

YORKSHIRE REGION
PLAN SUMMARY

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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 Yorkshire 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. Yorkshire Region employs a total of some 600 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).

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

Kenneth Newham

Regional Board Member

Peter Coverdale

Regional Flood Defence Committee Chairman

Tom Collier

Regional Rivers Advisory Committee Chairman

John Whitworth

Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee Chairman

John Fawcett

Activities Requiring NRA Consent

Certain activities require NRA 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 water 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

The Register of Applications and Consents for Abstraction Licences may be examined, during normal working hours, at our Regional Headquarters in Leeds. The Register of Water Quality and Effluents may be examined, during normal working hours, at our Regional Headquarters, our laboratories in Leeds and our Southern and Northern Area Offices.

Where to contact us: Regional Headquarters

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Unit 13
Lancaster Way Business Park
Ely, Cambs CB6 3NP
Cheques should be made payable to 'National Rivers Authority'.

Foreword

The preparation of the Regional Plan for our second year takes into account the Region's strengths and weaknesses, building on strengths and seeking to improve, by additional resources where possible, those areas where a need for improvement has been demonstrated. In general, this has meant a consolidation of our efforts but areas needing further inputs caused by events such as the continuation of drought conditions require careful consideration. In this respect matters such as river augmentation schemes will be investigated both to improve abstraction potential and also to provide adequate dilution of effluent discharges in order to preserve the rivers and safeguard our fisheries.

The assertion of our identity required sound legal support and continuing effective monitoring and bailiffing to demonstrate our purpose by timely and successful prosecutions as necessary. We shall continue to develop our telemetry system and the need for an integrated water archive is of highest priority.

The monitoring of our performance in implementing the objectives incorporated within the Plan is most important to ensure that the objectives we have set ourselves will be achieved by the dedicated employees in the Yorkshire Region. We look forward to a challenging and rewarding year.

Kenneth Newham
Regional General Manager

Key Achievements 1990/91

Our first full year of operation, in which Yorkshire has experienced a generous share of both drought and flood conditions, has seen the Region continuing to develop its resources and to integrate into the national framework. There have been key achievements in the year in a number of areas.

Pollution Control:

- Target pollution incident response times (of one hour during the normal working day and two hours outside it) have been maintained despite an increase in the number of incidents.
- The 1990 River Quality Survey was undertaken on schedule and a monitoring programme for blue-green algae has been accomplished.
- The establishment of the charging for discharges scheme has been accomplished.
- The Yorkshire Rivers Litter Research Project was launched with the Tidy Britain Group.

Flood Defence:

- An extensive programme of capital works construction has been executed, including the construction of 23km of new river defences.
- The tidal barrier on the River Hull and the River Foss barrier in York have both been operated on several occasions to protect large areas of the cities from flooding.
- Flood warning procedures have undergone a comprehensive update to correspond with the new national format of colour-coded warnings from October 1990.

Fisheries:

- An action plan for the River Esk, the Region's most important salmon fishery, has been devised – its implementation is expected to have a marked effect on poaching and improvement in fish stocks.
- Three fish havens (one on the River Swale and two on the River Derwent) have been established.

Conservation:

- The programme of river corridor surveys has been extended as a result of appointing extra permanent staff and a computerised database of conservation and related information has been established.

Support Services:

- Enforcement measures show a marked increase over the previous year, especially in the area of prosecutions for pollution offences.
- Construction of both the Regional Telemetry Scheme and the River Flow Forecasting System were both substantially completed in March 1991. Together they will enable greatly improved forecasting through the whole range of river flows.
- Although the economic situation has been difficult, an intensive recruitment effort has resulted in an overall increase in manpower from 519 in December 1989 to 572 in March 1991.

Regional Priorities 1991/92

In our second full year of operation we hope and expect to build on the experience gained in 1990/91, to continue and complete many of the projects started in the first year and to progressively improve the water environment in Yorkshire. The repeated mention of plans and strategies in our priorities shows that we are still a young and developing organisation identifying our assets. We have a manpower recruitment plan which calls for an increase in staffing from 572 to 615 during the Plan year and it will be necessary to adhere to this target if we are to meet the objectives set out below.

Water Resources:

- to produce a Regional plan for water resources operation and development;
- to construct and commission a replacement river gauging station on the River Ouse above York;
- to develop river augmentation boreholes in the Vale of York to support increased abstraction from the River Ouse;
- to assess the behaviour of the Chalk aquifer during recent drought and report on the implications for the control of abstraction and protection of flows in West Beck;
- to develop a Regional groundwater protection policy, define protection zones and assess pollution risks within them.

Pollution Control:

- to maintain the pollution incidents and emergency service, with target response times of one hour during the normal working day and two hours at other times;
- to start charging for discharges on 1st July 1991 and complete validation of the Charging Register during 1991;
- to appraise the findings of the 1990 Water Quality Survey by June 1991, and to continue work on the preparation for the statutory Water Quality Objectives;
- to implement the NRA guidelines for monitoring sewage treatment effluents on 1st April 1991 and to build up the sampling programme for trade effluents, rivers and groundwaters to an annual rate of 50,000 samples per year; also to enhance monitoring by the increased employment of hand-held and continuous instrumentation;
- to augment the pollution prevention programme.

Flood Defence:

- to improve flood protection in Northern Area, in particular by completing Phase 4/6 (Aike and Arram Beck) and Phase 9B (Wawne to Weel) of the River Hull Comprehensive Scheme;
- to improve flood protection in Southern Area, in particular by completing the River Worth Scheme, Phase 2 (Heckmondwike) and Phase 4 (Liversedge) of the River Spen Scheme and the Beal to Haddlesey Scheme on the River Aire;
- to produce an action plan for Yorkshire tidal and sea defences by December 1991;
- to establish a register of all flood defence assets by October 1991.

Fisheries:

- to identify all major fishery owners by March 1992 in order to set up a system of fishery rating;
- to issue Regional strategy and performance indicators for fisheries by March 1992.

Recreation and Conservation:

- to complete the identification of NRA sites with potential development for recreation by March 1992;
- to produce Regional strategies and performance indicators for both recreation and conservation by March 1992;
- to develop a five-year rolling programme of strategic river corridor surveys by March 1992.

Support Services:

- to commission the River Flow Forecasting System and its support systems, and carry out staff training for the systems to be operational by October 1991;
- to develop and implement a manpower recruitment plan and review and maintain individual job specifications;
- to develop the existing scheme for identifying individual training needs and to prepare a training plan.



KEY

- Headquarters
- Area offices

Yorkshire Region

The NRA Yorkshire Region comprises South and West Yorkshire, most of North Yorkshire, North Humberside and the northern part of Derbyshire.

The catchment of the Yorkshire Ouse constitutes most of the Region – the Ouse, with the Trent, forming the Humber Estuary.

Land levels rise to 700m in the Pennines in the west of the Region where there is an average annual rainfall in excess of 1,500mm in places. The Pennine area includes parts of the Peak District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks. The North York Moors National Park is the other significant upland area.

In contrast, areas of the City of Hull are below sea level and are defended from inundation by flood banks and a tidal surge barrier. The annual average rainfall in the east of the Region is as low as 600mm.

Some Key Statistics

- Area: 13,500sqkm
- Population: 4.5m
- Length of main river: 1,741km
- Length of estuary: 110km
- Length of coastline: 150km
- Flood defence works maintained: 1,504km
- Average annual rainfall: 833mm
- Number of abstraction licences: 3,770
- Volume of authorised water abstraction: 6,303ML/d
- Number of consented discharges: 18,219
- Number of EC bathing waters: 22