

# River Basin Management Planning – Update November 2015

## The publication of the plans

SEPA has now submitted final draft river basin management plans to Scottish Government and Defra. Subject to approval the plans will be published on 22 December 2015.

## What will the plan look like?

The plans comprise a short summary document supported by a number of technical appendices. There is also a powerful interactive webtool, the Water Environment Hub, that holds data at a range of scales from national to individual water bodies. The plans are an action plan to protect and improve the water environment through a phased programme of measures for the next 12 years.

The plans cover:

- The current state of the water environment
- Pressures
- Measures
- Summary of objectives

## How are we going to deliver the objectives in the plans?

Good progress was made during the first cycle but there is still a large amount to do with 35% of water bodies in less than good condition. Due to the nature of the main pressures requiring attention (rural diffuse pollution, physical condition and fish barriers), collaboration and partnerships with other agencies will be essential to achieve the goals set out in the plan.

The main actions set out in the plan in these areas are;

### Rural diffuse pollution.

Scotland's land managers and public bodies will complete the work started in the first cycle on priority catchments. This work will be expanded between 2015 and 2021 to cover all catchments in Scotland affected by rural diffuse pollution and characterised by intensive land use.

SEPA will also investigate and confirm the sources of pollution in a number of smaller focus areas. These areas are characterised by lower intensity land use. Measures in these smaller focus areas will be in place by 2027.

### Physical condition

A partnership approach will significantly expand the effort and funding we put in to improving the physical condition of water bodies. The aim is to have all water bodies improved to good status by 2027. This includes physical works in a number of water bodies during the second cycle, and a large programme of scoping studies in the remaining areas.

## Barriers restricting fish migration

We will look to work with relevant partners to build on the successful work under the Water Environment Fund (WEF) in the first cycle, to remove all remaining barriers by 2027. The work on barrier removal will be delivered through a combination of licence reviews for active sites, working with public bodies on their asset management and addressing historic structures through WEF. There are a small number of barriers where we already know it is not feasible to provide fish access, and these have been given a less stringent objective.

## Other work areas

Scottish Water will carry out the works necessary to address discharges of waste water currently contributing to worse than good water quality. They will also complete a large study programme in discussion with SEPA to confirm the extent to which waste water discharges will need to be addressed and where appropriate, design the necessary works to address those discharges. They will also work to improve flows and levels in impacted waterbodies.

SEPA will work with operators of discharges, water abstractions and of reservoirs to ensure those operators take the actions needed to improve water quality, flows and levels through the CAR review process. We will also work in partnership to increase our certainty in respect of the impact of pressures on flows and levels in further water bodies to confirm whether or not action is needed.

The risk of deterioration is a key issue for invasive non-native species; actions will continue to be delivered in partnership with relevant organisations through awareness raising and biosecurity measures.

## Stakeholder engagement

Successful delivery of the plan will be dependent upon strong partnerships and a shared vision of environmental improvement; hence the stakeholder engagement strategy is an integral element of the plan. The advisory group network will continue to be used but in a flexible way with an increased focus on delivery and implementation. We will also continue to work with colleagues in flood risk management to align engagement and projects where possible.

If you would like further information please contact [RBMP@sepa.org.uk](mailto:RBMP@sepa.org.uk)



