



# River basin management plans: Planning overview annex summary

The river basin management planning overview annex supports the river basin management plans. It provides the detail behind the decision making which has shaped the documents.

## Background

The European Water Framework Directive provides the main framework for managing the water environment throughout Europe. At its heart is an ecosystem approach that requires measures to be taken to encourage the sustainable use of water and to protect and improve inland surface waters, ground waters and coastal waters, with the aim of achieving good status. It recognises that interested groups need to work together to design and implement improvements, taking a holistic and integrated approach to managing the water environment.

Under the Water Framework Directive, a management plan must be developed for each river basin district. Environment Agency Wales (now Natural Resources Wales), as competent authority for implementing the directive in Wales, first published these in December 2009. The river basin management plans (the plans) outlined the actions that would need to be taken so that more waters were at good status by 2015 and what needed to be investigated to test whether all waters could justifiably achieve this by 2027.

The plans and the objectives and measures contained within them must be reviewed and updated every six years; therefore an updated plan for Western Wales, Dee and Severn river basin districts have been published.

Natural Resources Wales, working with others, started the process of updating the first plans in 2012. The main document for each river basin district summarises the current state of the water environment and the revisions to the objectives and measures.

## Supporting information

The following data for every water body in Wales is available on Water Watch Wales:

- Classification results
- Reasons for not achieving good status
- Water body objectives
- Reasons for alternative status objectives
- Monitoring networks
- Measures required to improve water bodies to good status

## What the document covers

**Managing the water environment** (section 2) describes why water is such an important resource and summarises the policies, both European and domestic, which shape how the water environment in Wales is managed.

**The Water Framework Directive** (section 3) describes the aims and objectives of the directive including the application of exemptions. The river basin management planning process used in Wales is described including how Natural Resources Wales is working with others.

**Defining and describing the water environment** (section 4) describes how the water environment is divided up and characterised for the purposes of implementing the Water Framework Directive. It set out how the environment is monitored and the results of that monitoring used to assess and report on the status of the water environment. The latter part of the section describe the main challenges affecting management of the water environment in Wales, how future risks have been assessed and current causes of problems identified.

**Identifying measures and objectives** (section 5) describes the role of economic appraisal and sets out the overall process used for determining environmental objectives, including water body status objectives and developing measures.

**Summary of engagement** (section 6) looks at the engagement work we have done including public access to information, consultations and a forward look

**Annex VII Requirements** (section 7) sets out the requirements under Annex VII of the Directive and where the information can be found.

**Mechanisms for protecting the water environment** (section 8) provides further information on the mechanisms that underpin the measures to improve the water environment

**Glossary** (section 9) a comprehensive list of all acronyms used throughout the document

