



Channel Payments for Ecosystem Services European Regional Development Fund

CPES Case study: Portsmouth Water

Geographic scope report

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Introduction

Portsmouth Water's supply zone covers 868km² in an area between Fareham up to Eastleigh in the west, to Littlehampton in the east, and from the south coast up to the top of the South Downs. The area contains many rivers including the Meon, Alver, Wallington, Lavant (E.Hants), Ems and Lavant (W.Sussex). The area is predominantly agricultural but also contains significant urban areas along the coastal plain including Gosport, Portsmouth, Havant, Chichester, Fareham and Bognor Regis.

The water company supplies 316,000 properties, serving a 725,000 population. It does not directly supply businesses any longer, but still remains the wholesale supplier for business-supplied water. Portsmouth Water's water supply is derived from 85% groundwater, via boreholes and springs (Havant and Bedhampton Springs) and 15% of its water is abstracted from the River Itchen, outside the company's supply area.

The Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership (D&HCWP), set up between Portsmouth Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England in 2008, is currently the delivery mechanism through which catchment management efforts operate.

Within the company's area of supply and the D&HCWP area lies several nationally and internationally important wetland areas, the most notable of these are within Portsmouth, Langstone and Chichester Harbours; these are nationally important for a number of wetland bird species and also support areas of intertidal habitat and are rich in associated flora, such as Eel Grass.



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Local harbours and shorelines support a diversity of recreational activities, including sailing, other boating activity, swimming and fishing. A shellfish industry still exists, albeit affected by pollutants – particularly Faecal Indicator Organisms (FIO).

There is a specific focus on the 'priority catchments for catchment management' associated with the groundwater abstractions at Lovedean, Eastergate, Northbrook, Slindon, Funtington, Bedhampton Springs and Aldingbourne, which are designated by the Environment Agency as Safeguard Zones (nitrates). More specifically, the Eastergate group of boreholes and their catchments are the primary focus of future PES schemes.

Portsmouth Water's Supply Area

The following maps show Portsmouth Water's supply area; the supply area superimposed upon the Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership area and the focus area for the CPES project.



Figure 1 Portsmouth Water supply area

Overall Portsmouth Water operational area largely sits within the Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership area, as illustrated below in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Portsmouth Water supply area superimposed on the Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership area



Figure 3 shows the specific region of concern to Portsmouth Water: the Eastergate group of boreholes and their catchments.



Figure 3: Principal focus area: Eastergate, Westergate, Aldingbourne and Slindon



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Key stakeholder analysis

On a catchment-wide basis, stakeholders could be numerous and would be likely to change over time. Therefore, the below is limited to the key stakeholders who would directly influence any potential scheme. Other main stakeholders and the level of communication with them are listed in Appendix 1.

Portsmouth Water

The principal 'buyers' of a PES scheme will be Portsmouth Water, 'selling' to farmers - but any eventual scheme is technically open to other buyers and sellers, providing there is a 'product' or are 'products' that both are willing to trade. For the purposes here, only farmers will be considered. The relationship envisioned by Portsmouth Water between the company and local farmers is to support or subsidise cover crops, forestry, and other catchment interventions where it is practically and economically viable to do so.

Portsmouth Water's current strategy of reducing high nitrate in its raw water is via blending in service reservoirs of sources containing high nitrate with low nitrate sources. As a danger exists that levels of nitrate may rise in sources with low(er) nitrate, catchment management options are incorporated as they are calculated to be at least twice the cost-effectiveness as the end-of-pipe treatment of nitrate, i.e. the construction and the running of nitrate removal plants.

The specific benefits presented to Portsmouth Water are not based on cost alone. Others include reducing the risk of rising nitrate, particularly nitrate 'spikes' - thus protecting its sources, engagement and involvement/partnership with principal land users, reducing the likelihood of issues with other pollutants (e.g. pesticides), and perhaps the ability of more rain/water to be captured and held for public water supply and the environment, rather than running off.

The company has always strived to keep its water bills to the minimum. Ofwat, a principal regulator, also endeavours to keep water company charges to the minimum. More catchment management work in the future will be done by using customer-sourced income; Portsmouth Water needs to ensure that catchment management work is as cost effective as possible, therefore making its customers important stakeholders.

Farmers (and other land owners where appropriate)

Within the catchment, LPIS data Natural England suggests that there are over 500 farms. In practice, the actual number of active farmers may be as little as 150, owing to the high level of contract farming (e.g. by agricultural contractors or neighbouring farmers), and leasing of land to large agricultural concerns. On the Chichester Plain, numerous horticultural/glasshouse enterprises exist and there is a gradual growth in vineyards, albeit it from a small base. In past years, there has been an increasing conversion of agricultural land into horse pastures and associated equine activity, which is not governed by agricultural legislation.

Farmers would be the principal 'sellers' of a PES scheme by being supported or subsidised to undertake catchment interventions such as cover cropping, forestry and other measures where there would be little apparent or perceived economic benefit to do so.

The specific benefits to farmers are projected to be as follows:

- Protection and enhancement of soil as their principal resource, and its theoretical increase of productivity
- Recapture and reuse of nitrate that would otherwise be leached (lost), in theory reducing the use and cost of nitrate (and other inputs)
- Potential cash crops, where feasible
- Financial support (short or long term) from local water companies or other stakeholders and/or free advice and services to maximise their farming systems





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There are a number of dis-benefits/risks:

- Cost of cover crop seeds, planting and 'killing off cover crops', where subsidies do not exist that prove economically disadvantaged
- Cost and time needed to manage trees/woodland/forestry
- Difficulties of tillage etc with existing machinery (CCs); new machinery may be sought at (high) cost
- Potential issue of encouraging slugs or pathogens (e.g. club root in brassicas)
- Largest benefits of cover crops may take a number of years to become apparent; return from forestry will take a minimum of 5 years (e.g. short term coppice) and could take decades
- The vagaries of the weather and markets may make cover crop use/forestry planting economically marginal
- Forestry EIA regulations preventing land that is turned over to forestry being reverted back to arable at a later date

South Downs Farmers' Group

The SDFG is largely a farmer-led group who are seeking to farm more sustainably and make ecological improvements via catchment management approaches. Recognising Portsmouth Water's need to reduce nitrate in its drinking water sources, the SDFG are working with the water company to develop an ecosystems services approach via incentive based schemes, such as payment for taking cropped areas out of production, beyond the scope and abilities of Countryside Stewardship. Portsmouth Water Catchment Management see the SDFG as a principal means through which to test catchment interventions through CPES on top of developing other incentive-based methods outside the immediate CPES project.

The principal risk for both parties is that a workable, economically viable and sustainable programme for both may be difficult to formulate, given the vagaries of weather, fluctuation of markets and unknown outcomes of Brexit. Farmers could be left financially constrained and Portsmouth Water may lose a mechanism by which to reduce nitrate loss into groundwater.

Local Authorities

Key concern for LAs will be through their role as a lead flood authority. There are two Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMP) that cover Portsmouth Water's supply area: South East Hampshire Catchment Flood Management Plan and the Arun and Western Streams Catchment Flood Management Plan. The CFMPs were intended to assist spatial targeting of resources to areas where the risks are greatest.

For South East Hampshire, since 2001 flooding has only been seen to have been serious with a combination of prolonged rainfall, high water table and surface runoff (over saturated ground). Two villages (Hambledon and Walderton) were affected. Some fluvial flooding is possible, particularly in combination of high tides, but flooding events are generally rare.

As a rural catchment with highest flood risk limited to the lower part of the Rother catchment (around Pulborough and outside Portsmouth Water's supply area), flood risk may be perceived to be of less importance than elsewhere in the Arun and Western Streams catchment and the wider southern region. The Arun and Western Streams CFMP indicates that the main areas of flood risk (from fluvial, surface water, groundwater flooding and tidally influenced flooding) are located in Arundel, Littlehampton and Horsham, which are also all outside Portsmouth Water's supply area.

Benefits of catchment management to LAs would be:

- The reduction of rapid run-off from fields that are cover cropped
- Interception, storage (in the soil) and slow release of water via newly afforested areas



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Environment Agency and Natural England

The Environment Agency's Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy (CAMS) report sets out the water resources situation in the catchment.

The Environment Agency and Natural England state that water companies are required to have at least one bespoke Environmental Outcome Delivery Incentives (ODI) that relates to the environment.

The PR19 catchment management programme is driven by the statutory Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP), which comprise 11 groundwater safeguard zone schemes in the Portsmouth Water supply area.

Catchment management will inherently deliver wider environmental/biodiversity outcomes (i.e. beyond Portsmouth Water's own sites). For example, reducing nitrate could do the following: increase the number of SSSIs or hectares of land designated SSSI brought from unfavourable to unfavourable recovering condition (or from unfavourable recovering to favourable) due to water company actions or improving habitat resulting from water company actions.

Natural England's principal concerns lie with eutrophication of Portsmouth, Langstone and Chichester Harbours, the Hamble estuary and the Solent in general that affect both fauna and flora. The harbours are both nationally classified (e.g. SSSI) and internationally classified (i.e. RAMSAR) for key plant and bird species. A principal issue lies with excessive algal growth that smothers and detrimentally affects important feeding grounds on mudflats and sands.

South Downs National Park Authority

The South Downs National Park Authority is a key stakeholder within this catchment, with the national park occupying approximately 50% of the D&HCWP/PW area. It is involved with enhancing and preserving the ecology and function of the park, promoting public enjoyment of its assets and ensuring regulator aspects within the park (e.g. planning) are adhered to. It will be particularly interested in "greening" up farming to promote biodiversity and to help reduce diffuse pollution.

Hampshire County Council

The council still remain as significant land owners in East Hampshire with a number of tenanted farms and farm-based centres (i.e. Manor Farm Country Park and Staunton Country Park). Regular staff changes regarding farming operations have led to an inconsistency of approach but the council still strive for farm and land management improvements, particularly in view of improving the environment – but also for some regulatory aspects to help reduce diffuse and other pollution.

Others

Other stakeholders will have a direct interest, largely in environmental improvements, with listed groups comprising representatives from a range of organisations – Councils, EA, NE, IoW and Hants Wildlife Trust, Angling and Fishing groups, Groundworks, CLA and NFU. The list includes: East Hants Partnership Arun and Rother Rivers Trust Meon Valley Partnership



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Stakeholder perceptions

The below was directed to Colin Hedley, who leads two Farmer Cluster Groups, the South Downs Farmers' Group and the Adur and Arun Farmers' Group that reside in Portsmouth Water's and Southern Water's areas of operations respectively.

1. What do you feel is the level of perception with the farmers you deal with of the nitrate issue and the risks it conveys?

Although I don't think the majority of farmers are convinced that there is a clear health issue over nitrates they are fully aware that there is a legal limit which they must comply. The proximity of Langstone and Chichester harbours has helped some farmers focus on the issue; the growing trend to making environmental management a core part of the business and increased cost of nitrogenous fertiliser have also influenced general awareness and action. (Colin Hedley, edited pers comm, 2018)¹

2. What is their attitude regarding corrective measures, technical solutions and best practice?

I think the farmers do have a high level of knowledge and positive attitude towards introducing steps to reduce diffuse pollution of nitrates. The majority are open to introducing land management options, whether rotational or possibly permanent, to the farm but need to be confident that these will be well rewarded and not expose the farm to excessive bureaucracy. All are open to reducing nitrate losses as part of farm management and some farmers in particular are very interested in using the latest research and technology to reduce variable costs and also the farm's impact on the wider environment. (Colin Hedley, edited pers comm 2018)

Existing regulatory framework

Water company regulation

Portsmouth Water is a supply-only water company; it is not involved with waste water, which either enters sewers operated by Southern Water or disposed in septic tanks and cess pits. The water industry is governed by the following regulatory bodies (with kind thanks to Southern Water for the replication of much of their tables):

Regulatory Body	Key responsibilities				
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Sets the overall water and sewerage policy framework in England.				
European Union	Sets European water, wastewater and environmental standards.				
Ofwat	The economic regulator of the water and sewerage sectors.				
Environment Agency	The environmental regulator of the water and sewerage sector in England. They are the principal adviser to the government on the environment, and the leading public body protecting and improving the environment of England. They work in partnership with a range of other organisations.				
Drinking Water Inspectorate	The drinking water quality regulator. They check that the water companies in England and Wales supply water that is safe to drink and meets the standards set in the Water Quality Regulations.				

¹ Colin Hedley is both a farmer and coordinator of two farmer-led groups: the South Downs Farmers' Group is currently working with Portsmouth Water's Catchment Management programme





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Consumer Council for Water	They represent consumers within the water and sewerage sectors. They
	also investigate consumer complaints that have not been satisfactorily
	resolved by the water companies.
Natural England	The government's advisor on the natural environment. They provide
	practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's
	natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Their purpose is to protect and
	improve England's natural environment and encourage people to enjoy and
	get involved in their surroundings.

Agricultural regulation (Farmers and Landowners)

The following regulatory bodies directly affect and govern farming in England and Wales. Post Brexit, it is assumed that EU legislation will be largely be adopted into UK legislation.

Regulatory Body	Key responsibilities
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	Sets the overall agricultural policy framework in England.
European Union	Sets European waste and environmental standards in Europe.
Environment Agency	The environmental regulator of the agricultural sector in England. They are
	the principal adviser to the government on the environment, and the
	leading public body protecting and improving the environment of England.
	They work in partnership with a range of other organisations.
Rural Payment Agency	Responsible for provision and administration of subsidy payments from the
	European common Agricultural Policy to farmers and land-owners. Also
	control the payments for Stewardship and Catchment Sensitive Farming.
Natural England	The government's advisor on the natural environment. They provide
	practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's
	natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Their purpose is to protect and
	improve England's natural environment and encourage people to enjoy and
	get involved in their surroundings.

SWOT of current schemes, regulations and current pressures

	Types	Strengths	Weakness	Opportunities	Threats
Nitrates Directive – Surface and groundwater NVZs present	Regulation	-Targeted at priority catchments -Much improves nutrient management	-Measures aren't appropriate for all farming scenarios -Already minimal inspection regime by multiple agencies lacking in coordination -Doesn't consider P fully	weaknesses	-Brexit related changes to agricultural policy -Increase in extreme storm events due to climate change could mask water quality improvements
Catchment Sensitive Farming	Advice	-Good level of engagement -EA report sediment	-Optimal targeting of grants/advice hindered by data deficiencies,	-Continued and closer work with CSF -Cover areas that PW will not cover,	-Reducing investment by Govt/Defra for both EA and NE/CSF





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Concernation	Degulation	catchments -Site specific measures and advice -High level of funding -Collaboration with catchment partnerships	severity of water quality problems, and limits to the time that advisors can spend visiting farms -Conflicting advice from different advisors leads to mixed messages -Difficult to 'prove' some measures work, e.g. for nitrate, especially regarding poor baseline data and owing to various weaknesses & inaccuracies of CSF Reporter (database)	great catchment- wide benefits	re catchment measures -Increase in extreme storm events due to climate change could mask water quality improvements -Continuous changes in on-the-ground staff reducing local knowledge -Change in farmer attitudes -Uncertainty from Brexit
Conservation designations – SACs, SPAs and SSSIs present	Regulation	-High levels of protection for SACs and SPAs - Restrictions on damaging activities	-Lack of management led to large number SSSIs in unfavourable condition	-Opportunity to reform post Brexit to address weaknesses	-Brexit related changes to agricultural policy -Brexit related changes to conservation policy - Large areas of new housing or other land use may reduce ecosystem function of protected and other areas
South Downs National Park	Regulation	-Provides powerful restrictions on new developments -Involvement in catchment partnerships -High interest in water quality issues	more holistic catchment view and proactive with	involved with CSF and Partnerships to increase coverage of advice and services	-Government weakening legislation that counters provision of Ecosystems Services (e.g. increased housing in the NP)
Countryside Stewardship	Incentives	-Some incentives for uptake of measures	those measures with the greatest potential to deliver soil and water protection outcomes -Regional priority statements	environmental issues -Increased need to consider economics	-Brexit related changes to agricultural policy -Increase in extreme storm event due to climate change could mask water quality improvements





			quality protection as	demand	
				Stewardship	
			to 'lock' environmental improvements into the landscape		
			-Bad press/experiences reduces interest		
Catchment Partnerships	Voluntary	of a wide range of stakeholders - Good amount of local knowledge relating to diffuse pollution -Highly proactive -Site specific measures and advice	-Takes time to gather momentum, e.g. to acquire enough funds to make changes that result in a measurable water quality outcome -Difficult to sustain momentum -Difficult to 'prove' some measures work, e.g. for nitrate -Self interest may reduce greater catchment benefits via partnerships	and farmer awareness of water	-Change in farmer attitudes away from environmental issues
Rivers Trusts	Voluntary	of a wide range of stakeholders -Good amount of local knowledge relating to diffuse	acquire enough funds to make changes that result in a	and farmer awareness of water	-Change in farmer attitudes away from environmental issues
Water Framework Directive	Regulation	across member states -Provides targets for ecological quality -Stakeholder participation	-Socio-ecological construct -Individual catchment response to management not adequately accounted for -Basic measures rarely adequate to achieve good status -Over optimistic goals -Low sampling frequencies bring		-Brexit related changes to agricultural policy -Increase in extreme storm events due to climate change could mask water quality improvements





		observational uncertainty		
Drinking Water Safeguard zones, Drinking Water protected Areas and Source Protection Zones	restrictions and conditions have direct effects on water quantity	DWSZ are costly -Often only established for abstractions	opportunities with CSF and CSF	-Government reducing funding for regulators to be able to do their work, including (joint) farm visits
	within short-term	water quantities or population served	Zones.	

Cost of inaction

AMEC Foster Wheeler's report, *Nitrate Measures for Portsmouth Water PWS: Cost Effectiveness Assessment Report* assessed non catchment-based and catchment-based options and their associated costs. This included avoided costs of treatment, environmental and societal benefits of measures and also considered the wider benefits of measures.

As a principal concern for Portsmouth Water, the cost of inaction has been projected as the following:

- Shutdown of Eastergate pumping station
- Impact on resilience of public water supply
- With the continued nitrate trend, the Littleheath blending reservoir (supplied by the Eastergate group of boreholes) would fail in 2040, thus forcing the construction of a nitrate treatment plant (see Economic Impact, below).
- Other sources are deemed to be of less risk, owing to the greater (economic) ability to blend with a wider range of sources.

The cost of inaction for the greater environment would likely result in no appreciable reduction in nitrate (and other diffuse pollutant) loads in near-shore environments, including estuaries – and possible gradual increase followed by decline, as described by the nitrate modelling as a bulge of historically applied/leached nitrate moves through the chalk matrix. Therefore, eutrophic conditions in harbours and near shore environments would prevail, but this is likely to happen anyway – as it has been estimated that two thirds of the nitrate that enters harbours and other protected areas is resident in the Solent and comes in with the tide.

Economic impact of intervention (i.e. to stakeholders in general)

Although there would be a cost involved to Portsmouth Water for catchment management work, the overall cost has been calculated as significantly less than an engineering solution. The report states that *"in most catchments the avoided costs of treatment installation outweigh that of catchment management measures"*. However, *"in Slindon, Westergate and West Meon, the estimated cost (low) of CAPEX to install treatment is less than the cost of measures."* Nevertheless, this cost does not consider the price of the wider environmental and societal benefits of the measures.

- Catchment management in the Eastergate and Slindon catchments until 2075 estimated at £3.3M (to sustain blending at Littleheath)
- The alternative is 1 nitrate removal plant estimated at £2M capex, and £110,000/a opex therefore ~£8M until 2075

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Economic analysis (by AMEC) identifies several catchment measures that can be implemented to deliver cost effective mitigation for nitrates in groundwater— therefore trials will be developed through CPES. The AMEC report includes a qualitative assessment of wider ecosystem services benefits associated with woodland creation and improved soil management. These relate to:

- Provisioning services benefits in the form of goods or products (e.g. crops, timber etc);
- **Regulating services** benefits through the control of natural processes such as water quality and flows, pollination, climate regulation and erosion control;
- Cultural services non-material benefits such as recreation, spiritual values and aesthetic enjoyment; and,
- **Supporting services** natural processes that maintain the production of all other ecosystem services such as habitat provision, nutrient cycling, soil formation etc.

The most effective mitigation practices for each subsection of 'service' were listed with a description of that benefit (e.g. 'storage and retention of water for domestic, industrial and agricultural use by current and future generations') provided. Full details can be seen in Appendix D in *Nitrate Measures for Portsmouth Water PWS: Cost Effectiveness Assessment Report*.

The Portsmouth Water Catchment Management team commissioned a contractor to construct a Habitat Connectivity map (Figure 4) to highlight target areas that would produce the most effective gains in habitat creation and/or maintenance. The map in essence shows good existing connectivity in green – to poor connectivity in red. The map helps to position catchment measures to avoid damaging areas with good connectivity but target those that have poor connectivity.

Figure 4: Habitat connectivity in the Portsmouth Water/Downs & Harbours area





Appendix 1 : Summary of stakeholders and interest level

Engagement Approach	Stakeholders	Communication objectives	Communication methods	Responsibility	Timing and frequency of communications
	Agronomists	Enable them to be informed intermediaries between farmers/ SWS	Workshops, 1:1, published material, website, phone calls, emails, newsletter, farm walks/demos		Milestones, monthly
	ARRT	Enable them to be informed intermediaries between farmers/ SWS	As above	PW – Strategic Environment Panel & Sussex stakeholder Panel comms	As needed/milestones
	Environment Agency	Ensure objectives meet expectations- share of data	As above	PW – Senior management meetings with regulators and key stakeholder meetings	
	DWI	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		
	Land Agents	Buy in and support	As above		
	NFU	Enable them to be informed intermediaries between farmers/ SWS	As above		
	Natural England/CSF	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		
	Ofwat	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		
	Other farmers (in SWS catchment areas)	Buy in and participation in the scheme	As above		
ţ	Rother Valley Farmers' Group	Buy in and participation in the scheme	As above		
Manage - regular contact	South Downs National Park Authority	Ensure objectives meet expectations- share of data	As above		
ge - reg	Environment Agency	Ensure objectives meet expectations- share of data	As above		
Mana	Sussex/Hants-IoW Wildlife Trusts	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		



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Engagement Approach	Stakeholders	Communication objectives	Communication methods	Responsibility	Timing and frequency of communications
	CLA	Ensure objectives meet expectations	Workshops, 1:1, published material, website, newsletter		
	Defra	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		
_	Rural Payments Agency	Enable them to be informed intermediaries between farmers/ SWS	As above		
Manage - when needed	West Sussex co- operative	Enable them to be informed intermediaries between farmers/ SWS	As above		
ge - wh	West Sussex County Council	Buy in and support	As above		
Manag	WWF	Ensure objectives meet expectations	As above		
	General public		As above		
	Hampshire County Council		As above		
	Southern Water CCG		As above		
	RSPB		As above		
	Southern IFCA		As above		
	Sussex IFCA		As above		

ingagement Approach	Stakeholders	Communication objectives	Communication methods	Responsibility	Timing and frequency of communications
		Inform projects aims and objectives and invitation to support/participate(?)		PW/ SDNPA, UoC , EA	Start up and milestones
	Horsham District Council		As above		
	National Flood Forum		As above		
5	Sussex Chamber of Commerce		As above		



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Er	igagement Approach	Stakeholderc		Communication methods	Responsibility	Timing and frequency of communications
			Inform projects aims and objectives and invitation to support/ participate(?)			Start up and milestones
		Local MPs		As above		
		MEPs		As above		
		Parish Councillors		As above		
		Water UK/ other water Companies		As above		
	U	West Sussex Growers		As above		



