



River Basin Management Planning

Orkney Advisory Group Update

April 2017

The update paper contains the following topics;

1. [Area Update](#)
2. [RBMP Data - where to look for what you need?](#)
3. [RBMP Delivery Priorities](#)
4. [RBMP Delivery Updates](#)

1. Area Update

Work is underway across Scotland to deliver the objectives of the [second river basin management plan](#). Graph 1 below shows the types of pressures and when measures will be delivered in Orkney. The measures are predominantly in the third cycle; this is due to the need to further develop our understanding of the cause and extent of some of these pressures.

The main pressure affecting the water environment in Orkney is from changes to physical condition such as straightening of burns; this affects the Burn of Hourston, Voy Burn, Tormiston Burn, Netherbrough Burn and Burn of Corrigall. The objectives to improve this are to be delivered between 2021 and 2027. This is because we need to gather more information to provide confidence in the classification and decide on the actions needed.

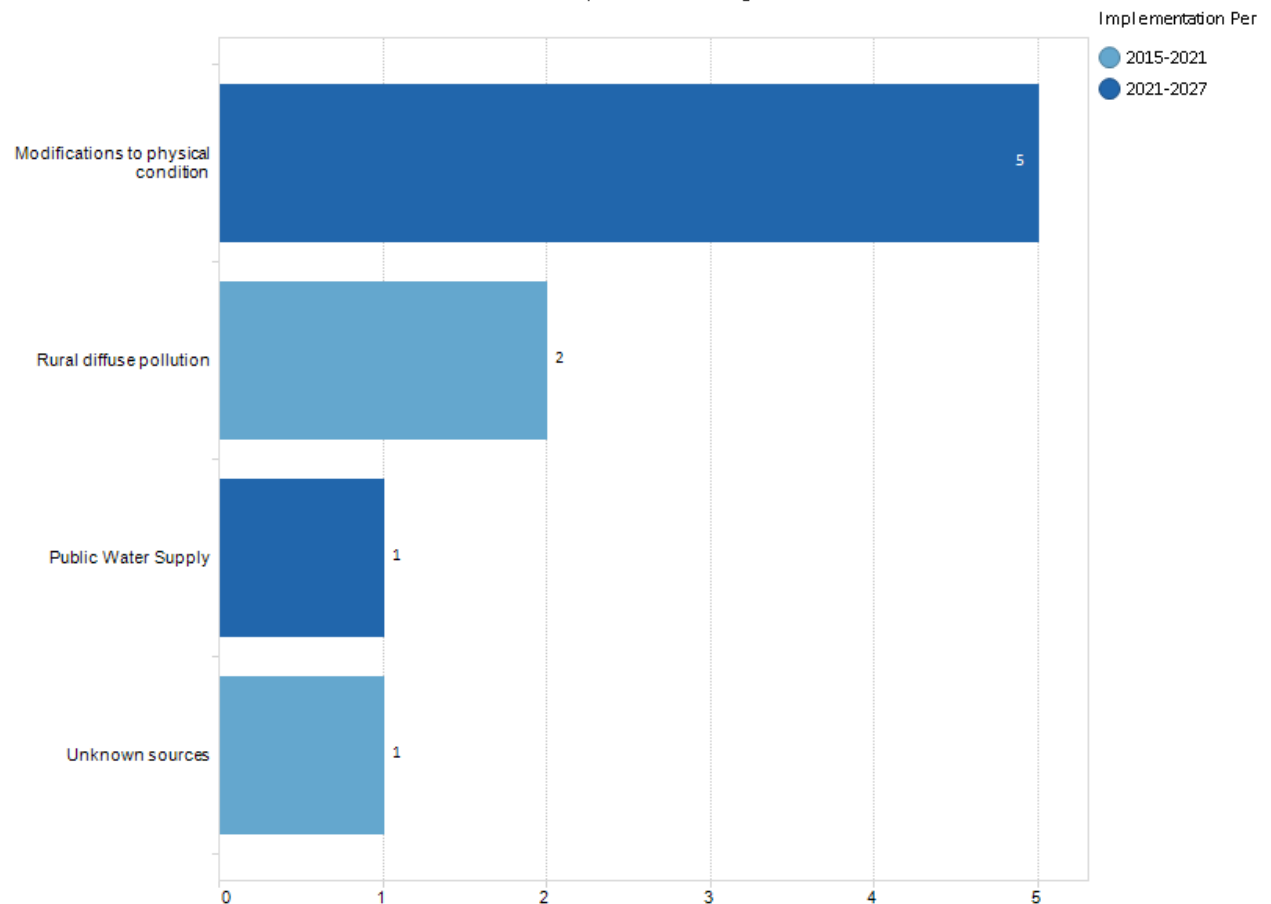
There are two pressures relating to rural diffuse pollution affecting the Burn of Hourston and the Voy Burn. We will be addressing these through a 'focus area' approach for rural diffuse pollution, with investigations to start by 2021.

There is a pressure on flows and levels on the Mill Burn downstream of Loch of Kirbister, because of public water supply. We will work with Scottish Water to ensure that these impacts are managed.

There is one pressure on water quality from 'unknown sources'. This pressure cannot be attributed to a single sector and may be impacted from diffuse and point source pollution, for example sewage discharges and agricultural land use impacts. SEPA is conducting further investigation during this cycle including source apportionment modelling and increased sampling to determine the reason for the downgrade.

Graph 1: Extract of RBMP2 objectives for Orkney from the [water environment hub](#)

Number of surface waters in which action will be taken to address pressures affecting Overall condition



We are keen to maintain a network of stakeholders with an interest in helping to protect and improve the water environment. If you would like to suggest additional members who you think would be interested to be kept informed of RBMP progress please let me know via; OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk

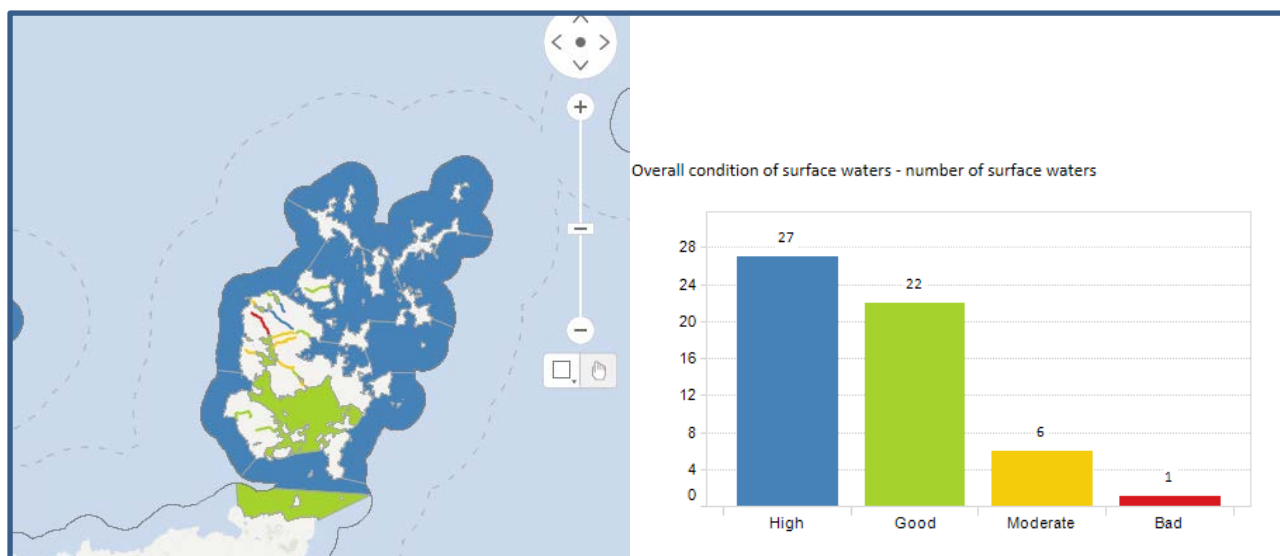
2. RBMP Data – where to look for what you need?

[The Second River Basin Management Plans](#) were published using 2014 classification data. All of the information for both of the plans, Scotland and Solway Tweed districts, can be found in the [Water environment hub](#). It provides information on each waterbody, pressures, measures and the targets that we have set.

The 2015 classification data has now been published and can be found at the [SEWeb – water body classification page](#). There are no changes to the 2014 classification, shown in Figure 2 below.

In summary, for information about the plans and objectives use [Water environment hub](#), for the 2015 classification results use [SEWeb – water body classification page](#).

Figure 2 – Classification of Orkney water bodies in 2014 and 2015



Please contact us if you have any questions or queries about where to access the data you need, via OrkneyAAG@sepa.org.uk

3. RBMP Delivery Priorities – Water Environment Fund priorities

The [second RBMPs](#) set out Scotland's objectives for protecting and improving water bodies up to 2027. In the second cycle (2016-21) the plans include objectives to improve the physical condition of 52 water bodies and ease fish passage across 76 historic barriers to fish migration. The plans recognised that this would require a significant increase in funding.

In the current climate of public sector budget constraints, we are now planning for a scenario where funding levels and timing are different from those original assumptions. The Water Environment Fund has therefore prioritised projects for delivery based on this level of funding.

In the short term we are focusing efforts on barriers to fish migration and urban morphology projects that deliver multiple benefits. We are still on track to remove 40+ fish barriers opening up over 800km of river to migratory fish and to restore the physical condition of 11 water bodies by 2021.

Current funding levels will not enable a number of ongoing projects to continue through to completion as originally planned. These projects will be paused at an appropriate stage and reviewed in the light of overall RBMP priorities, funding availability and timing. This won't affect existing contracts for individual stages of ongoing projects. The decision on which projects will be affected was very difficult to take. It was based on the amount of environmental improvement they'll each deliver.

This does not affect any existing projects in Orkney, but it means that only certain new projects can be funded – see www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/water-environment-fund/.

In the meantime we'll continue to actively explore other sources of funding. If you have any questions please contact RBMP@sepa.org.uk

4. RBMP Delivery Updates

Update on rural diffuse pollution work

The end of the first RBMP cycle in 2015 saw the completion of all of the catchment walks in the 14 priority catchments for rural diffuse pollution. There were also 400 awareness raising events for farmers. The work included 3,321 farm visits, revisits to non-compliant farms and the introduction of fixed monetary penalties for farms that remained non-compliant at the third revisit. This huge piece of work has shown great success with 84% of farms compliant at their first revisit.

RBMP2 will see an expanded programme of works with another 43 priority catchments due to be added to the original 14 (all on mainland Scotland). SEPA has also made changes to the way in which this work is done. Inspections will be targeted in at risk and downgraded waterbodies instead of catchment wide. Land unit staff will be conducting more farm visits per day and there will only be 1 revisit to a non-compliant farm before initiating enforcement action.

SEPA has invested significantly in additional resource to expand the priority catchment work with 7 additional permanent staff and one fixed term post. Work has now started in the next round of priority catchments, with 222 farm visits completed in the Whiteadder, Stonehaven, Nairn and Ken/Dee catchments.

SEPA has also been working in partnership with Scotland's Rural College to launch an awareness raising campaign under the brand of "[Farming and Water Scotland](#)". The brand encompasses both regulatory messages and advice for farming business on diffuse pollution and the General Binding Rules. Farming and Water Scotland attended 34 agricultural shows across Scotland and plan to attend a further 4 winter events.