River Basin Management Planning in Scotland – Statement of Consultation Steps for the third plans



Summary of responses

April 2019

Introduction

SEPA ran a consultation, 22 June 2018 to 22 December 2018, about the steps we will take to engage stakeholders in the preparation of the third river basin management plan, RBMP, for Scotland[1]. This digest summarises the responses received.

The consultation set out:

- the timescales associated with the formal consultations for the preparation of the third river basin plan;
- how we will engage with partners during this period;
- our intentions for cross border working for the Solway Tweed district; and
- our intention to align RBMP with other plans and policies.

A consultation for the Solway Tweed district ran in conjunction with this consultation. The summary of responses has been published by the Environment Agency[2].

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the consultation.

Summary of responses

Thirty-eight responses were received to the consultation from a variety of stakeholders and responsible authorities. A full list of respondents can be found in Appendix 1.

The responses received were supportive of the proposals set out. Respondents were well informed about the RBMP process and clear that we need to continue to work in partnership to continue to develop and deliver RBMP.

The responses are summarised into the following themes:

1. Engagement and partnership working
2. Effective integration of plans and strategies
3. Relationship with SEPAs new regulatory framework
4. Easing information sharing

1. Engagement and partnership working

Respondents were supportive of the proposed consultation steps and commitment to stakeholder engagement and working in partnership. They were clear that we should build on our engagement and communication successes to date so engagement was undertaken to provide clarity to everyone affected by the plan. A number of stakeholders offered to disseminate RBMP information on behalf of SEPA.

A number of respondents sought clarity about the role of advisory groups for the development of the second plans. These respondents felt that area advisory group meetings were a useful forum to allow for discussions about integration of local area issues and plans to improve cohesive regional working.

[1] River Basin Management Planning in Scotland – Statement of Consultation Steps for the third plans https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/publications/

[2] River basin planning 2021: working together consultation response report for England https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/river-basin-planning-working-together

There were also requests for the National Advisory Group to meet during the development of the third plan to allow early input by the responsible authorities and stakeholders.

Further information about the form the engagement will take was requested from a number of respondents. This would give stakeholders notice to organise resources and provide quality contributions.

2. Effective integration of plans and strategies

Respondents were very supportive of the commitment to integrate RBMP objectives with other plans and strategies. It was recognised that with limited staff time and resources it's important that we work efficiently and effectively with partners. RBMP is fully embedded in land use planning and flood risk management planning through policy and guidance that has led to effective partnership working and successful projects. Opportunities are also identified and links strengthened through the wider planning processes and statutory strategies, such as forestry and biodiversity strategies. A few respondents highlighted that we must ensure these opportunities are not missed either in developing and future strategies, plans and policies to maximise potential benefits.

3. Integration with SEPAs new regulatory framework

SEPAs One Planet Prosperity- Our Regulatory Strategy intends to create health and wellbeing benefits (social success) and sustainable economic growth (economic success) along with protection and improvement of the environment. Respondents were supportive of SEPA promoting successful and sustainable business operations through their adoption of a sector planning approach. A few respondents asked if the new strategy would change the statutory role of responsible authorities. This is not the case, the roles and responsibilities of responsible authorities are defined in legislation. We are clear that this regulatory strategy will strengthen the delivery mechanisms to achieve the RBMP objectives.

4. Easing information sharing

The use of the interactive maps from RBMP2 and the supporting tools have been well used and are popular with stakeholders and partner organisations. These tools have made RBMP data more accessible and available. Stakeholders are keen to see that work continues in this area to improve data sharing in a format that is easily interpreted and understood.

Some respondents were keen to share data with SEPA to improve our information. We are always interested to look at new data sources, and will work with stakeholders to do this.

A couple of respondents asked if SEPA will undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment, SEA, in the development of the third plans. We will undertake a screening assessment of the need for a SEA that will be published in due course.

Next Steps

Given the supportive responses SEPA will progress with the proposals outlined in the consultation to develop the third river basin management plans.

SEPA will publish a communication and engagement strategy geared to the publication of the third plans to provide further detail to stakeholders.

Appendix 1. Respondents to the statement of steps Scotland consultation.

Scottish Canals	Aberdeenshire Council
The Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership (MGSDP)	Dundee City Council
Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust	Spey Fishery Board
Highlands and Islands Airports Limited	East Lothian Council
Dee Catchment Partnership	Linlithgow Angling Club
James Hutton Institute/Dee Catchment Partnership	West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Scottish Water	Woodland Trust Scotland
National Farmers Union Scotland	Scottish Anglers National Association
Scottish and Southern Energy, SSE plc	Crown Estate Scotland
Scottish Natural Heritage	Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board
Law Society of Scotland	City of Edinburgh Council
Forth District Salmon Fishery Board	Sea Fish Industry Authority
Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	Falkirk Council
Edinburgh Airport	Energy UK
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority	Aberdeen city council
East Lothian Council (Planning Policy)	Scottish Power Generation Ltd
Fisheries Management Scotland	The Coal Authority
Harry Millar, Voluntary Sector	3 anonymous responses