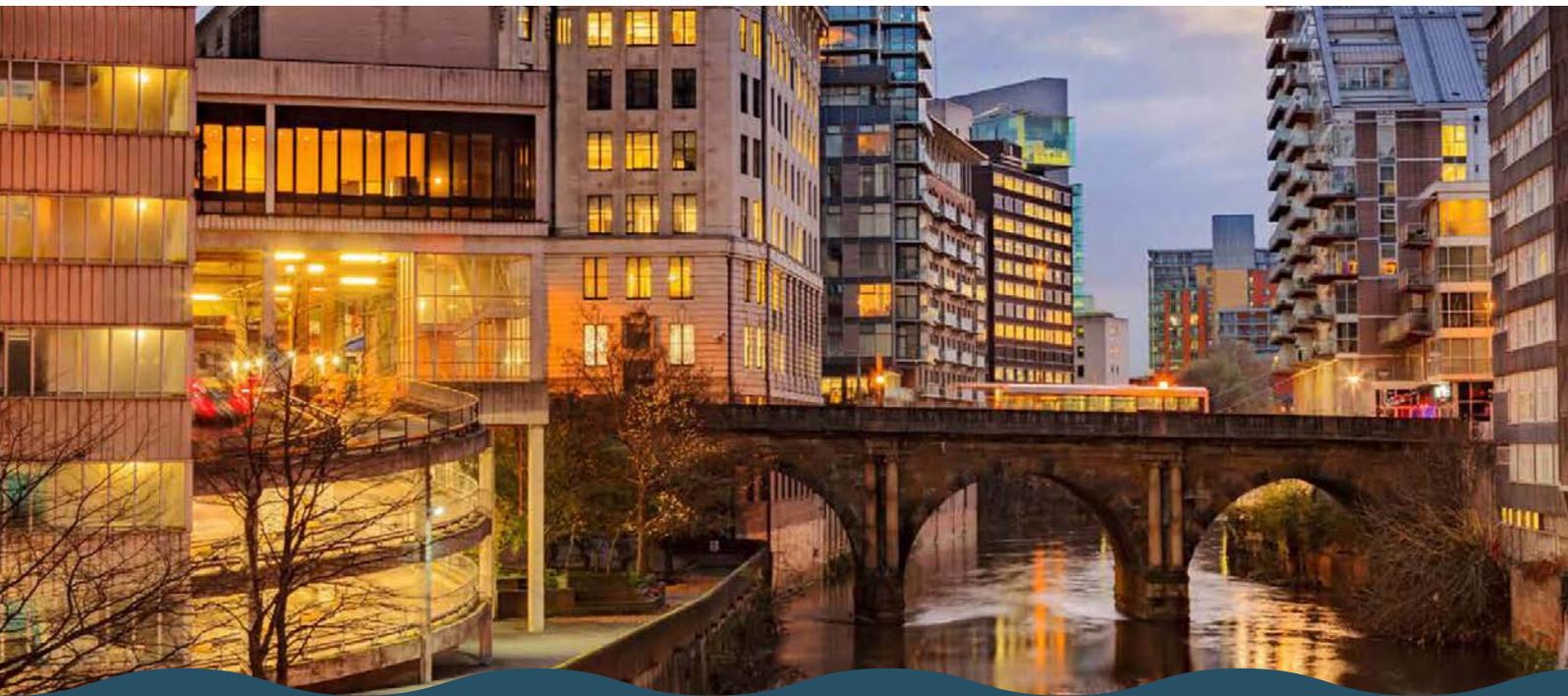


NATURAL OUR WATER. OUR FUTURE **COURSE**

Review of water governance in Greater Manchester **Executive Summary**



Date published: 29/10/2018



This programme has been made possible with
the support of EU LifeIP funding.
Project number: LIFE14 IPE/UK/027

About Natural Course

78% of water bodies in North West England are failing to meet a good ecological status* and solutions are often found to be too expensive to implement.

Natural Course is a collaboration of organisations in North West England from public, private and third sector who, together, will seek cost-effective solutions to improving water quality across urban and rural landscapes, sharing best practice across the UK and Europe.

*Environment Agency, North West River Basin District 2015

Natural Course will:

- Test and inform best practice in achieving UK and EU legislation in water quality
- Use the North West River Basin District as a flagship project and share best practice with the UK and Europe
- Make better use of resources, share ownership of complex issues and maximise outcomes through a collaborative approach of organisations from public, private and third sector.

Join the conversation #NaturalCourse

1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 THE PROJECT & METHOD

Funded by Natural Course, an EU LIFE integrated Project, this report provides the results of a small scale pilot that aimed to understand Greater Manchester's (GM) water governance and propose options for greater integration, particularly across the areas of water quality and water quantity. The proposed integration options aim to demonstrate the method and to pave the way for future research and action in this area.

The analytical framework is developed from current best practice for the water governance agenda and could also be equally applicable to other themes in the environmental area.

1.2 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Selected UK case studies showed various examples of best practice. For instance in Glasgow a major part of the flood resilience program was its tangible benefit in unlocking brownfield land for development. In Newcastle a multi-layer circle structure was developed to include all stakeholders.

The analysis of GM showed a hive of activity with well-developed expertise but, seemingly, with a lack of transparency and coordination on various fronts. Some of this points to issues at the national level where regulatory frameworks and resources could be much better aligned. Some results point to the city-region level with new opportunities coming from devolution and new forms of integration. This means that whilst there are constraints on the amount of action that can be taken by GM and other local stakeholders, there are equally opportunities to effect meaningful change.

1.3 OPTIONS FOR PROPOSALS

The proposals reviewed five options for water governance. Each links to the Natural Course economic modelling scenarios for water quality.

- (A) 'Status quo':** the current picture which points to projected deterioration in water quality & flood resilience.
- (B) 'Marginal change':** incremental improvements, which can be made at shorter notice (with only moderate water quality outcomes). This could pave the way for major change in the future.
- (C) Devo-Water:** this is the main proposition which consists of a city-region integrated platform for water policy coordination and forward investment. Here, the expected water quality outcomes would include all economic improvements.
- (D) 'National change':** the case for national policy to support the Devo-Water level of city-region water governance (with the water quality outcomes as more than what the city-region can do on its own). There is a further question for debate on the potential 're-municipalisation' of the water sector.
- (E) 'Blue skies':** this option represents the overall goal of a fully integrated city-region environmental governance. With that on the table, we can work back to various stages of practicality:

Devo-Water (option C) builds on the position of GM, as a (partially) devolved city-region, a leader and exemplar for others in the UK. It follows the general approach of 'Devo-Manc' in combining the critical mass of ten local authorities; devolving national functions wherever possible; and enabling longer term investment and strategic trade-offs between sectors and departments. Key features include:

Integration across the water cycle, in the ICM catchment model, but taking into account the city-region as an integrated territory which covers two main catchments and parts of two others.

Coordinated response to the challenges of climate change and adaptation, i.e. increased risk of flood, storm, drought and resource shortages.

Integration with other key sectors and water stakeholders, e.g. farming, forestry, minerals, transport, construction, critical infrastructure, waste management, process industries, public health, finance and insurance.

Integration with local authority and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) priorities and policy agendas: e.g. health and education, spatial planning, area regeneration, community enterprise, green infrastructure, and many kinds of social return on investment.

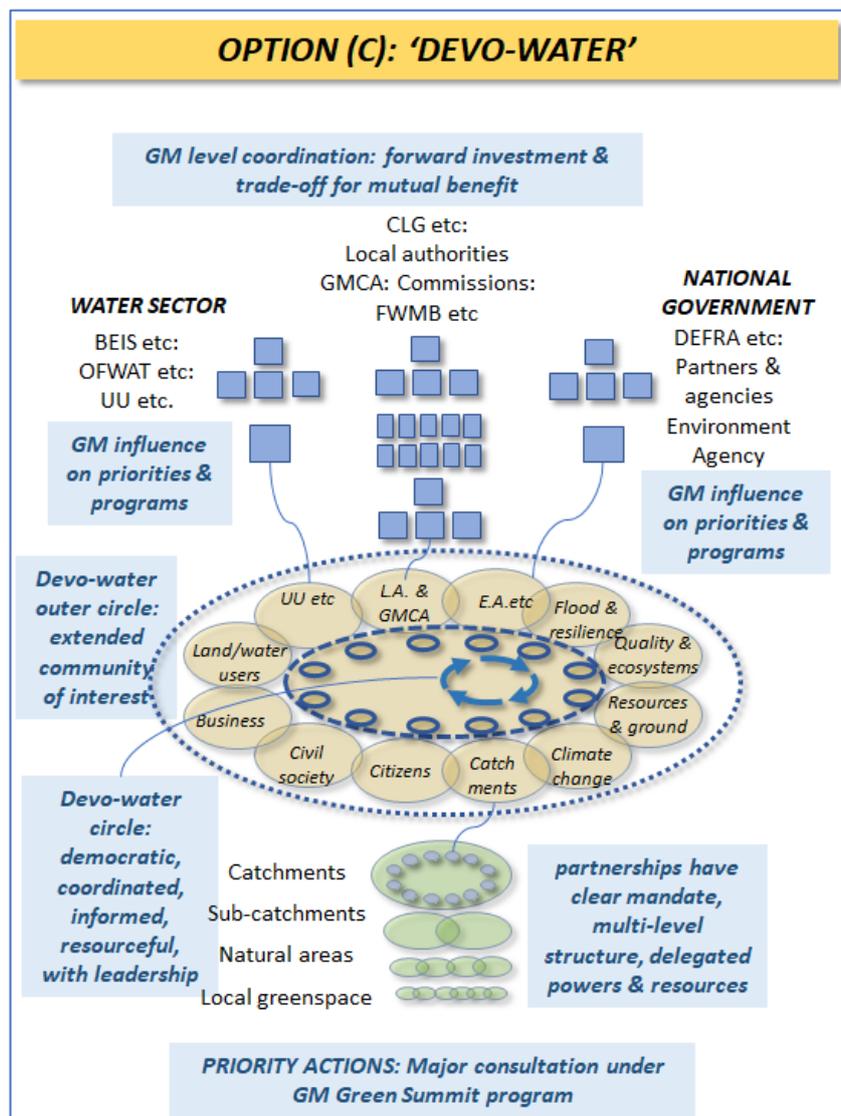


Figure 1 - Key components of Option C: Devo-Water

1.4 REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

The proposals then reviewed the preferred option Devo-Water, and its implications, including:

The structure of a water governance circle. This highlights the benefits of a multi-layer circle format which is inclusive, transparent, responsive, and with a combination of formal and informal interests.

Options for institutional design. From a review of the possible range, this highlights the combination of 'agency' with 'coordinating board' and with delegated powers and resources (This is separate from the question of 're-municipalisation' above).

Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. This explores further the multi-layer partnership and community, and how this can help to provide the appropriate level of linkage to a wide range of water stakeholders.

Options for GM roles and relations. This situates the Devo-Water Board and community, in relation to reformed bodies such as the FWMB, the GMCA LCH and others.

Options for value chains and benefit-cost models. There is clearly value-added in water investment: the existing AMP and similar can be extended to a wider range of fiscal benefits, wider-economy benefits, and socio/ecological benefits. All this then provides clear and tangible justification for the Devo-Water scheme.

Synergistic governance policy models. A brief summary of current and emerging models shows that the Devo-Water scheme is firmly based on existing policy models and can build on current trends and skills and knowledge.

Overall, there appears to be a clear and practical case for further research and development, as well as consultation, on a Devo-Water model with an operational Board or similar arrangement and designed such to include a wide range of formal and informal stakeholders.

1.5 NEXT STEPS

The next steps include:

Consultation with stakeholders in GM and regional bodies

Consultation with national bodies, principally EA, Defra, OFWAT, together with related stakeholders.

R&D on wider socio-economic benefit-cost & investment models

R&D on climate change impacts, adaptation & water resilience

Questions for further consultation include:

What is the most appropriate / ideal form of governance (and a suitable title)? Should a new body be a board, circle, commission, forum, panel, platform, hub, agency, unit, or enterprise?

What are the levers / opportunities for change? (e.g. the 25-Year Environment Plan, Brexit, Devo-Manc, or a possible major incident?).

What is the overall will, commitment, and leadership to drive innovation and change?

www.naturalcourse.co.uk

In partnership with



This project has been made possible with the support of EU LIFE Integrated Project funding.

Project number LIFE14 IPE/UK/027