

Environment Agency launches future of rivers consultation

- Challenges and Choices consultation to seek input from members of the public, businesses and environmental organisations
- Consultation to run for six months, seeking views on how river basin districts will be managed from 2021
- Challenges covered include dry weather, climate change, pollution in our waters and invasive non-native species

Residents and organisations invited to give views on future management of our water environments.

The Environment Agency has invited the public to share their views and ideas on the future of our water environment and rivers through its [‘Challenges and Choices’](#) consultation, launched today (Thursday 24 October).

Members of the public, businesses and environmental organisations are being urged to give their views on how water in the eight river basin districts will be managed and looked after from 2021 onwards.

The current river basin management plans were published in February 2016. Each river basin district has its own plan, which is now being updated to provide a framework for improvements from 2021.

The water environment is a precious resource that must be preserved for the future prosperity of wildlife, people and business. We have already lost 90 per cent of the UK’s wetland habitats in the last 100 years and urgent action is needed to ensure we can protect what is left.

Better, faster ways to encourage greater investment in our water environment must be developed if we are to reverse the damage caused to these precious habitats.

Pete Fox, Director of Water, Land and Biodiversity at the Environment Agency said:

The climate crisis and a growing population are adding to the mounting pressures on our water environment. It is vitally important that we find the right balance between our daily water needs, industry and nature to ensure that it is protected.

This consultation will provide valuable insight into how we can work together to best manage and maintain this previous natural resource for the future generations.

‘Challenges and Choices’ will compile the necessary views to demonstrate what difficult choices must be made to overcome the environmental challenges faced

by our whole water environment. It will look at measures on how we can all adapt to a changing climate and will outline the current challenges we are facing, including:

- River flow
- Climate change and the biodiversity crisis
- Chemicals in the water environment
- Pollution in our waters
- Invasive non-native species
- Physical modifications to our river habitats
- Ways of working

The consultation will run for six months. It will be open to any interested parties in the eight river basin districts.

The deadline for response is Friday 24 April 2020.