

local environment agency plan

West Midlands Stour

First Annual Review

December 1999



ENVIRONMENT
AGENCY

West Midlands Stour Local Environment Agency Plan (LEAP)

Previous LEAP Documents

West Midlands Stour LEAP Consultation Report
March 1998

West Midlands Stour Consultation Report Summary
March 1998

West Midlands Stour LEAP Statement of Public Consultation
October 1998

West Midlands Stour LEAP Action Plan
October 1998

**This document should be read in conjunction with the West Midlands Stour LEAP
Action Plan.**

**If you or your organisation need further information or copies of any of the above
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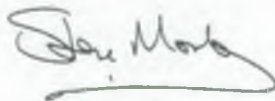
FOREWORD

The Environment Agency was established to protect, monitor and improve the environment in its broadest sense – ultimately contributing to the worldwide goal of sustainable development. One way of achieving this aim is through the production of Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs), which provide a framework for protecting and improving our local environment.

The West Midlands Stour LEAP aims to provide integrated environmental management of this important area of the West Midlands. The purpose of this first Annual Review is to highlight the progress that has been made by the Agency and others during the past year, in tackling the issues and problems identified in the Action Plan.

The progress that has been made over the last twelve months reflects the commitment of all those involved in the plan, and highlights the importance of the partnership approach developed through the LEAP process. As the demand upon limited funds continues to increase, it is even more vital that the momentum of environmental improvement is kept going through partnerships and collaborative ventures.

I look forward to developing further the positive achievements made so far with our partners, as we work together to safeguard and improve our local environment in the coming year.



Steve Morley
Area Manager - Upper Severn



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Review summarises the progress made in achieving targets to improve the local environment in the West Midlands Stour area in the year since publication of the Action Plan in October 1998. Many parties have made positive progress in pursuing the actions that were planned for the year, either as individual organisations or in collaborative projects. However, competing priorities and the increased demands upon limited funds this year have meant that we have not been able to progress some actions as much as we would have hoped.

Of the 62 actions planned for the year, progress has been made on all but 9, and 12 actions have been completed.

Of particular note this year has been: the securing of further water quality improvements in the Stour area to be undertaken under AMP3 (see p.11); the improvement in quality of the River Stour due to the reduction in use of mothproofing agents from Kidderminster carpet industries; remediation projects at two former landfill sites; and the signing of a memorandum of understanding with South Staffordshire Water that will secure groundwater abstraction reductions at their Cookley, Hagley and Churchill sources. Good progress has been made on discussions to develop a flood alleviation scheme for Kidderminster, and on completing the first phase of the project to augment water levels in pools in the Blakedown Valley.

Several key partnerships and collaborative initiatives are under way. These include:

- the Black Country Waste Minimisation Group, a partnership between the Environment Agency and Black Country Business Environment Association
- a collaborative project with Wyre Forest District Council to improve the management of Spennells Valley Local Nature Reserve, an important wetland complex in Kidderminster
- a collaborative project with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent Water Ltd, British Waterways and local authorities to look at improving canal and river corridors for otters.

In partnership with others, the Agency is keen to maximise the amount of external funding which is spent on the environment in general. Like other organisations, there are many worthy initiatives we would like to progress but are constrained by the ever-increasing competing priorities on our budgets. Working in partnership with those who share similar objectives should hopefully increase our and other organisations' chances of securing funding to the benefit of the environment. We will be looking at ways to progress this in the West Midlands Stour area next year.

The tables in Section 4.0 form an integral part of this review, and should be referred to for a summary of progress on each action.

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1.0 VISION FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS STOUR AREA

The Environment Agency's vision for the West Midlands Stour area is:

"To develop a better local environment in which people can live and work and maintain this, by sustainable management, for future generations."

It will be evident from the information provided throughout this document that the LEAP area is subject to considerable pressures. The impact of urban development, including housing, industry and infrastructure has resulted in: pressures on water resources, air and water quality; problems resulting from waste production, and the loss of wildlife and habitat. It is, of course, important that the economic and housing needs of the area are met, but at the same time for the impacts of this development to be minimised. The challenge is to ensure that the needs of all users and the environment are balanced and we aim to do this through integrated and sustainable environmental management.

It is important that we realise and develop the full environmental potential of the West Midlands Stour area. By promoting involvement with the local environment and raising people's awareness, we will work towards a healthy and diverse environment that is valued by, and of benefit to, its residents and visitors alike.

The Environment Agency needs the help of others to make this vision reality and effectively carry out the objectives set out below. We will therefore seek to work in partnership with Local Authorities, industry, environmental groups, other organisations and individuals who share an interest in the area.

Our key objectives for the West Midlands Stour area are to:

- * Educate and raise awareness of the local environment and environmental issues.
- * Work in partnership with local people and organisations to realise the potential of the area and encourage involvement with the local environment.
- * Maintain and improve the water quality of rivers, canals and groundwater.
- * Manage water resources in an environmentally sustainable way by balancing the needs of legitimate users with those of the environment.
- * Reduce the impact of flooding on existing developments, where possible, and resist development where it would be at risk from flooding or may cause flooding elsewhere.
- * Improve air quality by developing a programme, in partnership with Local Authorities, to assess air quality and the impact of Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) processes on it and enable improvements to be made.
- * Promote waste minimisation, encourage the achievement of national targets where appropriate and ensure the effective regulation of waste.
- * Protect and enhance watercourse/green corridors, and support biodiversity through the protection and enhancement of species and habitats.
- * Develop the recreational and amenity value of watercourses and protect the varied cultural heritage that exists within the area as a whole.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Local Environment Agency Plans (LEAPs)

For the Agency to fulfil its role and responsibilities, it needs to manage the environment effectively and to work in partnership with others. LEAPs are an important tool in this process. The plans are non-statutory, integrated action plans, which aim to identify, prioritise and address local environmental issues relating to our functions, taking into account the views of our local customers. They provide a focus for those concerned with the future of the local area. The timetable for achieving LEAP coverage for the whole of England and Wales is by the end of 1999.

LEAPs help contribute to the principle of sustainable development through integrated environmental management and improvement. They also play a key role in:

- Promoting openness and accountability
- Developing liaison and partnership with key groups
- Educating the public on local environmental issues
- Prioritising issues and establishing an action plan for managing and improving the local area over the next 5 years.

The West Midlands Stour LEAP is part of a national programme to ensure that the whole of England and Wales is covered by LEAPs. There are 131 LEAP areas in all, with four in the Upper Severn Area.

Upper Severn Area LEAP programme

Area	Start	Publish LEAP	Publish Action Plan	Publish 1st Annual Review
Middle Severn	April 1996	April 1997	November 1997	January 1999
West Midlands Stour	April 1997	March 1998	October 1998	December 1999
Severn Uplands	February 1998	December 1998	July 1999	September 2000
Teme	January 1999	December 1999	July 2000	September 2001

 Publications completed.

2.1.1 The West Midlands Stour LEAP

The West Midlands Stour LEAP Consultation Report was produced in March 1998. This outlined environmental issues within the area, and options for their solution. Following a three month period of consultation, the Action Plan was published in October 1998. This includes a five year programme of actions for improvements to the local environment, and outlines areas of work and investment proposed by the Environment Agency and others.

An important part of the LEAP process is to monitor the Action Plan to ensure that targets are achieved and actions completed, and that the plan continues to address relevant issues in an appropriate manner. This first Annual Review summarises the progress made since publication of the Action Plan in October 1998, and reports on the period November 1998 to October 1999 inclusive. This document is, therefore, part of an ongoing process for the West Midlands Stour area.

The action tables in Section 4.0 have been reproduced as they appeared in the Action Plan. Notes on progress are included in the final column of each table.

2.2 A brief description of the West Midlands Stour Area

The West Midlands Stour catchment comprises an area of just over 374 square kilometres. The plan area mostly falls within the counties of Staffordshire and Worcestershire, and the West Midlands area which includes the Metropolitan Boroughs of Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell. These three boroughs constitute the majority of the urbanised part of the plan area, approximately 32%, and form much of what is historically known as the Black Country.

The area is dominated in the north-east and east by the urban area of the West Midlands conurbation and by Kidderminster in the south west. The urbanised area has a significant impact on the character of the river and the state of the area in general, a fact which is particularly evident in the Issues raised. The West Midlands Stour area has a history of industrial usage stretching back to before the Industrial Revolution. Much industrial heritage remains, particularly in the form of canals which were built to replace the packhorse as a better means of moving raw materials and finished goods.

The remainder of the plan area to the south and west is largely rural in character, with the exception of Kidderminster and Stourport. Much of this is Green Belt, the urban/sub-urban fringes are mainly pasture land and the rest is utilised for intensive arable agriculture.

2.3 Update on events relevant to the West Midlands Stour area

Flood events

Notable flooding occurred on the Smestow Brook on 8-9 August 1999. However, little property flooding took place, proving the effectiveness of the Wolverhampton racecourse balancing and flow diversion works.

Widespread flooding occurred across the country during Easter 1998, although the West Midlands Stour area was not affected.

An action plan was subsequently published in November 1998, addressing recommendations made following the Bye Report into the Easter floods. The report highlighted the need for good maintenance of watercourses, flood defence schemes or flood warning schemes where these can be justified, and the need to reduce building on floodplains. Much work has already been done by the Agency to achieve some of the targets set and improving operations and public understanding. For instance, the Agency has provided all local authorities with updated maps of floodplains and emergency response has been improved.

Launch of Floodline

In October 1999 the Environment Agency launched its first national Flood Awareness week, highlighting the danger across the Midlands caused by flooding to lives, homes and businesses, and offering information to help people at risk protect themselves and their property.

Floodline, a new telephone information service for the public, was launched on 18 October. By calling **Floodline 0845 988 1188** people will get help and advice about how to protect their homes as well as find out what flood warnings are in force in their area.

Policy regarding Culverts

The Agency's 'Policy regarding Culverts' was published in March 1999:

'The Agency is in general opposed to the culverting of watercourses because of the adverse ecological, flood defence and other effects that are likely to arise. The Agency will therefore only approve an application to culvert a watercourse if there is no reasonably practicable alternative or if the detrimental effects of culverting would be so minor that they would not justify a more costly alternative. In all cases where it is appropriate to do so adequate mitigation must be provided for damage caused. Wherever practical the Agency will seek to have culverted watercourses restored to open channels.'

The issue of culverted watercourses is of particular relevance in the urban West Midlands Stour area, as historically many smaller watercourses in the area have been culverted for purposes of access or developing the land above (see Issue 10, the impact of culverted watercourses). This clear statement of the Agency's approach and the associated guidance will assist landowners and developers who may need to construct a watercourse crossing.

The key aims of the policy are that:

- only essential crossings proceed
- alternatives to culverting are fully investigated
- wherever culverting is unavoidable it is designed and constructed correctly from both environmental and technical points of view.

Water Resources/abstraction licensing

In accordance with the practice for the Midlands Region, most abstraction licences issued

are now subject to a time limit. At the end of this period, any environmental effects of the abstractions will be reviewed by the Agency. A licence will only be re-issued (for a further time-limited period) providing no unacceptable environmental impact has previously occurred.

To ensure that water is controlled in a sustainable manner, the Agency encourages measures which reduce the demand for water, particularly in those areas such as the Stour catchment where existing water resources are under pressure. These measures include water use minimisation, the capture and re-use of rainwater, encouragement for the new technology involved in 'grey water' recycling schemes and sustainable surface water drainage for new developments. As well as producing environmental benefits these practices can result in significant cost savings for industrial, agricultural and domestic water users.

Metal Recycling Sites

The issue of unregulated metal recycling sites is of particular relevance in the West Midlands Stour area (see Issue 19). The National Metal Recycling Sites (MRS) project started in Spring 1999. The project has aimed to help operators of MRS's obtain the necessary Waste Management Licence or Registration as exempt from the need for a licence, and thus enable the achievement of a level playing field across the country. The project has concentrated on helping sites to become regulated rather than the Agency taking unnecessary enforcement action. However, if on any visit officers discover that pollution of the environment or harm to human health is taking place, they are legally bound to investigate and take appropriate action to stop and remedy the pollution.

The project has set out various stages of action, the first step being a site visit and delivery of an information pack. The pack provides a site operator with the necessary information to decide which is the appropriate route to take in order to achieve regulated status. The second site visit, a few weeks later, enables an operator and Agency officer to agree on any changes to the site that are required and a realistic time table or Action Plan of when such work is to be carried out. Failure to meet the agreed deadlines results in a notice for removal of wastes from a site.

Implementation of Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) scheme

The Agency has defined NVZs around public water supply abstractions, where nitrate concentrations in groundwater have been found to exceed a certain level (50mg/l). The Government's Action Programme for NVZs was implemented in December 1998 (*The Action Programme for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones (England and Wales) Regulations 1998*). This sets rules, which must be followed by farmers in NVZs and require careful management of fertilisers and manures, including keeping records of their use. The programme measures are based on good agricultural practice and will help protect surface and ground waters against pollution from nitrates. This is particularly relevant to the West Midlands Stour area (see Issue 8), where there are 4 NVZs – at Tom Hill, Hinksford, Kinver and Wildmoor.

Kidderminster Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Agency is about to apply for planning permission for a flood alleviation scheme

which will reduce the risk of flooding in Kidderminster. The scheme may also be of benefit to Puxton Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SSSI is currently drying out and its conservation value being reduced – the flood alleviation scheme may allow the Agency to re-wet the area.

Review of Worcestershire Structure Plan

The Agency has made representations on the review of the County structure plan to support sustainable development in the county. In particular, the Agency is pressing for sustainable urban drainage techniques to be considered for new development, including highway schemes.

Review of Dudley Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The Agency is working closely with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council on the review of their UDP. Draft environmental policies have been commented upon. Proposals for the town centres at Stourbridge and Halesowen may provide opportunities for opening up access to the rivers and improved opportunities for nature conservation.

Stewponey Landfill Site

Significant public concern has been expressed about the proposal to extend the Stewponey landfill site just west of Stourbridge, in particular the impact this may have on groundwater quality. The Agency will need to assess the engineering design proposals to be submitted by Biffa, the waste disposal company, to mitigate the risk. Only if these satisfactorily address the risk will an authorisation be granted by the Agency.



3.0 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Of 62 actions planned for this year, progress has been made on all but 9 actions (3.1(b), 3.3, 3.4, 4.6(b), 7.1, 7.4, 10.1, 10.3, 16.1), and 12 actions have been completed (3.2, 4.8, 6(i)1a, 6(i)1b, 6(ii)2, 6(iii)1b, 6(iii)1c, 6(iii)1d, 6(iii)1e, 8.1, 13.4, 21.3). Many of the actions have involved organisations working in collaboration with others. However, competing priorities and the increased demands upon limited funds this year have meant that progress on some actions has not been as good as we would have hoped. This means that working in partnership to maximise the amount of external funding that is spent on the environment will become increasingly important in the West Midlands Stour area.

For details of progress for each action, please refer to the 'progress' column in the tables in Section 4.0. Should you wish to contact us for more information on the actions and progress made, please refer to the contact details on the inside front cover.

3.1 Notable achievements and disappointments

Notable achievements:

- A memorandum of understanding has been signed with South Staffordshire Water that will secure groundwater abstraction reductions at their Cookley, Hagley and Churchill sources (Issue 2).
- Good progress has been made on completing the first phase of the project to augment water levels in Swan Pool, Forge Pool and Ladies Pool (Issue 3).
- A pipeline has been installed by Severn Trent Water Ltd under AMP2 to bring diverted effluent from Roundhill STW to Hagley STW for discharge to the upper Blakedown Brook. This will eventually produce a net increase in flow in the Blakedown Brook (Issue 3).
- Alleviation of low flows in the Blakedown Brook is also being promoted through the AMP3 process; OFWAT's decision is awaited (Issue 3 and see note on AMP3 on page 11).
- There have been continued initiatives (for example housing development site at West Hagley in the depleted catchment of the Blakedown Brook) to promote sustainable urban drainage techniques (SUD) when dealing with planning applications (Issue 3 & 16).
- A collaborative project with Wyre Forest District Council has started, involving a new grazing regime at Spennells Valley Local Nature Reserve, an important wetland complex in Kidderminster. This will bring improvements to marshland flora (Issue 4).
- A collaborative project to look at improving canal and river corridors for otters has started. Partners include Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent

Water Ltd, British Waterways and local authorities (Issue 4).

- There has been continued positive discussion regarding development of the country park in Kidderminster (Issue 4).
- Genetic sampling of native brown trout from the Hoo Brook has taken place. The results showed that the Hoo Brook population closely resemble those in the Teme catchment (Issue 4).
- The Agency supplied native black poplars for local residents to plant at the Mushroom Green site (Issue 4 & 18).
- Further water quality improvements are to be undertaken in the Stour area under AMP3 (see p.11), following OFWAT's decision (Issue 6).
- An Urban Pollution Management (UPM) study on the Stour has been completed. The results enabled efficiencies to be gained for sewage treatment in the Stourbridge area with no adverse impact on water quality (Issue 6).
- There has been an improvement in the quality of the River Stour due to reduction in the use of mothproofing agents from Kidderminster carpet industries (Issue 6).
- Remediation project at former landfill Coombes Wood and adjacent British Steel site (redevelopment for industrial use). One of the improvements hoped for is reduced zinc and ammonia contamination from these sites (Issue 9 & 17).
- There has been an innovative approach to remediation of the former landfill site at Claughton, Blowers Green, Dudley, for re-use for commercial purposes. The site is affected by: shallow mineworkings; landfill gas; contaminated land; groundwater contamination and potential combustible material. The former mineworkings will be stabilised and the tipped material will be sorted. The majority of the materials will be cleaned and re-deposited in an engineered process so the site can be redeveloped (Issue 9 & 17).
- Discussions have been held with the developers of Crossley Retail Park, to develop an innovative and collaborative Flood Alleviation Scheme for Kidderminster (Issue 12).
- Dudley MBC organised a number of events during National Spring Clean month in April (at least one per day). The Environment Agency and Territorial Army assisted in the clean-up at Castle Hill, collecting 23.5 tonnes in one day (Issue 18).
- Successful implementation of the national Metal Recycling Sites (MRS) project. 13 new registrations for exempt MRS sites. Unregulated sites which have avoided the appropriate authorisation are now in the process of becoming regulated or are facing enforcement action (Issue 19).

- The Black Country Waste Minimisation Group, a partnership between the Environment Agency and the Black Country Business Environment Association, promoting waste minimisation to local businesses, has been set up (Issue 20).
- The first Dudley Community Pride competition (autumn 1998) was won by Manor Way School for their sensory garden. Dudley Community Pride was launched jointly by the Environment Agency and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council last year. The 1999 award has just been won by the 'Friends of Mousesweet Brook ' for their environmental improvement work at the Mousesweet Brook Nature Reserve (Issue 22).

There have been some disappointments:

- The completion of the Groundwater Model has been delayed by several months, impacting on some other LEAP actions (Issue 2).
- Lack of resources has meant we are unable to carry out action 4.6(b), the investigation of possible wetland restoration on Stanklyn Pool and Barnet Brook (Issue 4).
- Disappointing response to the pilot roadshow style approach for pollution prevention seminars on industrial estates (Issue 9).
- Lack of progress with the Kidderminster town centre redevelopment site. The developer has recently come forward with revised proposals. The site is progressing very slowly towards redevelopment (Issue 12).
- We have been unable to progress with the actions under Issue 17 (The effects of development on wildlife) as far as we would have hoped, due to lack of resources.

3.2 New issues/actions

As a result of this review, one **new action** has been introduced this year:

new action 6(iv).3 – undertake a UPM (Urban Pollution Management) study at Barnhurst STW to ascertain the effects of storm discharges to the Smestow Brook and the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal.

4.0 ACTIONS UPDATE

The following tables have been taken from the Action Plan, and updated to show progress on the 22 Issues in the LEAP, and any changes that have occurred. Progress for each action is summarised in the column on the right hand side. Where actions are shown in **bold**, this indicates they have been added at this Annual Review stage. Revised costs/timescales are also shown in bold. The background information relating to each issue is given in the Action Plan.

Key

<	less than.
==	Action in the year indicated (cost figures given if known).
R	Recurring - no additional costs to annual budgetary provision.
U	Unknown costs at this time.
U(i)	Individual costs will be identified and agreed during negotiations.
CS	Commercially Sensitive
+	Action added, or added to, as a result of consultation.
K	£1,000

Notes on abbreviations

AMP ¹	Asset Management Plan	NFU	National Farmers Union
CC	County Council	NVZ	Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
BCBEA	Black Country Business Environment Association	OFWAT	Office of Water Industry's Financial Regulator of Water Service Companies
BCU	British Canoe Union	RA	Ramblers Association
BOD	Biochemical Oxygen Demand	SME	Small to Medium sized Enterprise
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	SSW plc	South Staffordshire Water plc
BW	British Waterways	STW	Sewage Treatment Works
DC	District Council	STW Ltd	Severn Trent Water Ltd
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions	TBG	Tidy Britain Group
EN	English Nature	UDP	Unitary Development Plan
FC	Forestry Commission	UWT	Urban Wildlife Trust
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	VOs	Voluntary Organisations
IWA	Inland Waterways Association	WFDC	Wyre Forest District Council
LA	Local Authority	WMBC	Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	WT	Wildlife Trust
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council	WWT	Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Please refer to the original West Midlands Stour Action Plan for a full glossary of terms.

Note¹ AMP3 (Asset Management Plan No 3)

Every five years the Water Industry Companies have to agree its investment programme with the Director General of OFWAT. We are now in the third review, which will cover the period 2000 to 2005, and the Agency is pleased that consideration has been given to securing environmental improvements. At this stage (December 1999) the Agency is still clarifying with OFWAT and the Water Companies the implications of the final price determination. The Agency will expect the full implementation of those schemes listed in the Government's National Environmental Programme.

New actions

As indicated previously, this is an ongoing plan and following this year's review one new action (6(iv).3) has been included, addressing a potential new problem area. New actions are shown in bold in the tables.

List of issues (grouped into the themes set out in the 'Environmental Strategy for the Millennium')

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY



Issue 1: The current level of air quality monitoring

MANAGING OUR WATER RESOURCES



Issue 2: The sustainability of water resources

Issue 3: Impacts of over-abstraction within the Blakedown Valley

ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY



Issue 4: Low conservation value and poor biodiversity

MANAGING OUR FRESHWATER FISHERIES



Issue 5: Poor fish stocks

DELIVERING INTEGRATED RIVER-BASIN MANAGEMENT



Issue 6: Compliance with River Quality Objectives and EC Directives

Issue 7: The need for assessment of the current status of the Pensnett Canal

Issue 8: Nitrate contamination of groundwater

Issue 9: Pollution from industrial estates and the construction sector

Issue 10: The impact of culverted watercourses

Issue 11: Shopping trolleys in watercourses

Issue 12: Kidderminster town centre redevelopment

Issue 13: Lack of recreation and amenity facilities

Issue 14: Protection and expansion of watercourses and other green corridors and associated wildlife

Issue 15: Development of flood warning system

CONSERVING THE LAND



Issue 16: Flooding resulting from urban development

Issue 17: The effects of development on wildlife, cultural heritage and the landscape

MANAGING WASTE



Issue 18: Flytipping and litter

Issue 19: Metal recycling sites

Issue 20: Sustainable waste management

REGULATING MAJOR INDUSTRIES



Issue 21: Environmental monitoring of Integrated Pollution Control Authorisations

and: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Issue 22: The need to raise and promote environmental awareness and education

Issue 1: The current level of air quality monitoring

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
1.1 Work with Local Authorities to assess air quality monitoring needs for the area.	LAs Environment Agency	DETR	R	■	■	■			Ongoing	The Environment Agency's Regional Office is continuing to liaise with LAs and providing advice regarding IPC sites.
1.2 Agree common data sets.	LAs Environment Agency		R		■					The Environment Agency's Regional Office is continuing to liaise with LAs and providing advice regarding IPC sites.
1.3 Estimate the impact of IPC processes.	Environment Agency		U		■	■				Dispersion modelling work has been undertaken by Regional Office where appropriate, and this has been supplemented by dispersion modelling work carried out by the Area team.

Issue 2: The sustainability of water resources

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
2.1 Develop groundwater model.	Environment Agency		216.5	72	84.5				£60k spent 1997/98	Model completion anticipated by March 2000. £216.5k now committed.
2.2 No new licences and negotiate options for reduced abstraction, using model above.	Environment Agency/ Water Company		U/CS	■	■	■	■	■	Ongoing in AMP3 negotiations. Groundwater policy review once model is complete.	No change.
2.3 Enhance Swindon gauging station for low flow measurements.	Environment Agency		U	■	■					Need for station enhancement being reviewed.
2.4 Encourage winter abstraction and storage.	Environment Agency		U/R	■	■	■	■	■		3 winter storage licences have been issued in the LEAP area in the year up to 31 October 1999.
2.5+ Investigate possible low flow problem on Spittle Brook.	Environment Agency		R	■	■				Site specific.	Ongoing.

Issue 3: Impacts of over-abstraction within the Blakedown Valley

Actions Long term measures see Issue 2	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/ 99	1999/ 2000	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
3.1 Quantify impacts:	Environment Agency	EN LA								
a) Install observation wells and water level monitoring equipment.			8	■					£8k spent 1997/98	2 observation wells instrumented. Weir installed at Hurcott SSSI to monitor trial releases. One further pool level recorder to be installed. Awaiting results of water level monitoring in 3.1 (a).
b) Determine effects on i) ecological and ii) archaeological environment.			11.5 U	11.5 ■	■	■	■	■		
3.2 Complete project to augment of water levels in Swan Pool, Forge Pool and Ladies Pool in 1998 using groundwater.	Environment Agency		25	25						Project now complete. Operating rules to be updated to include Ladies Pool.
3.3 Review trial releases of water to Blakedown Brook in 1998/99 and assess the benefit to Hurcott/Podmore SSSI.	Environment Agency STW Ltd SSW plc		3		3					Trial releases now unlikely before March 2000.
3.4 Reduce groundwater licences to a sustainable volume as indicated by groundwater modelling (Issue 2).	Environment Agency STW Ltd SSW plc		U	■	■	■	■	■		Awaiting completion of groundwater model (see 2.1).
3.5 Review the possibility of restoring dried pools higher up system in Blakedown using groundwater from new and/or existing sources.	STW Ltd SSW plc Environment Agency		U		■	■				Memorandum of Understanding signed with SSW plc. To be implemented on receipt of West Midlands and Worfe groundwater model.

Issue 4: Low conservation value and poor biodiversity

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£K)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
4.1 Develop and implement appropriate guidelines for the protection of riparian habitats for water voles.	Environment Agency UWT LAs	WTs IWA	6	3	3					Worked with Baggeridge Brick to safeguard water vole habitat through land drainage consent. National guidelines have now been produced – Water Vole Conservation handbook, 1998.
4.2 Monitor otter distribution and undertake habitat improvements.	WTs, LAs Environment Agency		15	3	3	3	3	3		Habitat improvements on Mousesweet Brook and Hoo Brook. Start of collaborative project to look at improving canal and river corridors for otters.
4.3 Determine the current status of native brown trout and investigate the degree of genetic diversity in these relict populations in line with the Wild Brown Trout Strategies.	Environment Agency		4	2	2					Genetic sampling of Brown Trout in the Hoo Brook. 300 scale samples were taken for analysis from native Brown Trout in the Hoo Brook. The results showed a high degree of similarity between the fish. The Hoo Brook population closely resembles those in the Teme catchment. At present we have insufficient background data to draw conclusions from this work. Future work will help to put these results into context.
4.4 Implement planting and management schemes to ensure the continued presence of native black poplar in the catchment.	Environment Agency	FC, WTs	6		3	1	1	1		Network of nurseries producing native black poplar now established. Four planting schemes within Stour area. Draft planting strategy complete.
4.5 +Seek opportunities for reed bed creation, lowland wet grassland and floodplain woodland.	Environment Agency Developers LAs	FRCA MAFF STW Ltd.	13	7	0	2	2	2		See 4.6 for progress on Country Park. Creation of small reed bed agreed as part of retail development in Kidderminster. Development at Watery Lane, Stourport.

Issue 4: Low conservation value and poor biodiversity (continued)

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£K)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
4.6 a) Restore wetlands and develop management plans at Puxton, Stourvale, Wilden & Spennells Valley in Kidderminster and develop a Country Park and Local Nature Reserve +b) Investigate similar possibilities on Stanklyn Pool and Barnet Brook.	Environment Agency WFDC WWT Landowners EN		50? R	8.4	20? ■	10?	10?	10?		(a) Progress continuing with Wyre Forest DC and English Nature on development of the Country Park. The Agency has been involved in a collaborative project to improve the management of Spennells Valley Local Nature Reserve, an important wetland complex in Kidderminster. We have funded new fencing to allow grazing regime, which will bring improvements to marshland flora. (<i>check costs</i>) (b) No action so far this reporting year.
4.7 + Carry out baseline survey of great crested newts and potential habitats in key parts of the catchment and support development of species action plan.	Environment Agency LAs EN WTs		5		5					No action planned for this reporting year.
4.8 Re-survey wetland Special Wildlife sites in Worcestershire.	WTs EN	Environment Agency	5	5						Survey completed last year.
4.9 + Work with others to identify targets for national BAP species/habitats for which the Agency is the lead.	Environment Agency EN, WTs LAs		R	■	■	■	■			Work ongoing. Refer to 4.6 above for work on habitats. Input to English Nature feasibility study to improve wetland at Wilden Marsh.

Issue 5: Poor fish stocks

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
5.1 Develop and implement a strategy for the creation of instream habitat and riparian buffer zones.	Environment Agency	Landowners Anglers FRCA	35		5	5	15	10		Involvement with developing the unitary development plan (UDP) for Dudley.
5.2 Selective fish stocking.	Environment Agency		5	1	1	1	1	1		3,500 Chub and Dace were stocked into the River Stour during the year.

Issue 6: Compliance with River Quality Objectives and EC Directives

Issue 6 (i): Failure to meet EC Directives

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
6(i).1 List 2 failures:										
a. River Stour at Stourport. Investigate results, check the error inherent in this type of sampling.	Environment Agency STW Ltd		R/U	■	■					Recent results show no failures following reduction of pesticide use at carpet factories and improvement work at Kidderminster STW. No positive results for Cyfluthrin since 1998. The Agency will continue to take routine samples, but this will no longer be included as a specific issue in the LEAP.
b. Wom Brook, Smestow confluence: Pipe Wombourne STW effluent to Smestow Brook to reduce localised impact (see Issue 6 (ii).2).	STW Ltd	Environment Agency	CS	■	■					Work has been completed (December 1998) to pipe Wombourne STW effluent to Smestow Brook. Since this work has been carried out, results for copper have not exceeded the EQS limit. The Agency will continue to take routine samples, but this will no longer be included as a specific issue in the LEAP.

Issue 6 (ii): Failures involving specific discharges

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
6(ii).1 Monitor the improvements made under AMP2 to Roundhill STW, Wombourne STW, and West Hagley STW; and the effects of transferring sewage from Freehold and Caledonian STWs to Roundhill STW.	Environment Agency STW Ltd		R		■	■	■			Revised consent issued for Roundhill STW, incorporating pumpback scheme to West Hagley. Urban Pollution Management (UPM) study completed on Freehold Caledonian transfer indicates negligible impact – field monitoring to be carried out.
6(ii).2 Pipe Wombourne STW effluent to Smestow Brook to improve dilution (see Issue 6 (i)).	STW Ltd Environment Agency		CS	■	■					Wombourne AMP2 consent issued July 1998 and work completed December 1998. Wom Brook has complied with RE4 objectives since Wombourne STW effluent has been piped to the Smestow Brook. However, since 3 years' data is used to calculate RE compliance, it is not expected that Wom Brook will pass its RE objectives until 2000. Monitoring to continue.
6(ii).3 Promote the inclusion of funding under AMP3 for possible improvement work at the following STWs: Trescott; Gospel End; Blakedown and Belbroughton.	Environment Agency STW Ltd		R CS	■	■					Works included on list for AMP3 except for Lower Gornal STW and Trescott STW. The Secretary of State has requested more information regarding the cost of these schemes and their resultant environmental benefits before determination.

Issue 6 (iii): Failures requiring investigation by the Agency

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
6(iii).1 Investigate to identify/confirm cause of failure:	Environment Agency		R							
Smestow Brook	"	WMBC		■	■	■				Investigation complete, showing various surface water sewer and industrial estate run-off problems. The next stage is for the Agency and Severn Trent Water Ltd to follow up with site visits to eliminate discharges.
Lutley Gutter	"			■	■					Latest RE (River Ecosystem) data shows the Lutley Gutter is now RE2 compliant again, having previously been a marginal failure. No further action proposed although monitoring to continue, will not appear as an issue in the next Annual Review.
Merryhill/Warstones Brook	"			■	■					Marginal pH failure. No further action proposed, although monitoring and analysis of data to continue. This will no longer be included as a specific issue in the LEAP.
Hoo Brook	"			■	■					Marginal BOD failure. No further action proposed, although monitoring and analysis of data to continue. This will no longer be included as a specific issue in the LEAP.
Staffs/Worcs Canal	"	BW		■	■					Marginal BOD failure. No further action proposed, although monitoring and analysis of data to continue. This will no longer be included as a specific issue in the LEAP.
Dudley Canal.	"	BW		■	■					No investigation undertaken as yet. The failure could be algal-related, to be looked at.
6(iii).2+Encourage the removal of contaminated sediments from Staffs & Worcs Canal bed.	Environment Agency	BW STW Ltd	U	■	■					Investigation into heavy metal contamination of the canal sediment has been completed. BW/STW Ltd have proposed dredging of the canal in this financial year. See Note* below.

Note* British Waterways has a statutory duty to undertake dredging to maintain navigation in their canals and the navigable rivers they manage. The requirement to dredge on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal is heightened by the discharge of sewage effluent to the canal from Barnhurst STW. Because of this a number of tripartite meetings have taken place between BW, STW Ltd and the Agency in order to develop a dredging strategy. The proposal is for BW to undertake the dredging operation and STW Ltd to dispose of the resultant silt. BW are looking to dredge during this financial year from the point of discharge from Barnhurst STW in both the Staffs & Worcs and Shropshire Union Canals.

Issue 6 (iv): Problems associated with unsatisfactory combined sewer overflows

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
6(iv).1 Assess the improvements to the 10 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in the AMP2 scheme.	Environment Agency STW Ltd.		R CS	■	■	■				Improvements carried out under AMP2. The situation is being monitored.
6(iv).2 Identify further CSOs for improvement.	Environment Agency STW Ltd.		R CS	■	■	■	■	■		22 CSOs have been included on the AMP3 list for improvement.
6(iv).3 Undertake UPM (Urban Pollution Management) study at Barnhurst STW to ascertain the effects of storm discharges to the Smead Brook and Staffs & Worcs Canal.	STW Ltd	Environment Agency	CS		■	■				New action.

Issue 7: The need for assessment of the current status of the Pensnett Canal

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
7.1 Discuss current status and future proposals for canal with Dudley MBC and local wildlife groups.	Environment Agency Dudley MBC Wildlife Groups BW, IWA		U	■	■	■				There has been no progress on this action this year. (7.2 & 7.3) A number of polluting inputs, mainly scrapyards, have been identified and eliminated. The problem was mainly aesthetic and improvements have been made in the gross oil pollution that was occurring. No samples taken to assess water quality as yet. As 7.1 above, there has been no progress on this action.
7.2 Assess water quality of canal.	Environment Agency		R		■	■	■			
7.3 Assess polluting inputs to canal. (also see Issue 17)	Environment Agency		U		■	■	■			
7.4 Assess importance/ potential importance of canal to local conservation.	Environment Agency Dudley MBC Wildlife Groups BW, IWA		U		■	■	■			

Issue 8: Nitrate contamination of groundwater

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
8.1 Implement and extend NVZ ¹ scheme within the LEAP area.	Action plan agreed between Environment Agency & DETR		U	■	■	■	■	■		Implementation of the Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) scheme was completed in December 1998. Visits are being undertaken to farmers in the area to assess compliance with relevant legislation.

¹Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) An area where nitrate concentrations exceed, or are at risk of exceeding, the limit of 50mg/l laid down in the 1991 EC Nitrate Directive, and where compulsory, uncompensated measures came into force on 19 December 1998 as a means of reducing those levels.

Issue 9: Pollution from industrial estates and the construction sector

Actions		Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
		Lead	Other								
9.1	Hold 'roadshow' style seminars and/or undertake on-site visits for SMEs on industrial estates where a) pollution incidents are a problem, or b) diffuse pollution is believed to be significant.	Environment Agency	LAs Partners	R	■	■	■	■			The roadshow style approach has been piloted and the response was very disappointing. A national waste survey of businesses in early 1999 involved visits to over 100 companies in the Stour area. During visits companies were provided with pollution prevention advice where appropriate. However, the significant resource required to undertake this survey has meant that only a few pollution prevention visits (14) to SMEs have been undertaken during the year.
9.2	Visit new construction sites located in sensitive areas prior to commencement of operations.	Environment Agency		R	■	■					New construction sites have been identified using Building Commencement lists provided by the LPAs. Site contractors have been sent a letter and pollution prevention guidance, and offered on-site visits to provide further advice. In addition a seminar for members of the Civil Engineering Contractors Association was held to promote good practice.

Issue 10: The impact of culverted watercourses

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
10.1+ Identify significant lengths of culverting for potential removal and identify possible areas for river corridor appraisals.	Environment Agency		3		■	3				The national culverting policy was published in March 1999 (see page 5). Work postponed on this particular action, and will now commence in 2000. De-culverting of river secured in Kidderminster as part of the Kidderminster Town Centre 1 (KTC1) development (see Issue 14.3). No other opportunities have arisen during this reporting period. Work postponed on this particular action, and will now commence in 2000.
10.2 Remove culverts, where possible.	Riparian owner		U	■	■	■	■	■		
10.3+ Produce display and educational material to highlight issues in the LEAP area.	Environment Agency		2		■	2				

In addition to the above actions, the Agency will address this issue through its routine activities by undertaking enforcement action on illegal culverting works. This will be reported in the Annual Reviews as appropriate.

Issue 11: Shopping trolleys in watercourses

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
11.1 Seek solutions in partnership with others to resolve the problem.	Supermarkets Wyre Forest DC Environment Agency		U	■	■	■				Liaison has taken place with a number of supermarkets. They are now on board to recover their trolleys, and some employ a contractor. The action will continue into next year as some more work is needed. Some progress has been made as a result of national initiatives. This action will not appear in future Annual Reviews as it is dependent on national, rather than local, initiatives.
11.2 Implement use of coin operated shopping trolleys.	Supermarkets		U	■	■					

In addition to the above actions, the Agency will address this issue through its routine activities by taking action against offenders under Land Drainage Byelaw 11 for permitting an obstruction to a main river (and under its Enforcement Policy). This will be reported in the Annual Reviews as appropriate.

Issue 12: Kidderminster town centre redevelopment

Actions		Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
		Lead	Other								
12.1	Continue to provide advice at feasibility stage of the town centre development on the improvement of flood defence standards and ecological quality.	Environment Agency		R	■	■	■	■			Revised proposals are coming forward from the developer. The developer has been unable to progress the KTCI development for a variety of reasons.
12.2	Improve "off-site" flood defences.	Environment Agency		R*/U(i)	■	■	■	■			Feasibility study progressed but not yet concluded. The Agency is about to apply for planning permission for a flood alleviation scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding in Kidderminster.

R* Revenue costs only at present to Agency, awaiting outcome of negotiations

Issue 13: Lack of recreation and amenity facilities

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
13.1 Increase the opportunities for angling on the rivers, canals and other water bodies.	Environment Agency Angling Clubs LAs	IWA BW Landowners	15			2	3	10		The Agency is actively involved with the feasibility of water supply to a proposed pool in Gornal Wood.
13.2 Improve the opportunities for disabled angling.	Environment Agency Angling Clubs LAs	IWA BW Landowners	15			2	3	10		No action planned for this reporting year.
13.3 Promote and support access initiatives.	LAs Groundwork Sustrans BW RA	Environment Agency Landowners MAFF	R	■	■	■	■	■		Access to river secured through KTC1 development in Kidderminster. Advice given on Town Centre Inset Plans (part of Dudley UDP Review on improving access to the river in Stourbridge and Halesowen).
13.4 Improve public access at Mushroom Green.	Environment Agency Sandwell MBC Dudley MBC	UWT BTCV	5		5					Clean up operation at Mushroom Green has improved access.
13.5+ Consider opportunities for greater canoeing as water quality improves.	BCU	Environment Agency BW IWA WTs	4				2	2		No action planned for this reporting year.

Issue 14: Protection and expansion of watercourses and other green corridors and associated wildlife

Actions		Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
		Lead	Other								
14.1	Continue to implement and promote collaborative schemes that enhance areas of urban green desert adjacent to watercourses and wetland e.g. Wom Brook Walk.	Environment Agency LAs	WTs Local community groups and forums	15			5	5	5		Promotion of local initiatives through the Community Pride initiative (refer to page 35).
14.2+	Encourage the development of riparian buffer zones by use of agri-environment schemes.	MAFF FRCA EN landowners	Environment Agency NFU	R	■	■					Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews unless there is something exceptional to report.
14.3+	Develop a closer liaison with those involved with the restoration and/or creation of wildlife corridors e.g. river corridor in Halesowen town centre as highlighted in Dudley UDP review; restoration of section of Dudley No.2 Canal.	Environment Agency LAs BW JWA EN Canal Trusts		R	■	■					De-culverting of river in Kidderminster secured through land drainage consents involvement. See also 13.3.

Issue 15: Development of flood warning system

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
15.1 Investigate the feasibility of improving/ extending the flood warning system.	Environment Agency	LAs	10		5	5				No work programmed for this reporting year at time of writing.

Issue 16: Flooding resulting from urban development

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£K)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
16.1 Alleviate risk of flooding to property at locations identified in S105 survey: a) Construct flood defences to protect property at risk b) Reduce flood levels by increasing watercourse capacity to protect property at risk c) Reduce flood flows by upstream surface water balancing.	Environment Agency	Property Owners/ developers	See future column	■	■	■	■	■	Environment Agency assessing costs where works worthwhile.	Cost/ Benefit assessment delayed by Easter 1998 flood/ Bye Report action. Actions (a), (b) and (c) are dependent on completion of this. Source control techniques advised through the planning liaison process.

Issue 16: Flooding resulting from urban development (continued)

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
16.2 Remove obstructions/developments which increase flood levels (also see Issue 10).	Environment Agency LAs Property owners/ developers		U	■	■	■	■	■	Progress dependent on opportunities arising e.g. Kidderminster town centre.	No opportunities occurred in this review period.
16.3 Map floodplain, provide maps for Local Authorities and highlight areas where restoration of floodplain capacity is advantageous.	Environment Agency	LAs	5		5					Floodplain maps provided to Local Authorities.
16.4 Model effects of urbanisation on flooding regime and devise long-term strategy to reduce detrimental effects.	Environment Agency		25				■	■		No work programmed for this review period.
16.5 Ensure proposed new development does not add to existing flooding problems.	LAs	Environment Agency	R	■	■	■	■	■	Ongoing work but a key task in minimising flood risks.	Development in flood risk areas objected to on 8 sites during the review period. Sustainable Urban Drainage techniques advised through the planning liaison process.

Issue 17: The effects of development on wildlife, cultural heritage, recreation and the landscape

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
17.1 Develop a joint and consistent approach between all those involved with new developments and other changes in land use in the area.	LAs Developers Environment Agency	STW Ltd WTs	R	■	■					The Agency is involved with multifunctional meetings with Dudley MBC to develop jointly suitable policies in the UDP review. Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews.
17.2 Actively seek greater publicity for examples of best practice in development and engineering.	Environment Agency LAs Developers	STW Ltd WTs	4		1	1	1	1		The Agency is actively involved with innovative restoration of a brownfield site in Dudley.
17.3+ Continue to raise awareness of cultural heritage.	Environment Agency LAs Developers BW/IWA		R	■	■					Extensive liaison on work at Mushroom Green. Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews.

Issue 18: Flytipping and litter

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
18.1 Develop a strategy to control flytipping/litter at specific locations.	LAs Environment Agency	Groundwork Trust TBG VOs	R	■	■					<p>A National Flytipping Stakeholders Forum has been set up whereby a number of organisations, including the Environment Agency, are collaborating to develop a co-ordinated approach to the problem of flytipping. The Forum has produced guidance to help landowners, managers and members of the public combat flytipping. Regular liaison with LAs has been established to roll out the flytipping protocol locally. The use of remote CCTV equipment in targeted hotspots is being looked at.</p> <p>During National Spring Clean month in April Dudley MBC organised a number of events around the Priory area. At the Castle Hill site the Environment Agency and Territorial Army assisted in the clean-up, collecting 23.5 tonnes in one day. Since April, 927 bags of litter have been collected as a result of seven other events in the Borough.</p> <p>Wolverhampton Council has set up Rubbish Action Zones. Staff from the Council are working together with local community groups to carry out "spring clean" projects on agreed areas of land. These sites are identified jointly by local residents and the local authority.</p> <p>Awareness raising was undertaken by the Environment Agency and Dudley MBC at two sites believed to be contributing to the build-up of litter in the Mousesweet Brook. A 'Friends of the Mousesweet Brook' group has been established by local residents to raise awareness and undertake conservation works in the area. Action complete.</p>
18.2 Remove the 'build up' of litter at certain locations.	LAs	Groundwork Trust TBG Environment Agency VOs	U	■	■	■	■	■		
18.3 Hold discussions with responsible parties to tackle flytipping/littering in Mushroom Green area.	Dudley/Sandwell MBCs Environment Agency	Groundwork Trust UWT	R	■	■					

Issue 19: Metal recycling sites

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
19.1 Unlicensed sites: a) ensure that all operations are licensed or registered as exempt b) take enforcement action as appropriate.	Environment Agency		R	■	■					a) 59 sites identified as requiring regulation. All have been visited and assessed resulting in 20 requiring registration as exempt activities. 13 operators have submitted exemption applications with action plans to the end of October 1999. b) 7 sites are likely to require enforcement action as they have not attempted to carry out any works to enable compliance with the exemption criteria
19.2 Licensed sites: a) enforce licence conditions b) improve operating standards where necessary through a review of licence conditions.	Environment Agency		R	■	■					Trialling new methodology for targeting worst operators with more inspections. Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews.
19.3 Exempt sites: a) ensure sites are registered and complying with criteria. Take enforcement action where necessary. b) improve operating standards where necessary.	Environment Agency		R	■	■					Resources not available to inspect all currently registered exempt MRS sites, due to the high workload of the National MRS project regarding unregulated sites. However these operators will be assessed in the next phase of the MRS project, after October 1999, together with additional unregulated sites which have been identified.
			R	■						
19.4 Flytipped waste: require landowners/local authorities to remove flytipped waste as appropriate.	Environment Agency	LAs Landowners	R	■						Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews.
19.5 Regularly review the situation and monitor progress. Undertake appropriate enforcement action if land occupiers/licence holders are not making improvements in accordance with agreed timetables.	Environment Agency		R	■	■					Routine/ongoing. As this forms part of the Agency's day to day work, progress will not be reported on in future Annual Reviews.

Note It is envisaged that the current problems at these sites will be resolved during the periods indicated. Thereafter routine monitoring will continue at the sites in accordance with the Agency's policy.

Issue 20: Sustainable waste management

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998 / 99	1999 / 2000	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
20.1 Set up waste minimisation initiatives.	BCBEA Environment Agency	Partners	U(i)		■					Two new waste minimisation groups have been set up in the LEAP area, one covering Dudley and Sandwell and a second covering Wolverhampton and Walsall. In addition the Worcestershire and Shropshire Waste Minimisation Groups, which cover some of the LEAP area, have continued with a third and second training series respectively.
20.2+ Develop local initiatives to promote the sustainable management of household waste.	LAs	Environment Agency	U	■	■	■	■	■	Refer below for future actions for LAs	7 primary schools in Brierley Hill took part in a competition to design a recycling poster. The pupils also participated in educational workshops given by Groundwork and Dudley MBC on litter and recycling. The winning poster will be distributed in the Dudley area. The competition was organised by Groundwork Black Country and sponsored by the Environment Agency and Marks & Spencer Merry Hill. See note* below for a summary of some of the work done by LAs during the review period.
20.3 Promote waste minimisation to companies during routine industrial visits.	Environment Agency		R	■	■	■	■	■		Waste minimisation has been promoted to companies visited i) as part of the national waste survey ii) in connection with the Packaging Waste Regulations, and iii) to provide pollution prevention advice.

Note* 20.2 Dudley MBC has commenced green waste composting at civic amenity sites, with material being processed by contractor for land remediation. A buy-back option exists for the Council to acquire the compost and sell on to householders- may take place in next 12 months. Kerbside collection started taking place in centre of Dudley for glass, cans, paper, textiles, and white goods, from July 1999. Looking to expand to rest of borough as and when funds become available. Inert household waste is being segregated from Civic Amenity (CA) sites and used for civil works by a contractor. Wolverhampton MBC - Green waste collected separately at the borough's two civic amenity sites (one of which is within the LEAP area), and passed to a variety of contractors who process it for different end-uses. May well consider buy-back of compost for sale to householders at weekends (via CA site). Inert household waste from CA sites (e.g. rubble) is also being segregated and used by another contractor for civil engineering use. Shoe recycling just started at some supermarket sites and the civic amenity sites for sale to third world countries/eastern Europe. Some kerbside collection taking place in Bushbury area of District with main aim of providing training scheme to previously unemployed operatives. Sandwell MBC increased the number of bring sites over the last year. It is reviewing its waste strategy and recycling plan in November, which will be concentrating on reviewing recycling markets and plastic/green waste recycling. The Community Recycling Scheme (CRV, -an environmental body) serve 50,000 households across the borough with kerbside collection of paper, textiles, cans and furniture. Sandwell have also just obtained a grant via the landfill tax system to fund 3,500 home composters for spring next year. If the take-up is successful the district will subsidise additional composters thereafter. Bridgnorth DC have started collecting green waste at CA sites for processing at Himley Wood landfill site. Material is to be used as final cover in the restoration of the site. Also looking to supply subsidised composters in March 2000 to certain collection rounds. Worcestershire CC and Herefordshire Council – a new 25 year waste contract is set to greatly increase the levels of waste recovered/recycled (40% by the year 2005), through a number of stages including the upgrading of recycling centres and the introduction of kerbside collections of recyclables. Wyre Forest DC to introduce kerbside collection where feasible (see Worcs. CC). South Staffs DC will be piloting a campaign in the new year to raise awareness and provide assistance to householders in diverting waste away from the bin. After assessment, if successful, the scheme could extend to the LEAP area. Wychavon DC has supplied subsidised home composters throughout the district, 'Buy Recycled' leaflets sent to parishes and schools.

Issue 21: Environmental monitoring of Integrated Pollution Control authorisations

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
21.1 Develop a joint and consistent approach on environmental monitoring where necessary with local authorities.	LAs Environment Agency		R	■	■					Continue to liaise with Dudley MBC on soil quality issues.
21.2 Identify sites for environmental monitoring.	LAs Environment Agency		R		■	■			Completed, although further sites may be identified in future.	Air quality monitoring carried out in Kidderminster and Stourport to assess impact from IPC processes.
21.3 Undertake monitoring at agreed sites.	LAs Environment Agency	Site Operators	40	20	20					Monitoring work completed and report "A Baseline Soil Survey in the South Dudley Area" has been produced. Meeting held with Dudley MBC to discuss report. Report to be on the agenda for the next Council Environment Committee. Liaison to take place regarding any press releases.

Issue 22: The need to raise and promote environmental awareness and education

Actions	Responsibility		Total Cost (£k)	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Future	Progress
	Lead	Other								
22.1 Develop a local education strategy and establish partnerships to deliver it. ¹	Environment Agency	LAs Community Groups WTs STW Ltd TBG and other partners	U	■	■	■				Upper Severn Area Education group set up. Education strategy and procedures currently being developed.
22.2 + Continue to support the Community Pride initiative in Dudley and investigate expanding to other parts of the LEAP area (see Section 5.3.3 of Action Plan).	Environment Agency	LAs Community Groups	4		1	1	1	1		The first Dudley Community Pride ² contest, launched jointly by the Environment Agency and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and forming part of the local commitment to Local Agenda 21, was won by Manor Way School for their sensory garden. Prizes were also awarded to Pensnett Chase, Tanhouse Community Group, and to the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers for their work at Ham Dingle. The 1999 award has just been won by the 'Friends of Mousesweet Brook' for their environmental improvement work at the Mousesweet Brook Nature Reserve.

Note¹

Topics being investigated include: the promotion of environmental education material to schools and colleges (including evaluation of needs for Key Stage material/packs); promotion of the Eco-schools project; targeted environmental awareness and pollution prevention campaigns and roadshows for industry and local businesses; supporting Local Agenda 21 initiatives; participation in local community events to raise public awareness about environmental issues.

Note²

The Community Pride initiative is an annual competition which provides local groups with the opportunity to get involved in community based environmental improvement projects.

We will use the LEAP Annual Review process to report on the developing local education strategy, and will include specific actions and more detail in the next Annual Review.

5.0 FUTURE REVIEWS

We will review progress again next year and aim to publish our second Annual Review of the West Midlands Stour LEAP in December 2000.



APPENDIX 1

Summary of the Environment Agency's routine activities in the West Midlands Stour area

The strategic nature of the LEAP as a long-term planning tool, directing manpower and financial resources to resolving environmental problems, means that the plan is not designed to reflect fully on routine activity within the LEAP area. Our everyday work, of which examples are given below, commits substantial resources to managing the environment.

Education, raising environmental awareness, routine monitoring work and enforcement are all important in achieving the Agency's objective to protect and improve the environment. These activities and regulatory responsibilities form the basis of our work. Our routine activities include:

- regulation of discharges to controlled waters through the issue and enforcement of discharge consents, responding to pollution incidents, prosecuting polluters, sampling water quality, carrying out surveys, setting water quality targets, and protecting groundwater quality;
- regulation of industrial processes with the greatest pollution potential;
- regulation of the disposal, keeping and use of radioactive waste;
- regulation of the keeping, treating, movement and disposal of controlled waste;
- regulation of the remediation of contaminated land designated as special sites;
- the responsibility for water resources includes licence determination, charging, policing and enforcement.
- fisheries - fish surveys, fish rescues, restocking, regulation of fisheries by licences;
- flood defence activities include regulation (including issuing of land drainage consents), enforcement, maintenance and improvement works, and issuing of flood warnings;
- the Agency works closely with local planning authorities through its planning liaison function, commenting on planning application consultations and promoting policies to protect and enhance the environment in development plans.

The Agency educates industry through consultation, collaborative activity and focussed campaigns to promote the culture of prevention rather than cure. However where this fails or if the offence is of a serious nature, the Agency will use available powers, including legal action, to prevent or to rectify the situation. During 1998/99 in the West Midlands Stour area there were 3 waste prosecutions for offences (including flytipping) under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 heard in Kidderminster Court. There were no prosecutions brought against water polluters in the area, and no formal cautions were issued. Formal cautions are given where it is deemed inappropriate to prosecute but it was clear that a significant offence had been committed. Other pollutions are dealt with by warning letters. We responded to 183 reported pollution incidents in total in the West Midlands Stour area, of which 113 were substantiated on investigation. Of the 113 substantiated pollutions, one was a Category 1 incident.

Routine monitoring work includes site inspections throughout the area at sewage works (private and water company), sewerage systems, industrial sites, contaminated land sites, farm sites, licensed waste management facilities, and landspreading sites. During 1998/99 there were 1191 water samples taken for chemical analysis and 18 routine and 6 for reactive biological determination.

During 1998/99 a total of 4 abstraction licences were issued in the West Midlands Stour area, 3 were for surface water abstraction, 1 for groundwater abstraction. In addition, 150 routine enforcement visits to licence holders were carried out. A total of 6 Land Drainage Consents were granted in the West Midlands Stour area during the reporting year (November 1998-October 1999), and 1 consent application was refused.

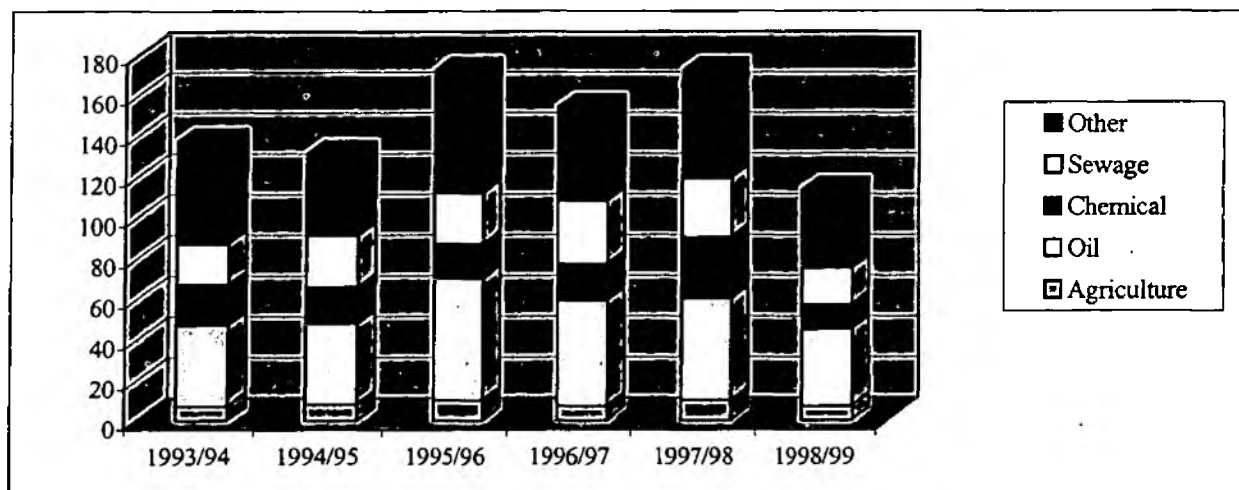
APPENDIX 2

Current Status of Local Authority Development Plans in the West Midlands Stour area

Local Authority	% of Area	Development Plan and Current Status
West Midlands	35.0	RPG 11 – Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands, September 1995 (updated 1998) covering the counties of Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire in addition to the West Midland Metropolitan Boroughs.
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC)	24.1	Dudley Unitary Development Plan adopted November 1993. Review commenced Summer 1999. 1 st deposit January 2000.
Sandwell MBC	2.8	Sandwell Unitary Development Plan adopted January 1995 (republished June 1996). Review 1 st deposit November 1999.
Wolverhampton MBC	8.1	Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan adopted September 1993. Review – Issues Report June 2000.
Staffordshire County Council	31.3	Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 Consultation Draft, October 1997. Now in deposit draft, examination in public October 1999. Minerals Local Plan adoption November 1999. Waste Local Plan 1 st deposit Spring 2000.
South Staffordshire District Council	31.3	South Staffordshire District Local Plan adopted December 1996.
Worcestershire County Council	33.7	Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011, Consultation Draft May 1999. Initial deposit January 2000. Existing Hereford & Worcester County Structure Plan, second alteration operative March 1993. Minerals Local Plan adopted April 1997.
Bromsgrove District Council	11.0	Bromsgrove District Local Plan Deposit Draft November 1993, Inspector's report following Public Enquiry February 1997. 1 st deposit of new plan Summer 2000.
Wychavon District Council	<1	Wychavon District Local Plan adopted January 1998. Issues Report on Revised Plan 2000.
Wyre Forest District Council	22.0	Wyre Forest District Local Plan adopted May 1996. Review starting 2000.

APPENDIX 3

Overall Trend of Reported Pollution Incidents by Type 1993/4 – 1998/9



Pollution Incident Reports by Type and Cause - 1998/99

		Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Cumulative Total
TYPE	Agriculture	0	1	6	7
	Oil	0	1	37	38
	Chemical	0	0	12	12
	Sewage	0	1	17	18
	Other	1	0	37	38
	TOTAL	1	3	109	113
SOURCE	Industry & Commercial	0	0	19	19
	Agriculture	0	0	4	4
	Water Utility Company	0	1	16	17
	Other	1	2	70	73
	TOTAL	1	3	109	113

Category 1 – Major incident Category 2 – Significant incident Category 3 – Minor incident

