

ANGLIAN 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 NRA 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 Anglian 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. Anglian Region employs a total of some 1,160 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
Dr Kevin Bond
Regional Board Member
Peter Brandt
Regional Flood Defence Committee Chairman
John Martin

Regional Rivers Advisory Committee Chairman
Christopher Groome
Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee Chairman
Peter Tombleson

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 water quality public register can be consulted at the Regional Headquarters, from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 16:30 hours (excluding Bank and public holidays).

Where to contact us: Regional Headquarters

Kingfisher House
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Orton Goldhay
Peterborough
PE2 0ZR
Tel: (0733) 371 811
Fax: (0733) 231 840

24-hour telephone number: (0733) 371 811

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

We have produced a confident, proactive Regional Plan containing aims and targets which are realistic, well-developed and designed to meet and underpin both the corporate objectives of the NRA and the primary perceptions which the public have of us as "Guardians of the Water Environment". They are also designed to reinforce the confidence which representative bodies and the public showed in us during our formative year by tackling some of the principal challenges which face the Region's aquatic heritage.

Not least of these are the continuing achievement of improvements in water quality and the development of a strategy aimed at tackling the vitally important issue of the availability of water in this the driest part of the country. In both these activities the public is looking to the Anglian Region to provide robust and practical operational solutions. This we aim to do.

The Region prides itself on its effectiveness in providing its services. During the past year, the efficiencies which we have been able to make as a result of skilful management of resources have been channelled into improving our operational performance and increasing our productivity. We will continue to encourage this type of personal and collective initiative.

Dr Kevin Bond
Regional General Manager

Key Achievements 1990/91

Regulatory duties and other operational responsibilities were discharged competently by a dedicated team of professionals. Our achievements included:

- avoiding water resource problems during the drought. This was achieved by skilful management of water transfer and support schemes. Four drought orders were sought, granted and emergency works constructed;
- processing nearly double the number of abstraction licence applications handled during 1989/90 – 600 were dealt with;
- seeing the best improvement for several years in the compliance of discharges from sewage treatment works;
- carrying out over 550,000 chemical analyses in the Regional Laboratory;
- responding effectively to emergencies including some 1,700 serious pollution incidents and 18 closures of Thameside flood barriers;
- investing £29m in major sea and river flood defence projects to protect life and property;
- stocking 400,000 fish, attending 160 fish kill incidents and issuing 230,000 fishing licences;
- maintaining 507km of navigable waterway and 60 locks;
- developing a rivers environmental database to provide a "Doomsday Book" of bird and plant life on the Region's rivers;
- operating independent computing facilities.

To achieve our regional objectives, we require a two-fold commitment – personally from our staff and financially to fund the level of activity which will meet our legal obligations and begin to realise public expectations of us and our role. Increases in resources during 1991/92 in water quality, water resources and flood defence will enable us to make real progress towards achieving our corporate objectives. In other services, activity will be restricted to this year's level and progress towards achieving the corporate priorities will be limited. Our key initiatives for the year are to:

General:

- respond effectively to high profile issues and emergencies;
- improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the NRA through specific initiatives;
- increase policing and enforcement in all core functions to achieve our operational objectives.

Water Resources:

- develop water resources further to meet water demands and environmental objectives;
- implement enforcement of abstraction licences in accordance with Regional practice for enforcement in general;
- manage a potentially difficult water resources situation in 1991/92 following three successive winters with below average rainfall;
- maintain progress with tackling low flow problems;
- encourage the adoption of aquifer protection measures.

Water Quality:

- achieve monitoring programmes – 63,000 samples, 570,000 determinations;
- implement new policies on consenting introduced by the NRA;
- secure income from the charges in respect of applications and consents for discharges to controlled waters;
- set draft Water Quality Objectives for 4,450km of river for statutory approval by the Secretary of State;
- meet current UK commitments for North Sea monitoring by increasing our marine monitoring resources, including the commissioning of a marine survey vessel.

Flood Defence:

- continue to improve flood protection to people, property and sites of special conservation interest;
- review flood warning communications and emergency response;
- maximise contributions for flood defence work;
- improve 52km of flood defence embankments and coastal defences through capital projects;
- publicise the result of the 3-year coastal management study.

Fisheries:

- maintain and begin to develop and improve our fisheries;
- develop a charging database, in preparation for rating fisheries;
- implement new arrangements for the regulation of commercial eel fisheries.

Recreation:

- introduce recreational facilities as part of other functional schemes where possible;
- support external organisations in the development of water-based recreation.

Conservation:

- ensure full implementation of the Code of Practice;
- carry out improvements to river habitats and develop wetland ecology at NRA sites;
- undertake environmental appraisal of all major capital works.

Navigation:

- improve locks on regional waterways;
- maintain enforcement activity for registration and bye-law inspection.



Anglian Region

Anglian Region covers nearly one fifth of the area of England and Wales. Geographically the largest of the ten NRA Regions, it is also the largest in terms of the scale and diversity, both of its operations and the environmental issues which it faces.

The Region remains the fastest growing area in the country. Although predominantly rural, it includes several important centres of population growth and industrial activity, such as the M11 "corridor", Thameside, South Humberside and expanding centres like Peterborough and Milton Keynes.

Four of the major rivers drain into the Wash, a shallow sea inlet, around which lie the Fens – a large area of the most fertile agricultural land. A quarter of the Region lies below high tide or river flood level, highlighting the need for extensive defences to protect people and property against flooding.

Some Key Statistics

- Area: 27,000sqkm
- Population: 5.6m
- Length of main river: 5,812km
- Length of estuary: 447km
- Length of coastline: 465km
- Flood defence works maintained: 7,000km
- Average annual rainfall: 610mm
- Number of abstraction licences: 9,700
- Volume of authorised water abstraction: 8,600Ml/d
- Number of consented discharges: 26,887
- Number of EC bathing waters: 28
- Length of embanked watercourse: 1,430km
- Area of land below sea level: 4,700sqkm
- Length of navigable waterway: 507km
- Total expenditure: £78m