

# RIVER CHERWELL CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION REPORT SUMMARY LEAFLET

National Rivers Authority  
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**NRA**

*National Rivers Authority  
Thames Region*

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## THE NATIONAL RIVERS AUTHORITY (NRA)

The NRA is the principal agency responsible for protecting and improving the water environment in England and Wales. We have statutory responsibilities for:

- Water Resources
- Water Quality & Pollution Control
- Flood Defence & Land Drainage
- Fisheries & Conservation
- Recreation & Navigation



*River Cherwell at Nell Bridge, Adderbury*

## CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In order to effectively manage the water environment and sustain it for future use, the NRA has established the principle of Catchment Management Planning. This

entails the preparation of Catchment Management Plans (CMPs) for each natural river catchment throughout England and Wales. Through data evaluation, issues analysis, external liaison and consultation, the CMP provides a vehicle to focus attention on the water environment. By their very nature, the Plans will involve us in close contact with local communities and statutory organisations who share our concern and interest in the water environment. The process establishes an integrated plan of action for managing the catchment over the next five years, after which the plan is reviewed.

It should be realised that the actions proposed in the Consultation Report are only options at this stage and do not represent any firm commitment by the NRA or other organisations. Feedback from the consultation exercise should help and guide the NRA to prioritise its activities in view of resource limitations.



*Confluence of River Cherwell and River Ray at Islip*

## CATCHMENT BACKGROUND

The Cherwell catchment lies largely within Oxfordshire, although it also encroaches into Buckinghamshire to the east and Warwickshire and Northamptonshire to the north. The major urban areas include Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington and Oxford. The catchment itself extends southwards from the headwaters of the river at Charwelton in Northamptonshire to its confluence with the River Thames at New Hinksey, Oxford.

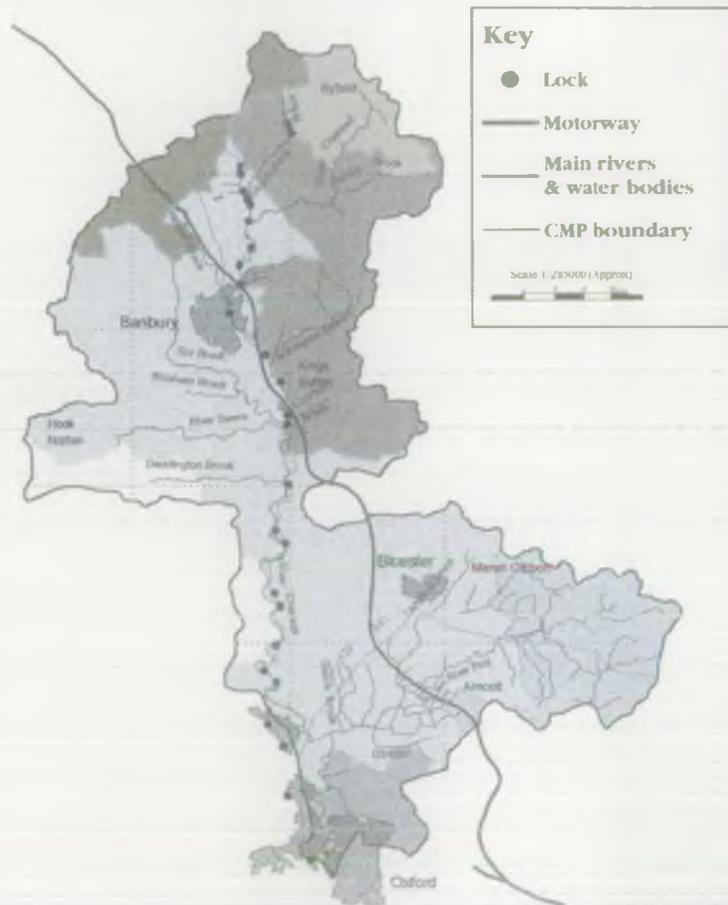
The River Ray is the largest tributary of the Cherwell. It rises near Quainton, flowing 32km south west to its confluence with the Cherwell.

The River Cherwell shares its valley with the Oxford Canal, where responsibility for water quality, recreation and fisheries is shared between the NRA and British Waterways (BW). For much of its course, the Canal runs parallel to the River Cherwell, actually crossing it at Nell bridge and occupying the same channel for the 1.5km between Enslow and Shipton-on-Cherwell.

The catchment is predominantly clay based, covering an area of 906km<sup>2</sup>. Much of the area is of high landscape value and part of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) falls within the catchment. In addition, the Cherwell and Ray valleys lie within the Upper Thames Tributaries Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA).

## KEY CATCHMENT STATISTICS

- Catchment Area 906 km<sup>2</sup>
- Population (1986) 63,461
- Average Annual Rainfall 682 mm
- Main River Length 506 km



## CATCHMENT ISSUES

### 1. WATER QUALITY

*Issue:* Current failure of a number of reaches to achieve their River Quality Objectives. Some watercourses are also achieving low Biological (BMWP) scores.

*Proposals for action:*

- continue regular chemical and biological monitoring to determine the cause of specific failures.
- continue the on-going programme of pollution prevention visits.
- carry out further modelling work to verify objectives.

### 2. GRIMSBURY PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY INTAKE

*Issue:* There is concern over water quality in the vicinity of the Grimsbury public water supply intake, in relation to elevated concentrations of herbicides, pollution from M40 surface water run-off and the possible designation of part of the River Cherwell as a nitrate vulnerable zone.

*Proposals for action:*

- continue regular chemical and biological monitoring, including monitoring for herbicides by TWUL.
- investigate possible automatic quality monitoring at the intake.
- implement a pollution prevention and education programme in the area.
- maintain interceptors and balancing ponds along the M40.

### 3. BANBURY STW DISCHARGE

*Issue:* The trade effluent from Kraft Jacobs Suchard Ltd causes the discharge from Banbury STW to be highly coloured and results in noticeable discolouration of the River Cherwell.

*Proposals for action:*

- treatment of the effluent by either Kraft Jacobs Suchard Ltd or by TWUL to remove/reduce the coloured component in the effluent.
- review Banbury STW consent and consider the application of a colour standard for the discharge.

### 4. RECOLONISATION OF THE CATCHMENT BY OTTERS

*Issue:* Encourage the return of otters to the catchment

*Proposals for action:*

- NRA to assess the suitability of the catchment for otters
- to work with other organisations to protect existing sites and enhance potential sites in the catchment.
- to seek sponsors to co-fund a future Cherwell otter habitat project.



Otter



## 5. WATER LEVELS

*Issue:* There is a need to maintain water levels in wetland habitats such as Otmoor, located along the river valley.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) NRA to prepare a water level management plan for Otmoor.
- ii) Education and collaboration is needed to encourage more sympathetic management of wetland habitats within the catchment.

## 6. THE OXFORD CANAL

*Issue:* During periods of water shortage in the upper reaches of the canal, the flow is augmented from the River Cherwell. Numerous connections between the canal and the river have led to silt transfers, resulting in turbid water in the river.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) British Waterways are investigating the enlargement of Boddington reservoir.
- ii) BW are undertaking an on-going programme of dredging along the canal.

## 7. LOW FLOWS

*Issue:* During dry periods, abstraction from the River Cherwell at Grimsbury results in depleted flows in the river over a 2km stretch through Banbury.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) investigate ways of limiting the impact of the abstraction.
- ii) investigate the feasibility of carrying out in-channel works to accommodate varying flows in the River Cherwell.

## 8. WATER RESOURCES

*Issue:* To meet the increased demand placed on water resources associated with the identification of Banbury as a development growth area.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) promote water use efficiency and continue to work with TWUL to improve the efficiency of the distribution system.
- ii) monitor and review the need for additional water resources regularly.



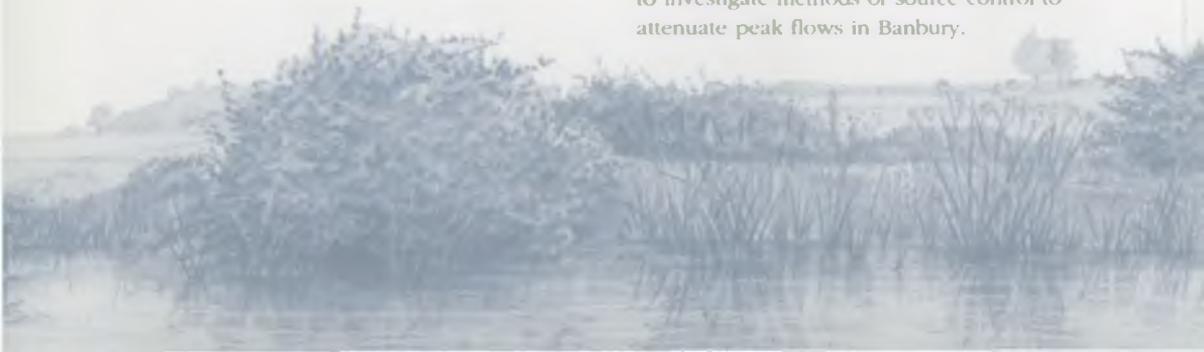
*River Cherwell at Spiceball Park, Banbury*

## 9. FLOODING

*Issue:* There is public concern that recent development in the River Cherwell floodplain may have increased the frequency of flooding in some areas.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) ensure NRA policies to prevent development in the floodplain are included in development plans.
- ii) carry out surveys to facilitate floodplain mapping.
- iii) develop a drainage strategy for Banbury
- iv) establish a multi functional NRA group to investigate methods of source control to attenuate peak flows in Banbury.



## 10. LACK OF BASELINE DATA

*Issue:* There are no detailed landscape or geomorphological surveys or assessments of the catchment. This baseline data needs to be established.

*Proposals for action:*

- i) carry out geomorphological and landscape assessments of the River Cherwell catchment.
- ii) ensure that habitat surveys cover floodplain habitats where relevant.

### THE CONSULTATION PROCESS: YOUR VIEWS

The Consultation Report has been prepared as a means of undertaking detailed consultation with all interested parties and to get a range of views on how we can all ensure the well being of the local water environment.

When responding to us we hope that you will tackle both points of detail and strategic issues. We have prepared a questionnaire to aid this process. In particular we are keen for you to consider the following questions:

- Have we fairly assessed the issues and what opinions do you have on them and the actions we suggest ?
- Have we missed any issues ?
- Does our draft vision within the Consultation Report include your aspirations ?
- How should we progress the development of activity plans ?

Open public meetings will be held within the coming months to discuss the Consultation Report.

During the consultation period, comments and questionnaires should be submitted to:

Mr J A Hamid  
River Cherwell CMP  
NRA Thames Region  
Isis House  
Howbery Park  
Wallingford  
Oxon OX10 8BD

Jamal Hamid, Catchment Manager or Tania Woodward, Catchment Management Officer can be contacted on (01734) 533304/533309

All comments must be with us by Friday 14th July 1995.

The full Consultation Report is available for inspection at local libraries and local authority offices. The Action Plan will only be produced once the consultation responses have been received and considered.



Oxford Canal at Embay

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY



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