mechanisms/measures) do we need to do this?
3. What can we do to address this biodiversity crisis and meet the 25 Year Environment Plan targets for wetlands, freshwater and coastal habitats and wildlife?
4. Environmental targets can generate action and provide a strong signal of intent. Could additional statutory targets contribute to improving the water environment? If so, what types of targets should be considered?

### **Challenge 1: Changes to water levels and flows**

5. What can be done to address the challenge of changing water levels and flows?  
If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the questions below:

6. The abstraction plan, referenced in the changes to water levels and flows narrative, explains our current and future approach for managing water abstraction. What else do we



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need to do to meet the challenges of climate change and growth while balancing the needs of abstractors and the environment?

7. What kind of a water flow environment do we want? Should we maintain statutory minimum water flow and level standards universally across England as we do now, or go further in some places based on environmental risk?

### **Challenge 2: Chemicals in the water environment**

8. What can be done to address the challenge of chemicals in the water environment? If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the question below:

9. Do you support the Environment Agency's proposed strategic approach to managing chemicals as referenced in the Chemicals in the Water Environment challenge document? If not, what changes would you make?

10. What balance do you think is needed between current chemical use, investing in end-of-pipe wastewater treatment options and modifying consumer use and behaviour?

### **Challenge 3: Invasive non-native species**

11. What can be done to address invasive non-native species? If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the questions below:

12. How would you promote Check, Clean, Dry to all recreational users of water, including those who are not in clubs or attend events?

13. Are there any barriers stopping you adopting good biosecurity when you are in or near water?

### **Challenge 4: Physical modifications**

14. What can be done to address the physical modification of our rivers and coasts? If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the question below:

15. Giving more space for rivers and coasts to move and adjust naturally will regenerate habitat, improve wildlife and help us adapt to climate change. What can you and others do to support these changes?

### **Challenge 5: Plastics pollution**

16. What can be done to address plastics pollution in the water environment? If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the question below:

17. What actions should the Environment Agency take to reduce plastic pollution?

### **Challenge 6: Pollution from abandoned mines**

18. What can be done to address pollution from abandoned mines?

### **Challenge 7: Pollution from agriculture and rural areas**

19. What can be done to address pollution from agriculture and rural areas?



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If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the question below:

20. How can we support the farming sector to excel at innovative solutions which benefit both productivity and the environment? What should these solutions look like?

### **Challenge 8: Pollution from towns, cities and transport**

21. What can be done to address pollution from towns, cities and transport?

22. How can sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure be most effectively used to tackle pollution from urban areas? What challenges are there to using them?

### **Challenge 9: Pollution from water industry wastewater**

23. What can be done to address pollution from water industry wastewater?

If you have read the further information about this challenge, you may also like to answer the question below:

24. What opportunities exist for water companies to collaborate with other sectors and organisations on measures to improve the water environment?

### **Catchment partnership working Working together**

25. How can local partnerships become more inclusive and representative of all of the stakeholders within their catchments?

26. How can local partnerships achieve a better balance of public and private funding to support and sustain their environmental work?

### **Who pays?**

27. How should the step change in protecting and improving the water environment be funded and who should pay? Are there any barriers to doing this?

### **The water story Narrative:**

Water unites all life on Earth. You, everyone you love and every bit of nature around us depends on having enough clean water to be able to survive. Billions of years ago water came out from the centre of the planet and started to shape the newly forming land. It helped create the right conditions for life to evolve and thrive. It's cycled round and around since that time, in the sky, underground, in rivers and seas day after day after day. Every drop of water you see or feel has been on an incredible journey. But despite this incredible story, it's easy to take water for granted.



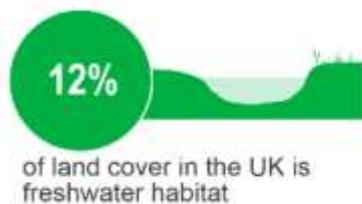
Let's take a moment to think about all the things water does for us. Of course, it quenches your thirst. It washes your body and your clothes and dishes and it's there to flush your loo. It's essential for creating the food and drink you consume, whether that's helping grow plants

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in a field or cooking in your kitchen. Water helps generate your light, heat and electricity too, whether at home or at work. It's needed to manufacture all the things you own, from your mobile phone to your favourite mug. Water is used in cars, buses and other transport you need to get about. And when it rains, it cleans the air we breathe. It can be a huge part of staying healthy and happy in other ways too. Perhaps you like going swimming or fishing. Maybe you're a keen gardener or enjoy walking your dog in the countryside; a landscape shaped by water. Maybe you canoe or sail or just love a day at the seaside. Few things are more beautiful than a waterfall, especially when it's surrounded by birds, bees, animals, trees and flowers. They all need water to be healthy and happy just like you do. Water is so much more than what you get out of the tap. It's our greatest natural asset.

For hundreds of years our ancestors took water for granted. They relied on water to cleanse and purify, washing away all the dirt, poisons and toxins of the Industrial Age and its booming human population. Water was everywhere, so much and so powerful, they didn't believe they could possibly damage it. They were wrong.

By the 1950s water in England was so polluted that many of our babbling brooks and singing streams fell silent. Nature couldn't survive there any longer. The fish died because they couldn't get the light, oxygen and food they needed. Waters became still as they were choked with weeds. And people engineered channels, moving water away; building over rivers, burying them or diverting them to serve our needs.



Since then, tighter environmental standards, changes in industry and massive investment in bigger sewers and better waste water treatment plants have restored the most polluted rivers. Today, the asset value of fresh water in the UK is estimated to be £39.5 billion. In England we spend about £5 billion a year to protect that asset and to protect public health and wildlife from a polluted water environment. But there's still so much to do. Only 16% of England's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuaries and seas are close to their natural state. Our climate is changing and there's more of us than ever before. This is bringing with it some big challenges that need us to make equally big choices.

One of our biggest challenges is being able to invest the amount of time and money we think it will take to protect our water assets and get back all those benefits that we've lost. A huge gap is opening up between the outcomes we want to achieve and our ability to achieve them. At the current rate of progress it will take over 200 years to reach the government's 25 Year Environment Plan target of at least 75% of waters to be close to their natural state. We urgently need to find better, faster ways to get more investment in our water environment.

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16%



of England's groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuaries and seas are close to their natural state

90%



of the UK's wetland habitats have been lost in the last 100 years

Today we're working together to achieve a better balance between people and nature, so that we can all have what we need for a good life, not just now, but in the future too. Striking that balance means lots of individuals uniting to manage water and writing our plan down for everyone to share in. We want your help to update the river basin management plans and find different and more ambitious ways of protecting the natural world and our precious water assets.

These plans, one for each river basin district, apply to all of us, including you. That's why it's important you tell us what you want them to say through this consultation. We'll use this evidence to tell those in power what choices you want to make to overcome our challenges. But you needn't stop there. Keep talking to your local politicians, businesses and council leaders about the changes you want to see in your environment and the legacy you want to leave. You can also make small changes at home and at work. The short films in this consultation contain simple ideas for things you can do that will really help.

Water is precious and it needs us all to show it some love. Join the growing movement of citizens taking action to protect our precious natural resources and wonderful wildlife. If we get this right, water will continue its incredible journey into the next generation; clean and plentiful, valued and loved.

### **How do you want to respond – by Challenge or Sector?**

Challenges describe the significant issues affecting the water environment: this is how the consultation is set out:

- climate and biodiversity crisis
- changes to water levels and flows
- chemicals in the water environment
- invasive non-native species
- physical modifications
- plastics pollution
- pollution from abandoned mines
- pollution from agriculture and rural areas
- pollution from towns, cities and transport
- pollution from water industry wastewater

Sector responses would cover the challenges most relevant to some of the main sectors (though not exclusive): see question numbers:

Agriculture and rural land management

- Challenges: chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10), physical modification (14,15)



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- Pressures: FIO (Faecal contamination), fine sediment, nitrate, phosphorus

### Government (including Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England)

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10), Invasive Non-native Species (11,12,13), physical modification (14,15)
- Pressures: FIO (Faecal contamination), fine sediment, nitrate, phosphorus

### Construction

- Challenges: chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10), Invasive Non-native Species (11,12,13)
- Pressures: faecal contamination, fine sediment

### Energy production

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10)
- Pressures: drinking water protected areas

### Food and drink

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10)
- Pressures: phosphorus

### Forestry

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7)
- Pressures: fine sediment, nitrate, phosphorus

### Local authorities/Public Sector

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), Invasive non-native Species (11,12,13), physical modification (14,15)
- Pressures: faecal contamination, fine sediment

### Manufacturing and retail

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10)

### Mining

- Challenges: chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10)
- Pressures: fine sediment

### Ports

- Challenges: chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10); physical modification (14,15)
- Pressures: fine sediment

### Water industry

- Challenges: changes to water levels and flows (5,6,7), chemicals in the water environment (8,9,10), Invasive Non-native Species (11,12,13), physical modification (14,15).

### Films

Each 'challenge' page has a short film, a brief summary and links to further detailed information, and the pressures responsible for causing it.

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Small Changes, Big Picture Trailer	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KdVoxs2SSM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KdVoxs2SSM</a>
Managing Water in Our Environment	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA6gqonQL0Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA6gqonQL0Q</a>
Climate Crisis	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbs7Ci3nF_c">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbs7Ci3nF_c</a>
Changes to Water Levels and Flows	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_ktVTM4Mrw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_ktVTM4Mrw</a>
Chemicals in the Water Environment	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP493JsiukM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP493JsiukM</a>
Invasive Non-Native Species	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_OiGvphEBw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_OiGvphEBw</a>
Physical Modifications	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2c03-wJj9JI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2c03-wJj9JI</a>
Plastics Pollution	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cDo2gMa0-o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cDo2gMa0-o</a>
Pollution from Abandoned Mines	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xnals6bTvX4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xnals6bTvX4</a>
Pollution from Agriculture and Rural Areas	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFaVYsOjea4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFaVYsOjea4</a>
Pollution from Towns, Cities and Transport	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAr_eJm6RKFU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAr_eJm6RKFU</a>
Pollution from Wastewater	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBcPb0q2tZg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBcPb0q2tZg</a>

