

Comment Receipt

Event Name	Water for life and livelihoods: Challenges and choices
Comment by	English Heritage (Dr Jen Heathcote)
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The significant issues

1. What do you consider to be the significant issues facing waters in England?

Broadly, we agree with the main issues identified. However, we are concerned about the lack of reference to the historic environment (cultural heritage) and the part that it plays in defining the characteristics and conditions of a place, including the water environment. We consider it important that the services and benefits of the historic environment are given due recognition as part of the environmental assessment as well as in the final management plan.

In considering the services and benefits provided by the historic environment, English Heritage recommends the following aspects are taken into account:

- 1 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource.
- 2 The historic environment has served to shape, and continues to influence, ecosystems and the spatial extent, diversity, quality and condition of their constituent habitats. Specific habitats, such as water bodies in parkland, can also be heritage assets in their own right.
- 3 Certain heritage assets have an intimate relationship with the water environment, such as historic bridges, weirs, watermills and demonstrate people's efforts over centuries to manage and exploit water resources.
- 4 Other important heritage assets can be reliant on water-dependent habitats or water-level management regimes such as buried, waterlogged archaeological and palaeo-environmental remains associated with river valleys, floodplains, wetland habitats and water meadows.
- 5 Heritage assets often provide a focus for community interest and engagement and promoting this can provide a basis for delivering wider environmental improvements.

2. Do you agree with our description of the issues affecting the water environment and society?

Please specify which issue(s) your response refers to and provide relevant information to help explain your answer.

Physical modification We consider it important to recognise that with respect to the issue of physical modification, channel obstructions may be heritage assets which contribute to the local character and distinctiveness of a place and are valued by society. Some of these obstructions have been in place for centuries. As such, we would prefer greater emphasis to be placed on adaptation rather than

focussing attention on removal (p8): we are aware that adaptation does take place, but that message doesn't come through in this document.

We appreciate that physical modifications can have negative impact on water quality, but a more sophisticated approach is needed when discussing this issue to recognise that in some circumstances they have positive qualities and provide opportunities for wider public benefit.

3. How do you think these issues should be tackled? Please specify which issue(s) your response refers to and describe any consequences of taking particular actions or approaches.

Abstraction and flow

Historic metal mine workings have been suggested to be a potential factor to low flow in some areas although there are difficulties in quantifying the degree to which they contribute to the problem.

There is also a risk of catastrophic collapse of some historic mine drainage tunnels which are rarely maintained. The impact of collapse would be likely to include flood events with negative consequences on water quality from fine sediment and chemical discharge. Provision for inspection, care and maintenance in areas at risk would be wise.

Chemicals

A particular sub-issue for this category is tackling the legacy of historic metal mining, both with respect to minewater and underground workings and the erosion of relict working floors, infrastructure and spoil. We welcome the partnership research being conducted at heritage sites such as Force Crag to develop solutions for mitigation.

Due the variability of form, degree of preservation, designation status and other factors, it is likely that each site will require a bespoke solution designed in partnership by the various sectors (i.e. historic environment, amenity, water and environment) with interests in the mines.

Diffuse pollution in rural areas (fine sediment, nitrates, phosphates)

Some farm complexes are historic and can be wholly or partly listed, including yards. Tools and advice are needed to help design improvements in farm infrastructure, for example roofing yards, to avoid adverse impact on the integrity, character and heritage value of such places.

Physical modification

See Question 2

4. What could you, or the organisation you represent, do to better protect and improve England's waters? Please specify which issue(s) your response refers to.

About you

When we come to analyse the results of this consultation, it would help us to know if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group.

Please select from the following options: Responding on behalf of an organisation or group

Please specify which organisation(s) or group(s) you are responding on behalf of and include what type it is e.g. local authority, trade association, a river's trust, academia, water company.

English Heritage

English Heritage is the Government's lead advisory body for the historic environment in England.

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