

Comment Receipt

Event Name	A consultation on Working Together to deliver river basin management
Comment by	Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (Mr Phil Holden)
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Working together in the Severn River Basin District

1. How do you think the Environment Agency can create an approach that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute to the Severn River Basin Management Plan?

This is a difficult task, as the area is very large and there are many stakeholders. An important means will be to link as far as possible with existing groups. In our area this would include the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership itself, and the Clun Catchment Partnership which we have established for a sub-catchment of the Teme. In addition a wide variety of accessible methods will be needed to reach new audiences.

2. In your experience, how can the Severn River Basin District Liaison Panel be made more effective and efficient as part of this approach?

I have no experience of this group. I found a set of minutes on the web but was able to make little of them. There can be a value in cascading minutes of such a meeting on to other levels, but they need to be written in a way which is understandable to people who were not at the meeting.

Working together in catchments

3. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses about working at a catchment scale? The Environment Agency will consider responses to this question alongside the formal evaluation of the Environment Agency hosted catchment pilots. If you have any experience of the catchment pilots (both those hosted by the Environment Agency and those hosted by others), or working in catchments generally, please tell us.

I have been involved in the Teme Catchment Pilot during 2012, and am involved in running a Clun Catchment Partnership for the Clun sub-catchment of the Teme (see <http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/looking-after/area-initiatives/clun-catchment/>). Both of these initiatives have been extremely valuable to us in engaging with new partners and tackling issues of importance to the AONB. The catchment is a functional ecological unit, and the Teme work in particular has brought us together with new partners outside the county. This is valuable as the AONB is a large part of the headwaters of the Teme, and what goes on within it affects areas considerable downstream.

In our experience however, pursuing practical issues and project working has to be done at a smaller scale than WFD catchment level (ie in our case the Teme). We work especially in the Clun catchment (currently with two dedicated project staff) and even this is a large area, within which we have targeted areas for involvement. It is also only at this very local scale that community involvement really becomes possible.

3b. The implementation of WFD is largely happening at a catchment level. We feel that delivery partner representatives from catchments are currently underrepresented within a largely sector based membership. How do you think we can improve this situation, whilst maintaining the right balance between being inclusive and maintaining a manageable sized panel?

I am not clear if this question is about representation from particular catchments at the RBD Panel, or about representation on catchment level groups. I do feel that continued government resourcing of the catchment pilots will be necessary to continue the work they have successfully started.

The Environment Agency's approach to working together

4. How do you want to work with the Environment Agency in developing the Severn river basin management plan? Please include what level of involvement (inform, consult or working together to solve problems) you want and specify what methods you would prefer.

We will be happy to comment on documents produced. Meetings and workshops may be useful but only if these are locally focussed rather than for the whole river basin district. We will be happy to forward appropriate details of the consultation to our own groups and contacts to help reach wider audiences.

Flood risk management plans

5. How do you think consultation on the Severn River Basin Management Plan and the flood risk management plans can best be co-ordinated?

I do not have sufficient knowledge of these processes to answer this question. I have as a result of looking at this questionnaire found the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Shropshire and will be looking at this to understand the implications for the AONB and our Management Plan which is currently under review.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation. At the end of the consultation period the Environment Agency will write and publish a response report and we will let you know when this is available.

We would also like to keep in touch with your organisation as cycle 2 planning progresses, with regular updates and invitations to events and other opportunities for you to contribute. Is this of interest? Yes