

SOUTHERN REGION  
PLAN SUMMARY

1 9 9 1 / 9 2



NRA

*National Rivers Authority*

Guardians of  
the Water Environment

## Introduction

Established on 1st September 1989, the National Rivers Authority (NRA) came into being as a result of the 1989 Water Act and was created as a public body whose main task it is to protect and improve the water environment in England and Wales and provide protection against flooding from rivers and the sea. The first full year of independent operation was completed on 31st March 1991.

Head Office functions of the Authority are split between London and Bristol, but its operational activities devolve on ten Regions based on the former Water Authority areas.

This document, one of a set of ten, seeks to explain a little of Southern Region NRA's background and shows how the Authority's national aims as set out in its 1991/92 *Corporate Plan* will be translated into Regional action.

## Mission Statement

The National Rivers Authority will protect and improve the water environment. This will be achieved through effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. The Authority aims to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging its duties it will operate openly and balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, ground waters, estuaries and coastal waters. The Authority will be businesslike, efficient and caring towards its employees.

## Aims:

- to achieve a continuing improvement in the quality of rivers, estuaries and coastal waters, through the control of water pollution;
- to assess, manage, plan and conserve water resources and to maintain and improve the quality of water for all those who use it;
- to provide effective defence for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea;
- to provide adequate arrangements for flood forecasting and warning;
- to maintain, improve and develop fisheries;
- to develop the amenity and recreation potential of waters and lands under NRA control;
- to conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and archaeological features associated with water under NRA control;
- to improve and maintain inland waterways and their facilities for use by the public where the NRA is the navigation authority;
- to ensure that dischargers pay the cost of the consequences of their discharges and, as far as possible, to recover the cost of water environment improvements from those who benefit;
- to improve public understanding of the water environment and the NRA's work;
- to improve efficiency in the exercise of the NRA's functions and to provide challenge and opportunity for employees and show concern for their welfare.



## Regional Organisation

Each Region of the NRA is managed by a Regional General Manager who reports to the Operations Director and whose management team has responsibility for managing the main functions and support services in the Region. Southern Region employs a total of some 680 people.

There are three statutory Committees per Region through which the NRA achieves a wide base of consultation. These are a Regional Flood Defence Committee (through which the NRA discharges its flood defence and land drainage duties), a Regional Rivers Advisory Committee and a Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee (these two committees being composed of members from a wide range of relevant backgrounds who advise the NRA on river basin management and fisheries policy respectively).

The Southern Region has a fourth Committee, the Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee, which advises on the NRA's activities in owning and operating Rye Harbour.

In addition, each Region has a Regional Advisory Board, on which the RGM and the three statutory Committee Chairmen sit. This is chaired by the NRA Board Member with responsibility for that Region.

Regional General Manager  
**Grainger Davies**  
Regional Board Member  
**Karen Morgan**  
Regional Flood Defence Committee Chairman  
**Christopher Neame**

Regional Rivers Advisory Committee Chairman  
**Maldwin Drummond**  
Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee Chairman  
**Arthur Humbert**  
Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee Chairman  
**Roger Breeds**

## Activities Requiring NRA Consent

Certain activities require the NRA's consent. The list is too long to include here, but the following are examples:

- abstract or impound water;
- make a discharge to any river, lake or tidal water or onto land for a soakaway, or to specific underground waters;
- clean or desludge a dam, weir or sluice;
- culvert any watercourse;
- interfere with land drainage by building or modifying any structures within or adjacent to a main river;
- build or plant within eight metres of a main river;
- introduce or transfer fish into any waters or use a net or trap to catch fish;
- use a rod and line to catch fish;
- use a boat on a waterway controlled by the NRA;
- interfere with a sea defence.

## Public Register Access

Public access to data for the whole Region is available at Headquarters and data for each district at the appropriate District Office.

## Where to Contact Us: Regional Headquarters

Guildbourne House  
Chatsworth Road  
Worthing  
Sussex  
BN11 1LD  
Tel: (0903) 820692  
Fax: (0903) 821832

24-hour telephone numbers:  
Winchester District (0962) 714585  
Chichester and Pevensy District (0273) 606766  
Rye, Tonbridge and Canterbury Districts (0634)

From August 1991: Freephone (0800) 252676

Copies of the full Corporate Plan are available @ £12 per copy from:  
Advertising Services  
Unit 13  
Lancaster Way Business Park  
Ely, Cambs CB6 3NP  
Cheques should be made payable to 'National Rivers Authority'.

## Foreword

The preparation of this second Plan follows a successful first year of operation for the NRA in Southern Region. During that period we have faced serious damage to sea defences and an exceptional drought of over two years duration.

The guidance and advice of the NRA Regional Committees, which have now been firmly established, are beginning to influence our approach to priorities.

It is well known that in the eastern part of our Region water resources are stretched. A Regional water resources strategy for the conservation and redistribution of water resources, already in embryo, will continue to be developed. Against that backdrop, the Region will be well placed to respond in a formative way to a number of projected major water resources development schemes. As funds become available, we are taking action on over-abstracted catchments which have already been identified for in-depth study.

In the fight against pollution, we aim to further strengthen water quality monitoring. Automatic water quality monitors will be installed where appropriate and we will introduce our own laboratory service during the year. Plans are well advanced for the introduction in 1991 of charges for discharges based on the "polluter pays" principle.

Following a comprehensive review of the coastline, defences against flooding by the sea will be improved as part of a major programme lasting several years. Indirect control of emergencies will cease. They will be handled directly through a new Regional Emergency Control System.

In seeking improvements, the Region will continue to search for economies and improved productivity so as to provide a cost-effective service. However, much of the investment for environmental improvements will fall on abstractors and dischargers. Through liaison with them and other interests we will devise integrated strategies in the first place for catchments where the aquatic environment is under stress.

This Plan is a positive response to the challenges facing the Region. As "Guardians of the Water Environment" our staff are committed to carrying it through.

**Grainger Davies**  
Regional General Manager

## Key Achievements 1990/91

The NRA Southern Region is now firmly established as an independent regulatory body with virtually all staff accommodated in NRA premises on NRA sites. 1990/91 was a challenging year with key achievements not only following the objectives of the last Corporate Plan but also relating to events such as storm and drought. In the period since 1st April 1990 the NRA Southern Region has:

- progressed River Catchment Management Planning activity in accordance with national policy with initial plans for six catchments having been largely completed;
- developed a Regional Emergency Control System with the Regional Control Room now fully equipped;
- contributed towards the security of water resources within the Region by co-ordinating the response to a major drought, developing a 12-point policy in liaison with the water companies and publishing demand forecasts for the Region;
- maintained monitoring of the Region's 67 designated bathing beaches;
- set up a Regional Laboratory in preparation for a full in-house analytical service;
- responded effectively to flood emergencies including last winter's severe storms;
- carried through a review of Rod Licence Tariffs with the full support of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee;
- established a close liaison with the Agence de l'Eau-Artois Picardie in north-eastern France;
- progressed with the development of the Region's computer systems to provide more extensive telemetry, modelling and data base facilities.



## Regional Priorities 1991/92

The priorities set out below represent the Region's ambitions to improve its service to the public both externally in the form of increased effectiveness and internally by increased efficiency.

### *Regional/Cross Functional:*

- undertake an organisational review with regard to certain elements of the structure;
- further develop the Regional Emergency Control System to cover multifunctional requirements;
- continue the development of integrated River Catchment Management Planning.

### *Water Resources:*

- to prepare and publish a regional strategy for Water Resources;
- prepare evidence and represent the NRA's interests at public inquiries into three major reservoir developments;
- complete investigations in Category 'A' low flow catchments and to start alleviation work on the Wallop Brook;
- improve efficiency of hydrometric service and licensing/planning procedures;
- implement the NRA Groundwater Protection Policy.

### *Water Quality:*

- implement the new NRA monitoring policy for effluents and controlled waters;
- identify catchments with significant pollution concentrations and analyse trends;
- complete the Groundwater Quality Archive;
- expand farm-based inspections in order to incorporate the requirements of the farm waste regulations.
- monitor the effectiveness and progress of WSPLC Investment Programme for Coastal Discharges.

### *Flood Defence:*

- complete the National Sea Defence Survey in the Southern Region and incorporate results into the Medium-Term Plan;
- bring *all* defences up to standard in terms of both condition and level of service;
- establish effective lines of communication and a programme for the improvement for all non-NRA defences;
- progress towards the establishment of an in-house design team;
- standardise and codify regional policies and implement through liaison with local planning authorities.

### *Fisheries:*

- identify schemes suitable for S28 funding;
- maintain the programme of fish stock assessment;
- in co-operation with Northumbrian Region develop salmon-rearing techniques with a view to restocking Southern rivers;
- complete provision of fish passes;
- develop methods of coarse fish production.

### *Recreation and Conservation:*

- develop the amenity and recreational potential and carry out conservation management plans for areas of land under NRA control;
- complete river corridor surveys on 540km of river and to survey 5km of coastal land.

### *Navigation:*

- complete in-house study in Rye Harbour and determine its future management;
- review River Medway Navigation – incorporating the results of earlier studies.

### *Support Services:*

- continue migration to Information Systems Strategy;
- enhance training of all personnel within NRA Southern Region.



### Southern Region

The Southern Region includes the Isle of Wight, nearly all of Kent and Sussex and most of Hampshire, together with a small part of Surrey and minor parts of other counties.

The North and South chalk Downs which merge in Hampshire dominate. In between is the Wealden Ridge, otherwise the Region comprises extensive lowland areas.

Rivers are typically short, rising in one of the upland areas, running along the agricultural lowlands and making their way through one of the many gaps in the Downs to the sea or the Thames Estuary.

The Region's major conurbations are along the coast in the Southampton- Portsmouth, Brighton- Worthing and Medway Towns- Gravesend areas. Inland, Ashford is a designated development area. 89% of the area remains relatively rural but nevertheless contains nearly one third of the population.

Half the Region's agricultural land is of permanent arable use, the remainder being grassland or grass rotated with arable crops. Almost all rivers are of some fisheries interest, with the Test and Itchen being world renowned game fishing rivers.

The Region has always been attractive to development which has been further encouraged by the M25 and the promotion of the Channel Tunnel. Nevertheless there are small pockets which are not as buoyant, such as the north-eastern corner of Kent, and efforts to promote these areas can be expected.

### Some Key Statistics

- Area: 10,500sqkm
- Population: 4.5m
- Length of main river: 2,748km
- Length of estuary: 382km
- Flood defence works maintained: 3,220km
- Average annual rainfall: 790mm
- Number of abstraction licences: 2,715
- Volume of authorised water abstraction: 14,604Ml/d
- Number of consented discharges: 9,968
- Number of EC bathing waters: 67