

Summary of English Nature's response to the Consumer Council for Water's consultation on its Draft Forward Work Programme.

English Nature has had a close working relationship with Water Voice in the past and, as Natural England, it hopes to build on this relationship, reflecting its joint new responsibilities, in the future.

English Nature found the draft forward work programme very clear, setting out the Consumer Council for Water's main priorities, which reflect many of the shorter and longer term interests of the water consumer. English Nature support especially the proposal to develop an education programme to highlight to consumers the value of water, and the proposals to work with Water Companies on demand management and with planners on the implications of development plans.

English Nature notes objective (Section 5 – “Working with Others”) to work with Natural England to raise awareness of the human issues that surround environmental protection and improvement. English Nature is working closely with the Environment Agency to identify the environmental requirements for water availability, and especially to meet the requirements for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Natura 2000 sites (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives) which are most important sites for wildlife in England. English Nature would welcome closer working with CCWater on this issue, to share data and condition assessments, and to explain how it seeks to achieve favourable condition of these sites and ensure their long-term sustainable functioning in the context of the reality of climate change. On this basis English Nature would like to work with CCWater and the Environment Agency in examining the costs and benefits of proposed changes to abstraction under your “water on tap” priority work area.

English Nature believes that the forward work programme would benefit from more specific reference to CCWater's sustainable development duty, how it intends to develop an understanding of the role in sustainable development and how CCWater intends to take this forward both more generally and specifically with regard to the natural environment and future generations. The joint survey work carried out by regulators and Water Voice during PR04 (which, incidentally, English Nature hope can be repeated as a joint exercise under PR09) identified many of the priorities for consumers which is referred to in the draft forward programme. However, environmental protection was also high among consumer priorities. English Nature would welcome stronger recognition of CCWater's role in representing the broader interests of consumers, especially as beneficiaries from the environmental improvements arising from water company investment in water treatments, and would be happy to work with CCWater in raising awareness of such benefits. English Nature would also welcome more informed and stronger interventions from CCWater at a policy level (e.g. in relation to diffuse pollution from agriculture). English Nature believes that more sustainable approaches to achieving high standards for both drinking and environmental water quality, such as that funded under AMP4 for United Utilities, should be more widely developed and adopted. CCWater has an important role in promoting such approaches for the benefit of sustainable

development and for the long-term benefit of consumers, and recognition of this in the forward programme would be welcomed.

English Nature hopes to be able to develop these areas of shared interest with CCWater as the structure of Natural England develops

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