



S O U T H W E S T R E G I O N

ANNUAL COMMITTEES REPORT 2001/2002





I am pleased to introduce the Regional Committees' Annual Report in my capacity as Environment Agency Board Member with special responsibility for South West Region.

The Regional Committees are much valued for their major contribution to the Agency's work. The extent of their contribution is evident in this Annual Report.

A major feature of the year has been the extensive reorganisation of the Agency under the BRITE (Better Regulation Improving the Environment) project, which became live in the autumn of 2002. BRITE is a key organisational change which will enable the Agency to manage delivery of a more efficient and consistent regulatory process and deal with the major workload coming our way.

Flood Defence Committees have seen commencement of a major funding review by Government which is likely to have implications for the Committee structures. Whatever changes are made to the institutional or funding arrangements the Agency is focussed on delivering reduced flood risk, on which they depend heavily on the Flood Defence Committees.

Following publication of the Agency's Vision for the Environment, environmental and organisational priorities were identified during the year in 'Making it Happen', the plan to deliver the Vision over the next five years, which will govern the Committees' future work.

Many of the Agency's operational activities were affected by restrictions imposed as a result of the foot and mouth disease emergency. Credit is due to the Committees, management and staff for the rapid progress subsequently achieved when restrictions ended.

This informative summary of the activities of the Committees during the year is a valuable insight into the work of the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerald Manning'.

Gerald Manning OBE

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD DEFENCE COMMITTEE WESSEX REGIONAL FLOOD DEFENCE COMMITTEE

These two Regional Flood Defence Committees (RFDCs) are the statutory executive Committees through which the Agency is required to discharge its flood defence and land drainage functions in the former Wessex and South West regions.

The Committees' work includes the promotion of major flood and sea defence capital programmes, flood defence maintenance work on 'main rivers' and the administration of legislation controlling land drainage activities.

An increasingly important part of the work of the RFDCs consists of the provision of a flood warning service to the public and development control advice to local planning authorities in order to ensure that development will not increase the risk of flooding.

South West RFDC covers the counties of Devon and Cornwall, together with small adjoining areas of Somerset and Dorset. The Committee has seventeen Members, six appointed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), two appointed by the Agency and the majority, nine Members, appointed by the local authorities.

Wessex RFDC covers the counties of Somerset, Dorset, the former county of Avon and a large part of Wiltshire, together with parts of South Gloucestershire and Hampshire. The Committee has 15 Members. Five Members are appointed by the DEFRA and two Members are appointed by the Environment Agency. Eight Members, the majority of the Committee, are appointed by the major local authorities ('Constituent Councils') who pay the Agency's flood defence levy.

South West Report page 8

Wessex Report page 10

REGIONAL FISHERIES, ECOLOGY AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Agency has a statutory duty to consult the Regional Fisheries, Ecology and Recreation Advisory Committee (RFERAC) on how the Agency carries out its duty to maintain, improve and develop salmon, trout, freshwater and eel fisheries. It also has a statutory duty to consult RFERAC on recreation, navigation and conservation issues.

RFERAC consists of 21 Members, including the Chairman who is appointed by DEFRA. Two Members of the Committee are appointed by the Environment Agency. The remaining 18 Members are appointed, following public advertisement, from nominations received from relevant organisations and applications from individual members of the public. These eighteen appointments are split between various fisheries, ecology, recreation and navigation interests to ensure fair representation of all interests relevant to the work of the Committee. It is also endeavoured at the same time to achieve a geographical spread of the Committee's membership across the region to ensure that all parts of the region are represented.

Report page 6

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Agency has a duty to consult the Regional Environment Protection Advisory Committee (REPAC), a statutory Committee which the Agency is required to appoint by the Environment Act 1995, on any proposals of the Agency relating generally to how it fulfils its functions. The Committee takes a strategic overview of Agency activities, identifies areas of special importance regionally and acts as a sounding board for regional activities.

REPAC consists of 21 Members, including the Chairman who is appointed by the Minister of State (Environment). Members are appointed, following public advertisement, from nominations, received from public organisations with an interest in the way in which the Agency undertakes its functions and from applications received from individual members of the public.

The interests represented in the membership of REPAC are in accordance with a statutory membership scheme approved by the Secretary of State.

Report page 4

Chairman's Foreword



Foot and mouth disease played a significant part in the exceptional level of work generated for the Agency during the year. Despite this crisis workload on top of the ever-increasing regulatory responsibility, the Agency completed the year with its reputation enhanced in the West Country. The internal deliberations on the Vision, Strategy and Policy were

comprehensively discussed with local stakeholders, and despite the complexity of the process a high level of buy-in has been achieved. The BRITE re-organisation had commenced by the year-end, and shows strong signs of achieving its aims of focussing on key issues and more efficient and effective regulation.

Being at the sharp end and the primary interface with many stakeholders on environmental issues, there continues to be a performance expectation beyond the responsibilities and capabilities of the Agency. Managing this issue continues to exercise both Regional and Area management, as there are no simple solutions. Nevertheless there has been a marked increase in the influence achieved on a wide range of non-statutory environmental matters through the effective development of partnerships with other governmental bodies and NGO's.

It is to be hoped that the steady progress being made in protecting and enhancing the South West's greatest asset - the environment, will not be adversely impacted by any inadequate increase or reduction in available Grant in Aid for environmental protection.

Philip Rees
Chairman, REPAC



▲ *The industrial complex at Avonmouth*

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (REPAC)

ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee met four times during 2001/02 and appointed Working Groups to comment on a number of detailed consultations.

CHAIRMANSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

Philip Rees was re-appointed as Chairman of the Committee until 31 December 2004.

The following new Members were welcomed during the year:

Michael Bowden	Representing those Regulated
Tim Evitt	Representing those Regulated
Alan Neal	Representing those Regulated
Dr Ulrike Leroff	Representing Air and Land Aspects of the Agency's Work
Alan John	Representing Environmental Organisations
Mark Robins	Representing Environmental Organisations
John Smeaton	Representing Local Authorities

THE AGENCY'S ROLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

In discussing a paper on this subject the Committee considered that the absence of definition of the Agency's role in relation to potential health hazards left the Agency in a vulnerable position. The Committee emphasised the need for precise standards for emissions, based on research and supported the Agency commissioning the best expert advice available. The Agency was advised to commission research to provide basic background information.

LANDFILL DIRECTIVE AND SOUTH WEST REGIONAL WASTE STRATEGY

The Committee has been briefed on the implications of the Landfill Directive. REPAC congratulated the Agency on taking the initiative to provide a Regional Waste Strategy. The need to maintain progress on a wide variety of waste issues was emphasised by REPAC.

OPERATOR MONITORING ASSESSMENT - EMISSIONS TO AIR

Proposals to introduce and extend the scope of operator monitoring assessment in relation to emissions to air were supported. The Committee welcomed the approach of targeting those not performing well, in preference to a blanket approach.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

The Committee was informed of the Agency's response to the foot and mouth disease outbreak in the Region, when it was noted that the Agency had been concerned to avoid environmental problems by contamination of the groundwater and private water supplies. REPAC recorded their thanks to Agency staff for their work.



REBUILDING AGRICULTURE

A paper inviting the Committee to comment on the priorities for the Agency and agriculture was received with considerable interest. The Committee endorsed the priorities agreed by the Agency Board and emphasised the need for sustainability in agriculture.

WATER RESOURCES - AMP 3 PERIODIC REVIEW

The Committee noted progress with the national environment programme for restoring sustainable abstraction and emphasised the need for early discussion of elements of the AMP 4 review. REPAC also congratulated South West Water and Wessex Water in the delivery of their wastewater improvement programme. An annual report on these programmes was requested.

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION POLICY APPLIED TO LANDFILL

The proposed approach to controlling the impact of landfill upon groundwater was endorsed by the Committee.

REGULATORY AND CHARGING STRATEGY

REPAC made a number of suggestions on the development of an Environmental Protection Regulatory and Charging Strategy for the period to 2008.

REGIONAL STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Regional State of the Environment report and the development of a Regional Environmental Observatory were welcomed by REPAC, who made a number of suggestions for inclusion in these initiatives.

BRITE, MAKING IT HAPPEN AND LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS

During the year the Committee received informative presentations on these Agency initiatives and supported proposals to enable smarter regulatory proposals to be delivered.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGENCY'S POLLUTION INVENTORY

Planned developments of the Pollution Inventory were reported to the Committee, who advised on priority areas for development.

POPULATION GROWTH

A paper put forward by a Member of the Committee, Roger Martin, indicating that indefinite population growth in the South West precluded long term improvements in the regional environment, stimulated lively discussion. The Committee agreed that the issue of population growth should be drawn to the attention of the Minister in this Annual Report.

NITRATES DIRECTIVE

A Working Group was appointed to formulate the Committee's detailed response to a DEFRA Consultation on the implementation of the EU Nitrates Directive.

Chairman's Foreword



In addition to the regular quarterly meetings of the Committee members were consulted on various other issues which are of particular relevance to the remit of the RFERAC. Members volunteered to work with those from other Committees on sub-groups to discuss the issues where necessary. Integrated consultation in this way is essential to ensure that conflicting views are avoided.

It will be clear from the main content of the Report that fisheries funding, the allocation of resources between the regions and changes involving reorganisation as a result of the BRITE project were of particular concern to the Committee. Good external relationships are an important part of the way in which the Environment Agency carries out its duties, especially in matters involving fisheries; it is vital that this is not lost as a result of changes to funding or the structure of the Agency.

The Committee has been very encouraged by the 'Best Farming Practices' publication referred to in the main report. The practices and policies, so clearly set out in the booklet, will bring tremendous benefits to both fisheries and conservation if they become widely adopted throughout the region. Dissemination of the principles outlined is of great importance.

The recommendations made by the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review Report and their implementation continue to be prominent in Members' priorities. It is hoped that the next year will see considerable progress; already Fisheries Action Plans, Angling Participation Projects and moves towards the way we manage our salmon stocks are being developed.

I would again like to thank the Members of the Committee for their wise advice and commitment to the South West RFERAC. Their input is invaluable to the Agency and the staff. I would also like to pay tribute to the tremendous dedication of all the staff with whom we work; their workload and dedication to the preservation of the rivers and fisheries in the South West is greatly appreciated.

Finally, this is the last foreword which I shall be writing after several years involvement with the RFERAC, the Agency and its predecessor; they have been challenging years and it has been very pleasing to see the outcome of many of the issues with which we have been involved over that time. Above all it has not only been rewarding but also enjoyable. I wish the Committee and its new Chairman every success in the future; they are all an excellent 'team'.

Chris Rothwell
Chairman, RFERAC

REGIONAL FISHERIES, ECOLOGY AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RFERAC)

ANNUAL REPORT

RFERAC met four times during the year. The following is a summary of the business considered:

FUTURE FUNDING OF FISHERIES

A three-year plan for fisheries funding, allied to Government planning cycles prompted the Committee to suggest that EU funding could be an alternative source of revenue. The ability to manage business efficiencies when the allocation of income was predetermined was questioned and the Committee suggested that resources should be allocated according to need. Information was requested on the measures taken by the Agency to secure additional fisheries funding. The importance of maintaining no cross-subsidy between coarse and salmon fisheries and of accommodating private sector initiatives was emphasised.

LEVELS OF SERVICE AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

RFERAC considered issues regarding levels of service, anticipated expenditure and the allocation of resources to the regions. A degree of flexibility was felt desirable, to enable regions to meet targets. RFERAC strongly opposed any further reduction in funding for coarse and trout fisheries. The principle of developing a more equitable and transparent basis for allocating fisheries resources was however supported.

MEMBERSHIP

Three new Members were welcomed to the Committee:

Terry Fell	Representing Coarse Fisheries
Michael Parker	Representing Netsmen
Dr Stuart Welton	Representing Academic Bodies

REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Committee agreed to pursue the inclusion of salmon as an environmental indicator within the South West Regional Sustainable Development Framework, which RFERAC considered would have fisheries funding potential.



▲ Guidance on riverbank erosion is given in 'Best Farming Practices'

CATCHMENT ABSTRACTION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (CAMS)

The development of CAMS to manage water abstractions was welcomed. A number of positive suggestions were made aimed at securing the maximum benefit from CAMS.

WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR THE SOUTH WEST REGION

The conclusions and actions identified in the Regional Water Resources Strategy were strongly supported.

NATIONAL TROUT AND GRAYLING FISHERIES STRATEGY

The consultation and implementation processes for the Agency's draft Trout and Grayling Fisheries Strategy were commented upon by the Committee.

RIVERS DART AND TEIGN - SALMON FISHING RESTRICTIONS

The progress of salmon fishing restrictions on the Rivers Dart and Teign was discussed. It was apparent from the latest stock assessments that further controls on exploitation were necessary. Agreement on voluntary restraint appeared to the Committee not to be possible, although it was suggested that some issues could be explored. Proposed reduction measures were subsequently reported.

COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY (CROW) ACT

Following a detailed briefing on the main parts of the CROW Act, highlighting the impact on the Agency, concerns were expressed at the adverse effect of increased public access to sensitive water areas as a result of definitive mapping procedures.

TAW / TORRIDGE NET FISHERY

Unanimous support was expressed for net limitation order and buyout negotiations for the Taw / Torridge net fishery.

BEST FARMING PRACTICES

This Agency publication, which was written with the help and encouragement of farmers, was strongly supported by RFERAC as likely to be of considerable benefit to fisheries and ecology.

FISHERIES ROD LICENCE OFFENCE PROCESSING AND FIXED PENALTIES

Agency proposals to introduce a system of fixed penalty notices for minor rod licence offences were endorsed. However, RFERAC had some concerns at the resource implications in the event of staff requiring further training. RFERAC suggested that the opportunity should be taken to lobby the Treasury to allow a proportion of fisheries related fines to be retained by the Agency.



▲ Anglers participated in a fly trends study

FISHERIES ACTION PLANS

RFERAC was in favour of the development of Area-based Fisheries Action Plans in collaboration with other organisations. The additional funding required to produce these plans was a matter of some concern and RFERAC suggested that external funding for this initiative should be secured where possible.

THE AGENCY'S VISION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGES IN WATER MANAGEMENT

The Committee was kept informed of the Agency's targets over the next five years to deliver its Vision for the Environment, together with changes proposed in water management (the 'BRITE' project). The loss of specialist fisheries staff in Areas and the potential adverse effect on external relationships was a matter of concern to the Committee. RFERAC emphasised the importance of managing public perception carefully and of ensuring that partnerships between external fisheries interests were maintained.

RECREATION AND NAVIGATION

Proposed Agency action to promote the regeneration of water-based recreation and navigation was considered. A view was expressed that the Agency was not adequately fulfilling its duty to promote recreation.

MILLENNIUM CHALK STREAMS FLY TRENDS STUDY

The Committee discussed the results of a study of chalk stream fly trends. It was noted that the pattern and timing of the decline in chalk stream flies coincided with the decline of salmon stocks and that the ecology of rivers and fisheries required to be addressed.

Chairman's Foreword



It's always a challenge to try to distil a year's flood defence activity into a short report, especially as flood defence is a subject that continues to arouse much interest and concern across the region.

The South West Regional Flood Defence Committee has found its focus shifting slightly in this year to look with more confidence and expectation to the future. There are, it seems, always

challenges ahead, but we now have a fantastic spirit of partnership with the committee working in a really positive way to support its officers.

Flood defence is now reasonably funded. There is still an immense amount to be done in the region, and our concern is to ensure that we can now deliver the schemes we have scheduled and funded on time and on budget. We owe it to those communities who have had no choice but to remain patient while the necessary feasibilities, surveys, plans, planning permissions and funding applications have progressed in their own inimitable way.

The Committee continues to have a lively input into the strategic debates on flood defence that are taking place across the country. These have been soul searching at times as the committee debated whether there really were better ways of approaching its work. This took place against a background of more change within the Environment Agency, and increasing information about climate change.

Currently the UKCIP (Climatic Impacts Programme) is assessing the South West with its findings due next year - its findings will doubtless draw yet more attention to the changes in weather patterns and tidal levels which mean we can never be complacent about flood defence.

This summer has seen great swathes of Eastern Europe faced with unprecedented flooding, and I never cease to be awed by the sheer force of a flood in full spate. This was further reinforced when the people of Lynton and Lynmouth remembered the flooding that devastated their community 50 years ago. It was a timely reminder for us all. Ours is important work and we must never lose sight of the dangers that we try to mitigate on behalf of those communities at risk in our region.

I cannot end without offering my thanks to the staff and colleagues on the Committee whose continued commitment, enthusiasm and hard work ensure that the South West Regional Flood Defence Committee continues to have real impact in the region, and contributes effectively and incisively in national debate. I do my best to represent you all and I believe that there's no danger of our voice not being heard nationally!

Deborah Clark
Chairman, SWRFDC

SOUTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD DEFENCE COMMITTEE (SWRFDC)

ANNUAL REPORT

The main topics discussed by the Committee at its four meetings during the course of the year included:

CAPITAL SCHEMES

During the year opening ceremonies were held for schemes at Polperro and Hayle. The Polperro Flood Defence Scheme, involving five dams and a flood relief channel was completed at a cost of £6 million and the scheme for a new tidal barrier at Hayle cost £360,000.

Bodmin Town Leat scheme was completed. This £1.5million scheme is designed to safeguard Bodmin from flooding from the leat which runs through the town, mainly underground.

Work also progressed on Bideford Tidal Defences, the overall scheme for which will protect 480 properties and also on Pentewan and Harbertonford Flood Defence Schemes, protecting 40 and 45 properties respectively. The Harbertonford scheme, promoted in partnership with South Hams District Council in accordance with the Committee's policy on funding works on 'non main' river is an example of a successful partnership with local authorities.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD) EMERGENCY

During the FMD emergency flood defence operations were discontinued in rural areas to reduce the potential risk of Agency staff contributing to the spread of the disease. Subsequently delays occurred to critical flood defence schemes and a rigorous risk assessment approach was adopted with a view to recommencing works at the same sites. Resumption of work was subject to extensive consultation.

MEDIUM TERM PLAN

The Committee considered the implications for the Medium Term Plan of additional DEFRA funding following the Autumn 2000 floods, also increased grant rates for fluvial schemes and the opportunity to progress schemes as special cases.

Concern was expressed that grant rates had not been increased in line with the increased programme. Local Authority Members undertook to raise with DEFRA their concern at the implications for future funding, as the increase in flood defence levy had been agreed on the assumption that grant rates would increase to reflect the increased capital programme.



▲ The Hayle tidal barrier

FLOOD DEFENCE REVISED BUSINESS PLAN

In discussing the revised Business Plan for 2001/02, amended in accordance with the agreed levy increase of 10.5%, it was emphasised that local authorities should appreciate that the revised budget could alter and that their expectations should not be raised unnecessarily.

Changes to the Business Plan to reflect latest estimated costs, needs and regional priorities were approved. Members identified difficulties encountered in the levy process. Quarterly reports on the Business Plan were requested by the Committee to assist Local Authority Members to understand the funding position.

The Committee considered four levy options for 2002/03 and unanimously approved a levy increase of 8.4%. Regular budgetary updates in future were requested, together with reassurance that the levy increase for 2003/04 would be at Standard Spending Assessment level.

WINTER 2000 FLOODS - LESSONS LEARNED

The key findings of the Agency's eight regions following their experience of the Autumn 2000 flooding were welcomed by the Committee, who made a number of positive comments. A regional report on floods in the South West was considered to be valuable supporting material for the Agency's public awareness campaign.

CONSERVATION

The impact on flood defence functions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the role of flood defence and collaborative projects in promoting biodiversity were all considered to highlight the role of flood defence in the Agency's wider remit and to emphasise the need for a partnership approach.

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 29 (PPG 29)

Efforts to raise awareness of PPG 29 in relation to development and flood risk were wholeheartedly supported.

IMPLEMENTING THE HABITATS REGULATIONS

The key implications for the Agency of the Habitats Regulations were noted.

OPERATION PUBLIC SAFETY

Progress in implementing this project to ensure the safety of the Agency's structures for the public, together with national initiatives and funding aspects were discussed. The Agency's pragmatic approach was supported.

FUNDING CAPITAL WORKS ON SEA AND TIDAL DEFENCES

A policy for funding capital works on sea and tidal defences was agreed, aimed at providing clarity to assist in negotiations with operating authorities.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The following new Members were welcomed to the Committee during the year:

Christine Channon	Devon County Council
Owen Masters	Devon County Council
Roger Giles	Devon County Council
Bert Biscoe	Cornwall County Council
David Stark	Plymouth City Council

THE AGENCY'S VISION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Plans to deliver the Agency's Vision for the Environment over the next five years were supported by the Committee.

Chairman's Foreword



The severe autumn floods of 2000 continued to cause disruption and misery for some communities in Wessex into the Spring of 2001. Then foot and mouth disease delayed the start of many of the urgent repair and emergency works. Nevertheless both North and South Wessex instigated far reaching programmes to repair stressed defences, improve emergency response arrangements, extend flood warning and monitoring capabilities, enhance the development control effectiveness and review the liaison arrangements with other public service providers. As soon as FMD controls permitted these programmes were rapidly completed.

Government responded to the floods with improved funding and imparted a sense of urgency to the improvements in the infrastructure of flood protection. The three local committees within Wessex had already gained significant levy increases. So it is good to be able to report that throughout Wessex by the end of 2001 we were able to undertake far more capital works and maintenance programmes than before. Within the next few years I hope that we will have been able to defend communities that have had to live with flood risk for centuries.

Meanwhile the politics of change continued to absorb some the Committee's time. The Funding Review, the Financial Management and Policy Review, the Habitats Directive, concerns about public safety on our structures are all important issues that have been addressed during the year.

My thanks and congratulations go to all staff and Committee colleagues for their hard work and support during an exceptionally busy year. With further increases in funding for the future our challenge will be to develop schemes that give the best value for taxpayers money whilst responding effectively to the challenges posed by climate change.

Giles Sturdy
Chairman, WRFDC

WESSEX REGIONAL FLOOD DEFENCE COMMITTEE (WRFDC)

ANNUAL REPORT

The main topics discussed by the Committee at its four meetings during the course of the year included:

CAPITAL SCHEMES

A number of capital schemes have been completed by the three Wessex Local Flood Defence Committees (LFDCs), over which Wessex RFDC exercises supervision and receives detailed reports of their proceedings:

Avon and Dorset LFDC:

- Weymouth Harbour Tidal Defences
- Poole Harbour Tidal Defences
- Pymore Mills Flood Defence (in partnership with developer)

Bristol Avon LFDC:

- Twerton Gates refurbishment, River Avon

Somerset LFDC

- River Parrett Banks - emergency work
- Lower Tone Flood Defence Improvements, Stage 1 - Baltmoor Wall
- Moorlinch Water Level Scheme

OPERATION PUBLIC SAFETY

Following a drowning incident on the River Brue near the Agency's Hackness Sluice 'Operation Public Safety' was launched to ensure provision of warning signs and fencing at the Agency's structures.

THE IMPACT OF FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ON FLOOD DEFENCE PROGRAMMES

At the onset of the foot and mouth disease (FMD) emergency the Agency's rural activities were discontinued, impacting upon delivery of capital works and maintenance programmes. Subsequent risk assessments were completed in respect of all activities in the countryside. Where low risk was confirmed works were recommenced subject to the approval of DEFRA, the National Farmers' Union and landowners and occupiers.

Despite the delay, by the end of the year work programmes were completed. Credit in achieving this outcome should go to the workforce and contractors.

The additional funding made available by DEFRA as a result of the severe flood events of the previous winter was fully utilised.

THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY (CROW) ACT AND BIODIVERSITY

The Committee considered the implications of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, the requirements for the Agency to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when undertaking its functions and the key issues associated with the implementation of the Habitats Regulations.



▲ Poole tidal defences

CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY FOR CAPITAL WORKS

The Committee agreed policies for contributions towards funding capital works on ordinary watercourses and tidal defences.

FLOOD DEFENCE LEVIES 2002/03

The levy settlements for 2002/03 agreed in December by the three Wessex Local Flood Defence Committees (LFDCs) averaging a levy increase of 23% were welcomed as demonstrating the effectiveness of the LFDCs and a commendable response to local situations.

'MAKING IT HAPPEN' AND 'LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS'

The Agency's plan to deliver its Vision for the Environment over the next five years was supported by the Committee.

LIVE FLOOD WARNINGS ON THE INTERNET

Constructive comments were made by the Committee relating to the launch of the Agency's new service to disseminate flood warnings through the Internet. It was emphasised that the service was not a substitute for direct flood warnings.

DEFRA CONSULTATION ON MANAGED RE-ALIGNMENT OF THE COASTLINE

A Sub-Group was appointed by the Committee to consider its detailed response to this consultation, the basic direction of which was supported. However, it was suggested that more ambitious proposals were required and there would be a greater chance of success for managed realignment proposals if a clearer view was given of the way compensation was paid.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee welcomed six new Members appointed by local authorities:

Bob Cook
Mrs Hilary Cox

Julian Johnson
Charles Price
Prof. John Sharpe
Bob Williams

(North Somerset Council)
(Dorset County Council)
(subsequently succeeded by Capt. Leigh Mason RN)
(Wiltshire County Council)
(Bristol City Council)
(Somerset County Council)
(Bournemouth and Poole Borough Council)

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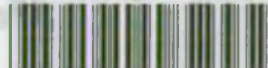
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