

WATER MANAGEMENT ALLIANCE

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT POLICY

GOVERNANCE

Review date: September 2021

To be reviewed every 5 years

Next review date: September 2026

Reviewed by: WMA Consortium Management Committee

Adopted by:

Broads Internal Drainage Board
East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board
King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board
Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board
South Holland Internal Drainage Board
Waveney, Lower Yare and Lothingland Internal Drainage Board
Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

In order to deliver our water management aims we need to ensure we have stakeholder engagement objectives that support our work and those we work with. This policy identifies who we intend to engage with to deliver our aims, explains how we will go about developing stakeholder engagement objectives, sets out what our stakeholders can expect from us and explains how we will communicate with them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Water Management Alliance (WMA), on behalf of our member Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), has developed a strategic policy to consider our approach to engaging our partners, customers and stakeholders. In order to deliver our water management objectives, we need to ensure we have stakeholder engagement objectives that support our work and those we work with.
- 1.2. Our vision is to make each Member Board's Drainage District and water catchment area a safer place to live, work, learn and have fun, as a model of sustainable living in a high flood risk area. As a result, we need to interpret how we should engage others as we try to deliver our vision.

2. WHO WE SHOULD ENGAGE WITH TO DELIVER OUR AIMS

- 2.1. Considering our aims above we have undertaken a strategic review of our key stakeholders and they fall broadly into the following groups:
 - people and places at flood risk
 - those that support people and places that are at flood risk
 - influencers, policy and decision-makers
 - the public
- 2.2. We have developed stakeholder objectives for these groups to meet our business and customer needs.

3. DEVELOPING STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. We have considered our stakeholder groups and the different ways we may need to engage with them at a strategic level. We have, through situation analysis, considered the current strengths and weaknesses of our engagement approach and we have also presented some of the opportunities and threats to our current approach. In order to deliver our business objectives, we need to establish stakeholder engagement objectives to help us maximise our strengths and opportunities and overcome threats and weaknesses.
- 3.2. We will marry our stakeholder engagement approach to our business aims and develop strategic stakeholder engagement objectives that will underpin our business. To meet our aims, we need to tailor our engagement objectives accordingly.

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3.3. We have set out below how WMA will approach stakeholder engagement for each of our business aims. We have also considered what our customers can expect from us and how we will know if we have achieved our stakeholder engagement objectives.

3.4. We aim to:

1. *Reduce the flood risk to people, property, infrastructure and the natural environment by providing and maintaining technically, environmentally and economically sustainable flood and coastal defences within our hydraulic sub catchment areas.*

WMA will:

- (i) Ensure our stakeholders understand their flood risk and how we can help manage that risk. We will signpost advice from other Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs) and support groups to ensure our stakeholders understand how they can manage their own flood risk.
 - (ii) Communicate our role in managing flood risk to all existing stakeholders and undertake to broaden our communications approach to extend our engagement to new customers and partners.
 - (iii) Develop a strategic communications plan to target our engagement to ensure we understand our stakeholders needs and all our stakeholders are aware of our role and what we can offer.
 - (iv) Report to the IDB members and Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCCs) to inform them of our progress, highlight any successes or risks and seek their guidance and steer on future progress.
 - (v) Seek media opportunities to highlight flood risk issues to raise awareness for our customers and those at flood risk.
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2. *Become the delivery partner of choice for all flood risk, drainage and water level management services in our hydraulic sub catchments and coastal zones, by working closely with Lead Local Flood Authorities, the Environment Agency, Coastal Protection Authorities, and other stakeholders.*

WMA will:

- (i) Work with FRMAs to understand their needs through dedicated meetings with officers and managers to discuss our work programmes where we will seek collaborative working opportunities to deliver more for people and the environment.
- (ii) Work with existing and potential customers to deliver value for money and offer additional services as part of existing works and projects wherever possible.

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- (iii) Demonstrate our ability to be the delivery partner of choice through existing and new working arrangements and highlight our successes and good practice to our partners through reports, case studies and promotional materials.
 - (iv) Report to the IDB members and the RFCCs to share our successes and good practice.
 - (v) With ADA, seek ongoing support for our role in national policy and legislative discussions with Defra, other FRMAs and Government.
 - (vi) With ADA, identify opportunities for WMA to promote our work to existing and potential customers and partners alongside other IDB's nationally.
 - (vii) Seek proactive media opportunities to advertise our work and promote our projects in the local and national media and with industry and related publications.
3. *Enable and facilitate land use for residential, commercial, recreational and environmental purposes by guiding and regulating activities that would otherwise increase flood or coastal erosion risk.*

WMA will:

- (i) Work with Planning Authorities to improve the mechanism by which the IDBs are involved in reviewing new planning applications.
 - (ii) Develop standard paragraphs to support planning advice that reflects the WMA position to future developments in each IDB catchment.
 - (iii) Identify and engage with developers strategically and opportunistically to secure viable clay materials arising from building works for flood defence projects and reduce waste to landfill.
 - (iv) Support landowners and community groups wishing to undertake flood defence projects with technical advice and support for consents and licences.
4. *Nature, enhance and maintain the natural habitats and species, which exist in and alongside watercourses.*

WMA will:

- (i) Work to enhance our reputation as a trusted delivery body for environmental management and enhancement in all our routine works and capital schemes through regular programme meetings with Natural England and relevant environment organisations to discuss our programme. We will seek views and share our approach to ensure good environmental outcomes and strengthen our reputation as an environmental enabler.

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- (ii) Encourage good environmental governance and practice in all our works by communicating our Environmental Policy to all our contractors and ensuring our Standard Maintenance Operations instructions are available to all staff and operators.
- (iii) Engage with partners to develop projects and schemes that meet national and international environmental legislative requirements and deliver major environmental outcomes using a range of funding sources. Take part in meetings and discussions to identify projects and offer WMA support as a delivery partner and match-funder.
- (iv) Through existing river and estuary partnerships we will support landowners and community groups wishing to undertake environmental projects with technical advice and support for consents and licences.

4. WHAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS CAN EXPECT FROM US

4.1. Flood Risk Awareness and Policy.

- (i) Our customers can expect a professional service from an organisation that has a long history in flood and water management.
- (ii) Our stakeholders will understand their flood risk and how we and they can help manage that risk.
- (iii) Our stakeholders will have sufficient information to understand the role of IDBs and our communication materials will be accessible to existing and potential new customers and partners.
- (iv) Our Board members and the RFCCs will be informed of our progress and have sufficient information to advise and steer our work programmes.
- (v) Our Board members, the RFCCs and ADA will understand our work and any issues or opportunities for WMA so that they can represent our views at a national level.
- (vi) The media will be prepared for proactive publicity opportunities and will approach WMA for further stories and updates as and when appropriate.

4.2. Programme Delivery

- (i) FRMAs will understand our business and will hopefully seek collaborative working opportunities to deliver more for people and the environment.
- (ii) FRMAs will support ongoing funding of WMA from national and local government sources because they are confident in our ability to deliver value for taxpayers' money.
- (iii) Existing and potential customers will choose the WMA as their preferred delivery partner because we deliver value for money and offer additional services as part of existing works and projects.

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- (iv) Report to the IDB Boards and the RFCCs to share our successes and good practice.
- (v) Defra, other FRMAs and Government will be aware of WMA, understand impacts to our business from potential policy or legislative change and involve us in consultation.
- (vi) ADA will be able to fully promote our work to existing and potential customers and partners alongside other IDBs nationally.

4.3 Planning and Development

- (i) Planning Authorities will have a framework for working with IDB's when reviewing new planning applications and recognise the value of our involvement.
- (ii) Planners and developers will receive consistent advice from WMA regarding future developments in each IDB catchment.
- (iii) Developers will be aware of the opportunity to work with the WMA to share suitable building materials arising from building works for flood defence projects and reduce waste to landfill.
- (iv) Landowners and community groups will be aware of WMA and understand our ability to support partnership approaches to flood risk management. They will be able to seek technical support for consents and licences and receive consistent professional advice.
- (v) Natural England and other environmental organisations will trust WMA as a delivery body for environmental management and enhancement in all our routine works and capital schemes.
- (vi) Our contractors and operators will be informed of our environmental policy and practice and understand our expectations regarding environmental projects and outcomes.
- (vii) Our partners will view WMA as an organisation that understands partnership working and funding and will seek opportunities to work with us.

5. DELIVERING OUR STAKEHOLDER OBJECTIVES

- 5.1. WMA recognises that in order to engage our existing stakeholders, partners and customers, as well as to attract potential new ones we need to have a clear engagement plan.
- 5.2. We will develop a communications strategy for WMA which will meet the opportunities and threats noted above and deliver our stakeholder engagement objectives.
- 5.3. Our communications strategy will highlight existing and new opportunities for engaging and communicating with others. It will include timetables for action and act as an over-arching plan for individual stakeholder engagement approaches targeted at specific issues, projects or key stakeholders as and when there is a need.

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- 5.4. Our communications plan will need to be measurable and we will actively seek feedback from stakeholders to ensure we are meeting their needs as we aim to deliver our business objectives.
- 5.5. We will develop our plan by April 1st, 2023, and we will review it annually to ensure we are engaging appropriately and tailoring our approach accordingly.
- 5.6. Our Stakeholder Engagement Policy recognises that we do not have dedicated communications expertise. Instead, we will promote a culture of good engagement approaches across our staff and ensure all staff members are aware of our general approach to engagement as well as the specific needs of stakeholders associated with their role.
- 5.7. Internal engagement of staff to raise awareness of our communications approach will be part of our strategy. We will also share our objectives and policy with the IDB members to ensure we are being inclusive and seek their views on our approach. We will measure our engagement successes and report back to the IDB Boards for their information and advice.

6. REVIEW

- 6.1. This Stakeholder Engagement Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals, as stipulated on the front page.