

**SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE:
VALUES AND CHALLENGES**

A response by the Institution of Environmental Sciences

Comments have been made within the framework set out in the consultation document using the specific numbering system where relevant. The individual questions have NOT been repeated in the interest of brevity!

A What environment should we protect?

- A1-2. Enhancement should be the aim for practically all of the water and water-related environment except for those areas that may already remain in an unaffected (and protected) state. Priority should be given to locations where important and fragile ecosystems exist in a natural state (e.g. wetlands) and which are subject to damage from other water requirements (extraction, etc.)
- A3. Regional and local (integrated) policies should be agreed between the relevant authorities defining a balance of activities that can take place and the restrictive measures that should apply.
- A4. A precautionary approach should be adopted as far as possible.

B How should we respond to climate change?

- B1. There is a range of different scenarios in current predictions ranging from minimal effect to alarmist. Forward planning should be based on a rational and median prediction level.
- B2. Monitoring procedures are in place to record climate change. The results of this should be applied to assess possible effects on water resources.
- B3. Farming techniques should adapt.
- B4. -
- B5. Water usage should be at maximum economy irrespective of climate change.
- B6. This will be dependent on the degree of the effect.

C Should we prioritise access to water resources?

- C1. No
- C2. No
- C3. Fair and even distribution should be a maxim.
- C4. No
- C5. This will depend on national sustainable development strategies for transportation generally

D Should water resources and supplies be a consideration in the planning system?

D1. Yes

D2. Planning consent should be consequent on resources becoming available.

D3. Innovation can help with problem solving, but is unlikely to provide a comprehensive solution.

D4. See D1.

E What are the main dependencies between rural land-use and water resources?

E1-4 No Comment

F Is water "undervalued"?

F1. Yes

F2. Yes

F3. No

F4. No comment

G Are customer restrictions an appropriate and effective way of saving water?

G1. Not during critical shortages.

G2. Yes

G3. As and when critical shortages occur.

G4. No comment

G5. Yes – public appeal and persuasion.

G6. Yes

H Is our individual use of water sustainable?

H1-2. Individual planning is a reasonable expectation but is unlikely to be achieved voluntarily without measures such as metering (with price mechanisms).

I Water efficiency – should the Agency set targets for all users?

I1-3. A proactive campaign with recommended targets by the Agency is desirable.

I4. Cost reductions would occur for reduced usage (if metered) by both households and industry/business.

J How might competition in the water industry affect sustainable water resources management?

J1-3. We consider competition and operating profitability have inherent risks for sustainable (and fair) resource management. Regulation is essential.

K How far should leakage control be pursued?

K1-3. The concept of "economic level of leakage" is reasonable BUT best practice is likely to be at significantly lower levels than those developed by the water companies. Some government subsidy may be necessary to achieve better levels.

L Should water resources be developed locally?

L1-5. A national grid with fair distribution (no transfer charges) should be developed to achieve sustainable development. All users should be made aware of their impact. Local developments can still supplement such a process.

M How should we work out which water resource options are most acceptable?

M1. Monetary figures are not always feasible but some form of evaluation should always be applied.

M2. These techniques will assist towards better decision making and encourage sustainable development.