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Business Plan
2008-2009



www.riversagencyni.gov.uk

DMS 08.09.020



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



An Agency within the Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**
www.dardni.gov.uk

Foreword



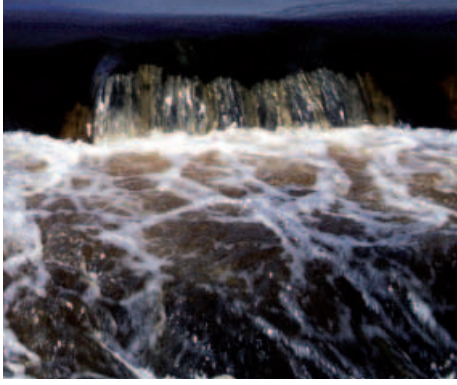
I am pleased to present the Rivers Agency's Business Plan for the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009. The Agency's activities contribute to developing a more sustainable environment – a goal within the DARD Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011. The key performance targets in the business plan have been agreed by the Minister. They are aligned with the Programme for Government PSA target 23 which relates to managing the risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.

During the year the Agency will be considering and developing two strategic aspects of work that will significantly influence the management of flood risks in future years.

Firstly, the European Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks (Floods Directive) is now in force and a programme of work has been developed for implementing its requirements.

Secondly, the Agency will be giving attention to the delivery of flood risk management issues determined within a new policy framework that will emerge from a recent Flood Management Policy Review (FMPR) for Northern Ireland. We will also continue to take account of the increasing range of legislative and policy developments affecting the wider water environment.

Reducing flooding risk and minimising the damage caused by flooding will continue to be priority issues for the Agency. Resources will be devoted to efficient management of our infrastructure assets and the delivery of cost beneficial flood protection schemes. The Agency will also continue to play a positive role in facilitating economic development by upgrading drainage infrastructure to accommodate the increase in surface water discharge associated with industrial and housing development, where this is economically viable.



Foreword

The management and maintenance of our arterial drainage systems, which are fundamental to securing good drainage throughout Northern Ireland, will continue. The Agency will continue to be pro-active in addressing environmental matters in the planning and execution of all works for which it is responsible.

The Agency is fully committed to providing the best possible standards of service to our customers. In particular we will continue to seek to ensure an appropriate response in flood emergency situations working closely with other Government agencies and responders.

JOHN R HAGAN
Chief Executive

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Introduction

The Agency

Rivers Agency is an Executive Agency within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (“the Department”). The Agency is subject to the direction and control of the Minister with responsibility for the Department. The Agency Framework Document sets out the relationship between the Agency and the Department and the Agency’s accountability to Ministers and Parliament.

Functions

The Department is the statutory drainage and flood protection authority for Northern Ireland. Under the terms of the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 the Department has discretionary powers to:-

- Maintain watercourses and sea defences which have been designated by the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland (Membership is listed in Appendix 3)
- Construct and maintain drainage and flood defence structures
- Administer advisory and enforcement procedures to protect the drainage function of all watercourses.

Organisation and Resources

The Agency is headed by a Chief Executive supported by a Senior Management Directorate and as at March 2008 employs 176 non industrial and 252 industrial staff. The Agency’s Headquarters is located at Hydebank in Belfast and it has Regional Offices in Lisburn and Omagh and Area Offices in Coleraine, Craigavon, Lisburn and Ballinamallard, which services the Fermanagh Sub-Area. Further details of the organisational structure and office locations can be found in Appendix I.

Vision and Aims

Vision

To manage flood risk to facilitate the social, economic and environmental development of Northern Ireland.

Aims - The following aims support the vision:

- Reducing risk to life and damage to property from flooding from rivers and the sea.
- Undertaking watercourse and coastal flood management in a sustainable manner.

Business Priorities for 2008/09

Floods Directive

The Floods Directive entered into force on 26th November 2007 starting the clock for delivery of transposition into Northern Ireland legislation and the production of the first round of risk assessments, maps and plans in accordance with the milestones defined within the Directive. This will necessitate closer working relationships with other government departments and bodies as well as the public. This will be achieved by the establishment of a strategic stakeholder group to ensure a greater emphasis on sharing and communicating risk so that government and the public are aware and understand flood risk thus enabling all stakeholders to take steps to manage risk as they deem appropriate. Given the nature and in particular the scale of the Directive the Agency has established a project delivery team including four of our framework consultants.

Flood Management Policy Review

The Flood Management Policy Review will inform the policy framework setting the future direction for flood risk management in NI. This framework is likely to endorse much of what is delivered at present as well as identifying areas where it is possible to deliver a more integrated approach, and also filling policy gaps. On the basis of the agreed framework it is anticipated that delivery will require both additional resources and a realignment as well as significant changes to the organisational structure.



Introduction

Advisory and Enforcement

Rivers Agency will continue to liaise closely with Planning Service on drainage and flood protection aspects of Area Development Plans, planning applications and in relation to sustainable development with regard to Planning Service's policy on Planning and Flood Risk.

Asset Management

The Agency is migrating from its current reactive approach to maintaining its assets to one based upon Asset Management Plans (AMP). The AMP for Culverts has now been in place for 2 years, for Sea Defences 1 year and that for Fluvial Defences is nearing completion. Work programmes will be developed on the basis of condition assessments which are currently underway for all categories of assets and as part of the approach the Agency will benchmark the level of asset condition with the wider industry. An ongoing cycle of inspection, assessment and intervention is an integral part of the AMP and essential to ensure the effective functioning of assets.

Water Level Management

The Rivers Agency monitors and measures river flows and water levels at locations throughout Northern Ireland. It supplies appropriate river flow data to the UK National River Flow Archives on a monthly and annual basis and to other users such as Environment and Heritage Service and the NI Water who use the data for environmental and water resource monitoring. The Agency's Hydrometric Section has representation on various hydrometric and hydrological committees at national and international levels. The Agency also is responsible for managing the water levels of Lough Erne, Lough Neagh and stretches of the River Bann and River Lagan. On Lough Erne control is achieved in conjunction with the Electricity Supply Board, in Republic of Ireland, who manage the hydro electric power station at Cliff, near Ballyshannon. Lough Neagh and the Lower Bann are controlled by a series of sluices at Toome, Portna and the Cutts near Coleraine. The River Lagan has a number of weirs which offer some level control with additional water level management provided by the Lagan Weir in Belfast, which is operated by the Department of Social Development.

Maintenance

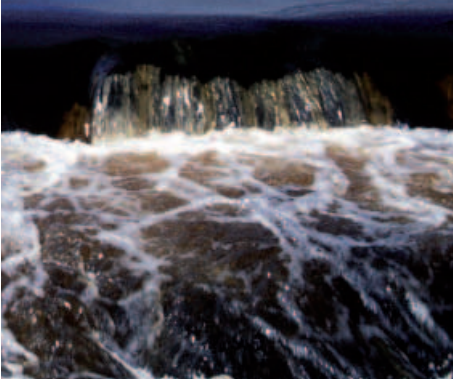
Rivers Agency carries out cyclical inspections to designated watercourses, and culvert inlet grilles. The timing of these inspections is dependent on the likely maintenance requirements, drainage impact and flood risk. For example high risk inlet grilles are inspected on a weekly basis, and rural watercourses are on a six yearly programme. Maintenance works identified during these inspections are programmed and carried out by the Agency's industrial staff using in house plant, term contractors or by using site specific repair and maintenance contracts. The Maintenance Programme is evaluated using environmental and cost-benefit criteria prior to the inclusion of proposals in the annual works programme.

Health and Safety

In carrying out works the Agency strictly adheres to all Health and Safety legislation and endeavours to create a safe working environment both for staff and in areas accessible to the public. The Agency will continue to adopt a pro-active role on health and safety issues and in the coming year will be reviewing and updating procedures. Ongoing and continuous training of staff will remain a key element in reducing accident rates.

NICS Reform Initiatives

The Agency will continue to implement and develop the various elements of the NICS reform initiatives, including Records NI, HR Connect and Account NI.



Introduction

Key Objectives and Performance Targets

Key Objective 1:

To deliver sustainable flood risk management policies to meet society's social, environmental and economic needs

- 1.1 Provide flood risk information and advice to Planning Service on 48 hectares of land under its Area Plan development process.
- 1.2 In response to the Flood Management Policy Review establish an agreed policy framework by May 08 (PSA Target).
- 1.3 Complete a detailed resourcing & structural analysis of flood risk management delivery.

Key Objective 2:

To implement the requirements of the European Directive for the assessment and management of flood risks

- 2.1 Establish a strategic stakeholder group with agreed Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 Complete a flood mapping pilot study to support delivery of flood mapping requirements of the Floods Directive.
- 2.3 Establish a stakeholder group to progress assessment of flood risk to Belfast.

Key Objective 3:

To reduce the number of properties currently at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea

- 3.1 Refine number of properties at risk from base flood maps by end-May 08 (PSA Target).
- 3.2 Reduce number of properties at significant risk from 28000 to 27923 by end-2009 (PSA Target).
- 3.3 Increase no. of Housing Equivalents benefiting from a reduced risk of flooding from 19566 at 31 Mar 08 to 19696 at 31 Mar 09.

- 3.4 Improve drainage infrastructure to cater for development of 94 hectares of land.
- 3.5 Respond to 98% of Schedule 6 applications within 3 months.
- 3.6 Ensure response to 90% of requests for assistance with flood emergencies within 3 hours.

Key Objective 4:

To maintain flood defence and drainage infrastructure in a satisfactory condition

- 4.1 By end-March 2009 complete a condition assessment of flood defence infrastructure namely:-
 - Urban Flood Defences
 - Sea Defences
 - Culvert Network
 - Benchmark the NI situation against the wider industry
- 4.2 Complete structural repairs to circa 1.04 km of the designated culvert network where collapse is likely or imminent.
- 4.3 Inspect & maintain as required, 98% of all designated urban open watercourses in accordance with the Maintenance Manual.
- 4.4 Inspect & maintain as required, 98% of all designated culvert inlet grilles. categorized as critical to flood protection of urban areas at least once a week
- 4.5 Inspect & maintain as required, 98% of all other designated culvert inlet grilles once a month.
- 4.6 Maintain a minimum of 503 designated rural watercourses as part of the Agency's 6 year annual maintenance programme.



Introduction

Key Objective 5:

To operate to resource limits

- 5.1 Maintain expenditure within Resource Limits and to approved budgets.
- 5.2 Produce unqualified accounts which are laid in the Assembly by the summer recess.

Key Objective 6:

To support and motivate all our people to achieve the Agency's objectives

- 6.1 Deliver a 20% reduction in lost time work related accidents from the 2006-07 base figure of 21.
- 6.2 Maintain staffing levels at a minimum of 96% of complement.
- 6.3 Reduce average annual level of absenteeism due to sickness for non industrial staff to not more than 8.5 days.
- 6.4 Reduce average annual level of absenteeism due to sickness for industrial staff by 5%.

Key Objective 7:

To deliver quality services for our customers and stakeholders in a fair and equitable way

- 7.1 Issue substantive replies to 80% of written enquiries within 15 working days of receipt.
- 7.2 Respond to 80% of planning application consultations to publish first stage of strategic Flood Mapping product Planning Service within 21 working days of receipt
- 7.3 Establish an Agency communication strategy.
- 7.4 Publish first stage of Strategic Flood Mapping products.

Appendices



Appendix I

Agency Corporate Directorate

Chief Executive Mr J R Hagan		
Director of Development Mr J Clarke Construction Works Services Procurement and Major Project delivery Flood Management Policy Review Floods Directive Asset Management Hydrometrics Information Technology Professional Standards	Director of Operations Mr P Mehaffey Operational Management Maintenance Works Programme Planning Advice Plant, Vehicle and Equipment Health & Safety Environment Emergency Planning	Director of Corporate Services Mr E Gaw Finance Human resources Corporate policy and planning Legislation NICS Reform Initiatives

Agency Offices

Agency Headquarters

Hydebank
4 Hospital Road
BELFAST BT8 8JP

Tel: 028 9025 3355

Fax: 028 9025 3455

Western Region

Regional Office
Woodside Avenue
Gortin Road
OMAGH BT79 7BS

Tel: 028 8225 4900

Fax: 028 8225 4901

Coleraine Office

37 Castleroe Road
COLERAINE BT51 3RL

Tel: 028 7034 2357

Fax: 028 7032 0628

Fermanagh Office

Riversdale
Ballinamallard
ENNISKILLEN BT94 2NA

Tel: 028 6638 8529

Fax: 028 6638 8972

Eastern Region

Regional Office
Ravarnet House
Altona Road
LISBURN BT27 5QB

Tel: 028 9260 6100

Fax: 028 9260 6111

Armagh Office

44 Seagoe Industrial Estate
CRAIGAVON BT63 5QE

Tel: 028 3839 9111

Fax: 028 3839 9113

Plant Unit

44 Seagoe Industrial Estate
CRAIGAVON BT63 5QE

Tel: 028 3839 9100

Fax: 028 3839 9112



Appendix 2

Agency Resource Allocations 2008/09

	2007/08 £'000
Admin Cost	12,397
<i>Programme Expenditure</i>	
Capital	8,500
Resource	2,985
Sub-Total	<hr/> 11,485
Total	<hr/> 23,882

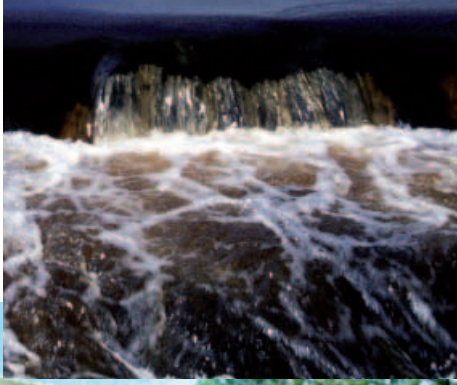
Capital Expenditure – ISNI Measure: Flood Risk Management

Programme	£ 000
Drainage Infrastructure	1,500
Flood Alleviation	4,500
Flood Risk Management	1,000
Omagh Regional Office	1,000
Recurrent Capital Plant, Vehicles, Machinery	500
Recurrent Capital Receipts	(1,619)
Total	<hr/> 6,881

Appendix 3

Membership of the Drainage Council for Northern Ireland

Name	Interest Represented
Mr Gerald Crawford (<i>Chairman</i>)	Fisheries
Alderman Hubert Nicholl (<i>Vice-Chairman</i>)	Ballymena Borough Council
Alderman Roy Beggs	Larne Borough Council
Councillor Michael Gillespie	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
Councillor Alan Graham	North Down Borough Council
Councillor Oliver Hughes	Magherafelt District Council
Councillor William King, MBE	Coleraine Borough Council
Councillor Jim McBriar	Ards Borough Council
Councillor Catherine McCambridge	Moyle District Council
Councillor Gerry McHugh MLA	Fermanagh District Council
Mr Gareth Boyd	Industry
Mr Robert Cummings	Agriculture
Miss Janice Gault	Tourism
Vacant	District Council
Dr Harold Johnston	Drainage Specialist
Vacant	DOE Planning Service
Dr Alexandra McGarel	Conservation
Mr John Hagan	Rivers Agency





Proof Sheet

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