

# Catchment management: the declaration

# A call from business, civil society organisations and the public sector to commit to the water catchment-related ambition of the UK Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and support collective activities that will deliver successful catchment management.

## Cambridge insight, policy influence, business impact

For 800 years, the University of Cambridge has fostered leadership, ideas and innovations that have benefited and transformed societies. The University now has a critical role to play to help the world respond to a singular challenge: how to provide for as many as nine billion people by 2050 within a finite envelope of land, water and natural resources, whilst adapting to a warmer, less predictable climate.

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) empowers business and policy leaders to make the necessary adjustments to their organisations, industries and economic systems in light of this challenge. By bringing together multidisciplinary researchers with influential business and policy practitioners across the globe, we foster an exchange of ideas across traditional boundaries to generate new solutions-oriented thinking.

## Anglian Water

As the company charged with supplying drinking water to the driest part of the UK, Anglian Water understands the value in every drop. We also know that if we are to make the most of this most precious resource others need to value it too.

Love Every Drop is a movement to put water at the heart of a whole new way of living. We have committed to stopping pollution, cutting carbon, and eliminating waste. We want to lead the way in raising awareness of the value of water, reducing the amount we all use and helping our region to become the most water-efficient in the UK. It's working too, despite our population having grown by a third in the last thirty years, today we still only have to put the same amount of water into supply as we did in 1990.

In 2015, Anglian Water was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development, and in 2017 Business in the Community's Responsible Business of the Year award.

## Business in the Community (BITC)

The Prince's Responsible Business Network - is a business-led membership organisation made up of progressive businesses of all sizes who understand that the prosperity of business and society are mutually dependent.

BITC uses its Responsible Business Map to guide members on a journey of continuous improvement, working across the whole responsible business agenda. From community engagement to employment, diversity and the circular economy, BITC offer expert advice and specialist resources, driving best practice by convening, sharing learning and recognising great performance across its influential Network.

## Thames Water

Thames Water is the UK's largest water and wastewater services provider, covering the urban landscape of our capital city through to the rural reaches of the Cotswolds. We supply almost one third of the 9 billion litres of water used by people and businesses in the UK each and every day, while removing and treating over four billion litres of sewage for 15 million customers.

Delivering excellent services to these customers is at the heart of our company's culture. We are committed to protecting and enhancing the natural environment we rely on to deliver these services, acting as a socially responsible and sustainable business, now and in the future

## Yorkshire Water

Yorkshire Water provides some of life's most essential services to the 5 million people and 140,000 businesses in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. The Company plays a key role in the region's health, wellbeing and prosperity by supplying water and waste water services, and being custodians of essential infrastructure and the natural environment. This is all done for just over £1 a day for the average customer, amongst the lowest water and waste water bills in the country.

## Publication details

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# The context

**Water is a shared resource that is critical to the success of many sectors, the health of the environment, and our quality of life. Many businesses have an interest in the quality of the natural environment in which they operate and the impacts they have upon it through their own activities.**

Water is fundamental to business, to heat, cool, as input to ingredients and to clean. Whether there's too little or too much, water can have an impact on the bottom line. Water stress such as flooding or drought can impact business continuity and add costs, whether this is directly within operations or further up the value chain. However, resolving the issues and pressures facing water is beyond the reach of any single sector or organisation and, as emphasised in the Government's 25 year Environment Plan, a broader catchment-based approach is needed. Whether a farmer, energy producer, land owner, water company or consumer, we have to take positive steps to ensure the sustainable management of this resource for the benefit of all.

Water companies have been working with other stakeholders to deliver innovative catchment interventions in response to the challenges they face in delivering their services in a sustainable way. A well-managed catchment not only enables a more efficient water supply but it also supports other stakeholders to undertake their activities in a way that protects this precious resource and enables local communities to enjoy clean waterways and the wildlife these provide. Every catchment is different and there is no one size fits all solution. There are many examples across the UK that are already demonstrating positive results but there is much more to do to make catchment management the norm.

Farmers have been implementing more sustainable approaches to food production. Over the past 20 years fertiliser use has decreased, pesticide use is more targeted with fewer active ingredients used, and greenhouse gas emissions have fallen. But of course whilst improvements are being made there is much more to do. Farmers recognise the need to improve their environmental performance at the same time as producing high quality food. The creation of a new framework for agriculture signals an opportunity to design bespoke policies to deliver simpler, more cost effective agricultural and environmental performance.

Change cannot be achieved by a few regulatory tweaks, nor can any single sector or any government agency, working in isolation, deliver this change. Catchment solutions are multi-sector and highly interconnected; there is a need to get 'joined up' local-level action to deliver innovative, sustainable solutions in order to reap the multiple benefits they offer. It is only by taking a collaborative approach that catchment-wide sensitive management and behaviour change will be made possible. Catchment partnerships

are already delivering a key role in the implementation of the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA), however, these are at widely different stages in terms of maturity, membership and effectiveness, and some could do with a little more resource and legitimacy.

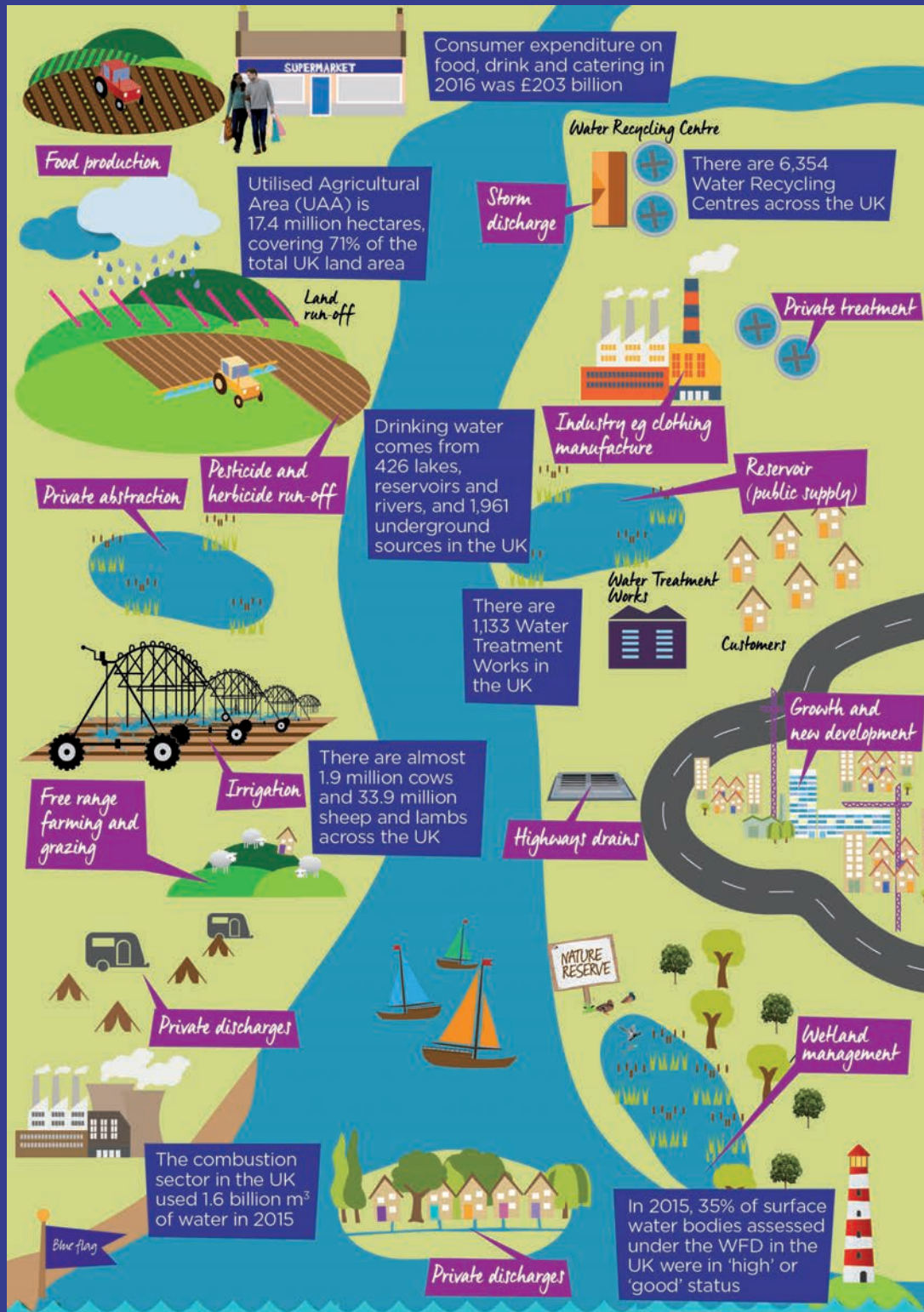
The sustainable use of the water cycle is not just an environmental goal, but a sound business decision. The demands of growth and a changing climate make it imperative to work together to reduce the pressures being placed on freshwater supplies and natural capital, and improve resilience across all our sectors.

## Key facts

- Water crises have been among the top five global risks in each of the last seven years according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- One in three pressures on England's rivers are attributed to the agricultural sector, primarily the production of food and drink.
- Large amounts of water are wasted by households, where average use is 140 litres per person a day.
- Urban and transport also place large pressures upon water resources.
- Pollution from waste water from a number of industries cause issues for catchments.
- Two of the top six areas requiring more action in the UK's Climate Change RISK Assessment relate to water scarcity and impacts on natural capital – both of which can be supported through wider delivery of catchment management solutions.
- Soil compaction increases rainfall run-off, while sediment in rivers decreases their capacity to carry water and blocks culverts, this contributes to flooding costs in the UK of £2.2 billion a year.
- Only 14 percent of water bodies achieve 'Good' status as defined by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).



# Water is everyone's business



Source: Anglian Water

References- [www.energy-uk.org.uk/policy/environmental-regulation/water-resources.html](http://www.energy-uk.org.uk/policy/environmental-regulation/water-resources.html); [discoverwater.co.uk](http://discoverwater.co.uk); [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/672119/AUK-2016-08jan18.pdf](http://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672119/AUK-2016-08jan18.pdf)

# Collective action

**The management of water as a shared resource requires a clear and effective governance framework at appropriate scales, in order for organisations to collaborate to enable action together.**

Catchments represent the primary scale for collective action through which the 25 Year Environment Plan can be delivered. This Declaration supports the 25 Year Environment Plan for action at both catchment level and in contributing to effective delivery in the 14 higher level operational areas adopted by Natural England and the Environment Agency. As part of this, there is an important role for the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to support delivery by engaging across the natural, social and financial capital boundaries; this can be used to demonstrate the benefits that shared water management can provide local economies.

An approach is needed that is applicable across existing operational boundaries and that will benefit regional and national scales.

There are many groups working in the area of catchment management, such as the Alliance for Water Stewardship, the CaBA water stewardship service and the Campaign for the Farmed Environment (CFE). The intent of this Declaration is not to duplicate these existing initiatives but to support and create further momentum around a collaborative approach to delivering successful catchment management in the UK.

**We welcome the ambition laid out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.**

## 25 Year Environment Plan

We welcome the ambition laid out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. We believe it goes further than any other plan has before in its commitment to leave the environment in a better state than we found it; now is the time to consider how we implement it. A step change in catchment management activity, supported by a multi-sector collaboration, will be a demonstration of commitment to the ambition of the 25 Year Environment Plan by supporting water catchment-related activities that will facilitate a greater level of delivery.

This Declaration will support the delivery of many elements of the 25 Year Environment Plan but crucially:

- reducing the impacts of abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater
- reaching and exceeding objectives for rivers, lakes, coastal and ground waters that are specially protected, whether for biodiversity or drinking water
- restoring 75 percent of terrestrial and freshwater protected sites to favourable condition and securing their wildlife value
- ensuring interruptions to water supplies are minimised during prolonged dry weather and drought
- improving soil management and developing soil management metrics and approaches
- supporting the sustainable production of food
- safeguarding and enhancing natural scenery and improving its environmental value
- significantly reducing plastic pollution
- exploring new and innovative funding and delivery mechanisms as part of a new environmental land management system
- working with farmers to use fertilisers efficiently
- making sure that all those with a role to play take action to improve water quality by, for example, removing misconnected plumbing, improving surface water drainage and land management, and maintaining private sewage systems to a high standard.

Fundamentally, this Declaration aims to demonstrate the commitment of all parties involved in catchment management to resolving the barriers that impede its effective and widespread delivery.

# The Declaration

**We the undersigned will work together to deliver the following principles.**

## Principles:

- 1.**  
We recognise that water is a valuable and shared resource on which we depend and impact both direct and indirectly; we will take responsibility to progress sustainable water management, from where we are at present, for all.
- 2.**  
We will support action at both catchment and regional scale to deliver multiple benefits through cross-sector partnership and collaboration, recognising that the environment is a system upon which we all depend.
- 3.**  
We will support the improvement of existing governance frameworks to facilitate delivery through mechanisms such as the Catchment Based Approach.
- 4.**  
We will work together to increase the awareness of citizens on their role in delivering water stewardship and encourage positive action.
- 5.**  
We will reconvene in 12 months, in the first instance, to share progress, best practice and to demonstrate positive action.
- 6.**  
By signing, we commit to including delivery against this Declaration throughout our business operations so that the principles form part of how we will deliver our environmental intentions.

**Through a leadership group<sup>1</sup> we will address the above principles and enable business to align with the 25 Year Environment Plan. This group wishes to explore a number of longer term ambitions which could include:**

1. The potential for minimum, locally appropriate water stewardship standards
2. The benefits of an open framework to represent all data, evidence and best practice to drive continuous improvement and facilitate pooling of resources
3. Reviewing the existing governance frameworks for delivery of catchment management and promoting improvements
- that provide opportunities for working together at a strategic level to deliver multiple stakeholder benefits from single interventions
4. Establishing a common narrative to be used across sectors and stakeholders to improve understanding of the importance of water stewardship
5. Opportunities to share best practice across catchments

<sup>1</sup> Over the next 12 months, through the combined convening power of the CISL's Natural Capital Impact Group and BITC Water Taskforce, we will bring together all those interested in furthering catchment management and water stewardship in the UK, working collaboratively to deliver the joint objectives.

**A step change** in catchment management activity will be a demonstration of commitment to the ambition of the 25 Year Environment Plan by supporting water catchment-related activities that will facilitate a greater level of delivery.

This Declaration aims to bring sectors and organisations together to enable effective catchment management.

## Current signatories







## Cambridge insight, policy influence, business impact

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