



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



YOUR GUIDE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Thames Region - West Area



## INTRODUCTION

The new Environment Agency for England and Wales is one of the most powerful environmental regulators in the world.

It provides a more comprehensive approach to the protection and management of the environment by combining the regulation of land, air and water. Its creation is a major and positive step, merging the expertise of the National Rivers Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, the Waste Regulation Authorities and several smaller units from the Department of the Environment.

The Agency's overall aim is to protect and enhance the environment as a whole. Its wide ranging responsibilities include:-

- The regulation of industrial and chemical processes, for example at chemical plants, incinerators and power stations;
- Preserving and improving water quality in rivers, canals and other watercourses;
- Ensuring proper use of water resources - monitoring river flows and rainfall;
- Waste regulation - issuing licences and monitoring waste sites such as landfill sites, car breakers and scrap yards;
- Undertaking flood defence works and warning people who are at risk from flooding;
- Issuing fishing licences and monitoring stocks of fish in local rivers;
- Conserving the water environment and promoting its use for recreation;
- Liaison with local planning authorities to ensure developments take account of the environment.

The Environment Agency will NOT be dealing with:

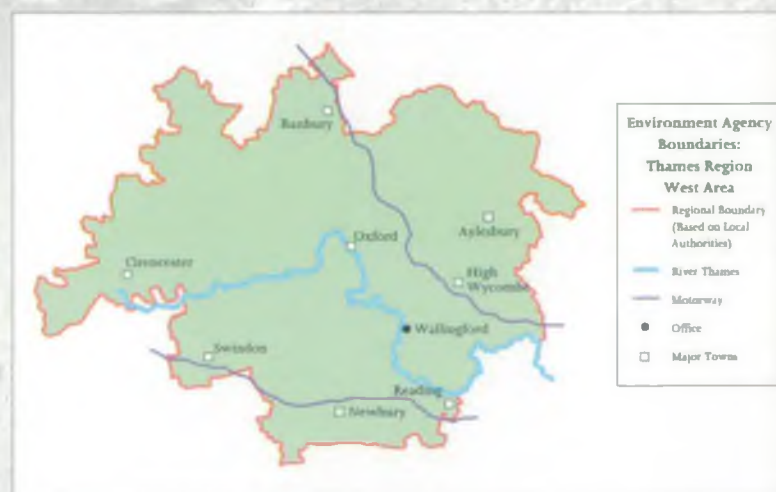
- Waste collection - responsibility remains with local authorities;
- Noise pollution - responsibility remains with local authorities environmental health departments;
- Drinking water quality - responsibility remains with private water companies;
- Public health;
- Those aspects of the control of air pollution which remain with local authorities.

## WEST AREA

The major towns of Oxford, Newbury, Swindon, Banbury, High Wycombe, Aylesbury and Reading all fall into the Environment Agency's West Area. Most of the staff will be based at existing offices at Wallingford, Reading and Oxford. The main West Area office is at Wallingford.

Some of the issues and opportunities currently facing the West Area are:

- West Area has a high quality environment. Much of our effort will be directed at safeguarding that environment. The importance of actions required to maintain the status quo should not be underestimated, particularly in the face of increasing demands upon the environment.
- The major towns as above all provide the inherent pressures associated with centres of population, for example emissions/discharges to the environment, high demand for water and the production of waste. In addition these areas attract great interest for further development and expansion with the potential loss of natural habitat, as does the desire for improved road links.
- The rural parts of the area are not without pressures, for example, risks to water quality from agricultural practices, the desire to exploit mineral resources, the need for further waste disposal sites and the subsequent risk of contaminated land.
- Many local initiatives to combat such pressure will be progressed, but it is important to stress we cannot achieve all the necessary improvements alone and we shall continue to seek partnerships with third parties, for example industry, Local Authorities, voluntary organisations and land owners.





The Area Manager, responsible for the day to day running of the West Area is **Stuart Darby**.

He said:

“The main aim is to offer a more comprehensive approach to the protection and management of Air, Land and Water. This will recognise the realities of the world in that something which affects one environmental medium almost always has an effect on the other media too. From an organisation point of view, this integration and common purpose should enable more effective use of resources and better value for money in getting results.”



**Water Quality & Water Resources Manager - John Haines**

Responsible for protecting and improving water quality and water resources. Ensures environmental protection by monitoring water quality and resources, undertaking enforcement action, responding to pollution incidents and seeking to balance the needs of abstractors with those of the environment.

**Waste Regulation Manager - Barry Sheppard**

Responsible for regulating the collection, treatment and disposal of controlled waste in order to prevent pollution of the environment and harm to human health. Undertakes the licensing and monitoring of waste management facilities and enforcement action where necessary.

**Integrated Pollution Control Manager - Keith Harsham**

Responsible for regulating industrial processes with the greatest pollution potential so as to control the emission of pollutants to the environment. This involves authorising and regulating the usage, storage and disposal of radioactive materials and regulating the disposal of specialist waste effluent to sewers.

**Flood Defence Manager - Roger Powling**

Responsible for providing an efficient and effective flood defence service in the Area through watercourse and structures maintenance programmes, the implementation of flood alleviation schemes and other major Environment Agency projects.

**Fisheries & Conservation Manager - John Sutton**

Responsible for fisheries and conservation interests in the Area. Ensures that fisheries are maintained, improved and developed and that the Environment Agency meets its duty to further conservation of flora and fauna generally.

**Navigation & Recreation Manager - Eileen McKeever**

Responsible for river use and traffic controls, lock and weir operations, river level control and navigation enforcement. Also responsible for developing and promoting the recreational use of water and associated land and for liaison with River User Groups.

**Planning & Liaison Manager - Brian Hughes**

Responsible for the implementation of Local Management Plans and liaison with local planning authorities on development plans and planning applications in order to safeguard the environment by influencing the activities of others. Also responsible for customer services and provides the 'first step shop' for answering public enquiries, arranging talks and dealing with complaints.

**Business Services Manager - Mark Rowe**

Responsible for providing cost effective business support to the operational functions. This includes strategic business development, business planning, personnel, management accounting, site services and co-ordination of administration.

**Contractor Manager - Bob Warne**

Responsible for the co-ordination of teams carrying out river engineering and structures maintenance work including 29 lock and weir complexes on the River Thames. Also provides a key role in responding to environmental emergencies, for example flooding.





## OUR OBJECTIVES

The Agency works towards Sustainable Development through seven objectives, set by Ministers:

- An integrated approach to environmental protection and enhancement, taking into consideration the impact of all activities and natural resources;
- Delivery of environmental goals without imposing disproportionate costs on industry or society as a whole;
- Clear and effective procedures for serving its customers, including the development of single points of contact with the Agency;
- High professional standards, using the best possible information and analytical methods;
- Organisation of its own activities to reflect good environmental and management practice, and provision of value for money for those who pay its charges, as well as for taxpayers as a whole;
- Provision of clear and readily available advice and information on its work;
- Development of a close and responsive relationship with the public, including Local Authorities, other representatives of local communities and regulated organisations.



Environment Agency  
Information Centre  
Head Office

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY  
127234



**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR YOUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OFFICE  
WEST AREA, ISIS HOUSE, HOWBERY PARK, CROWMARSH GIFFORD, WALLINGFORD, OXON, OX10 8BD  
TELEPHONE: 01491 832801

Telephone the emergency hotline **0800 80 70 60** to report all environmental incidents