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Evaluation of the Catchment Based Approach: Phase 2

Final report: WT1559

Produced: March 2015

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A report of research carried out by CASCADE Consulting, on behalf of the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs

Research contractor: CASCADE Consulting in association with Collingwood Environmental Planning, eftec and YJRees Consulting

Authors: Yvonne Rees, David Kingsley-Rowe, Phillip Cryle, and Dr Kieran Conlan

Publishing organisation

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Flood Risk Management Division,
Nobel House,
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

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SUMMARY

In 2013, following a 2-year pilot phase, the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) was widely adopted across 93 catchments in England. This report provides an overview of what is being achieved¹ based on a survey of the partnerships in July/August 2014.

Catchment partnerships are working effectively, performing well against success measures in the 2013 Policy Framework Document and delivering additional value as a mechanism for efficient and effective catchment-level engagement, as well as securing funding from other sources² (leveraging 3-8 times Defra's investment). As would be expected, new partnerships have achieved less than partnerships existing pre-2013 but are progressing quickly, particularly in terms of engagement. More mature partnerships have a stronger focus on practical environmental work, showing that continued commitment is enabling partnerships to progress from 'talking' to 'doing'. Over 90% of respondents expect their partnership to deliver longer-term environmental benefits. At present, these benefits are difficult to assess, partly because the environment takes time to respond and there are inherent difficulties in attributing benefits to shared actions.

Representation on partnerships continues to develop, as partnerships seeking wider involvement particularly from landowners, local government and businesses. Relationships between partnerships have developed well with the Environment Agency, with most, but not all, confident they will contribute to river basin planning. Most partnerships do not yet have working relationships with other local initiatives, such as Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs), or Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs), are unclear how to link to them and think it unlikely they will merge due to differences in scope, scale and ways of working.

Overall, we would conclude that CaBA continues to provide value in line with the original policy framework as an essential engagement and delivery service which Defra should reasonably consider paying for (particularly since most partnerships are unlikely to be viable without Defra funding after March 2015) and confidence that CaBA will deliver long-term environmental benefits remains generally high. We therefore recommend that Defra continues to fund catchment partnerships, at least in the short term, and provides clarity on the

¹ Results are based on >450 responses, from a range of organisations, across 100 of the 106 catchment partnerships. Situations in catchments vary, and feedback is largely from those with a role in CaBA,

² Please note that for the purposes of this report other funds is taken to include in-kind support

funding position as early as possible.

Partnerships could be further enhanced by:

1. Clarifying, and publicising, the role of partnerships, particularly in relation to:
 - the contribution partnerships could make to the next rounds of river basin planning, and the form these contributions could take to best influence River Basin Management Plans and make them locally appropriate;
 - suggested partners and best practice for working more closely with other partnerships and local fora such as LNPs, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), NIAs and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs), and between planning regimes to support closer working links and help bring different planning systems and plans together in a synergistic way.
2. Further capacity building around:
 - engaging land owners, local authorities, business and local fora, to help partnership decisions be more 'representative of all views in the catchment';
 - business planning and gaining funding from alternative sources including guidance on how to find synergies between CaBA objectives and the objectives of others delivering and funding work locally to enable additional joint action and external investment to be leveraged.
3. Developing a clear and agreed approach of how benefits should be assessed and reported by March 2015 and for the longer-term, to manage expectations, clarify requirements, and enhance assessment, of value for money.

A further point for consideration is that Defra, together with the EA and CSG, should build on the vision for CaBA set out in the Policy Framework by developing a benefits realisation plan for the next 5-10 years. This should clarify: what partnerships are expected to achieve, their status and relationships to others; and how they will be funded and evaluated. The plan should: be developed with those leading on other local initiatives to present a clear picture of linkages; consider issues around catchment partnership

legitimacy and explore funding options.

The final point for consideration is that Defra, CSG and the EA clarify responsibilities for working strategically with partnerships to help ensure that their potential benefit is realised in full. It may be worth considering how the CSG could be further developed, for example, whether going forward, a larger 'unit' is needed rather than an advisory group of experts.

Of the 23 'Key Points for Consideration' proposed, 7 regarding funding and self-evaluation were highlighted as a priority.



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1 Introduction

Defra is leading the development of a new “Catchment-based Approach” (CaBA) to improve the water environment through catchment-level engagement and planning. Phase 1, a pilot phase, was launched in 2011/2012 to develop an understanding of how CaBA could work in practice and was evaluated to identify lessons to inform Defra’s policy framework for wider adoption from 2013. Phase 2, wider adoption of the CaBA, is ongoing, with Defra providing funding and support to 106 catchment partnerships³ in England (including cross-border partnerships with Wales).

A team, led by Cascade Consulting, has been asked to evaluate the wider adoption of CaBA, through two short surveys in summer 2014 and spring 2015 and further focused investigations in areas requiring deeper understanding. The surveys will answer key policy questions identified by Defra, the Environment Agency (EA) and the Catchment Support Group (CSG).

The following sections contain: an outline of the approach to the first survey, response levels and follow-up action; a summary of responses, using the policy questions as a framework (see Figure 1); and conclusions and key points for consideration. Details of the results are in Appendix A, a copy of the survey in Appendix B and good practice examples in Appendix C. The report is an interim evaluation, that will be further developed with the second survey in Spring 2015.

³ Allocated funding by partnership 04/07/2014

Figure 1: Policy Questions forming the basis for the CaBA evaluation



2 The Survey and Follow-up Work

The primary source of evidence was an on-line survey, which ran from 18/07/2014 until 21/08/2014 (Appendix A provides a copy). Responses were sought from the following representatives in all catchments:

1. Catchment partnership hosts/lead organisations⁴.
2. Representatives from agencies with statutory responsibilities related to protecting the water environment (namely, the EA, Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) Local Authority (s), Water Companies, and Natural England).
3. Representatives of regional/local arenas such as River Basin District Liaison Panels (RBDLP), Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs), Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) and Nature Improvement Areas (NIA).
4. Other representatives, selected by partnership hosts to provide a range of views reflecting the type of catchment and local land ownership.

The survey was designed to produce semi-quantitative results. Comparative analysis was undertaken to understand differences in response depending on two factors:

- The maturity of the catchment partnership. Results were compared for new partnerships (those indicating they ‘started’ after 2013⁵) and the more mature partnerships (those indicating they ‘started’ before 2013). As in the phase 1 evaluation, the question of ‘how long has the partnership been running’ often seemed hard to determine⁶.
- The type of respondent, in particular their organisation, role in the catchment partnership and role in other regional/local forums. Being able to breakdown responses by these categories was particularly important, as the evidence is opinion-based, in understanding potential bias. Where respondents did not provide this information, responses were not included in the comparative assessment.

⁴ This included all joint hosts, since around 40% of partnerships are registered as jointly hosted.

⁵ 2013 was chosen as the cut-off date as this was the year the policy framework was published and Defra funding for the phase 2 began.

⁶ In 38 partnerships, more than one person answered this question (although it was in the host section), and nine of these had conflicting responses as to the year the partnership “started”, which have also been removed from comparative analysis.

Over 450 responses were received, providing a well-balanced coverage of 100 out of the 106 catchment partnerships⁷ (see Figure 2). There was also a good spread of responses in terms of partnership maturity, organisations, roles in the partnership and representation from other regional/local forums (Figure 3). The results are collated across all responses but ‘drill down’ into these factors, where the results showed interesting differences. Full details are given in Appendix B.

Figure 2: Respondents per catchment⁸

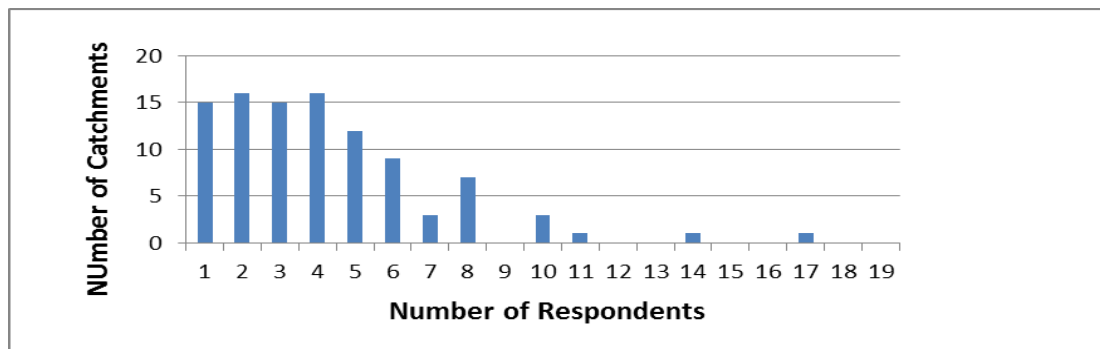
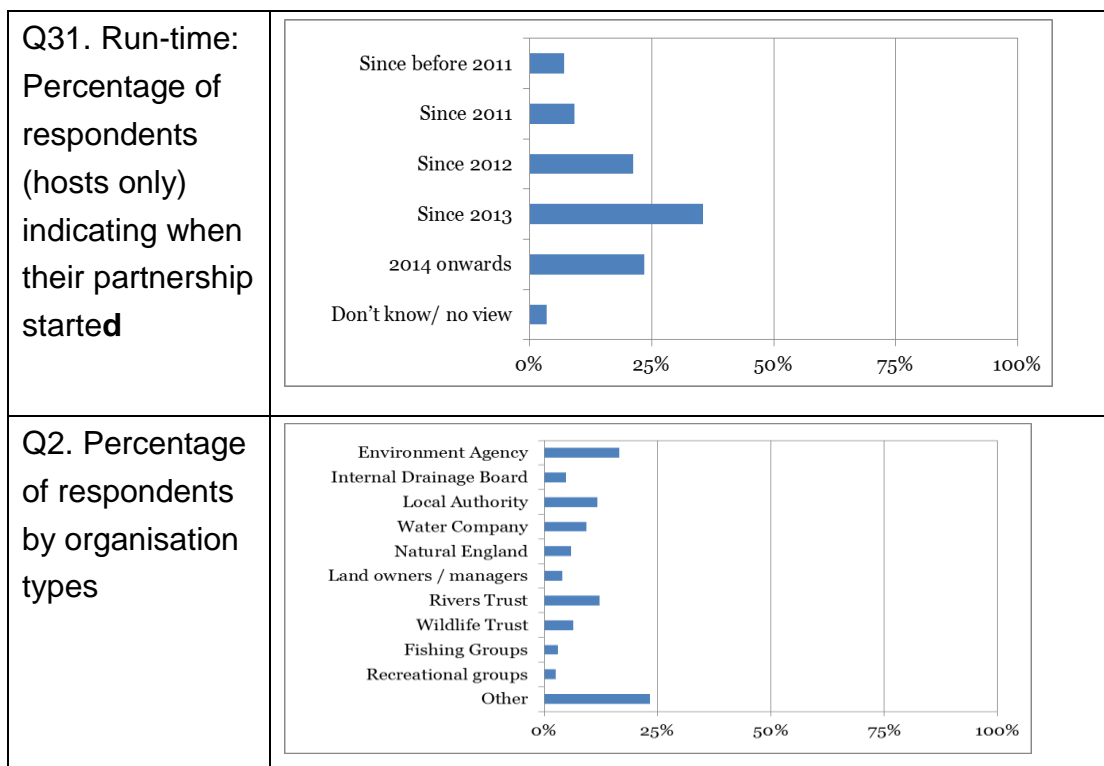
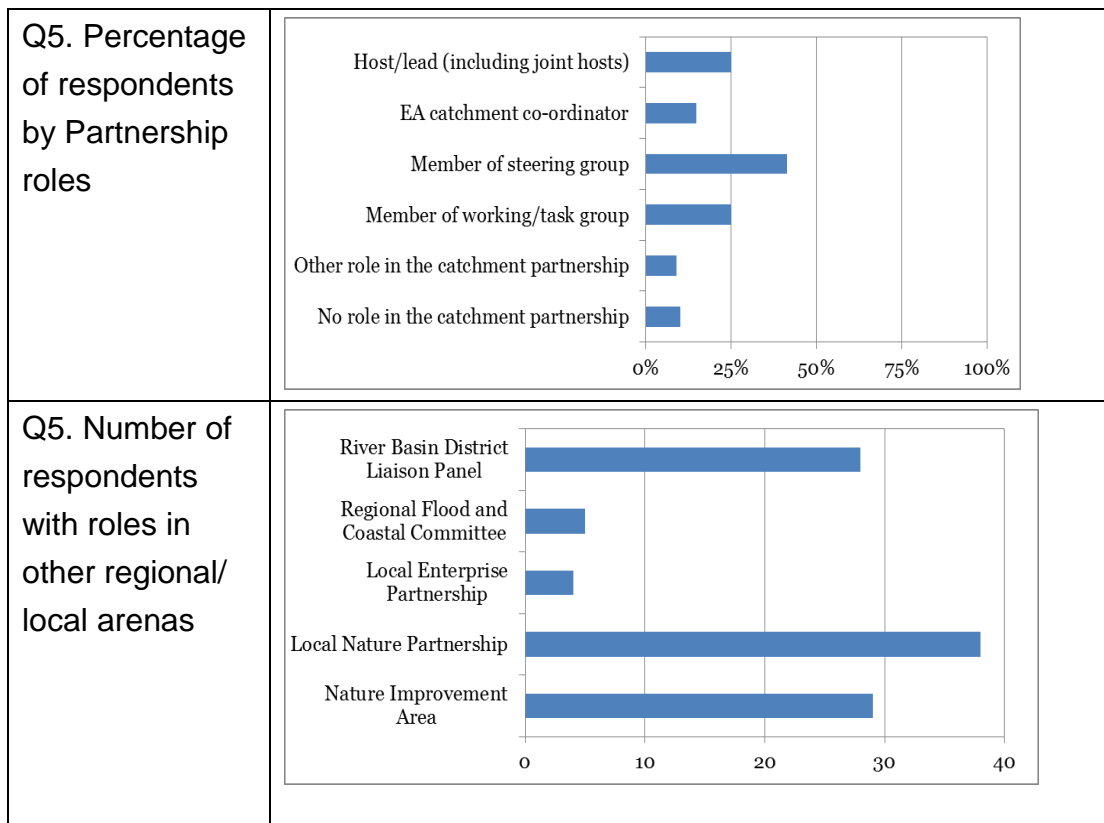


Figure 3: The Catchment Partnerships



⁷ No information was received from the following catchments: London - Lower Lee North; Severn Vale; Tame Anker and Mease - Lower Tame in North Warwickshire and Tamworth; Upper Lea (Hertfordshire); Waver, Wampool; West Cornwall and the Fal

⁸ The partnerships with the highest number of respondents were Stour (17); Cuckmere & Pevensy Levels (13); Arun & Western Streams (10); Test & Itchen (10); and the Wear (10)



Following an initial analysis of results, follow up work was undertaken to:

- Contact all respondents indicating ‘they had delivered physical improvements and could provide quantifiable evidence of the associated costs and benefits’ were contacted to obtain details on quantified benefit where available (see Section 3.5 on value for money).
- Contact a selection of respondents where partnerships indicated good practice in key areas but where typically less progress was being made in achieving outcomes in order to develop case-studies of, and tips for, good practice (see Appendix C).
- Contact a selection of respondents holding different views to the majority around key areas of interest, to understand their views, potential barriers to progress and find ways, if possible to overcome these (feedback is provided in relevant sections of the text).

In total 71 emails were sent out to respondents seeking further information (39 seeking cost benefit information and 32 inviting inputs on good practice or clarification of response). All requests were followed up twice to achieve a reasonable response rate given the short time available which resulted in 15



interviews being conducted and 28 detailed email responses being received.

3 Findings

3.1 How are partnerships working in the catchment?

3.1.1 Activities

1. Although the majority of catchment partnerships focus on water quality⁹ and/or freshwater biodiversity (>90%), many also address water resources and flood risk (>70%) with about a third indicating these were a 'main focus'. Terrestrial biodiversity and climate change have at least some focus in c.70% and c.50% of partnerships. The partnerships view water resources as much less of a focus if the EA coordinator responses are removed and c.25% of NGO respondents (Wildlife Trusts, Rivers Trusts, RSPB, other than hosts) see water resources as little or no focus. This is far less than for water (95%) and also NGO respondents consider them less of a focus than other areas (Q6).
2. Catchment partnerships are generally (>80%) clear about the purpose of the partnership and how to work with the EA locally. But 40-60% indicate they require clearer consistent guidance on the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in CaBA, how to work with other local partnerships and what is expected of them concerning funding post March 2015 (Q11). Overall NGOs seem least positive about the clarity around partnership working in the catchment. For example, no NGO respondents felt they were clear about what is expected regarding seeking funding post March 2015. Though there is generally very little difference between the responses for the more mature (existing prior to 2013) and new partnerships (starting 2013 onwards), interestingly the new partnerships are marginally clearer about what is expected of them regarding funding post March 2015 than the more mature partnerships.
3. There is clear evidence to show that the partnerships are delivering practical environmental work (see Sections 3.2 and 3.5). Further analysis by age of partnership showed that the more mature partnerships spend, on average, 2.7 times more than newer partnerships on delivering practical environmental work. In addition, whilst the total spend on partnership development is higher for the more mature partnerships, the proportion of Defra funding within this actually decreases slightly. Newer partnerships also use more funding to co-ordinate activities than the more

⁹ Only 8 respondents in total, out of the 384 who answered this question felt there was little or no focus on water quality.

mature partnerships do.

4. Most respondents confirmed that their partnership has set up a steering group or alternative decision making body (c75%) and held their first meeting with all partners invited (>80%; Q22). This is true even for partnerships started in 2013 and 2014 and might indicate that lessons from the pilot phase have been well shared with new partnerships, and/or reflect that the more mature partnerships have included new members on their steering groups based on their experiences from the pilot phase which had not yet met all together.
5. The most common members of partnership steering groups are the EA, Wildlife Trusts, Water Companies, Local Authorities and Rivers Trusts. Natural England, land-owners/ managers and fishing groups are represented on 50-60% of steering groups (Q12). Around 60% of respondents felt that most of the right organisations were involved but only 12% felt all of the right organisations were involved at the right level. A significant number of EA coordinators (28%) and Hosts (25%) responded that 'only a few of the right organisations are involved in the partnership'. This is also an area where there is a clear difference between the more mature and new partnerships (43 compared to 18).
6. As with phase 1, landowners / managers, local government and business are the three key stakeholder groups that were identified as needing to be more involved in the partnership (Q14). These three were overwhelmingly identified as the important groups and c.36% of respondents felt that land owners / managers were the top priority. This shows that the partnerships feel clear on where they need to engage more effectively in order to deliver their objectives. Experiences on how some partnerships have been able to work more closely with these groups have been shared in Appendix C.
7. Most partnerships (c 55%) have agreed the key pressures in the catchment. Fewer partnerships have appraised options for improvement (c.30%), and developed a catchment plan setting out priorities (c.30%) and actions (c.25%). The more mature partnerships are slightly more advanced (by c.10%) on these activities than new ones. Few respondents indicated they had developed a business plan in their partnership but c50% intend to by the end of March 2015. Further contact indicated that some had been 'overly optimistic' or confused a catchment plan with a

business plan (Q22). Experience on developing a business plan from one partnership is shared in Appendix C.

3.1.2 Relationships

1. Overall 75% of respondents' felt that their partnership is working effectively together and the majority (60-75%) agreed decisions in their partnership were: made transparently, evidence-based, made with clarity; and were not overly influenced by one or more party with vested interests. Comparison based on partnership maturity shows that respondents feel the more mature partnerships are applying collaborative working principles more widely (by c20%) showing how collaborative working has developed with time.
2. Interestingly, only around 45% of respondents overall (67% and 39% for more mature and newer partnerships respectively) agreed that decisions were 'representative of all views in the catchment' (c. 30% disagreeing overall, or 20% and 39% for more mature and newer partnerships respectively). This probably results from 'missing' representative involvement since most partnerships identified there was not enough involvement from some (see above) and suggests that respondents see the partnerships and collaborative working as 'work in progress' rather than 'achieved' and hence are open to further learning (Q15).
3. About 50% of respondents stated they were not sufficiently clear about the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in CaBA and importantly how to work with other local partnerships indicating additional clarification was needed (Q11). This was true even for hosts (24%) and EA coordinators (28%). Supporting this, was a view that most partnerships have no clear working relationships with some important groups including other local fora such as LNPs, NIAs, IDMs, RFCC (<10% have developed collaborative relationships with these groups). Comparative analysis shows that hosts and 'other' organisations are generally more positive about the relationships with NIAs and LNPs, than other respondents. Interestingly when asked to identify the types of organization needing to be more involved in order to meet the partnerships' objectives, c130 identified LEPs, c110 identified LNPs but less than <30 identified national parks/AONB and NIA probably reflecting their limited geographical spread (Q14). Experiences from partnerships which have developed collaborative relationships with these groups may provide models and support for others

(see Appendix C on good practice).

4. Relationships between the partnerships and the Environment Agency (85%), Environmental NGOs (70%) and to a lesser extent water companies (55%) are working well, or very well. Interestingly respondents from both host and 'other' organisations were more positive, regarding the relationship with the EA, than the EA coordinators were (Q17).

3.2 What are the catchment partnerships achieving?

3.2.1 Success measures of the Policy Framework

1. Table 1 summarises respondent views on what partnerships are achieving in terms of the success measures set in the Policy Framework Document, differentiated by partnership maturity (Q15, Q24). The majority of respondents agree that the more mature partnerships (existing pre-2013) are delivering against all success measures, with 81-90% agreeing partnerships had increased involvement of stakeholders (44% estimating this to be a >50% improvement) (Q24, Q15). New partnerships also performed well for increasing involvement of stakeholders but with smaller estimated improvements so far.

Table 1 Summary of views on partnership achievements against the success measures identified in the Policy Framework Document

Q24: Please reflect on the extent to which you agree or disagree that the partnership has already achieved the following compared to the situation before the partnership was formed (310 responses)						
	>50% improvement so far	<50% improvement so far	No change yet	Don't know/ no view	Grand Total	
SM1: Increased the involvement of stakeholders in identifying priorities and taking action to address them						
More mature	44%	46%	8%	2%	100%	
New	16%	58%	17%	9%	100%	
Total	27%	53%	14%	6%	100%	
SM3: Funding: Enabled additional joint action and external investment to be leveraged						
More mature	12%	54%	26%	8%	100%	
New	11%	28%	47%	14%	100%	
Total	11%	38%	39%	11%	100%	
SM4: Enabled measures to be planned in a more co-ordinated, strategic and better targeted way that takes account of ecosystem functioning						
More mature	30%	30%	34%	6%	100%	
New	14%	36%	40%	11%	100%	
Total	20%	34%	37%	9%	100%	
SM5: Enabled different planning systems and plans to come together in a synergistic way						
More mature	21%	35%	38%	6%	100%	
New	11%	19%	54%	16%	100%	
Total	15%	25%	48%	12%	100%	
Q15: To what extent do you agree with the following? (343 responses)						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/ no view	Total Responses
SM1: Stakeholders in your catchment are closely involved in identify priorities and taking action to address them						
More mature	20%	61%	18%	0%	2%	100%
New	10%	52%	23%	1%	14%	100%
Total	14%	55%	21%	1%	9%	100%
SM2: Stakeholders in your catchment understand their role in the CaBA and their influence on river basin planning						

More mature	6%	65%	21 %	0%	8%	100%
New	1%	49%	31 %	4%	15%	100%
Total	3%	56%	27 %	2%	12%	100%
Total	15%	57%	14 %	1%	14%	100%

2. Most respondents (>70%) say their partnership has improved the situation with regards to most of the wider engagement and planning outcomes set for partnerships in the Policy Framework, e.g. increased local collaboration and transparent decision making, provided a platform for engagement and discussion (exceptions are increasing local expertise, enabling the development of more appropriate RBMP and enabling planning systems to come together in a synergistic way) (Q24).
3. Most partnerships are also already successfully encouraging action in places where actions had not happened before, and enabling new measures to be planned in a more coordinated way (see also 3.5).
4. When asked openly in the survey what barriers prevented partnerships from being effective, apart from lack of funding (particularly core funding for a central person and/or to support applications for further funding bids), lack of enthusiasm/interest and local knowledge in the catchment, and stakeholder fatigue were also cited as common barriers.

3.2.2 Influencing River Basin Management Planning and other plans

1. Despite over 80% of respondents indicating inputting into the RBMP process was a key or secondary focus for the partnership (Q34), 40-60% of respondents felt so far, that the partnerships have contributed very little, or not at all or had no view (Q19). Looking ahead, more than half of respondents (58-78%) feel their partnerships have, or will, at least moderately influence(d) the RBMP process, fewer (28%) feel their partnerships have influenced NELMs targeting (Q19&20) and few (typically <10%) indicate a good level of success in influencing other plans (e.g. plans of the Local flood partnership, LA, LNP, or AONB; Q21). With respect to other plans, the most common response (over 40% and in once instance 60%) was that respondents did not know, didn't think it was applicable, or had no view. This suggests that the partnerships are not clear on how to relate to these local plans, which is in line with other

findings from the survey on relationships and support. Appendix C shares experiences from some catchments who have successfully developed relationships with local for a and which may provide models for others.

2. Key barriers to influencing the RBMP process, identified from subsequent interviews, were: newness of the partnerships, impenetrable/academic nature of the RBMP process and information provided to support it, lack of clarity over the role of partnerships and tight deadlines. One interviewee, who sits on a River Basin District Liaison Panel, suggested that it was unclear how the information submitted by partnerships was derived, and in particular to what extent it represented the views from the catchment as a whole (see also 3.3).

3.2.3 Practical environmental action and improvement

1. The majority of (90%) respondents think that some additional physical action and improvement will be delivered as a result of the catchment partnership, but 32% believe this will be after March 2015. Some respondents (35%; mostly from more mature partnerships) indicated their partnership had already delivered action and improvement (Q18). Respondents broke down improvements to the aquatic environment and terrestrial environment as follows: freshwater biodiversity (17%), water quality (11%), terrestrial biodiversity (10%), flood risk (7%), water resources (5%) and climate change mitigation (4%). NGOs tended to be more positive than other groups about the extent that physical actions and improvements delivered. A small number of respondents (24 respondents, including 3 hosts and 2 EA coordinators, from 21 partnerships) felt their partnership had 'not delivered physical actions and did not intend to'. Follow-up research indicated reasons included, newness of partnerships and low confidence in them continuing, and for 1 more mature partnership because this was not the focus of activity.
2. Of the 39 partnerships who indicated they had quantified costs and benefits of associated with physical action and improvement (Q18), 17 provided information on the types of actions delivered as:
 - 34 km of watercourse restoration
 - 24.5 hectares of habitat creation and restoration
 - 90km of Invasive Non-Native Species removal

- Farm visits on farms managing over 18000ha of catchment land (visits include cross compliance checks, soil management including NVZ regulations, crop management, infrastructure, ditch and river management/ enhancements).
- 35 barriers to fish passage removed
- 9 fish passes installed or in planning stage
- 70km of catchment walkovers completed
- 50m of culverts removed
- 2 sluices installed.
- 600m of footpaths improved
- 76 locations where measures have been undertaken to reduce or prevent urban diffuse pollution
- 16 community events held.

Information on quantifying the benefits is given in Section 3.5.

3.3 Are the partnerships getting sufficient support and what else is needed?

1. The major sources of support and advice were the EA catchment coordinators, other EA staff and the 'parent' organisations of members on the steering group, with well over 75% of respondents looking to these sources for support (Q9).
2. In terms of the support promised to the partnerships by Defra, overall, where people had a view, most (>70%) found it was provided and helpful, or essential in the case of EA catchment coordinators (Q10). Most respondents were happy with the support / relationship with the EA particularly at area and RBD levels and feel the EA has worked with them transparently. However, and potentially of concern, there are respondents who disagree, or strongly disagree with these generally positive messages (Q16). For example 15-20% (3-4% strongly) disagreed that:
 - the wider EA listens to them (including 16 of 100 hosts and 3 of 58 coordinators);
 - the EA uses the additional evidence from the partnership well

(including 19 of 102 hosts and 8 of 59 coordinators);

- other key authorities with responsibility for river basin management decisions are making good use of the knowledge in the partnership (including 25 of 100 hosts and 18 of 58 coordinators) (Q16).
3. Most respondents had no view on the support from the National CaBA Support Group (CSG), but, where a view was expressed, it was mostly positive. Partnership hosts were more aware of the support from the CSG and found most elements helpful, or essential in the case of the GIS data package (Q10).
 4. The highest priorities for further refinement were helping to integrate catchment partnerships with other landscape scale initiatives (35%); and considering catchment priorities when undertaking strategic planning and targeting of resources (27%; Q10). Additional priorities for further support identified were additional clarification and guidance (Q12, 109 responses), including guidance to help secure funding from 2015, clarify on the relationship with other local initiatives, and greater formal recognition and promotion of partnerships (53 responses) particularly to improve commitment of statutory agencies at senior level.

3.4 Can catchment partnerships be viable without Defra funding from April 2015?

1. Most respondents (77%) agreed that their partnership was likely to continue in a similar form but with alternative funding beyond March 2015, though 55% felt it would take time to develop the capacity to do this. However, when asked how confident they were about whether their partnership could continue post March 2015 based on the commitments received and structures in place, about half were at least somewhat confident (7% were very confident and 12% confident) and half were unsure or not at all confident.
2. The most common estimate for the level of funding needed by the respondents for the partnership to survive was £10-25k. Estimates of funding to deliver key priorities in their plan were most commonly >£100k.
3. When asked to provide details on future funding sources, 89 responses for information on sources of funding to cover the period up to March 2015 but there were only 27 responses providing information for 2015 onwards.

Suggesting partnerships, though fairly confident about securing additional resources up to March 2015, are less confident about the following period.

4. Information from partnership hosts suggests most funding has come from Defra and its agencies via various routes, from businesses (possibly water companies) and environmental NGOs. Some partnerships indicate funds have also been received from, for example, lottery funds; EU funds, the fishing community; local government; and unnamed 'other funds'.

3.5 Do catchment partnerships provide value for money?

1. Value for money (VFM) is a measure of the benefit (return) received from a cost (investment). For the purposes of this assessment, 'cost' is assumed to relate to the Defra funding for catchment partnerships and 'benefits', many of which are described in the Defra policy framework document, relate to:

- increased resource inputs, such as additional leverage gained from Defra investment.
- more effective or efficient activities, such as engaging stakeholders, building links to other fora, etc.;
- improved outputs such as provision of a platform for engagement, discussion and decision making, a mechanism for working effectively with other partnerships etc;
- improved outcomes such as 'a better understanding of the environment at a local level', 'involvement of stakeholders in identifying environmental priorities and taking action to address them', stakeholders who understand their role in CaBA and their influence on river basin planning, and the development of more appropriate River Basin Management Plans; and
- the ultimate outcome/impact of positive and sustained impacts for the water environment.

2. The implicit assumption in this analysis is that in the absence of Defra funding for catchment partnerships, the additional leverage in resources that is gained would have to be met by additional government funding in order to achieve the same outcomes and impacts (ultimate benefits to the natural environment). Therefore, it can be shown that there are cost

savings to the government from the catchment partnerships. However, it should be noted that from a societal perspective, these costs are still incurred and so these leveraged resources do not provide additional value in this wider context. It is suggested that this analysis be undertaken in the future if and when sufficient data exists.

3. All analysis relied on the data provided by the respondents¹⁰, although there appear to be some anomalies, we believe that the findings provide a good overall flavour of what is happening within the partnerships.
4. Overall the analysis of the questionnaire responses shows a range of situations of how partnerships are; gaining additional funding, using funding or accounting for the benefits of the activities delivered via the funding. There was no clear relationship between what partnerships have achieved and the level of funding they have received, either from Defra, or from other sources.
5. Based on the information provided by the 39 respondents who answered that they had “*delivered physical actions and improvements and could provide quantified evidence of the associated costs and benefits*” it has not been possible to identify quantified evidence on the environment benefits (as opposed to the costs where the evidence is much stronger). This has been for a number of reasons but mainly because the partnerships appear not to have undertaken a benefit analysis of the work undertaken and because the benefits in many cases have yet to be realised. However, where evidence has been provided it has been reported here. Alternative evidence on improved outcomes, outputs, activities and resources is also reported. This includes additional actions delivered, services provided and leverage gained from Defra investment which are suitable proxies for improved environmental impacts.

3.5.1 Costs of the catchment based approach

1. Figures provided to the Cascade team by the EA indicated that Defra funding varied, depending on the nature of the partnership, as follows:

¹⁰ Data was not checked for accuracy or correct allocation. Some figures do appear anomalous, for example, one respondent suggested they had been in receipt of £80,500 in Defra funding in one year, whilst another suggested 3000 days had been given freely for partnership development activities.

Time period	Funding level (Number of partnership receiving this amount)				
September 2013 to March 2014	£0 (6)	£5,902 (27 sub-catchments)	£11,804 (78 whole catchment)		Totalling £1,080,066
April 2014 to March 2015	£4602 (2)	£9323 (19)	£18646 (81)	£27970 (1)	Totalling £1,724,637

2. The figures provided by the partnerships indicate that from the start of the Defra funding to March 2014, funding varied between £0 (14 partnerships), £1,000 - £10,000 (17 partnerships), £10,000 - £12,000 (20 partnerships) and £13,000 - £80,500¹¹ (11 partnerships).
3. Further enquiry to the 39 partnerships, who indicated they could provide quantified costs and benefit information associated with physical improvements delivered, provided robust evidence on the costs of activities, and illustrates the huge level of resource going into the catchments to improve the environment.

3.5.2 Leverage on Defra's investment

1. Although some of the financial figures provided by the partnerships lack clarity and the level of funding does not always directly relate to what appears to have been delivered on the ground. However, there are some interesting, if tentative, headlines to be noted.
2. Many partnerships have been able to leverage from non-Defra sources. Examples include:
 - One respondent (Water Company) indicated that their partnership had spent £62,000 more from non-Defra sources than from Defra money (which was £0). This figure does not include time given freely which equates to an additional £8500.
 - A partnership in receipt of £27,000 of Defra funding up to 2014 had leveraged in an additional £59,000.

¹¹ It is assumed that the £80,500 is an error though it relates to data collection and interpretation and planning so it may indicate the use of 'other' Defra funding outside the CaBA approach.

- A partnership in receipt of £5,000 of Defra funding leveraged in an additional £161,902 with £150,500 in financial contributions
 - A partnership in receipt of £12,000 from Defra had leveraged in an additional £47,500 in time given freely for delivering practical environmental work on the ground
 - A partnership in receipt of £10,000 in Defra funding managed to leverage in an additional £100,793 in non-Defra funding. However, of this figure only £5,000 was non-Defra financial contribution (the remainder was time given freely).
3. Overall the proportion of spend on all the activities in this question originating from Defra funding is in the range 12.5 - 33%, suggesting that never more than a 1/3 of funding activities originates with Defra. Across all the partnerships 3422.5 days were reported as being given freely across all partnership activities. This equates to a value of £540,775¹².
 4. Of the 14 partnerships indicating that they had not received funding from Defra up to March 2014, eight (four from water companies, two from rivers trust, and one from a statutory agency) had also not leveraged in any other additional funding. However, six did leverage in funding or time given freely to deliver a range of activities demonstrating that a lack of centralised funding does not de-value the possible benefits of the CaBA approach.

3.5.3 Efficiency and effectiveness

1. Compared to how these activities would be carried out in their absence respondents felt partnerships were more effective and efficient at *delivering local engagement (c75%); delivering physical actions and improvements (c65%); and bringing together different planning systems and plans in a synergistic way (c60%)*. Generally respondents estimated the effectiveness/efficiency gain was <50% but about one third of respondents estimated an efficiency gain of >50% for delivering local engagement.
2. In all cases, but less so for engagement, a small number of respondents

¹² All conversions of time given freely into a monetary value, in this section, have been calculated using a conversion factor taken from the Office for National Statistics Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. This equates to a conversion of a standard 7.5 hr day into a monetary value of £158. The calculation does not include one figure, provided by a respondent, for 3000 days of time given freely for partnership development as this is assumed to be an anomaly.

(mostly from 'other' groups) indicated that the partnerships were less effective and efficient than the situation previously. Further investigation suggested that these responses largely reflect the newness of partnerships and limited resources, both in terms of funding and the availability of stakeholder time. However, on delivering action, there does seem to be a tension around whether a more collaborative approach is yet adding the value hoped for. This tension was expressed in two ways, one interviewee, from a fisheries organization (who previously projects submitted directly to the EA for funding) suggested that the partnership has delayed action, and that they are still trying to find ways of taking projects forward. Another interviewee suggested that the partnerships seemed to be completing the same actions/projects as they did before, showing no obvious change/added value as a result of wider engagement within the catchment. Whilst, it is unlikely that everyone will prefer CaBA over previous arrangements, and views on efficiency are likely to improve as the partnerships mature, it may be worth providing further guidance on what Defra expects from CaBA with respect to delivery of practical action to ease tension around this point.

3. Overall there is no significant relationship between the level of funding received, leveraged in or given freely and delivery of activities, or increased effectiveness or efficiencies.

3.5.4 Outputs and outcomes

See Section 3.2.1.

3.5.5 Quantifying environmental actions and improvements

Section 3.2.3 provides a summary of the physical environmental actions and improvements delivered and anticipated. This section focusses on quantifying the benefit associated with these.

1. Although in the survey, 39 respondents indicated they had already "delivered physical actions and improvements and could provide quantified evidence of the associated costs and benefits" when contacted none could provide information quantifying these benefits. One respondent suggested that the EA had surveyed restored sections of river and had found invertebrate and macrophyte levels had improved, though there was no detail on by how much or an attempt at monetising this improvement.

2. There are inherent difficulties in quantifying environmental benefits which are further complicated by determining the contribution of partnership working. But in practical terms, respondents identified the following barriers to providing cost and benefit information (figures in brackets indicate number of times respondents said this was an issue):

- There was a lack of time to collate responses (3 responses);
- The information has already been provided to the EA and others and there was a lack of willingness to compile it again (3 responses);
- The information is held by another organisation, or in a different part of the same organisation and it wasn't clear who to contact or how to go about getting it (1 response);
- The respondents didn't feel that it was their role to undertake this type of analysis. They were happy to provide an indication of the quantified costs of undertaking work but did not have the expertise to identify the benefits (2 responses, 1 via phone interview);
- There was also a lack of understanding about what cost benefit analysis is. The majority of information received during this further analysis covered only the costs of undertaking work, not the benefits that would accrue from doing it. In addition, when information was provided to demonstrate the evidence of costs and benefits it generally did not do this, instead covering other elements of work such as partnership working (5 responses);
- Respondents subsequently decided they didn't have the information (i.e. they were being too positive) or did not remember responding to the survey in this way (2 responses).

3.6 What are the potential roles for catchment partnerships going forward?

1. Most respondents (76%) felt that the partnerships are likely to continue in a similar form but with alternative funding and in-kind support. But the majority of these respondents indicated 'it would take time for partnerships to develop the capacity to do this' (Q28). When interviewed, respondents indicated that the partnerships are unlikely to continue where they are not making progress quickly enough or where there are competing demands from other local initiatives for limited local stakeholder resource.

2. Most respondents disagreed (41%), or strongly disagreed (7%), that the partnerships are likely to merge with other local initiatives such as LNPs (compared to 25% agreeing). As might be expected, more EA coordinators and partnership hosts disagreed with a potential merger than other groups, but there was some level of disagreement across the board. Subsequent interviews highlighted issues around the different scales of working (county based LNPs being too big to do the local engagement of catchment partnerships), different ways of working (Catchment Partnerships are more focused on delivery, local stakeholder engagement and are more flexible in their geography and scope). Interviewees also indicated that merger would create another level of management and reporting for already under-resourced Catchment Partnership hosts. A better way forward, it was suggested, was for CaBA, NIA and LNPs to be linked, but different and autonomous.
3. In terms of future roles, most respondents agree that the role of catchment partnerships could evolve with time to deliver related objectives of the EA, water companies and LA both as a formal engagement platform, a cost-effective tool to deliver physical actions and improvements and to administer funds but in all cases some (10-20%) don't agree. Subsequent interviews suggested some partnerships are not well suited to delivering action as they lack the capacity and experience to develop costed proposals and cover issues such as health and safety and accounting. In terms of administering funds, an interviewee commented that partnerships already receive money which they may allocate across partners but it wouldn't be useful to distract partnerships from their 'doing' role by giving them a wider administrative task. A similar view, about focusing efforts on core engagement activities, was made about potential roles leading other areas of water policy.
4. Views on current achievements support the view that it will take time for partnerships to develop the capacity to undertake these roles. Although some respondents (<10%) feel that partnerships are already undertaking the roles proposed, particularly for the EA.
5. Respondents felt partnerships could (60-80%) and in some cases already are (20-50%) self-evaluating in terms of resourcing, activities, deliverables, achievements and impacts of their work. Few respondents felt the need for assessment by independents.



4 Conclusions and Key Points for Consideration

The results are based on >450 responses, from a range of organisations across 100 catchments providing a good coverage of partnerships, organisations and roles. This represents a strong evidence base for what is being achieved overall, but remembering that situations in specific catchments vary. Views expressed are largely positive, albeit most respondents are involved in the catchment partnership to some extent.

This section draws conclusions based on the semi-quantitative results summarised in Section 3 and feedback from follow-up interviews which provided a greater understanding of ‘why things worked or didn’t’. Where the results indicated some improvement was required, key points for consideration have been provided. In many cases these are based on feedback from those working at catchment level, and in other cases are suggestions from the authors and peer reviewers based on experience including that from the in-depth phase 1 evaluation.

4.1 Key positives

1. Interim results indicate that most respondents (c75%) felt that their partnership is working effectively together and agreed decisions in their partnership were: made transparently, evidence-based, made with clarity; and were not overly influenced by one or more party with vested interests (64-77%) (Q15). This suggests that most catchment partnerships are successfully implementing these key principles of collaborative working.
2. The partnerships are developing collaborative relationships and are generally working well, or very well, with the Environment Agency (85%), environmental NGOs (70%) and water companies (55%) (Q17). This is a considerable achievement in changing traditional ways of working.
3. The Policy Framework Document sets five success measures for catchment partnerships. The majority of respondents agree that the more mature partnerships (existing pre-2013) are delivering against all success measures, with 81-90% agreeing partnerships had increased involvement of stakeholders (44% estimating this to be a >50% improvement). New partnerships also performed well for increasing involvement of stakeholders but with smaller estimated improvements so far (Q24, Q15).
4. In terms of the wider outcomes set in the policy framework, most

respondents (>70%) say their partnership has already improved the situation for many of the engagement and planning outcomes (Q 24).

5. The more mature partnerships are spending more time delivering physical action and improvements (Q33). This suggests that continued commitment is reaping benefits; facilitating progress from 'talking' to 'doing' and giving greater confidence that partnerships will deliver anticipated environmental benefits. In terms of activities, it appears that many partnerships starting since 2013 (new partnerships) have been able to get up to speed quickly, possibly because of lessons learned from the pilot stage (Q22).
6. The support provided by Defra, and the Environment Agency has been well received, where people had a view, most (>70%) found it was provided and helpful, or essential in the case of EA catchment coordinators. In a relatively short time, the outputs from CSG are seen as useful, particularly by partnership hosts (Q10).
7. Partnerships are seen to be providing a more effective and efficient service, compared to how these activities would be carried out in their absence, for *delivering local engagement* (for c75% respondents), *delivering physical actions and improvements* (c65%) and *bringing together different planning systems and plans in a synergistic way* (c60%) (Q23).
8. More than 90% of respondents think that some additional physical action and improvement will be delivered as a result of the catchment partnership with 35% saying their partnership has already done so (Q7). Typically these include actions such as removing barriers to fish and installing fish passes, removal of non-invasive species, culvert removal, farm visits, catchment walkovers, measures to reduce urban pollution.
9. The funding provided by Defra is catalysing further investment in many partnerships, in the form of funding and time given freely. Based on the results from 89 partnerships, additional funding is being leveraged in at between 3-8 times the Defra funding, and for practical environmental work, sources other than Defra provided over 10 times as much investment (calculated as an average across partnerships) (Q33).
10. Some partnerships have secured funding from other sources to support the partnership up to (Q36) and after (Q37) the roll-out phase ends. Sources of funding include: water companies (where catchments fall into a

water supply area water companies who may offer funds where this can be justified to Ofwat); an interesting business club scheme; European funds such as LIFE and Lottery funds; local authorities and in one case from a national park/AONB/NIA. In-kind funding has also be secured from environmental NGOs. However, only 27 hosts answered this question for funding after March 2015, suggesting most have not yet sought or secured funding for the medium term. This conclusion is further supported by wider respondent views, who generally (76%) felt that partnerships are likely to continue in a similar form but with alternative funding/in-kind support indicating that 'it would take time for partnerships to develop the capacity to do this' (Q28).

11. **Point for Consideration 1:** Pending, results from the March 2015, Defra should continue to support the partnerships at least for the short-term, allowing them time to further develop relationships, build trust, seek alternative funding sources and deliver anticipated environmental improvements.

4.2 Areas for further improvement

Areas where the evaluation suggested further improvement could be made are summarised below together with 23 'Points for Consideration'. Seven points were highlighted as a priority: points 2-6 on funding; and point 22 on self-evaluation.

4.2.1 Funding

1. Further clarification is needed concerning funding post March 2015 (Q11). This was highlighted as a priority for further support (Q12).
2. Some partnerships have secured funding post March 2015 (Q37) but for most, uncertainty around funding, particularly to secure a full-time officer, remains an issue and few have a business plan (Q22) which might help to build confidence. **Point for Consideration 2 (high priority):** Defra should further clarify the funding situation post 2015, what is expected of catchment partnerships concerning funding post-2015 as soon as possible.
3. **Point for Consideration 3 (high priority):** CSG should, with Defra, explore different funding options for CaBA. This should consider possibilities such as: distinguishing between funding to support the operation of the partnerships, and different streams of funding in order to

steer partnerships towards certain kinds of activities (such as contributing to the river basin district planning process, or physical delivery of improvements in the catchment); and/or focussing Defra funding in catchments where partnerships have less opportunity to receive funding from elsewhere (e.g. from water companies) and/or are expected to make the greatest difference (focussing limited funds may enable funding levels to cover a full-time project officer in selected catchments). This should bear in mind that the level of funding required, and the split of funding across activities, is likely to vary between partnerships, particularly new and more mature partnerships.

4. **Point for Consideration 4 (high priority):** Based on the exploration of options, Defra should provide a longer-term commitment to funding, linked to a 5-10 year benefits realisation plan for CaBA (see below).
5. **Point for Consideration 5 (high priority):** CSG should provide support to partnerships to develop business plans to help partnerships understand future income sources and risks, and to map and track the direction of partnerships.
6. **Point for Consideration 6 (high priority):** CSG should provide further guidance on how to secure funding for catchment improvements, this should include guidance on how partnerships can find synergies between their objectives and the objectives of others delivering and funding work locally to find multi-objective actions, as well as how best to access larger funding pots such as LIFE.

4.2.2 Clarifying the role and status of partnerships

7. Although most (>70%) are sufficiently clear on purpose of the partnership and how to work locally with the EA, less than half were clear about the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in CaBA and how to work with other local partnerships (Q11). Further clarity on expectations/requirements was cited commonly as support that would help catchment partnerships (Q12).
8. **Point for Consideration 7:** Programme/planning: Defra, EA and CSG should build on the vision for CaBA set out in the Policy Framework by developing a 5-10 year benefits realisation plan. The plan should include the points below:
 - Clearly set out what is expected from partnerships, to clarify and

manage expectations about what CaBA is likely to achieve at different stages.

- Be explicit about expected activities, links to other fora/planning mechanisms and initiatives (at a catchment scale but also across other scales/jurisdictions) and what constitutes key terms such as 'collaborative working' and 'providing a representative view'.
- Consider issues around partnership relationships to others so that shared objectives and necessary links to NIA, LNPs, water company asset and investment plans etc. are made clear. This should consider current and future relationships bearing in mind that most survey respondents disagreed that the catchment partnerships are likely to merge with other local initiatives such as LNPs suggesting a better way forward, was for CaBA, NIA and LNPs to be linked, but different and autonomous (see also 4.2.3).
- Provide details of the preferred funding mechanism rather than just a year-on-year amount of funding and indicate how this may change as partnerships continue to develop (see the funding options key point for consideration above).
- Contain clear measurable success measures as the basis of establishing VFM linked to a development timeline. In particular, the vision should outline if and when Defra expects the partnerships to deliver environmental improvements and in the meantime, the value of capacity building and collaborative working. Success measures should be linked to measurable indicators with clarity about how data will be collected.
- Consider the wider aspects of the 'multiple benefits' that CaBA is envisaged to enable/produce, for example around well-being, that would help develop closer links to the core interests and responsibilities of local authorities for example.
- Be informed by the results of this evaluation, and the evaluation of the Pilot phase (including the guide to collaborative catchment management), and should be done in consultation with the EA, as technical authority, and other key stakeholders, including those leading on other local initiatives to bring more cohesion to local working.

9. Although the majority of respondents believe catchment partnerships are more effective and efficient than the previous situation, there are 5-10% who believe they are less efficient and 20-30% who believe there is no change (Q23). Further investigation revealed this generally reflected the newness of partnerships but there seems to be a tension around delivering action. One respondent interviewed suggested that the partnership had at least delayed action compared to direct access to funding previously, whilst another suggested that actions/projects completed by partnerships showed no obvious change/added value from those completed by members prior to wider engagement within the catchment. Another interviewee felt that partnerships don't have the right skills to deliver physical actions. **Point for Consideration 8:** Delivery role: Future funding and evaluation programmes should help partnerships understand what Defra requires from them (or not), with respect to helping to deliver practical environmental action.
10. **Point for Consideration 9:** Capacity building: If Defra wishes to see catchment partnerships move towards more of a delivery role, CSG should be supported in developing or commissioning a thorough capacity building programme so that the partners have the proper drive, skills and capacity to fulfil a delivery role effectively.
11. The survey has highlighted several areas for improvement where additional support has been suggested. Although it seems clear that Defra has the policy lead, and the EA responsibility for working strategically with catchment partnerships in operational areas such as RBMPing and others within its remit, the scope of collaborative working envisaged is wider. **Point for Consideration 10:** Defra, the EA, the CSG and others, should clarify responsibilities for working strategically with partnerships to help ensure that their potential benefit is realised in full. It may be worth considering how the CSG could be further developed, for example, whether going forward, a larger 'unit' is needed rather than an advisory group of experts.

4.2.3 Linking to other local initiatives

12. About half of respondents stated they were not sufficiently clear about the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in CaBA and most feel the partnerships have no clear working relationships with important groups such as LNPs, NIAs, IDMs, or RFCCs (Q11). In addition, very few

partnerships are successfully influencing other plans (e.g. plans of the Local flood partnership, LA, LNP, or AONB) (Q12) and performance against the CaBA success measures related to bringing together planning systems and plans, and developing more coordinated measures, are weak relative to other measures. Further investigation suggests these difficulties may arise because the role/purpose of catchment partnerships isn't clear to other organisations. It is also likely to reflect issues about status and legitimacy¹³ which should be addressed as part of the 5-10 year plan for CaBA (see above).

13. **Point for Consideration 11:** CSG, with Defra, should provide guidance to help align catchment partnerships with other landscape scale initiatives by clarifying relationships, and identifying areas of shared interest that can be expressed in ways that enable catchment partnerships to engage others. This is in-line with findings from a recent evaluation of the Natural Environment White Paper (2013)¹⁴ which recognizes there is scope for better alignment of initiatives and interestingly, indicated that stakeholders considered water catchment pilots worked well on delivery (D4). This should make reference to good practice on engaging other local initiatives provided in Appendix C.
14. **Point for Consideration 12:** CSG and Defra should consider how to raise greater awareness of catchment partnerships role and objectives generally, but particularly with other local initiatives.

4.2.4 Linking to the RBMPing process

15. Respondents have mixed views about the extent to which partnerships will influence the RBMP process. Although 60% have engaged with their catchment coordinator, fewer felt they had engaged in the cost-benefit process or been able to challenge WFD pressures etc. (Q19). Follow-up research indicated that this is often a reflection of the newness of many partnerships. Most respondents (58-78%) feel their partnerships have, or will, at least moderately influence(d) the RBMP process going forward. Potentially of concern, there are, albeit a minority, respondents who disagree (15-20%) or strongly disagree (3-4%) that the wider EA and other

¹³ Tension around this issues is captured by requests from survey respondents for 'more formal recognition to partnerships' and to 'secure commitment of statutory agencies at senior level' contrasting with a view, expressed by one of the interviewees, who sits on a River Basin District Liaison Panel, that contributions from partnerships are likely to lack influence if it is unclear how the information submitted is derived, and in particular to what extent it represents the views from the catchment as a whole.

¹⁴ [Natural Environment White Paper evaluation framework and process evaluation.](#)

key authorities are making good use of the evidence, and knowledge or 'listens' (Q16). Lack of support in these areas is likely to cause considerable barriers to effective catchment working and could demotivate partnerships in contributing to the river basin planning process.

16. **Point for Consideration 13:** The EA should further clarify the relationship between catchment partnerships, catchment plans and the RBMPing process in an information sheet to partnerships outlining:
 - The different purposes of RBMPs and catchment plans;
 - A simplified process for RBMPing showing clearly what the EA sees as the role of the partnership in the process;
 - How catchment priorities will be considered as part of strategic river basin planning and how the EA and others will use the data and knowledge provided. This should manage expectations about the extent to which catchment plans can influence RBMP and indicate the nature, status and format of information that is likely to be most influential;
 - What the EA will do to improve the environment and what they can do more of with the support of the catchment partnerships and the public.
17. **Point for Consideration 14:** The EA should take further steps to ensure material produced to support engagement in the RBMP process is simple, and jargon-free so that non-expert stakeholders can contribute. National templates should enable local tailoring and EA coordinators should be supported in tailoring documents to their catchment to make them more meaningful so that they can engage people by showing them where they can make a difference.
18. **Point for Consideration 15:** The EA and partnerships, facilitated by the CSG, should develop shared criteria about quality of evidence. This will be an important step in enabling locally-generated evidence to be used effectively in developing more appropriate river basin management plans.
19. **Point for Consideration 16:** The EA should consider how best to provide feedback on how evidence provided by the partnerships has been used.
20. **Point for Consideration 17:** CSG should provide further guidance to

catchment hosts to help develop closer working with other local fora, plans, and planning systems to encourage more synergistic working, in particular:

- Outlining key plans and planning processes including timescales and how to best influence plans.
- Developing guidance for catchment partnerships on areas of interest to partners by setting out the objectives of other local forums and relate these to benefits that CaBA can help deliver.
- Illustrating how relationships can be developed using case-studies.

21. **Point for Consideration 18:** Defra, EA and the CSG should work to share national / centrally held data more effectively, especially if the same information is required by different organisations. There may be an opportunity for the Catchment Data User Group to assist with this. There may also be an opportunity to rationalise information requests to minimise the number of returns the partnerships are required to make.

4.2.5 Better engagement of land-owners/managers, local government and businesses

22. Although partnerships are generally considered to be working effectively amongst themselves, less than half of respondents considered decisions to be 'representative of all views in the catchment' (Q15). Key groups missing were land owners / managers; local government; and businesses (Q14). Partners already working collaboratively with these groups advise *"in all of this it's a question of adding value, try to give as much support to others as you possibly can, and identify what can you give them", "be seen to be doing things from their perspective"* (see Appendix C). **Point for Consideration 19:** The CSG should continue to provide assistance to catchment hosts on how to get more involvement from: land owners / managers; local government; and businesses. This might include highlighting good practices and/or developing guidance on understanding others' and helping partnerships to "do things from others perspectives" where there are areas of common interest. Guidance should build on that provided in the Guide to collaborative catchment management developed in the phase 1 evaluation and tips from this evaluation provided in Appendix C.

4.2.6 Quantifying benefits and determining VFM

23. Although most respondents are fairly confident that environmental improvements will result (Q25), there remains uncertainty around the delivery of benefits to the environment as partnerships, when approached, were unable to provide quantified evidence for this analysis. Key reasons quoted were: insufficient time to collate material; and lack of understanding of what was needed, where to find the information, and/or that it was the partnerships role to provide this. Underlying this lack of clear evidence are issues around: the lag time between activity and environmental response; and the difficulties of monetising benefits for partnership working, where almost by definition, partnerships are merging different activities, and combining budget lines to make things happen. **Point for Consideration 20:** In order to manage, and clarify, expectations of how the benefits of CaBA can be measured and reported, Defra, the EA and the CSG should agree, the data required to establish benefits, what is available, and the best way of collecting suitable information for the 2015 survey. Consideration should also be given to measuring benefits longer-term as part of a wider monitoring and evaluation programme, akin to that developed for CSF.
24. The timescales between investment in the Phase 2 CaBA roll-out and evaluation are relatively short. Combining results from the pilot surveys, this survey and the survey planned in March 2015 would yield a longer-term picture of whether envisaged progress and benefits are being realised. **Point for Consideration 21:** Results from the March 2015 survey, which should be aligned with this survey to allow progress to be mapped, should be compared with results with the phase 1 evaluation to quantify progress since 2011. In addition, in-depth case-studies of partnerships selected to represent a range of situations and stages of development should be undertaken to understand in more detail the challenges, innovations and supporting factors of/for effective catchment-working.

4.2.7 Evaluation

25. Most respondents felt that the partnerships could evaluate their own progress with little need for an independent view (Q29). **Point for Consideration 22 (high priority):** The CSG, with Defra's evaluation team, should develop a self-assessment tool using key parameters from this

survey and taking into account tools used already by partnerships. This tool should serve as a marker to indicate progress, identify issues to be resolved and help build capability and should link to the benefits realisation plan proposed above. Consideration should be given to the pros and cons of what can be evaluated nationally or locally and by the partnership hosts or independents.

26. Most survey respondents are involved in the catchment partnership to some extent, only 43 respondents (c10%) had no role and their views, when expressed, were less positive. **Point for Consideration 23:** For the final survey, Defra might consider how best to capture views of those not involved in the partnership more thoroughly to better understand the 'outsider' view of CaBA.



APPENDIX A
COPY OF SURVEY



APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF DATA AND ANALYSIS



APPENDIX C
GOOD PRACTICE TIPS BASED ON FEEDBACK FROM PARTNERSHIPS