

WFD Implementation Working Group (15th)

Draft Minutes

Tuesday 8th July 2008, 14.00 – 16.00

WFD Implementation Working Group (15th)

Tuesday 8th July 2008 14.00 – 16.00

Boardroom, WMU Lisburn

Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Name	Dept / Agency
Gabriel Nelson (Acting Chair)	NIEA Water Management Unit
Diane Arthur (Acting Sec)	NIEA Water Management Unit
Victoria Crone	NIEA Water Management Unit
Tom Adamson	NIEA Water Management Unit
Ian Irwin	DARD Forest Service
George Roddy	DARD Rivers Agency
Norman Simmons	DOE, PEPG
Linda McGoldrick	DARD, En. Pol. Branch
William Caldwell	DOE PEPG
Marcus McAuley	DCAL Salmon & Inland Fisheries
Philip McMurray	DOE, PEPG
Brenda Cunning	DOE PEPG
Brian Ervine	DARD, Policy
Emma Neill	DOE PEPG
Keith Forster	DRD Economics Branch
Roger Walker	Ports and Transport
Alan Morrow	DARD Countryside Management

APOLOGIES:

Name, Organisation	Name, Organisation
Dave Foster (Chair)	NIEA Water Management Unit
Cate Murphy (Sec)	NIEA Water Management Unit
Alison Murdock	NIEA Water Management Unit
Angela Halpenny	NI Water
Randal Scott	EHS Drinking Water Inspectorate
Stuart Wightman	DRD Water Policy
Bob Davidson	EHS Natural Heritage
Crawford Jordan	AFBI
Richard Schaible	DARD Forest Service
Michael McSorley	DRD Regional Planning
George Alexander	NI Water
Julian Smyth	DRD Water Policy
Paddy McCrudden	DARD Rivers Agency
Paddy Boylan	Loughs Agency
David Wright	DCAL
Bob Foy	AFBI

1. Welcome

The Acting Chairman welcomed attendees to the 15th meeting of this group and offered apologies as detailed above. The Acting Chairman thanked Angus McRobert for all his work on the River Basin Plans and work in general following his transfer to a post in the Marine Team. Thanks were also made to Cate Murphy, IWG secretary, who has since moved to another post within Water Management Unit.

2. Approval of draft Agenda.

The agenda for the meeting was approved with one AOB issue offered as Economics.

3. Minutes of 14th IWG meeting (21st May) and matters arising.

Two points of accuracy were raised and amendments agreed. All matters arising from the meeting were complete or were tabled for update on the Agenda for the 16th meeting. The Minutes were agreed and approved for publication and addition to the website.

4. Feedback on DARD/DOE/DRD committee meetings

The Draft plans have been forwarded to the Environment Minister and have been presented to other Committees and thanks were made to all those involved in the briefings.

The Agricultural and Rural Development Committee meeting was held on 17th June and a three page summary was provided to them for comment. There was discussion in relation to whether all sectors were 'doing their bit' to protect the water environment. It was therefore suggested that equality was an issue and that the next summary information presented to the committee should show what other sectors (in addition to farmers) are doing.

The Environment Committee met on 26th June and a resume was given on the content of the draft RBP. A discussion followed on the use of the term 'good status'. It was suggested that the Committee could be invited to go out into the environment to see 'good' status water bodies. It was agreed that the committee had sight of the plans and were content that the Minister continue to proceed with the executive process..

The Regional Development Committee meeting on 2 July discussed three issues:

- current pollution incidents and the results of these;
- even handed enforcement; and
- the need for a wide consultation list.

It was agreed they were also content to proceed through the Executive approval process.

The DCAL Minister wrote to the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee advising them of the role and responsibilities of his Department in meeting Water Framework Directive requirements.

5. Draft River Basin Management plans update and timetable

The draft River Basin Management Plan consultation document has been approved by the Minister to carry through the Executive approval process by 16 October. Prior to this draft submissions and executive papers are to be produced. It was noted that even prior to this the Group should take the opportunity, if it arises, to brief their respective Minister on the plans.

The Group discussed initial thoughts in relation to promotion of the plans through the Catchment Stakeholder groups. This might take the form of information days in order to engage at a community level. Interactive displays incorporating demonstrations of the web based mapping is favoured as opposed to public meetings. The aim is to encourage public participation. The details of the events will be provided for the January launch and the events will take place through February and March 2009. It is a specific statutory requirement to promote and publicise the plans. Consideration is also being given to a joint north south ministerial launch of the plan.

It was noted that the WFD interdepartmental board meeting to sign off to the draft plans is on 10 September and this would be the last opportunity for departments to comment (this is a provisional date awaiting confirmation). It was agreed that, as this is the draft Plan going to the Executive, that significant corrections/changes should be the focus at this stage rather than minor editorial and style changes.

Actions	By Whom	Target Date	Status
Confirm date of WFD interdepartmental board meeting	EN	Friday 11 July	complete

6. Programmes of Measures bilateral meetings, August 2008

A bilateral meeting had been held with DARD to discuss existing and additional measures for the programme of government. Those measures that are happening and involve aspects which support the WFD were also discussed. It was noted that any gaps must be identified and how they are to be filled agreed. It was also noted that all the Agencies could then bid for monies through identifying gaps in the current plans and future plans.

Further bilateral meetings are being arranged in early August with DOE Planning, DWI, DRD, NI Water and NIUA, DCAL and it was agreed that policy colleagues might attend where new legislation is required. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss and expand Appendices 8 and 14 of the Programme of Measures and also to review how the information is being presented in the draft plans..

The Group were advised that the web mapping tool, in support of the River Basin Plans, is under construction and this would house the technical information and supplementary information for the plans. The consultation document will be simplified and if more information is sought, the reader will be directed to the website. An editor will be employed to work up the text and the document will also be enhanced visually with pictures.

It was again emphasised not to concentrate on style but provide comment back on any misrepresentation on current measures.

Actions	By Whom	Target Date	Status
Agenda for bilateral meetings inc. statement of need to be circulated.	GN		complete
Further bilateral meetings to be completed.	GN AM	by 19 Aug	complete

7. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) update

The SEA process is running in parallel with the draft RBP. The tender for this work was awarded to RPS who are also the contractor for other work under the WFD for NS Share and the County Councils. The contract is underway and a steering group has been established on which NIEA have a representative in Wendy McKinley of EP Strategy Unit. The first meeting was held in Dublin and this will be followed initially by six-weekly meetings, alternating between Belfast or Dublin. An Environmental Report will be produced at the end of December and will be subject to the same consultation period as the draft plans.

A discussion followed clarifying the link between SEA and EIA in that EIA relates directly to specific projects whereas SEA sits at a higher level covering all new plans and programmes. It was noted SEA is a legal requirement and falls to the competent authorities i.e. NIEA have a statutory responsibility to develop SEA.

Actions	By Whom	Target Date	Status
Agenda for bilateral meetings inc. statement of need to be circulated.	GN		ongoing
Further bilateral meetings to be completed.	GN AM	by 19 Aug	ongoing

8. SNIFFER draft SEA guidance for water

Scotland and Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research (SNIFFER) are producing guidance for practitioners on how to take account of air, water and soil when undertaking SEA. SEA is a legal requirement during the preparation of certain types of plans, programmes and strategies.

This draft guidance is now available from the SNIFFER website (www.sniffer.org.uk and look at 'Latest Events'). The guidance is presented in two Sections. Section 1 is

an introduction, explaining its context and outlines SEA legislation. Section 2 is presented as three separate topic based pieces of guidance, focusing on the SEA topics of air, soil and water. For each topic the current state of the environment and key trends are explored and relevant legislation and policy is explained and guidance given.

SNIFFER launched a two month consultation period in June 2008 and now invite feedback on the work to ensure it is technically correct, easy to use, consistent with other SEA legislation and fit for purpose.

It was explained that there is a specific consultation response form to be used and the consultation closes on 11 August 2008. The Group were advised that the SNIFFER SEA Project Steering Group will consider responses and subsequently advise the contractors on required changes to the SEA guidance. The final version of the guidance is to be released in late 2008.

Actions	By Whom	Target Date	Status
Review technical accuracy of draft guidance with respect to water and return to SNIFFER	All	11 August	complete

9. AOB

The item of economics was raised specifically in relation to the costs and benefits of measures under the WFD. A paper must be submitted to the Executive to include a cost estimates, where available. A request will go out to the Departments to supply information for input into this paper. The Group were advised of their immediate involvement in this process and put on notice to expect the information request in due course. It was noted that some economic information has been received from Agencies during POM collation and this can be updated where necessary. Exact figures are not expected; approximate figures will suffice.

It was suggested DFP be included in the bilateral meetings and it was noted that DFP are a member of the WFD implementation board.

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) will be undertaken in support of the final plans.

One further point was raised at this point indicating that not all the Ports were receiving information from the stakeholder forum. It was agreed that they would be added to the circulation list on receipt of email details.

Actions	By Whom	Target Date	Status
Provide email details for all ports	RW	9 Jul	Completed

Update circulation list for stakeholder forum	BC	9 Jul	Completed
Circulate draft RBPs as works in progress	GN	28 Aug	Completed

Date of next joint meeting

3rd September 2008, 14.00-16.00 Boardroom, WMU Lisburn

Diane Arthur
Acting Secretary
Implementation Working Group