Oxford to Cambridge
Integrated Water Management Framework

# Maximising planning for water

# Reporting – key opportunities

The suggestions to address evidence gaps and barriers are based on conclusions from our consultant partners (Eunomia and LUC). These were reviewed by the Environment Agency's Oxford to Cambridge project team. These are initial ideas that could be expanded into a full research project.

## Key suggestions to shape further work to address evidence gaps and barriers

| Key evidence gaps and barriers | Suggestions to shape further work |
|---|---|
| The lack of best practice examples of planning policies on Integrated Water Management (IWM) and all the water disciplines available to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). | Explore ways to make good examples of planning policies and/or model policies that effectively address Integrated Water Management) IWM, and the 4 water disciplines (flood risk, water resources, water quality and environment), that are available to all LPAs.<br><br>Examples or model policies would need to consider the relationship between policy wording and effective implementation. As well as considering how local context and differences in environmental and socio-economic circumstances between LPA areas need to be reflected in policy. |
| The lack of best practice examples, at the site level, of effective IWM approaches for specific development types, making it difficult for LPAs to push for ambitious policy. | Research the site-level implementation of IWM approaches and their effectiveness in reducing flood risk, improving water quality and the environment, reducing water stress and managing surface water. This research could be focused on best practice IWM for different types of development, for example looking into brownfield regeneration approaches which produce the best outcomes for water. |
| The lack of awareness on the roles of different water related actors within a catchment, the different data they hold, and, how to integrate or utilise that data in the planning process to support an integrated CaBA. | Improve awareness of and provide information on<br><br>• who the relevant stakeholders are within catchments and what their role is with respect to water<br><br>• when and how to engage with different stakeholders during the planning process<br><br>• what evidence stakeholders hold or produce and where it can be accessed<br><br>• what role this evidence has in the plan making process |

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| The lack of understanding of the role and relevance to spatial planning of the various strategic water plans for example RWPRs, River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs), Drainage Water Management Plans (DWMPs), Local Flood Risk Management Strategies (LFRMS), Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) and Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). | LPAs expressed that whilst helpful in raising matters of regional or sub-regional significance with respect to water, the implications of these strategic water plans for local plans and planning policy were not fully understood. LPAs identified that some interventions and actions fall beyond the scope of planning, such as those of a behavioural nature. Furthermore, engaging in externally produced evidence studies can be challenging for LPAs due to:<br><br>• resource constraints leading to studies only being partially reviewed<br><br>• the reports being lengthy and technical<br><br>• the plans arriving too late or too early in the plan making cycle<br><br>• the changing context against which the study is prepared for example, legislative changes, as the local plan develops<br><br>Advice or guidance for LPAs to help explain how they should use strategic water plans, and the evidence they contain, to inform the preparation of policy and plans and to review planning proposals would help address this issue.<br><br>From the perspective of these strategic water plans, and the organisations responsible for them, mechanisms could usefully be explored on how they could be better designed to provide useful outputs for LPAs and how to overcome the challenges LPAs face in using them. This includes the challenges around the respective timings and processes for preparing them and how they could interact better with the planning process. In addition, how strategic water plans could better feed into one another and be more integrated in delivering IWM could be explored. |
| The lack of, or improvements needed in, cross-boundary collaboration between LPAs to deliver improvements for water and IWM. | Explore approaches to promote collaborative and integrated working between LPAs to deliver improvements for water and IWM. This could include exploring enablers and barriers where IWM plans and processes have been used between collections of LPAs. Advice or guidance for LPAs on how the existing duty to cooperate (and the alignment test due to replace it) should be used in dealing with cross-boundary water-related issues would be helpful in addressing this matter. |
| The lack of monitoring at the development project scale, including on water efficiency, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), greywater recycling and rainwater harvesting, to give LPAs more confidence that these are effective, and they have the evidence to demonstrate this. | Identify priorities, mechanisms and responsibilities to monitoring key water metrics at the development project scale. This could include for example, providing support to LPAs, developing national guidelines on water monitoring and enforcement responsibilities in the planning system, and, exploring the role of different organisations for example charities and citizen science in the collection and management of water-related data to help introduce greater capacity for monitoring. |
| The lack of data to justify including more stringent water efficiency targets within planning policy (beyond the Building Regulations) in the form national studies as well as national guidelines. | National or regional studies to gather evidence from monitoring water efficiency in developments could support LPAs in setting more stringent water efficiency standards. These could improve developers use of water efficient approaches due their financial and environmental benefits. Studies could explore whether setting standards for different development types and uses is suitable and beneficial for managing water stress and reducing costs.<br><br>The lack of templates and best practice examples and changing guidance at the national level means it is difficult for LPAs to achieve a prescriptive policy, whilst minimising the risk of abortive work.<br><br>Gathering water usage data from water companies throughout the life of a local plan would help understand how water use compares with water efficiency requirements in planning policy. While domestic water usage data can be anonymised, monitoring water usage in commercial development may be more complex due to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). |

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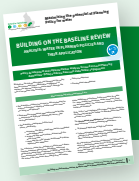
| The lack of quantitative data on groundwater flooding to inform planning decisions. | LPAs reported that they are often expected to fill data gaps through commissioning studies, however they are unable to do so due to resource constraints.<br><br>Explore how additional data can be collected on groundwater flooding. |
| The Planning for Water toolkit was developed with the case study LPAs within the Oxford to Cambridge Region. However, the toolkit is intended to be used by LPAs across England which may have a different set of barriers to and opportunities for IWM which have not been considered. | Identify whether gaps in planning for water significantly differ between LPAs which have different environmental and socio-economic characteristics. If necessary, this could be reflected in further revisions to the Planning for Water toolkit to make it more widely applicable.<br><br>Reviewing how LPAs are using the toolkit over time would help determine the toolkit's suitability for LPAs across geographical, environmental and socio-economic contexts. |
| The lack of views from other actors who are involved in and can influence the planning system, such as the Department for Levelling up Homes and Communities (DLUHC) and Planning Advisory Service (PAS), on the LPA Spheres of Influence project. | The findings of the current study are informed by engagement with LPAs in the Oxford to Cambridge Region and the Environment Agency. Therefore, the scope of this report is limited to a degree to one geographical region and does not consider the views of other actors who are involved in and can influence the planning system. It would be useful to build on the findings and extend engagement to involve more stakeholders, including DLUHC, the planning inspectorate and PAS which will have insight on the planning system on a national level. |
| The lack of data on the effectiveness of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) in improving water considerations during the planning process. | The scope of the study focuses on adopted and emerging local plans rather than SPDs. It would be useful to explore how SPDs address water issues and how they could be improved to better consider water and support the water-related ambitions of a local plan. Research could consider whether there is value in having water-focused SPDs and whether SPDs are an effective tool for strengthening water-related ambitions. |
| The lack of data on the effectiveness of neighbourhood planning in influencing water management, across the 4 water disciplines. | Neighbourhood plans were out of scope of this study. However, these plans have the potential to influence water management at a local level. It would be useful to explore the neighbourhood planning process with the aim of understanding<br><br>• how water is considered in neighbourhood plans and the process used for developing policies<br><br>• how communities are encouraged to develop policies for water and what the relationship is between adopted local plans and neighbourhood plans with respect to water<br><br>• what type of evidence is used to inform neighbourhood plans and how can communities help create key water evidence documents<br><br>• what role neighbourhood plans might have in monitoring planning policy performance |

# Document hierarchy – Project overview

## Stage 1

Policy baseline review

PDF



Building on the baseline review

Analysis: Water in planning policies and their application

PDF

## Stage 2

Planning and water toolkit

PDF

Development management checklist

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Instructional video

Policy case studies technical note

Pre-application guidance

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Policy development checklist

W

PDF

Conditions technical note

W

Written user guide

## Stage 3

Reporting – key recommendations

PDF

Reporting – key opportunities

PDF

## Engagement

Engagement

PDF

Engagement, survey approach and detailed summary of responses

PDF