

WFD INTER-DEPARTMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION BOARD (WFD-IIB)

Minutes of 7th meeting, held on Tuesday 22nd April 2008
3rd floor Conference Room, River House, Belfast

Present:

Paul Simpson (PS)	<i>DOE (Chairperson)</i>
William Caldwell (WC)	<i>DOE PEPG</i>
Andrew Cooper (AC)	<i>Coastal & Marine Forum</i>
Dave Foster (DF)	<i>EHS Water Management Unit</i>
Harry Gracey (HG)	<i>DARD Delivery (on behalf of Roy McClenaghan)</i>
Angela Halpenny (AH)	<i>NI Water</i>
Ronnie Jordan (RJ)	<i>DARD Central Policy</i>
Philip Mehaffey (PMe)	<i>Rivers Agency</i>
John Mills (JM)	<i>DRD Water Policy Division</i>
Gabriel Nelson (GN)	<i>EHS Water Management Unit</i>
Roy Ramsay (RR)	<i>EHS</i>
Norman Simmons (NS)	<i>DOE PEPG</i>
Jim Thompson (JT)	<i>Planning Service</i>
Stuart Wightman (SW)	<i>DRD Water Policy Division</i>

Apologies:

George Butler	<i>NI Water</i>
Mary McIvor	<i>DFP</i>
Alison McQueen	<i>DCAL (Inland Fisheries / Waterways)</i>
Mark Pinkerton	<i>DETI (on behalf of Fiona Hepper)</i>
David Small	<i>Forest Service</i>

Following approval by the Board, the agenda was re-ordered slightly:

1. Coastal & Marine Forum

- 1.1. Professor Andrew Cooper (AC), chairperson of the [Coastal & Marine Forum](#) thanked the Board for agreeing to extend its remit to cover Integrated Coastal Zone Management. He explained that ICZM was broader in scope than WFD, but that there was significant overlap, and that ICZM would be delivered in Northern Ireland through a [strategy](#) (from 2006 – 2026) containing a series of targets and objectives agreed by Government Departments. The Coastal & Marine Forum (CMF) was established to take an overview of the strategy's implementation and to raise awareness and publicise ICZM.
- 1.2. AC highlighted an issue which the CMF views as urgent, concerning the transfer of draft Planning Policy Statement 20 (The Coast) from DRD to DOE. He pointed out that there was no timetable for the development of this PPS.
- 1.3. Paul Simpson (PS) advised the Board that it had been necessary for DOE to take over work on DRD planning policy statements, the most pressing of which was PPS 14 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside). Following completion of PPS 14, resources would have to be focused on PPS 12

(Housing in Settlements) due to Ministerial commitment. PS said he would like to explore the CMF concerns in more detail with planning policy staff and to discuss possible timescales.

2. Minutes of 6th meeting

- 2.1. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 November 2007, were agreed.
- 2.2. Dave Foster (DF) gave an update on some of the actions from the previous meeting. He highlighted that no comments had been received on the concept for the draft River Basin Management Plans and that work would therefore continue on the basis that the concept had been accepted. He advised the Board that discussions were ongoing on a technical level regarding fish monitoring and that he would liaise with DCAL on developing a funding bid.

3. Updates on Water Framework Directive implementation

- 3.1. The 'updates' paper was circulated prior to the meeting, providing a summary on a range of policy, technical and public participation issues. No comments were recorded.

4. Draft River Basin Management Plans – timetable & progress

- 4.1. William Caldwell (WC) ran through the timeline for political sign-off of the draft River Basin Management Plans (from May to November), emphasising the need for engagement with other Departments at key stages:
 - May-June: informal 'clearance' of draft RBMP through departmental reps (on IWG or otherwise).
 - Early June: submission to Minister, draft RBMP to Environment Committee – other Departments to consider engaging their own SpAd / Minister and Committee.
 - August / September: Beginning of Executive process - draft RBMP circulated by DOE Minister to other Ministers, formal comments requested from Departments, consideration by Special Advisors.
- 4.2. Board members were asked to note the unavoidably tight timetable associated with the progressing of the draft River Basin Management Plans through Ministers, Departmental Committees and the Executive.
- 4.3. Norman Simmons (NS) suggested that a similar process to the Marine Bill be adopted, whereby the DOE Minister wrote to other Ministers about leading the issue through the Executive process. He stressed the need for other Departments to engage their Ministers and Committees.
- 4.4. The Board discussed the evolving nature of the draft plans, the degree of any new spending within them, and the North South implications for meeting the publication deadline.
- 4.5. Gabriel Nelson (GN) gave a short presentation on classification, objective setting and programmes of measures. He outlined the process for characterising water-bodies, classifying them according to status (determined from the monitoring programme), setting environmental objectives for each water-body and establishing the measures to deliver these objectives by 2015.

- 4.6. As an example, GN presented a summary of the status for rivers in Northern Ireland, and explained the current simple rules for objective setting, which take as a starting point the aim of improving the status of each water-body by one class for each River Basin Cycle (2015, 2021, and 2027).
- 4.7. He went on to explain current debate about 'certainty' or 'confidence' issues. Where there was high certainty or confidence in the classification of a water-body, then the problems identified should be addressed. Medium certainty would require the prevention of deterioration, and prioritisation for further monitoring and investigation, while low certainty would require monitoring, assessment and review.
- 4.8. GN asked the Board to consider the funding of new measures which could be identified, and how this could be presented within the plans, prior to any new funding being agreed by Ministers (e.g. through Programme for Government 2011-2014).
- 4.9. PS suggested that DFP should provide a steer on this. He asked how decisions on where and how to spend funding would be made, and what results would be achieved. GN replied that some funding could be detailed as the measures and objectives were refined. However, he said that uncertainty as to whether certain actions would have the desired results could continue through River Basin Cycle 1.
- 4.10. A discussion on funding and costs/benefits followed, with it being agreed that the Executive would expect to see some information on financial implications, and that consideration should be given to how best to present this information.
- 4.11. Harry Gracey (HG) asked for a copy of the presentation to be circulated, and asked if it was possible to identify the percentage of contribution to a pressure from each sector. GN replied that while this was difficult, AFBI and EHS were working on models.
- 4.12. GN highlighted again that under previous assessments of water quality, the figures would seem better than the classification of status under WFD, and this would be likely to draw comment. This is due to the additional elements (i.e. beyond invertebrates and chemistry) which must be assessed under WFD, and the 'one out, all out' approach to assigning status.

Action: Circulate copy of presentation to Board members.

5. Water Matters / Significant Water Management Issues

- 5.1. PS asked GN to outline the main issues raised during the series of public evening meetings to highlight the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI) reports, published under the title "Water Matters – Have Your Say", and the written comments received on that publication.
- 5.2. GN explained that a summary of the responses received was being compiled into a document for publication at the end of April / beginning of May, and that stakeholders wanted to be able to track their input into the RBMPs. The responses received covered issues such as:
 - Development planning (in particular PPS 14 and PPS 15);
 - Alien species;

- Regulatory controls and enforcement – level of fines, awareness raising;
- Water abstraction and hydropower;
- Sewage infrastructure;
- Agriculture;
- Nutrient losses /budgets;
- Cross-border issues;
- Forestry – perception from legacy of previous methods.

6. AOB & date of next meeting

6.1. No other business.

6.2. The next meeting of the Board will be held in late August / early September 2008.