

THAMES REGION REGIONAL PLAN SUMMARY 1994/95



NRA

National Rivers Authority
Thames Region

National Rivers Authority Information Centre Reading Office
Class No
Accession No <u>ARRR</u>

MISSION STATEMENT

Guardians of the water environment. *The National Rivers Authority will protect and improve the water environment. This will be achieved through effective management of water resources and by substantial reductions in pollution. The Authority aims to provide effective defences for people and property against flooding from rivers and the sea. In discharging its duties it will balance the interests of all who benefit from and use rivers, groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters, believing that an integrated approach is crucial for success. The Authority will operate openly and be businesslike, efficient and caring towards its employees. We're here to make a difference.*

FOREWORD

From Les Jones, Regional General Manager

This summary leaflet of our Region's Corporate Plan submission to Head Office is a very important communication. It attempts to encapsulate all the excellent work we have done in the past and our ambitious aspirations for the future. It is the first Corporate Plan submission which reflects our new Area organisation and it provides an opportunity for enhanced cross-functional working and the setting of even more ambitious targets than ever before.

1993/94 was an excellent year for Thames Region and we have achieved standards for all functions across the Region which are without precedent for many years. In 1994/95 and thereafter we must sustain the improvements we have all worked hard to achieve and make things better wherever possible. We will be doing this with less people, less money and all the uncertainties emanating from market testing and the proposed Environment Agency. The Management Team and I are, however, totally confident that we will succeed. This confidence stems from the complete trust we have in the ability and dedication of the employees of the Thames Region. Thank you all for your continuing efforts to improve the environment.

The contents of this summary will be incorporated into the NRA's fifth National Corporate Plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1993/94

1993/94 was a very successful year in Thames Region. Significantly, our major achievements were spread across all functions. Our initial experience of working with three Areas proved successful. Our key achievements were:

- Best overall water quality for many years
- Record run of salmon in the Thames and construction of eight fish passes
- An excellent emergency response, especially to the increased frequency of flooding incidents
- Rebuilding of Hambleden Lock
- Completion of the River Ver low flow alleviation scheme
- Our major contribution to the debate surrounding the Thames Water Utilities Ltd proposals for a South West Oxfordshire Reservoir
- Receipt of two major awards for landscape work
- Extension of the Thames Path

KEY ISSUES & PRIORITIES 1994/95

Our major tasks for the current year provide a number of challenges. Past performance indicates that we shall rise successfully to them. They include:

- Building on our successful transition to an organisation based on three Areas supported by an effective Regional office, and optimising the Area-Centre relationship
- Managing significant reductions in expenditure and employee numbers
- Handling the market testing programme in an orderly way - the market testing challenge this year in Thames Region is by far the greatest in the NRA
- Developing links with our counterparts in HMIP and the waste regulation authorities in anticipation of the Environment Agency
- Continuing to develop a 'Can Do' culture, to meet, for example Citizens Charter standards and the rigours of market testing, through appropriate staff development programmes and similar initiatives
- Sustaining and improving levels of service throughout our work
- Exploring further 'on the ground' cross-functional working

Functional priorities:

Water Resources

- Completing and publishing a regional water resources development strategy to meet future environmental and water use needs
- Implementing solutions to the outstanding River Misbourne low flow alleviation scheme and investigating other alleged low flow rivers
- Day to day control of the River Thames - a critical measure of NRA success.

Water Quality

- Maintaining the marked improvement in river quality achieved throughout the Region over the past two years
- Developing Statutory Water Quality Objectives in two pilot catchments in concert with catchment management plans
- Reviewing our sampling programme in accordance with national guidelines
- Getting our quality improvement priorities into the Water Utilities capital programme
- Implementing the Water Archive Management System in the Region

Flood Defence

- Continuing to respond speedily and effectively to incidents of flooding
- Successful prevention of flooding
- The Thames Barrier (it remains the NRA's single most critical asset)
- Progressing the Maidenhead flood alleviation scheme (assuming DoE authority is given)
- Developing a strategy to mitigate urban flooding in cases where the formal benefit-cost ratio is unfavourable but political reality requires a solution
- Developing an appropriate schedule of S105 surveys in support of land use planning authorities

Fisheries, Recreation, Conservation & Navigation

- Improving degraded habitats across the Region
- Playing a full role in the development of future financing strategies for Fisheries and Navigation
- Progressing the River Thames Recreation Strategy project
- Continuing input to all significant river works in the Region with particular regard to environmental assessment requirements
- Maintaining the country's most intensively used navigation service
- Completing the major rebuilding of Hambleden Lock
- Implementing updated byelaws and developing the National Boat Safety Scheme

Cross-functional

- Sustaining our already significant input to local authority development plans
- Improving our response to planning application consultations
- Progressing both the review of all catchments by 1995/96 and the production of full catchment management plans
- Continuing our programmes of employee development
- Sustaining our pro-active public relations efforts

'MAKING A DIFFERENCE' KEY SITES

The Top Five operational priorities for each Area:

North East Area

Flood Defence Capital Works

- Sites include the Lower Colne, the Upper Lee at Wheathampstead, the Crane, the Ingrebourne at Rainham, and the Lee Flood Relief Channel

Improvement Scheme

- Undertake a feasibility study and water quality investigations to commence an improvement scheme for the Lower Lee

Habitat Improvement Works

- At Amwell Magna and 13 other identified sites

Targeted Pollution Prevention

- At Luton airport and commercial and industrial sites in Dagenham, Harlow, Hertford, Tottenham and Watford

Catchment Management Plans

- Upper Lee and Middle Lee Catchments

South East Area

Water Quality Maintenance & Improvement

- Thames Tideway and Roundmoor Ditch, Slough

Flood Alleviation Schemes

- Maidenhead (construction awaits approval subsequent to the public inquiry) and River Quaggy (design and construction) Flood Alleviation Schemes, also Boulter's Weir reconstruction and motorisation.

River Restoration

- Gain approval for Hogsmill River Restoration Project

Lockhouse Reconstruction

- Boulter's Lock

Catchment Management Plans

- Blackwater; Hogsmill, Beverley Brook & Wandle; Mole; and Ravensbourne Catchments

West Area

Targeted Pollution Prevention

- Industrial sites at Abingdon, Aylesbury, Banbury, Didcot, High Wycombe, Reading, Swindon and Witney and at farms located in the catchments of the Rivers Cole, Enbourne, Evenlode, Ock, Pang, Ray (Oxon), Thame and Windrush and Foudry Brook

Watercourse Maintenance

- Reduction of risk of flooding through maintenance of 1440km of main river throughout the Area

Habitat Improvement Works

- Sites identified on the Rivers Thame, Cole, Leach, Dun, Kennet, Windrush, Lambourne, and Thames

Lock Enlargement

- Completion and re-opening of Hambleden Lock

Catchment Management Plans

- Kennet Catchment (implementation) and Upper Thames and Cherwell Catchments (production)

USE OF RESOURCES

Our budget for 1994/95 is set at £68.5 million. A number of initiatives will enable us to rise to the challenge, even greater than in previous years, of maintaining our high level of outputs. We will need to:

- focus our attention on what is mandatory
- continue to develop additional ways of sharing resources between sections, departments and areas, and with other regions, thereby working more efficiently
- implement successfully the Integrated Accounting System and Personnel System
- seek to maximise income:
 - through recovering the maximum possible pollution incident income
 - by ensuring a targeted use of bailiffs to minimise rod licence evasion
 - from navigation accommodations and recreation assets

KEY STATISTICS

- Area: 12,900 sq km	- Number of Abstraction Licences: 3,056
- Population: 11.6 million	- Volume of Authorised Water Abstraction: 9,554 MI/d
- Length of Main River: 5,294 km	- Number of Discharge Consents: 12,250
- Length of Estuary: 193 km	- Number of EC Bathing Waters: 3
- Flood Defence works maintained: 3,900 km	
- Average Annual Rainfall: 704 mm	

