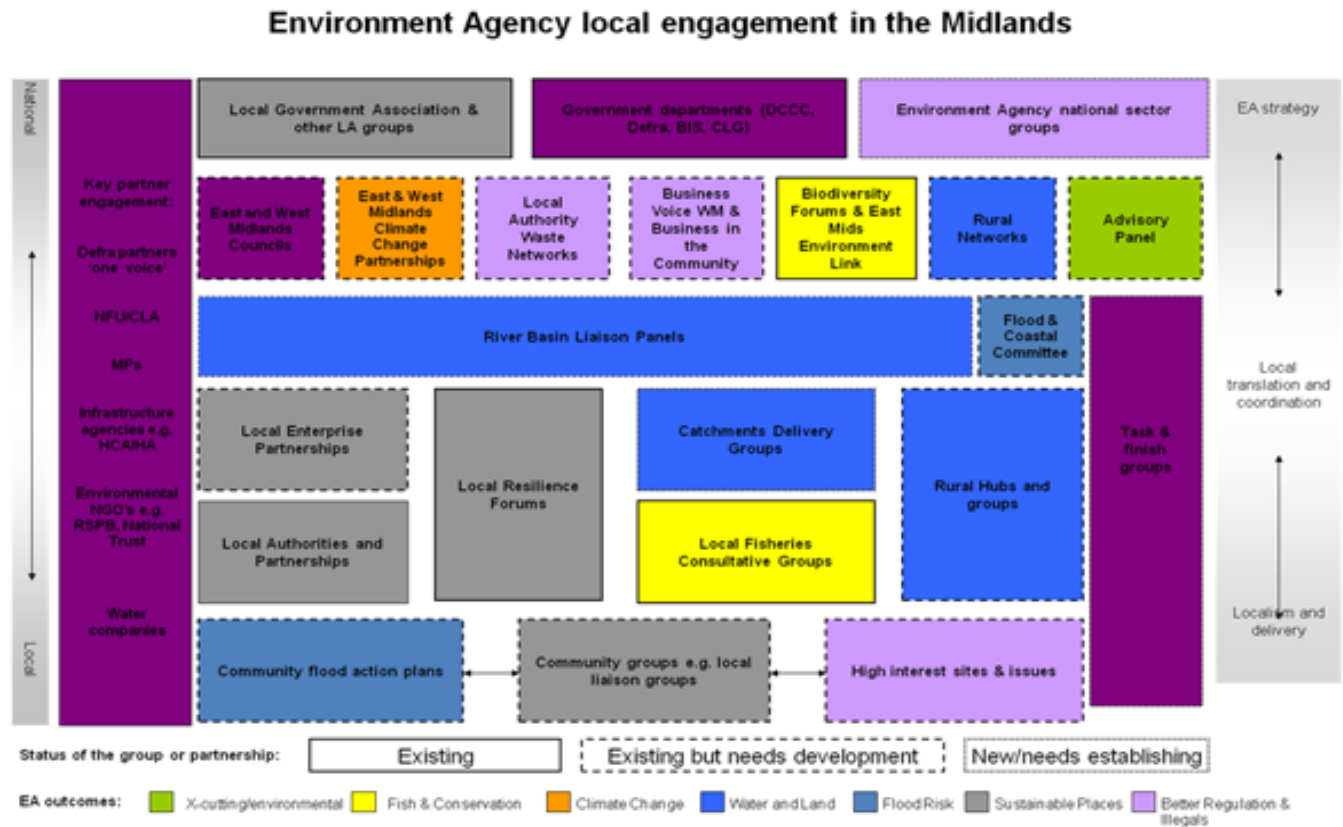


Annex D: Regional engagement models

Figure 1: Environment Agency local engagement in the Midlands region



A new approach to regulators working in partnership

The Environment Agency is always looking for innovative ways to make our regulation more effective and risk based. By working with other regulators, we can respond effectively to any concerns raised by the local community. We can also help businesses reduce their impact on the environment, lift the regulatory burden on well performing businesses and tackle illegal activities.

The Environment Agency has developed a joint approach, by using a specific waste site in Staffordshire as a pilot. The site has four regulators, Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council, the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency. By working together, we were able to engage more effectively with the community and help the site become more compliant and reducing its impact on the local environment. We will continue to use this partnership approach with other sites.

The result of working together was a more joined up approach to regulating the site. Outcomes included:

- improved and more consistent communications with the operator and local community
- agreeing priorities and timing of activities

- a more strategic view of the best course of action at any one time
- better planning
- improved sharing of intelligence and information

The approach has been recognised as an innovation and effective approach to regulating similar types of sites. As part of the project a toolkit was developed which has enabled this approach to be used at other local sites.

Community liaison to reduce risk of flooding

The Environment Agency seeks to help communities to understand and manage their flood risk more effectively by being more prepared and co-ordinated.

Following the floods in 2007, the Environment Agency has been working with community groups, such as Much Wenlock Flood Action Group, to help reduce the flood risk in their town. The town is affected by rapid flooding from surface and river water. Much Wenlock does not have a flood warning service, so preparation in the community is vital.

The Environment Agency helped the Flood Action Group to write a flood plan and to introduce a new alert system, giving residents more time to prepare for flooding. The Environment Agency has also helped the group to work with the community on ways they can help protect their homes and prepare flood plans for individual households.

The Environment Agency will continue to find ways of helping communities take a lead in reducing their own flood risk and preparing better for flooding, when it does happen.

Working in partnership with industry and the local community at local sites

The Environment Agency aims to improve the way we communicate with the public around the sites we regulate. We want to be more open and better understand public concerns, interests and how they want to talk to us or get information. There are many examples where we have developed our approach to working closely with site operators, local residents and others to resolve issues.

At a composting site the Environment Agency regulates in Gloucestershire, residents had concerns about odour and flies. We have been working in partnership with the local District Council and the community via a liaison group to resolve concerns from the community regarding odour and fly annoyance from the site. We have brought together local partners, including the operator, local councillors and the MP to attend the liaison group depending on the issue we are talking about. This has helped everyone understand local concerns, each other's point of view and how the site is regulated. The Health Protection Agency and Primary Care Trust have recently attended to answer questions from residents.

The operator has taken action to reduce the site's local impact, and by providing a forum for constructive discussion and information sharing, the concerns of residents have been addressed. One of the improvements made by the operator on the site has been a physical re-design and refurbishment of the odour treatment system. We have also done some additional monitoring, so we have an accurate base line to assess the ongoing improvements, as a result of the operator's action.

The Environment Agency will facilitate the setting up of more local groups in the future. This will help us work more closely with the local communities, operators and the local authority to address local concerns and help reduce the environment impact of our regulated sites

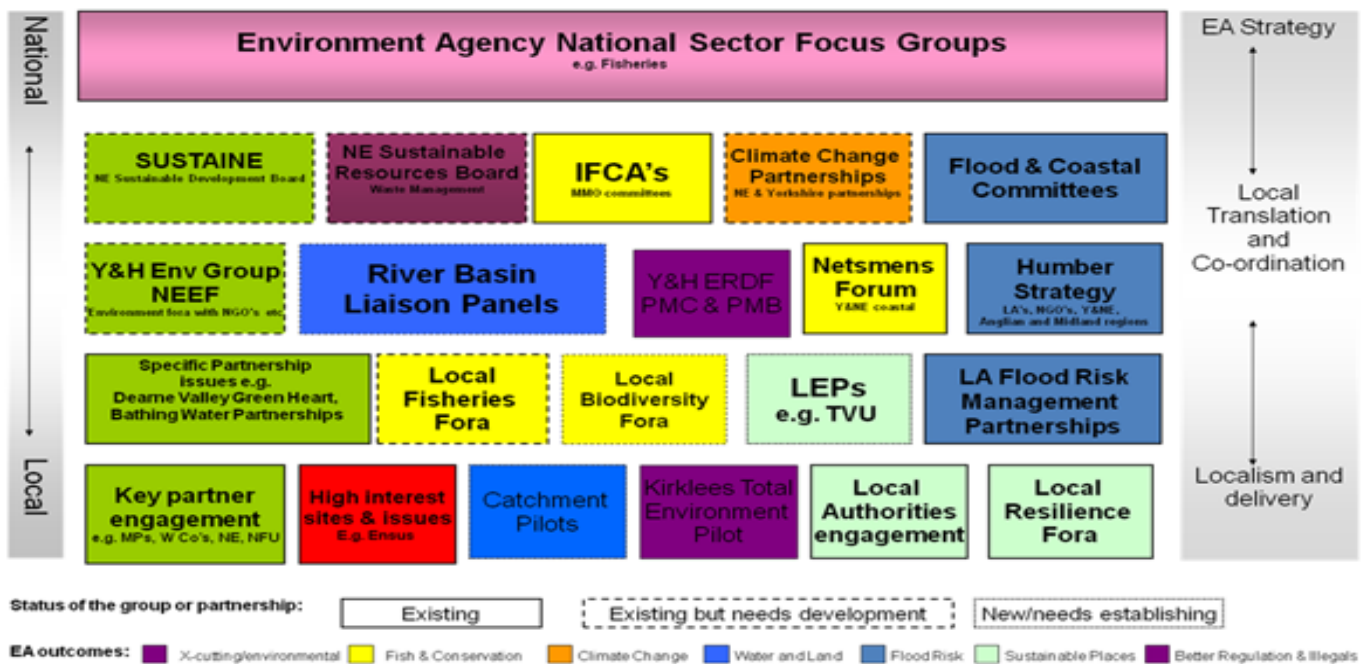
Developing the role of the Midlands Regional Advisory Panel (RAP)

The Midlands Region is developing a programme of RAP meetings for this year with topical items for discussion. These will act as the task and finish groups set out in our model. The topics will reflect our current engagement priorities and will involve some external partners or experts, depending on the topic. During this transitional year, the Region will also look at the future of RAP in line with our proposed model and their role as our critical friend.

We've mapped how we engage with our current customers and partners, at various spatial levels. This has informed our choice of topic areas, and helped us identify new or developing groups and forums which we'll need to work with more in the future. At each RAP meeting we'll present an update on our engagement.

Our next RAP meeting will discuss how we work with partners at all levels to deliver improvements in our water environment, under the Water Framework Directive. We'll particularly explore our relationships with local authorities and the challenge of presenting the aims of the Water Framework Directive in a more customer focussed way. This will help them to spot opportunities and better integrate the actions into their work and activities. This discussion will not duplicate the work of the Liaison Panels, but be complementary, as it'll drill down into specific issues in greater detail.

Figure 2: Environment Agency local engagement in Yorkshire and North East region



Engaging locally

Staff within the Environment Agency Yorkshire Area are invigorating communications with fisheries customers and others with an interest in waterways at a local geographic level. This builds on good practice in other areas and suggestions from an event in December 2010 attended by both RLFAC (FERAC) members and staff to look at improved engagement in the sectors. For example, the Environment Agency is engaging with the Yorkshire anglers, by answering questions through web-chats hosted by the Yorkshire Fishing forum website.

Area teams are focusing on engaging with customers as part of the solution rather than the Environment Agency solely leading meetings or events. The Environment Agency has also taken advice from professionals on how to engage where there are complex issues. This

approach is being used successfully in discussions with different recreational users of the River Dearne.

The Environment Agency will continue to facilitate the Netsmens Forum. This has developed into a very successful group where netsmen are happy to work proactively with the Environment Agency. This will be vital in maintaining key customer involvement in the development of byelaws and other local regulations.

The Environment Agency is working on developing the River Basin Liaison Panels to develop a clear role and drive delivery. The aim is to improve co-ordinated communications with other local engagement including across Environment Agency boundaries to make us truly accountable to our customers.

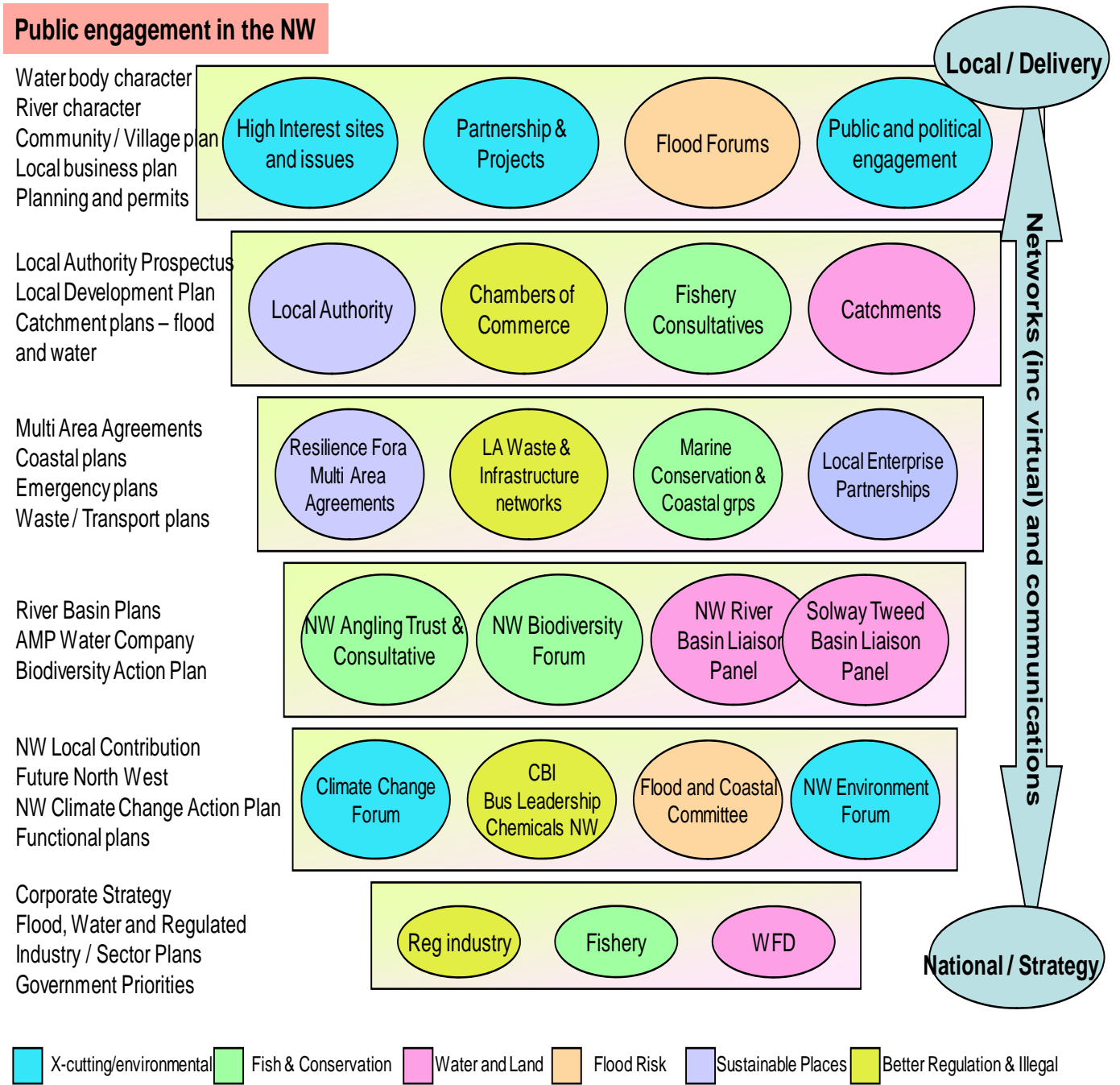
Area and Regional Office Managers all have prioritised engagement plans.

The **South Holderness liaison panel** has helped to develop an ongoing and open dialogue with communities and key partners. The Environment Agency is unable to secure funding to continue the maintenance of some defences in this area so it is a highly contentious subject, but have been working together with this representative group to tackle challenging funding issues and are developing a joint action plan.

Hemlington Lake is an artificial lake in one of the more deprived parts of Middlesbrough, created to provide flood protection for parts of the town downstream. The lake was subject to anti-social behaviour, abuse and vandalism. As part of the wider **Middlesbrough Clean Becks partnership** the project was a catalyst for a group of interested residents to set up a formal Friends of Hemlington Lake group. This group was actively involved in implementing the project, has instilled great pride in the neighbourhood and is passionate about looking after and improving it.

The Environment Agency is dealing with several applications for **EfW (energy from waste) plants**. At Allerton Park in North Yorkshire the Environment Agency began planning their approach over 3 months prior to receiving the application. Efforts were concentrated on those most affected by the proposals, visiting Parish Councils and meeting local residents groups to explain the Environment Agency's role in the planning and permitting process. By being proactive, open, honest and clear about alongside technical know-how, the Environment Agency is helping to build trust with communities, individuals and pressure groups during this early part of the process.

Figure 3: Environment Agency local engagement in the North West region



Public Engagement in the NW – the framework

Principles for engagement

- Engagement will be about environmental outcomes; build on what exists and works; enable integration and cross functional working; drive value for money; provide clarity of purpose and linkages between the local and nationwide forum inc inter-regional opportunities. Address short and long term issues.

Local

- We will continue to reinforce the range of existing arrangements. These include putting our efforts into responding to local needs on issues of high public interest and contention such as the many energy from waste proposals in Cheshire as well as supporting and equipping those wishing to actively improve their local environments. In addition we will specifically work with the big society vanguard project in the Eden Valley to enable their ambitions around sustainable green energy to be developed. We will also work with Keep Britain Tidy in developing a network of local river and beach care groups commencing in and around the Ribble catchment.

Local Authorities

- Over the last 12months we have agreed with the NW Local Authorities joint environmental priorities. These are being reviewed in the light of the spending review and public sector reform. Particular opportunities for engagement include how we support: the protection of people and property in relation to flood risk; the improvements to quality of life through effective regulation and criminal enforcement; the enhanced local environment through sustainable development and infrastructure planning. Working in partnership on this entire agenda will be essential if we are to achieve our joint ambitions.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

- We will work with the members of LEP's across the NW as they evolve into their new roles. We anticipate assisting in their capacity building, particularly with respect to climate change mitigation and adaptation. We will also review our role in terms of economic development as their agenda and needs crystallise over the coming months.

Catchment fora

- In the NW we will be setting up three 'catchment pilots' to test different models of engagement and action in diverse landscapes and cultures. The three catchments will be the Irwell, Ribble and Windermere / Leven. In addition we are developing a number of bathing water groups to support and lead on tackling the issues of diffuse pollution along the NW coast, in particular Fylde.

River Basin

- The North West and the Solway Tweed River Basin Liaison Panels will continue to provide a strategic planning and monitoring role in terms of the water framework directive and the NW ambition.

Industry and Business

- In addition to the range of national 'sector groups' we will work with the North West Confederation of Business and Industry, Institute of Directors, Chambers of Commerce and NW Business Leadership Team to develop our regulatory roles and approaches and support them in terms of resource efficiency and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- We will work in partnership with United Utilities to maximise the environmental improvements to the NW through their actions.

Rivers trusts, Angling Trusts and Consultatives

- These traditionally well established and active organisations exist across the NW at a range of levels and continue to provide excellent opportunities for engagement in terms of NW environmental priorities, (particularly water framework issues and fishery management) and the use of EA resources. The recent Marine Management Organisation and Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities add to this framework.

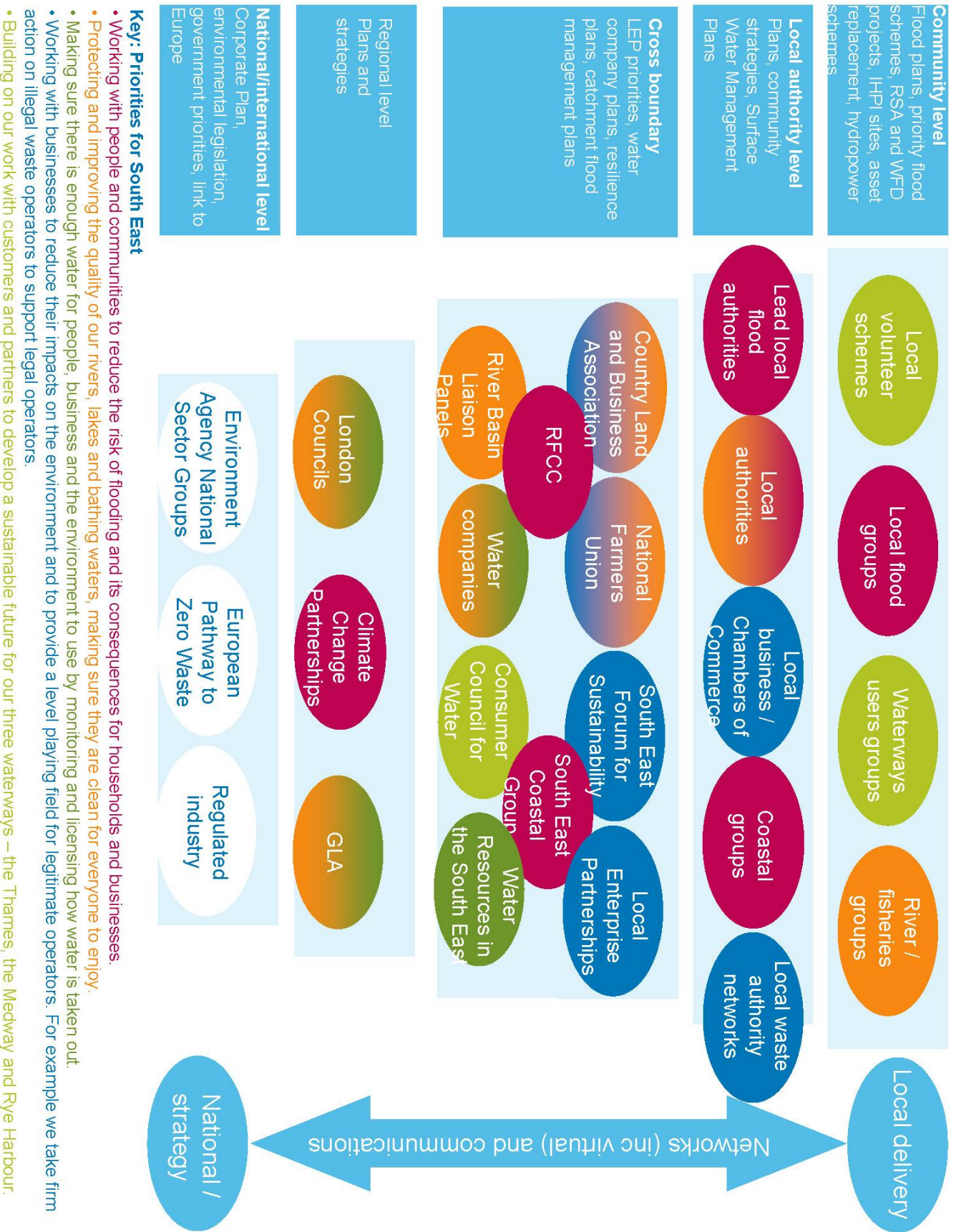
NW

- We will continue to work with the existing climate change partnership across the NW and in the months ahead support the handover of many issues to the LEP's and other delivery bodies.
- We will be arranging discussions with environmental organisations to help align resources and actions in support of NW and government priorities.

Virtual

- Enabling better access to information and more informal web based social networking is being explored as ways of enhancing the level and diversity of public engagement across the NW.

Figure 4: Environment Agency local engagement in the South East region



Public Engagement in the South East

We work with partners and community groups locally to achieve results. This is at the heart of our approach to engagement in South East. Highlights of how focussed engagement with local groups and communities achieves results for people and the environment include:

Water Framework Directive (WFD) - two of the Defra-selected pilot catchments, the Lower Lee and the Adur and Ouse are in South East. They are designed specifically to encourage greater public participation. The first collaborative meeting for the Lower Lee took place recently with Thames 21, Groundwork, London Wildlife Trust and the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority helping to shape plans for the scheme.

Medmerry Managed Realignment Scheme - as a result of engagement, the perception of local communities moved from it being a scheme driven by creating habitat for birds, to one focussed on creating a nature conservation area for local people to enjoy plus improved flood protection.

Padworth Material Recycling facility - knowing the local community had strong objections to this new Energy from Waste (EfW) facility we worked in partnership with the operator, Veolia, to set up a liaison group which included members from the local action group, parish council and local authority. We have an ongoing relationship and have recently extended the consultation period re: the permit application at the request of the group.

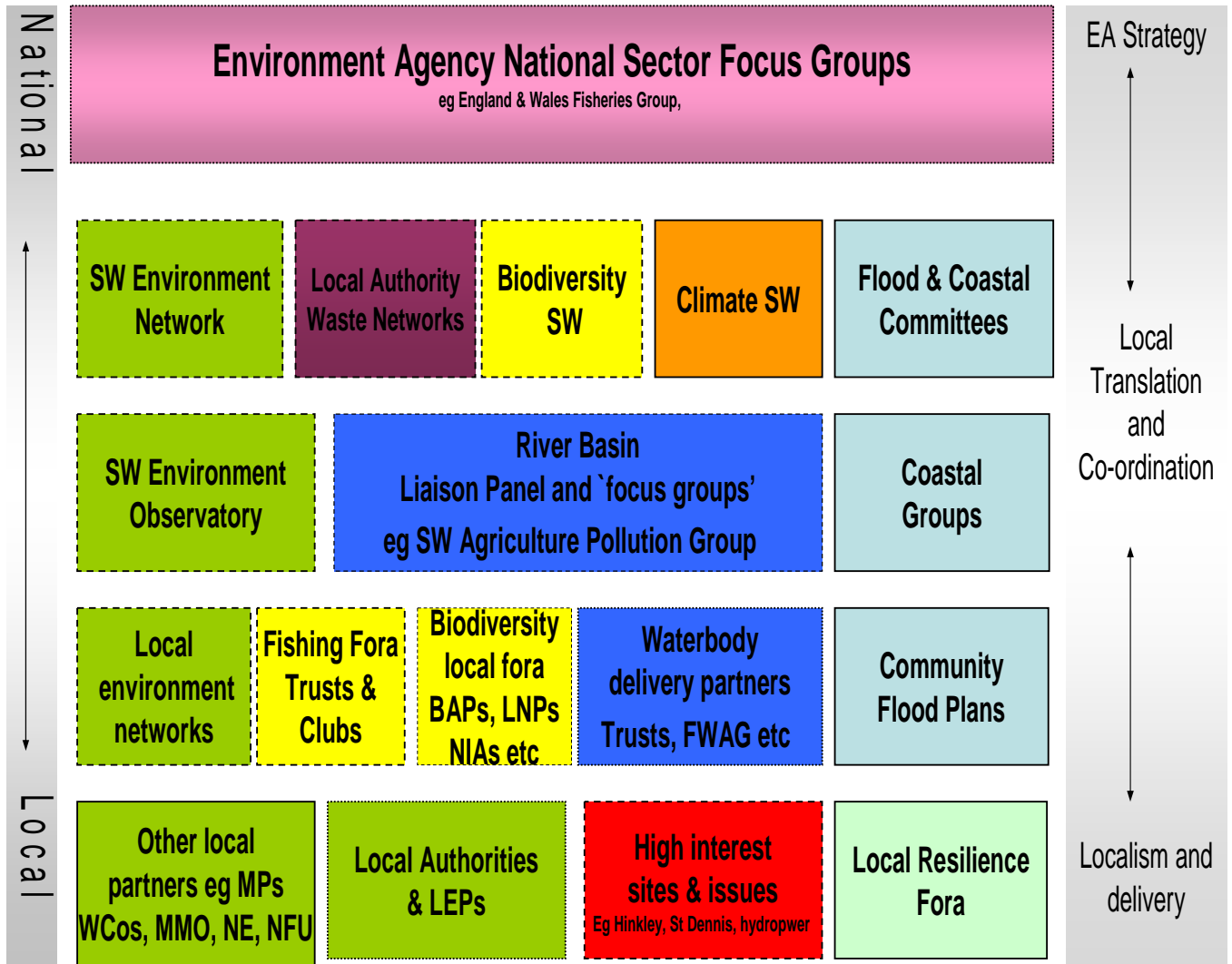
Westmill Landfill Energy from waste plant proposals - We met with the local campaign group opposing the plans to build an EfW plant at this already contentious landfill site ahead of the permit application. We created this opportunity to explain our role in permitting and regulating EfW plants, how local people can get involved, and importantly, what scope they have to influence us.

FishActive - digital engagement with the Sussex fisheries community - FishActive, www.fishactive.com is a web based forum in Sussex created in partnership with Fish and Fly, www.FishandFly.com. Designed to engage a wide audience in discussion, this will be a two way flow of information and the delivery of fisheries and biodiversity outcomes. Other initiatives will include electronic 'Where to Fish' guides, i-phone applications and a booking system to link anglers to fisheries.

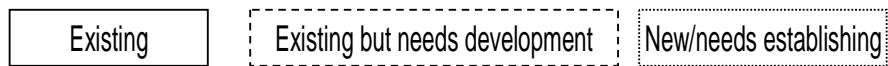
In addition, we regularly meet with and listen to the advice of local councillors and their chief executives, MPs and MEPs.

Figure 5: Environment Agency local engagement in the South West region

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY LOCAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE SW



Status of the group or partnership:



EA business outcomes:



Current Engagement in the South West

In the South West the environmental outcomes that we need to achieve drive the partnerships we have in place. For example: the West of England Partnership

The South West is an area of significant growth especially around Bristol, Bath and Weston Super Mare. There is significant tidal and fluvial flood risk, with 54,000 properties at risk and extensive infrastructure to maintain and upgrade as sea levels rise. Urban combined sewers are already under strain from high flows and tide locking which means urban river water quality is poor. There is also high growth planned with 100,000 new homes by 2026. The West of England Partnership is a voluntary partnership of local authorities formed to share knowledge and develop an evidence base and vision for development across the area.

Our particular focus is on identifying flood risk infrastructure needs - by jointly commissioning and funding flood studies for example at Avonmouth and Severnside - and ensuring that timely investment comes forward to upgrade defences.

We have sharpened our focus on the partnership reducing and rationalising our points of contact into a single virtual team with a lead contact. We have signed a memorandum of understanding with the partnership (together with NE and FC). This demonstrates our commitment to work with them and ensures our input is timely and effective. The MoU sits alongside a shared action plan.

The overall outcome we are looking to achieve is Sustainable Growth.

Water Framework Directive

We will not be able to achieve our target of getting 43 per cent of South West water bodies into Good Ecological Status (GES) under the Water Framework Directive without working closely with individuals and organisations. To achieve this we have developed a strategic and local approach to engagement. Each tier of engagement from the South West River Basin Liaison Panel down to local engagement at the 'cluster level' will cover the main sector pressures and interests including:

- Water companies
- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Biodiversity/ conservation
- Community and locally elected politicians

We are working to the principle of informing widely and genuinely engaging with those who can help us achieve the necessary improvements in water quality. For example:

The Agriculture Pollution Prevention Group is a Focus group for SW River Basin Liaison Panel, on agriculture impacts on water environment. The Environment Agency currently chairs the group. The group brings together Water Companies, West Country Rivers Trust, National Farmers Union, Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Natural England, National Trust to find solutions and take action to deliver the Water Framework Directive and achieve good ecological status in our water bodies.

Sites of high public interest

Within the South West we engage with individuals and local communities on a range of sites of high public interest including permits applications for energy from waste plants, new nuclear power stations and habitat creation schemes. Listening to the views of others helps us to take account of concerns that we wouldn't otherwise be aware of. We value the responses we

receive as they help us to ensure that we make the best decisions for people and the environment.

Future Engagement Opportunities

Engaging locally with our fisheries customers

At present, staff within the Environment Agency are already talking to a wide range of fisheries interests via different local groups and meetings. These include, fishing club and river association AGMs, local fisheries fora, local seminars, events and one-to-one contact in the field or on specific issues and sites. We do want to remain well engaged with key players and interests in order to deliver environmental outcomes but need to think differently as a result of reducing resource about how we engage.

We can for example;

- Explore with the local fisheries foras, opportunities to review their membership to increase the range of interests they contain.
- Look at existing or new initiatives such as establishing a new local forum, or making best use of existing regular local seminars, such as are held in Devon over salmon interests or Wessex (north) around coarse fisheries to improve knowledge.
- Look at a way to liaise with a range of representatives, for example, Angling Trust SW on freshwater fisheries.
- Work with national colleagues to ensure any national Environment Agency fisheries customer forum, incorporates local views, interests and needs.

Bathing Waters

There are 25 priority bathing waters across the South West that are at risk of not meeting the requirements of the revised bathing waters directive. Pollution sources include sewage and diffuse pollution in both urban and rural areas. We are working closely with water companies, local communities and businesses (including farmers) to tackle the causes of pollution.

Local authorities

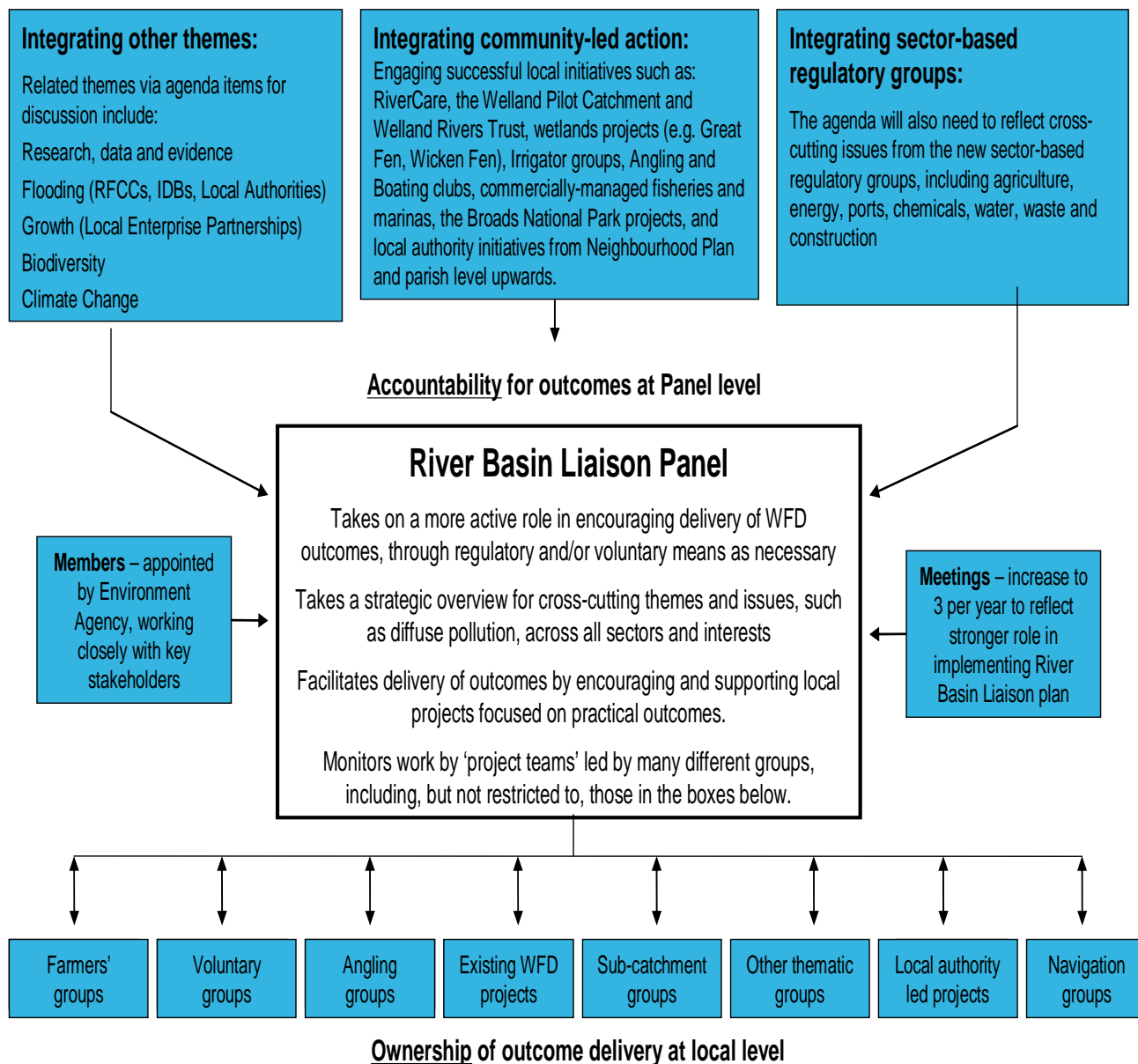
We are working closely and co-operatively with our local authorities in the South West. In Devon and Cornwall, our priority local authorities are the four unitary authorities: Cornwall, Torbay, Plymouth and Devon with particular emphasis on Cornwall (a relatively new unitary authority) and Torbay. We also chair Environment Kernow and are a key member of Environment Devon Group.

In Wessex our priorities are the City of Bristol, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset and West Dorset District Council.

We also have representation in groups such as The West of England Partnership (WEP) which brings together four unitary authorities - Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council - and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. It co-ordinates high level planning to improve the quality of life of its residents and provide for a growing population.

We have to take every opportunity to meet with local authority councillors and officers and we will use events and meetings to develop these contacts, for example inclusion on Strategic Partnerships.

Figure 6: Environment Agency local engagement in the Anglian region



The River Basin Liaison Panel will not replace RFERAC and REPAC as such. Other key sectoral groups exist and engagement with these either already exists, or will be developed, as necessary.

Future Engagement - Anglian

THE ROLE OF THE RIVER BASIN PANEL

It is proposed that:

- The Panel will continue to take forward its work to implement the Water Framework Directive (WFD), will be strengthened, building on its good work to date. It will continue to focus on the WFD: it is not proposed to widen its remit.
- Alongside the Panel's existing planning role (for the second River Basin Plan), it will also encourage and support practical projects set up to deliver environmental outcomes required by the WFD in sub-catchments, or to tackle cross-cutting themes.
- The Panel will encourage existing local initiatives which help achieve WFD outcomes, and ensure best practice is captured and shared. This will help to support new groups and projects where necessary, and identify the most resource-effective way to lead such activity. Decisions will be based on sound environmental data and evidence.
- River Basin management will be promoted at a scale that best suits those the Agency is working with to deliver WFD outcomes, while ensuring a strong overview of progress and priorities through the Panel. This could be at catchment level – as in the Welland pilot project – or through the natural work areas of Rivers Trusts or through Neighbourhood or Parish plans.
- The Panel will provide an important means for continuing to engage with key groups formerly represented through the REPAC and RFERAC committees which have an interest in WFD, including the Angling Trust Regional Freshwater Forum, conservation groups such as the RSPB and catchment-level navigation groups, including the Great Ouse Boating Association.

BUILDING ON EXISTING ENGAGEMENT

It is proposed that:

- The Agency will work harder to reflect the concerns of local communities in its actions and priorities, through the use of catchment engagement officers working at a local level. Their role will be to identify good ideas, partnerships and funding, and make appropriate links to deliver project outcomes
- Where local communities lack the capacity to lead local projects, the Agency will work with them through its partners in the public and voluntary sectors. Where appropriate, the Agency will also put communities in touch with existing good practice (e.g. the Welland River Trust success in leading the Welland WFD pilot catchment) to try to develop new groups or structures which will be able to take forward local aspirations for a better environment.
- The Agency is currently working with groups such as the Fisheries Consultative Forum and the Navigation Group to ensure they are fit for purpose and representative of the post-committee stakeholder landscape. Where necessary, we will support the development of new arrangements which build on existing 'localism' best practice – for example, the good work of Anglian Water's RiverCare project in engaging local communities to care for their local stretch of river.
- As a regulator, the Agency will continue to work with individuals who hold licences and permits including regulated farms, manufacturing businesses, anglers and boat-owners in order to actively seek feedback from these key groups, and maintain links with issues on the ground.
- We will continue to explore new and innovative ways of engaging with local stakeholders, including 'meet the Regional Director' forums, the use of social media projects such as Earth Chattering, and continuing use of quick-response media such as Twitter and Facebook.