

## FCRM Maintenance - Angling Trust Note – 1 December 2017

The Environment Agency works with communities and partners to manage the risk of flooding and reduce its impact on people and property. One way we manage that risk is through maintaining our flood and coastal risk management (FCRM) assets and main rivers. We know how important river channel maintenance is to reducing flood risk. Where appropriate we carry out work to enable rivers to convey flows more efficiently, helping to reduce the risk of flooding. We also work to reduce harm to the environment, and wherever possible take opportunities to enhance it. Unfortunately in some instances the work we have done has fallen short of the high environmental standards we set ourselves and we received a number of reports of issues affecting angling clubs in the spring of 2017 via the Angling Trust.

As a result, we have drawn up some actions to improve how we develop and carry out our maintenance programmes. This year we are focussing on:

- ensuring that all maintenance works are assessed for their potential impacts on the health of rivers including fish, biodiversity and channel habitats
- consulting on our maintenance programme (both internally and externally) so that we can explain the works necessary and work with others to look for alternative measures where possible
- ensuring that we adequately fund the work needed for environmental mitigation, compensation and enhancement
- delivering a consistent approach to our maintenance works across the country
- setting up an internal network on environmental and maintenance issues enabling us to identify and resolve issues more quickly
- new ways of consulting with external stakeholders before we carry out work, including anglers, angling clubs and communities
- using our regulatory powers to ensure maintenance works carried out by others take account of the environment
- reviewing our Maintenance Standards Handbook to ensure we work in a way that best avoids damage to the environment.

In doing this, we will develop an assurance system to ensure standards are applied consistently across the country.

In delivering our maintenance programme we aim to deliver multiple benefits such as the work undertaken on the River Hogsmill in South West London.

Trees and boughs which could have caused a flood risk downstream if they fell into the river were cut back and refitted into the channel (known as “deflectors”).

We used standard methods established by the Wild Trout Trust to install the deflectors in order to improve flow diversity, help the channel to develop a more natural meandering form and create habitat for invertebrates and other ecology.

Over 30 deflectors were installed over a length of 1 km of particularly uniform channel between Berrylands station and the A3 near Kingston.

