

Collaboratory on Sustainable Water Stewardship

Working Group on Finance, Regulation and Planning

Context

The Collaboratory on Sustainable Water Stewardship consists of three working groups under the guidance of a Steering Group chaired by Lord Selborne, Treasurer of the UK Government's All Party Parliamentary Water Group. One of these three working groups is concerned with regulation, planning and finance issues, the other two with behaviour change and water allocation respectively.

Objectives of the working group

The regulatory arena is already undergoing major changes in water stewardship, and more are promised in the government's White Paper on Water and the recent Review of Ofwat. The draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) addresses many planning issues relevant to safeguarding the quality of surface and groundwater as well as the efficient supply of water services. At present, planning for the effective use of ecosystems services for flood protection and carbon sequestration as well as for reducing water misuse is not well developed at the landscape scale. And there has been little discussion so far of effective means for financing catchment care also on a landscape scale.

The working group will bring together experts from the fields of regulation, planning and finance to complement the work of other interested groups and public bodies, to think 'out of the box' and propose innovative integrated solutions to the interconnections between finance, regulation and planning reform. It will begin its work with a detailed assessment of the gaps between existing practices and the requirements of integrated sustainable water care on a landscape scale, taking account of the role of ecosystem services in the changing contexts of financing, regulation and planning. The group hopes to provide a better understanding of the land-based assets relating to water management-related ecosystem services. It will also consider the scope for probabilistic approaches to comprehensive catchment care, the integration of the full water cycle, and the options for new forms of beneficiary payments whilst maintaining statutorily set water quality standards.

The group will explore a variety of options for joint financing of catchment based water stewardship, such as creative use of investment bonds, joint financing partnerships and catchment-based not-for-profit companies. This will require much thought and analysis and is an area where a clear new deliverables will be required. But for exciting new proposals to work, there will need to be sympathetic shifts in regulation and planning procedures.

Contact

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Anglian Water is proud to be a founding sponsor of CPSL's Collaboratory on Sustainable Water Stewardship.

