

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE - RESOLVING THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

1. The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC

Increasing stress on European waters including excessive abstraction, discharges of hazardous substances, floods and droughts led to the implementation of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC

The Directive introduced a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater which is intended to prevent further deterioration of these water bodies as well as protecting and enhancing the status of aquatic ecosystems overall.

The purpose of the Directive is to be achieved by a new integrated water management approach with effective public participation leading to sustainable water use and good water status for all waters by 2015.

2. Duty on the Secretary of State -To protect, enhance and restore the river basins by a programme of coordinated measures for the whole of the RBD.

The Secretary of State must exercise his relevant functions 'so as to secure compliance with the Directive and each River Basin District that the achievement of its environmental objectives and in particular programme of measures, are coordinated for the whole of the RBD.

3. How is the UK doing overall and in particular the Thames River Basin?

Surface Water overall- Only 21.3% will achieve good quality status (ecological and chemical) by 2015.57% have applied for an Article 4.4 extension to achieve good water status by either 2021 or 2027. The Thames River Basin (surface water) only 0.7% will achieve good water status by 2015. 75% of the Thames River Basin is subject to an Article 4.4 extension for compliance by 2027 at latest.

In the EC report of the UK's implementation of the Water Framework Directive-River Basin Management Plans COM (2012) 670 it is stated at page 4 that '*the large uncertainties reported in relation to the status, the pressures and the effect of potential measures, despite the relatively high level of monitoring in the UK has been used to justify the inclusion of very few specific new measures*'.

From 2009, there will be a 2.6% increase of all surface bodies achieving good quality status by 2015 ((0.5% increase for the Thames River Basin). It is abundantly clear from the above that the UK's current approach to compliance with the WFD has failed.

A Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources COM (2012) 673

The Blueprint is the most up to date EC policy that concerns better implementation of the WFD including climate adaption. It advocates that member states should increase their policy integration at national level and make full use of RBMPs to require an integrated approach to water management areas such as agriculture, aquaculture, energy, transport and integrated disaster management (p.6). Green infrastructure and particularly natural water retention measures are indicated as being able to greatly contribute to limiting the negative effects of floods and droughts (p.13).

Why the Thames Tunnel Proposal is not a solution

The Thames tunnel proposal is not an integrated approach to water management. It will not address flooding, drought, air pollution, carbon reduction nor achieve good water status as properly defined by the WFD. It will not address biodiversity loss, sealing of land issues or fish kill from Mogden STW. Despite the recent upgrade of Mogden STW, it spilled in May because a spring tide prevented the STW working and there was a resulting substantial fish kill.

Integrated Water Resource Management which includes natural water retention measures has been shown to work in many cities worldwide with significantly better multi-environmental, social and economic-benefits for costs. There is no evidence to show that this approach could not work for London. With effective public involvement Integrated Water Resource Management would ensure earlier compliance with the WFD with immediate environmental benefits.