

**CONSULTATION PAPER**

**ENVIRONMENT AGENCY**

**FINANCIAL, MANAGEMENT AND POLICY REVIEW**

**COMMENTS FROM THE INSTITUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
SCIENCES**

The Institution has a working relationship with the Environment Agency through a number of different channels and thereby a reasonable knowledge and appreciation of some of its facets. We have a high regard for the work that it does and the functions it performs and our response to Question 1.1 would be that the Agency should certainly continue.

On many of the other issues raised the Institution does not have particular or informed views though our general perception is that the Agency operates reasonably well as it is. We have not, therefore, addressed each question in the consultation paper but have concentrated on one or two significant issues that we consider important and should be considered.

First, and most importantly, we consider that the Agency has a significant role to play in acting as a focus for and co-ordinating opinion and expertise on environmental matters nationally. Through the regional framework views and information can be obtained at local level from both authorities, organisations, business and the public. National and regional co-ordination with MAFF, DETR and other national bodies (such as English Nature, English Heritage, etc) can also be effected and a strong forum for discussion and debate created. (Relate to Question 1.2).

The above role can include consideration of sustainability and sustainable development issues and can be expressed additionally through educational and training programmes and policies. The role would be additional to the present regulatory duties and functions.

Leading on from the last point (relating to Questions 2.1 and 3.2) we feel that this advisory role should be separated, operationally, from regulatory functions and the present structure altered as necessary.

For operational clarity we also feel that one other area requires consideration (relating to Question 2.2). Flood defence accounts for almost half the annual income of the Agency and almost half the expenditure. Since last September it has featured prominently in the physical activities and priorities of the organisation. It would seem logical to create some clear separation between the flood defence operation and the other regulatory functions. It would be wrong to take the function away from the Agency in view of the co-ordination required with other water regulatory activities. However, a separately functioning division would provide a good working model.

R. Fuller  
IES  
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