

SUMMARY
CORPORATE
PLAN



1992 / 93

*Guardians of the
Water Environment*

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NRA

National Rivers Authority

**Guardians of
the Water Environment**

Corporate Plan Summary 1992/93

FORWARD LOOK TO 1995/96

“The NRA’s substantial achievements over the last three years are a credit to those within the Authority who have continually striven to accomplish high standards.

I am confident that by implementing this, our third Corporate Plan, we can build on our past achievements and reinforce our claim to be the ‘Guardians of the Water Environment’ and Europe’s strongest Environmental Protection Agency”.

Lord Crickhowell, NRA Chairman

THE NRA

The National Rivers Authority (NRA) was established in 1989. Our role is to protect, improve and manage the water environment throughout England and Wales. We will continue to do this by pursuing our Mission and Aims and through implementing our statutory duties and powers in relation to water quality, water resources, flood defence, fisheries, recreation, conservation and navigation. We are answerable to Parliament through the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Welsh Office and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.



OUR MISSION

“We will protect and improve the water environment by the effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. We will aim to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging our duties we will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters. We will be businesslike, efficient and caring towards our employees”.

PLAN CONTEXT

Over the last few years we have taken major steps to alleviate problems of real national and regional concern. These include evaluating:

- future demands for water resources;
- river and bathing water quality;
- the status of the nation’s sea defences.

There remains much to be done to implement the findings of these surveys and tackle other important issues which frequently make headline news.

- The continued drought in the south and east of the country is causing serious water resource problems, in some cases aggravating low-flow problems.
- Pollution from Wheal Jane mine in Cornwall has raised awareness about potential pollution from other abandoned mines and contaminated land throughout England and Wales.
- Predictions about global warming and sea-level rise are increasing fears of flooding.
- Changes in the status of sensitive fish stocks, such as sea trout, may be indicators of wider environmental management problems.
- Demand for leisure is creating the potential for conflict with wildlife conservation.

Our third Corporate Plan sets out our future strategy and specific priorities for action for these and other important issues affecting the long-term well-being of the water environment.



OUR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Water Quality

- Review and monitor discharge consent conditions and implement a revised charging for discharges scheme.

This will continue to build on our policy of reducing pollution from point sources by the consistent application of new consenting policies and the recovery of costs from those who discharge.

- Advise the Secretary of State on the introduction of Statutory Water Quality Objectives.

The introduction of SWQOs is fundamental to maintaining and improving water quality. Objectives will be set eventually for all controlled waters, thereby assuring water quality in rivers, canals, groundwaters, estuaries and bathing waters.

- Complete a national survey of contaminated land and abandoned mines likely to cause water pollution problems and implement long-term solutions to the Wheal Jane Mine pollution.

As a result of these investigations, the full costs of a programme of prioritised remedial work will be known.

Water Resources

- Address with vigour short-term measures needed to tackle drought and review our legal powers and responsibilities in relation to the promotion of longer-term solutions.

Drought continues to be a problem. We will use our powers to progress both short and long-term solutions to mitigate its effects.

- Investigate and implement solutions to low-flow problems in over-abstracted priority catchments.

This will help to restore rivers with little or no flow. We are developing our capital programme to ensure funds are directed to areas of greatest need.

- Complete the development of a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of water resources.

This will seek to provide solutions to tackle rising demand.

- Finalise and progressively implement our groundwater protection policy.

This will ensure groundwater is cleaner and safer for consumption. It will involve the designation of nitrate-sensitive areas and water protection zones in liaison with other bodies.

Flood Defence

- Implement standards of service to develop a consistent approach to flood defence activities.

This is to provide an appropriate level of protection for different types of land use.

- Improve value for money on both capital and revenue expenditure by increased market testing and the introduction of competitive tendering and performance measures.

This will ensure our work is more cost-effective.

Fisheries

- Develop a Section 142 fisheries charging scheme to levy charges for the benefit of riparian owners.

This will rationalise current arrangements and lead to the improvement and development of these fisheries.

- Review commercial licence arrangements and charges.

This is part of a programme of measures to introduce a consistent system of fishing licences.

- Implement an East Coast fishery management scheme.

This will ensure the conservation and protection of fish stocks for different uses.

Recreation

- Review all NRA recreation facilities and activities.

This will realise optimum use of our sites.

Conservation

- Implement a strategic conservation classification scheme.

This will enable a fuller assessment of conservation as an integral part of the NRA's activities and water management in general.

Navigation

- Review navigation charges for NRA navigations.

This will help ensure the recovery of the costs of improvements from river users.

Success in these key areas will be underpinned by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of our support services.

In particular:

- our Research and Development programme is increasingly aimed at providing new knowledge and developing new techniques;
- our Legal services section will be advising on the interpretation of new legislation and EC environmental directives which will have an increasing impact on our work;
- we are implementing our IS strategy to provide improved financial and other management information.



MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Integration

Integrated catchment management is at the heart of all we do. We believe catchment management plans are an ideal means of:

- setting priorities;
- balancing conflicting needs;
- giving us closer contact with local communities;
- ensuring sustainable resource use.

This principle is central to our argument to retain all the NRA's functions intact within the proposed Environment Agency. We will continue to press for this, and for an Agency whose role is to both protect and enhance the environment, in our discussions with Government.

Continual Improvement

Over the coming years we will:

- continue our commitment to openness;
- adhere fully to the principles of the Citizen's Charter to deliver consistently high standards of service;
- make further improvements to our management control and financial systems;
- secure optimum value for money through improved efficiency and productivity and, where appropriate, market testing.

We have achieved a great deal already in pursuit of an improved water environment.

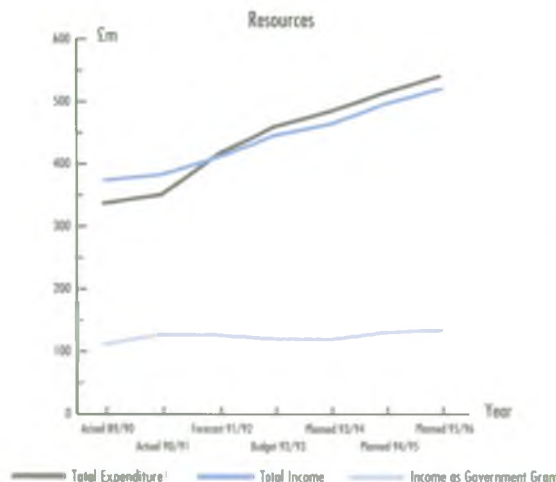
Over the next few years we are determined to develop our role and to increase our contribution to environmental management for the benefit of future generations.



RESOURCES

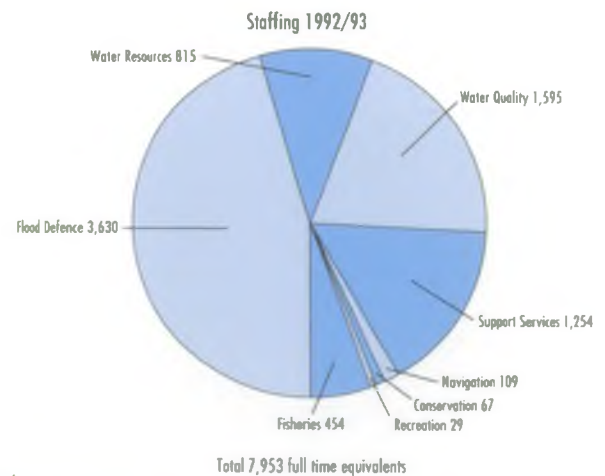
- In order to implement our Plan we will spend almost £2bn over the next four years, rising from some £450m in 1992/93 to almost £530m in 1995/96. We plan to employ just less than 8,000 permanent staff.
- Expenditure on all our core functions is generally set to increase at least by inflation. Additional resources over and above inflation have been allocated to water quality to help reduce pollution and water resources to help in tackling low flows and the drought.
- The proportion of our income from our charging schemes will rise to at least 75% while government grants will fall to around 25% of total operating costs.

It is our belief that by implementing the policies set out in our third Corporate Plan, we can continue to build on our past success as one of Europe's major forces in environmental protection.



Note 1

Expenditure is greater than income from 1991/92 onwards. The deficit will be funded from the run-down of balances from flood defence and water resources over the plan period.



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Further copies of this leaflet (issued free of charge) and copies of the main document (£10 net) are available from:

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