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**C O N S U L T I N G**

**MERSEY BASIN CAMPAIGN STUDY  
2006 FINAL REPORT**



Evaluation Of  
The Mersey Basin  
Campaign

Final Report

Government  
Office North West  
July 2006

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# Executive Summary

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## The Study

EKOS Consulting was commissioned by the Government Office for the North West (GONW) to undertake an independent evaluation of the past impact, present activities and future role of the Mersey Basin Campaign. The study sought to address the following questions:

- To what extent is the MBC succeeding in achieving its objectives in relation to the delivery of relevant European, Central Government and Regional Policies?
- What is the contribution of Government funding to that work?
- What still needs to be done between now and 2010 and 2015 to achieve European/government/regional policy objectives?
- What lessons can be learnt from the last twenty years and current approaches and activities to guide GONW in advising ministers on whether a centrally funded MBC is the most cost effective way forward?

The study has involved extensive desk based analysis and a consultation process involving a series of face to face consultations and themed workshops. The method was agreed with GONW and the Chair of the Campaign in order to capture, as fully as possible, the quantitative and qualitative benefits arising from the Campaign's work.

## The Role of the Campaign

### Context

The Campaign has its origins in the early 1980s when conditions in the River Mersey had become so poor that urgent action was required to address the situation. In recognition of the scale of this task, the Campaign was given a nominal 25 year lifespan. Significant water quality improvements have continued to occur in the Mersey Basin catchment area over recent years across a range of indicators. This has been due in a large extent to the massive investment delivered through Asset Management Programmes and the effects of the regulatory work undertaken by the Environment Agency. There are significant improvements still to be made in the area which will be driven by the EU's Water Framework Directive. In addition, waterside regeneration continues to provide the focus for significant development investment across the North West.

### The Campaign's Activity

The Campaign's original core objectives continue to guide its work, namely:

1. Improving water quality across the Mersey River Basin;
2. Encouraging and stimulating sustainable waterside regeneration; and
3. Engaging public, private, community and voluntary sector involvement in the process of water quality and waterside improvements.

The Mersey Basin Campaign seeks to achieve its objectives through involvement in a wide range of programmes and activities at a local, sub-regional, regional, national and European level. In some

areas, the Campaign plays a major and often central role; in others its role and impact is more indirect, adding value to the activities of others.

At a local level, the main focus of activity has been around facilitating local Action Partnerships, of which 14 are currently active. Each Partnership involves a mix of public, private and community sector representatives with central support from the Campaign team. Mini action plans are prepared for local activities which link in to the Campaign's overall Corporate Plan.

At a sub-regional level, the Campaign plays a number of roles. Examples include: a key role in Salford Quays Oxygenation project; overseeing research into water quality in the Manchester Ship Canal; and the organisation of various sub-regional fora and other events.

At a regional level, the Campaign is engaged with the Regional Park agenda, particularly the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park, and is also, in partnership with others, delivering ICREW projects, a European Union funded project initiative aimed at improving coastal and recreation waters.

At a European level, the Campaign is the UK lead partner for the Artery Interreg project, which is aimed at transforming post-industrial riversides, with specific involvement in the Speke Garston Coastal Reserve and the Stockport Riverside Park. The Campaign has made a substantial contribution to the national pilot for the Water Framework Directive in the Ribble and is involved in training and advising local authority planners on the Water Framework Directive through regular ENMaR seminars.

The Campaign also has a modest global involvement, the bulk of which relates to promoting its work at key events and conferences. It is also heavily involved in various communication activities such as the Source Magazine, its website, various conferences, fora and awards events.

#### Financial Performance

The Campaign receives annual funding of £0.5 million from Central Government, the majority of which is used to pay for core staffing costs and overheads. This funding enables the Campaign to draw in expenditure from a wide range of other public and private funding for projects and activity – in 2004/5 this direct leverage totalled approximately £1.25 million. In addition, the Campaign receives significant in kind contributions from a range of sources – in 2004/5 the contributions were estimated to have a financial value of £3.2m. When these in-kind contributions are included, the leverage ratio achieved is 1:9, greater than that achieved by many comparable organisations. The Campaign's ability to utilise its core funding to draw in substantial contributions from other public, private and voluntary sources is one of its key strengths.

#### Outputs and Outcomes

The Campaign's Corporate Plan identifies a set of annual activities and targets against which progress towards the three objectives are measured. Data for 2004/5 shows that the Campaign achieved or exceeded its target for around 70% of its performance indicators during the year. Whilst the framework provides an insight into some of the Campaign's achievements, it is recognised that the quantified outputs do not fully capture the Campaign's impact and added value

## **Impact of the Campaign**

### **1 Improving Water Quality across the Mersey Basin Area**

Whilst there have been substantial water quality improvements in the Mersey Basin catchment area, due largely to the Asset Management Programmes, it is impossible to quantify exactly the extent to which the Campaign itself has had an impact on these. The MBC's budget does not enable it to invest in a similar way to others in the direct water quality improvements which have occurred, though

despite this the Campaign should be credited with playing a significant role and impact under this objective. This has primarily been through its ability to bring people together, develop partnerships, become involved in projects, promote the benefits of water quality improvements and through clean ups at the local level. It is likely that most of this would not have occurred in the absence of the Campaign.

## **2 Encouraging and Stimulating Sustainable Waterside Regeneration**

The past 20 years have seen significant waterside regeneration throughout the North West but particularly in urban settings where the waterside is now seen as being a positive focus for regeneration. The Campaign has played a role in encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration, mainly through its involvement in sourcing funding for specific projects such as the EU Artery projects, and particularly in the initiation and development of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park. The development of effective working relationships with key landowners, developers and major employers such as Peel Holdings has been a key ingredient in this success. The Campaign has been an effective mechanism to bring organisations together and develop partnership-based solutions to waterside regeneration issues.

## **3 Engaging public, private and voluntary sector involvement in the process of water quality and waterside environments.**

A wide range of benefits and impacts on awareness and involvement resulting from the work of the Campaign were identified through the study. Their effectiveness has been demonstrated in a number of ways, including:

- involving people from a variety of levels in waterside regeneration,
- ensuring greater involvement at the local level, particularly through the Action Partnerships and the Mersey Basin Week,
- providing targeted and engaging public information on water related issues through such mechanisms as the Source Magazine, conferences and fora.

The overall diligence and professional approach of the Campaign team has underpinned the achievements. Whilst a number of positive impacts are evident, it was recognised that further improvements could be made with regard to how resources and activities are prioritised within this theme.

## **The Campaign Structure**

The Campaign underwent a significant restructuring in 2002 and current arrangements appear to be generally working well. The Campaign Council has a broad representation and the four specialist Advisory Groups enable a practical focus to be achieved on some of the Campaign's key areas of work. Areas for improvement include ensuring a consistent geographical coverage through the work of the Action Partnerships, in line with the resources available. Overall, the current structure of the Campaign appears appropriate, enabling a wide range of stakeholders to be involved and maximising the contributions of a smaller number of key partners.

## **Added Value of the Campaign**

The Campaign performs well against a number of added value indicators, particularly in relation to developing partnerships, achieving a high financial leverage and co-ordinating regional effort. In our view, the Campaign provides good value for money to the GONW and makes a valued contribution to sustainable development objectives.

Whilst inevitably improvements in water quality and waterside regeneration would have occurred without the Campaign, it has provided a focus and broker for many of the improvements which have taken place, playing a distinctive and valued role in partnership with United Utilities, EA and other. At the local level in particular, it is unlikely that partner and public involvement in waterside regeneration would have been as significant without the intervention of the Campaign.

## **Role and Funding Arrangements to 2010**

There is almost universal support for the Campaign to continue to receive core GONW funding to 2010. This reflects views on its impact and effectiveness in its current roles. Given the adverse effects that any withdrawal of funding would cause, it would appear sensible to continue supporting the Campaign to 2010, providing that added value continues to be demonstrated.

The objectives of the Campaign through to 2010 were considered to still be appropriate by the majority of consultees, and there is not a case for a significant switch in focus over the next 4 years. Key short and medium term priorities are detailed below under the three core objectives:

### **1 Improving Water Quality:**

- The Campaign needs to ensure that the momentum which has been created in the Mersey Basin in terms of water quality improvements is continued.
- There is a need for the Campaign to promote the benefits and needs of further water quality improvements.
- The Campaign has a role to play in creating partnerships, lobbying and brokering solutions, particularly in the case of the Manchester Ship Canal.
- The Campaign could usefully continue to influence, educate and work with partners on new water quality improvement legislation.
- The Campaign could potentially play an increased role in the environmental improvements of coastal areas.
- There is a role for the Campaign to continue to play with regard to the issue of aquatic litter.
- There is a continued need for clarity on the Campaign's exact role, added value and influence, and for this to be disseminated to partners.

### **2 Encouraging Sustainable Regeneration:**

- The Campaign could usefully engage with more developers, planners and a wider range of local authorities.
- The Campaign could potentially play a role in managing Artery 2 projects and future similar European and other projects.

### **3 Encouraging Public, Private and Community Sector Involvement:**

- Whilst the operation of the Action Partnerships has improved over recent years, there is need to ensure consistency of support and coverage across the Mersey Basin area.
- Impact at the local level relies significantly on the work of the Action partnership co-ordinators, highlighting the importance of staff retention.
- Mersey Basin Week should continue and has the potential to be even greater in scale.

- There is a continuing need to ensure a consistent process in relation to the Action Partnerships as currently some are active and having a large impact, whilst others are not active.
- The Campaign should continue in their efforts to engage with partners who they do not currently work with, but who may make useful contributions to the Campaign's work.
- The Conferences and fora should continue in the same vein, but with a greater focus on capturing the follow on benefits.
- Source Magazine and the Campaign's other communication activities are seen as beneficial, but there is a need to continually review and adapt their focus.

The Campaign should also continue to progress its work in producing a forward strategy which disseminates clearly to partners the areas where the Campaign will aim to work and where it will add value to 2010 and beyond. In parallel, there is a need to ensure that funding decisions are made as early as possible to enable both the Campaign and external partners to plan effectively and align activities and responsibilities.

## The Campaign's Potential Role Beyond 2010

Whilst most consultees in this study were in favour of the Campaign continuing to operate post 2010, there was much less consensus on whether the Campaign should continue to be centrally funded. The arguments put forward to keep the central government funding were strong and based mainly around the stability which it provides, the independence it offers and the added value which it brings. The negative opinions suggested that the Campaign had achieved its objectives and failed to see where it would play a role post 2010 and the rationale for its continued funding.

In our view, a case to continue government funding post 2010 does exist, but that the Campaign needs to be explicit about where it can most add value and the exact role it would play in specific areas. This study, together with the Campaign's own Strategic Review, has made a start on identifying an appropriate future funding strategy. The assessment of funding options needs to be completed in the next 12 months in order to provide a degree of certainty for both the Campaign and partner organisations. Other funding models should be explored to see if any lessons or examples of good practice can be identified for the Campaign.

## Recommendations

The key short and medium term recommendations on the future role and funding of the Campaign are:

1. GONW should continue to provide core funding for the Campaign to 2010 in order to deliver existing activities and objectives.
2. The Campaign should prioritise activity and resources on activities and partnerships which are not performing to their full potential e.g. a minority of Action Partnerships.
3. The Campaign should prioritise efforts to demonstrate the impact and added value of its activities, including exploring new methods such as the development of an influencing and enabling scale.
4. The Campaign should continue to develop its future Strategic Plan, particularly focusing on developing and promoting areas in which it adds particular value over and above other organisations.

5. The Campaign should, as a priority over the next year, establish a succession strategy. When considering future funding arrangements, both to 2010 and beyond, GONW and partners on the Campaign Council should make and disseminate decisions in a timely manner in order to minimise the negative consequences of delay.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and Objectives

The Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) has its origins in the early 1980s when conditions in the River Mersey had become so poor that, the then Secretary of State, Michael Heseltine famously described it as “a disgrace to civilized society”. The task of cleaning up the Mersey would be a vast one which would require a partnership approach and team effort involving partners from a variety of sectors and organisations.

The Campaign was set up in 1985 with a mission to facilitate the regeneration of the Mersey estuary itself as well as the river catchment area, affecting a population of more than 5 million people. In addition the Ribble Catchment area is now also under the remit of the Campaign. In recognition of the scale of the challenge, a nominal 25 year life span was specified for the Campaign up to 2010. Three core objectives were established at the outset, which have continued to guide its work to the present day:

1. Improving water quality across the Mersey River Basin;
2. Encouraging and stimulating sustainable waterside regeneration; and
3. Engaging public, private, community and voluntary sector involvement in the process of water quality and waterside improvements.

The impact of the Campaign and rationale for its continued involvement in each of these three areas is considered in depth as part of this evaluation.

## 1.2 The Campaign Structure

The Campaign's governance and delivery arrangements were reviewed in 2001 and, as a result of this process, changed significantly in 2002. Figure 1.1 overleaf details the Campaign's current structure. Overall strategic direction and oversight is now provided by the Campaign Council, which comprises representatives of a range of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders, with an independent chair under a ministerial appointment (currently Professor Peter Batey of Liverpool University). Supporting the work of the Council are four Advisory Groups focused on specific aspects of the Campaign's activities - Communications, International, Aquatic Litter and Voluntary.

Delivery of the Campaign's activities occurs through two bodies – the Mersey Basin Business Foundation and the Healthy Waterways Trust, the Campaign's charitable arm. The Foundation acts as the core of the Campaign, working with a range of partners and stakeholders to deliver programmes and projects at a range of different geographical levels that benefit the Mersey Basin area, including through a local network of Action Partnerships.

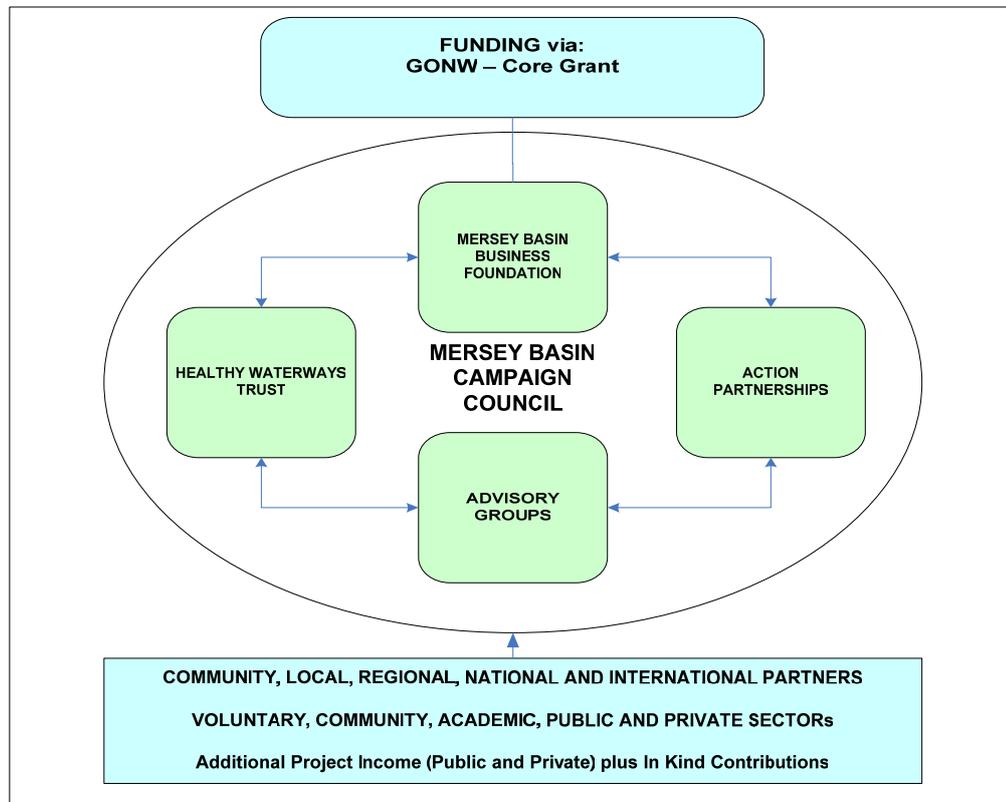
The core staff and operational costs of the Foundation are met by an annual grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government<sup>1</sup>, administered through GONW. A broad range of other contributions are secured from private sponsors and public and voluntary partners toward

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

specific projects and activities led or coordinated by the Campaign. The Campaign's incomes and expenditures are analysed in more detail in Section 2.3.

**Figure 1.1 – The Mersey Basin Campaign Structure**



## 1.3 The Study

### The Mid Term Review of the Mersey Basin Campaign

An interim review of the Campaign was carried out in 1997, looking at its progress over the first 12 year period. The key findings from the review were generally very positive, highlighting the improvements in environmental quality which have occurred in the MBC area, the extensive waterside regeneration activity which has taken place and the extensive business and community involvement in the Campaign's activities.

### Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this evaluation is to assess the impact and added value of the Campaign against its core objectives over the past decade and the role of government funding in enabling the objectives to be met. In addition, it considers its future rationale and role and the merits of central government continuing to fund the Campaign.

The brief for this study set out 4 key questions which should be addressed in relation to the activity of the Mersey Basin Campaign. These are as follows:

- To what extent is the MBC succeeding in achieving its objectives in relation to the delivery of relevant European, Central Government and regional Policies?
- What is the contribution of Government funding to that work?

- What still needs to be done between now and 2010 and 2015 to achieve European/government/regional/policy objectives?
- What lessons can be learnt from the last twenty years and current approaches and activities to guide GONW in advising ministers on whether a centrally funded MBC is the most cost effective way forward?

Our conclusions are presented in Chapter 6 along with recommendations on future role of the Campaign to 2010 and beyond. Whilst 2010 has nominally been seen as the end point for the Campaign, it is understood by the consultants that funding through to 2010 is not guaranteed. A focus for this study is to analyse in depth whether there is potential for the Campaign will provide added value over the coming years and if so, in which areas it should focus on over this period. This potential role is considered in Chapter 5.

### Study Method

The evaluation has comprised a mix of desk based research and consultation with a range of stakeholders and agencies involved with, or linked to, the work of the Campaign.

The key components of the study involved:

- An analysis of MBC activities through Corporate Plans, internal strategies, finance and output information, and other project-specific documentation;
- A review of the policy context within which the Campaign has operated and currently operates;
- Face to face and telephone consultations with 14 key individuals, including representatives from the Environment Agency, NWDA, Local Authorities, private sector partners, and community and voluntary sector groups; and
- Eight round table discussions which considered in depth some of the key aspects of the Campaign's activities including Action Partnerships, Mersey Basin Week, Source NW, the Artery waterside regeneration programme, and the Salford Quays Oxygenation project. In total, the views of 39 stakeholders on the Campaign were obtained through the round table discussions.

Detailed consideration was given to the most effective method for undertaking the evaluation. It was recognised that the evaluation would be primarily qualitative in nature, given the wide variety of work which the Campaign has been involved in and the difficulties in comprehensively quantifying its activity, influence and impact. Particular attention was given to how the round table discussions would be structured in order to best capture the impact of the Campaign's activity over recent years. The 8 themes were chosen in order to capture the work of the Campaign across all of its key objectives as well as involving consultees from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.

The remainder of the report is set out as follows:

- **Section 2: What the Campaign Does** – This section presents an analysis of the financial expenditure and performance against key indicators of the MBC over recent years, also looking at the role which the Campaign has played in various projects and programmes. It also provides an updated analysis of recent macro environmental changes in the MBC area;
- **Section 3: Water Quality and Regeneration Policy Context** – This chapter looks at how policy changes have influenced the work of the Campaign in its key areas and

also how the Campaign has influenced key regeneration policies and strategies within the region;

- **Section 4: The Impact and Added Value of the Campaign** – This section provides a detailed analysis of the key findings from the Campaign’s consultation process regarding the principal achievements, impact and lessons from both the Campaign as a whole and the individual projects over recent years;
- **Section 5: Development and Future Role of the Campaign** – This chapter considers what remains to be achieved from the original objectives along with the rationale for the continued core funding of the Campaign through to 2010 and the longer term role of the MBC. It highlights areas where a greater focus is required through to 2010, assesses the current governance structures and explores options for future funding; and finally
- **Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations** – The final section brings together the key findings of the evaluation. Our assessment is presented of the Campaign’s overall achievements and impacts as well as recommendations on its future role, priorities and funding.

A full bibliography outlining the sources of information used in this research, together with a full list of both the stakeholder consultees and participants in the round table workshops, are provided in Annexes A and B.

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## 2 What the Campaign Does

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### 2.1 Introduction

The Campaign's Annual Corporate Plan sets out the proposed activities, funding and outputs for the forthcoming year, as well as providing an opportunity to consider progress towards the three strategic objectives. Developed in conjunction with the Campaign Council and agreed by GONW, the corporate plan acts as the base reference document for considering the short and medium term performance of the Campaign. The 2005/6 Corporate Plan sets out the following medium term priorities:

- Focusing on areas where they can make a key contribution and add value;
- Continuing to set demanding targets and encouraging partners to do likewise;
- Pulling together evidence that demonstrates the achievement of the Campaign;
- Communicating effectively to different organisations – for example through the website; and
- Deepening links with people and communities – e.g. social inclusion aspect.

The Plan also identifies key priority actions for the year. Over the past 5 years, many of themes have remained constant, although the focus may have evolved. In 2005/6, the key priorities included contributing to the Water Framework Directive, helping to deliver the Artery and ICREW EU programmes and strengthening and increasing the outputs of the Action Partnership. A comparison of the Campaign's priorities and targets over time is provided in Annex C.

This section sets out a summary of the Campaign's current and recent activities, its financial and output performance, changes in the key indicators of water quality and waterside regeneration and the wider policy context under which the Campaign is currently operating.

### 2.2 Recent Campaign Activity

#### Introduction

The Mersey Basin Campaign seeks to achieve its objectives through involvement in a wide range of programmes and activities at a local, sub-regional, regional, national and European level. In some areas, the Campaign plays a major and often central role, in others its role and impact is more indirect. This spectrum is reflected in the five verbs used by the Campaign to describe their work:

- **Influencing** opinion and priorities across all geographical levels;
- **Enabling** projects to be implemented both by the Campaign and other partners;
- **Mediating** between different partners to provide common ground;
- **Enhancing** projects to enable added value and encouraging partners to aim higher; and
- **Communicating** the message of the Campaign and listening to new ideas and concerns.

Central to the Campaign's activities is the pursuit of effective partnership working, in recognition that a broad range of organisations have a responsibility and role in improving and regenerating the Mersey Basin. With no statutory responsibilities and a limited budget, it is the Campaign's work in securing partnership solutions to the water quality and regeneration challenges of the Mersey which is the key determinant of success and its continuing rationale. This is considered in more detail in Section 4.

### **Local Level**

#### **Action Partnerships**

A core element of the Campaign's work is to facilitate local partnership working to address local priorities within individual river catchments across the Mersey and Ribble Basins. This work is primarily conducted through a network of local Action Partnerships, formerly known as River Valley Initiatives. Each Partnership is tasked with preparing an annual plan setting out its priorities and how it is delivering the Campaign's overall strategic objectives. The partnerships comprises a mix of public, private and voluntary sector representatives supported by a Coordinator whose revenue costs are funded by a wide range of financial sources.

In the period since 1992, a total of 22 partnerships have been developed by the Campaign across the Mersey Basin area, of which 14 are currently active. These have been set up either as complementary to existing activity, in response to the ideas of other agencies or instigated by the Campaign itself. A full list of these partnerships is provided in Annex D. Recent high profile projects in which Action Partnerships have been involved include the Manchester Waterways Project at a sub-regional level, and more local initiatives such as the ODPM Liveability pilot in Glossop, the Dirt-busting Initiative in Skelmersdale and the litter removal project in Manchester City Centre, coordinated by Action Manchester Waterways.

In recent years, the focus has been on improving the quality and impact of activities managed and delivered by the Action Partnerships. Greater emphasis has been placed on maximising funding from external sources, assisted by a development manager located within the central Campaign team, as well as ensuring that local action plans are outcome focused and relate to the Corporate Plan. The Action Partnerships also play a key role in the delivery of the Campaign's Aquatic Litter strategy at the local level, including regular litter surveys within specific catchment areas and projects to clean up litter hot spots.

#### **Mersey Basin Week**

The Annual Mersey Basin Week has taken place every autumn for the past 14 years and forms part of the Campaign's awareness raising, media promotion and community engagement activities. It involves a broad range of activities to encourage people to improve and help maintain the region's rivers and watercourses. The most recent Mersey Basin week involved more than 4,500 people taking part in over 300 events. Events primarily involve small-scale environmental improvement initiatives across the Mersey Basin area including recycling projects, maintaining nature reserves and waterside clean-ups. The week involves input by volunteers from the public, private and voluntary and community sector and is corporately sponsored by MWH.

### **Sub-Regional Level**

The Campaign is involved in a number of high profile projects which are significant at the sub-regional level, such as the Speke Garston Coastal Reserve. Working with stakeholders to develop solutions on a sub-regional level is also a key part of the Campaign's work. Key examples include:

### **The Salford Quays Oxygenation Project**

The Campaign (through the Healthy Waterways Trust) together with United Utilities and the Environment Agency, worked with specialist aquatic science consultants on a unique project involving liquid oxygen being pumped into the Quays as part of a scheme to bring the waters back to life. This project has been of regional significance and the improvements to water quality in the Quays have been the catalyst for significant investment in the area over recent years. The Healthy Waterways Trust is also currently overseeing a significant body of research project into the water quality and subsequent solutions in the Manchester Ship Canal.

### **Sub-Regional Fora**

The Campaign organises fora at a sub-regional level. The rationale behind these fora is to engage local people from various groups and sectors, provide an opportunity to increase awareness and understanding of activities at the local level and the wider region, enable networking activity, showcase good practice and derive future locally based actions around waterside regeneration. The Mersey Estuary Forum and Ribble Forum are well established with similar formats. These consist of various presentations and workshops on activity which has been happening in the local area, the impact of future legislation, current research and future activities. A Cheshire forum was introduced in 2005 and a Greater Manchester Forum is planned for later in 2006.

### **Regional Level**

The Campaign is linked to a broad range of regional level organisations and partnerships involved in water quality and waterside regeneration. Having a regional presence and being seen as an ambassador for water issues in the North West is considered essential by the Campaign to achieve its long term objectives. For instance, the Campaign is represented on the environmental sub-group of NWDA and has extensive working arrangements with the Environment Agency. The Campaign has contributed to the revision of the Regional Economic Strategy and has also provided significant input into the Regional Spatial Strategy from the Regional Park perspective. A Campaign-wide forum is also well established aimed wholly at the voluntary and community sector.

### **The Mersey Waterfront Regional Park**

The Regional Park involves a major programme of investment in the Mersey Waterfront area including estuary development and management; tourism, sport and leisure; commerce; and other major projects contributing to the area's economic and environmental revival. The Campaign was centrally involved in the first phase of initiating and developing the Regional Park, including the "Pride in Our Promenades" initiative and is also currently involved in developing its second phase. As part of this, the Campaign led the project which involves enhancing and extending access to the urban waterfront. The Campaign provides staff time to the Regional Park, Action Mersey Estuary and the Mersey Estuary Forum are also key Campaign projects which link with the work of the Regional Park. The Campaign has been involved in the development of other regional parks such as the Weaver and the Ribble.

### **ICREW**

ICREW is a European Union funded project targeted at improving coastal and recreation waters. The MBC has established, and is delivering, projects in partnership with the Environment Agency, local authorities, and other organisations across the North West at 20 participating sites, which involve promoting the sites as recreational waters and tourism locations.

### **National and European Level**

The Campaign's primary activity at a national level is seeking to influence awareness and policy relating to waterside regeneration, including acting as a key consultee on new UK legislation. As many of the relevant policies emanate from the EU such as the Water Framework Directive, much of the Campaign's work in this area has been assisting in the interpretation and delivery of policy within the North West, in conjunction with bodies such as the Environment Agency and United Utilities.

The past 5 years has seen the Campaign's presence and role at a European level increase, primarily through its involvement in three trans-national projects, funded through the Interreg Programme Initiative. Whilst there have been some administrative difficulties, the Campaign's involvement in these initiatives has secured additional funding for projects locally as well as enabling the exchange of good practice. The key projects are:

#### **The European Water Framework Directive / ENMaR**

The Campaign is an active partner in the national pilot for the Water Framework Directive which focuses on the Ribble Catchment, located within the Campaign's geographical area. Commencing in 2003, this is an ongoing project looking at developing and testing new approaches and techniques in river basin planning and managing the water environment. In addition, the Campaign has developed a new EU INTERREG programme to work with local authorities to compliment the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (ENMaR). This has included training and advising local authority planners and working with European partners on water regeneration and land management issues relating to the Directive.

#### **The Artery Project**

The MBC is the UK's lead partner in delivering the European Union funded Artery programme, which involves 10 projects in focusing on redeveloping post-industrial riversides as their regions' arteries. This is a trans-national project, involving partners in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. The MBC is charged with managing the two UK projects - the Speke Garston Coastal Reserve Project and Stockport Riverside Park. The first of these involves developing vandalised and contaminated land into habitat for wildlife and green space for local people as well as re-building the Liverpool Sailing Club's premises. The Stockport Riverside Park involves transforming a post industrial landscape into a green and accessible space for the local community. The projects are due to be completed later in 2006, although the delivery of the Stockport scheme has slipped due to delays in securing land ownerships. A successor Artery 2 programme is currently under development, which may secure funding from the new Interreg programme.

### **Global Level**

The Campaign has a modest global involvement, the bulk of which relates to promoting its work at key events and conferences. Since winning the World River Prize in 1999, the Campaign's global profile has increased through the production of papers and attendance at international water related conferences such as The World Congress of the Regional Science Association International in Port Elizabeth, South Africa April 2004 and the IWA congress in Marrakesh in 2004. These fora provide the Campaign with valuable opportunities to disseminate/learn from good practice as well as networking and developing links with European and national partners. Going forward, the Campaign is contributing a paper to the 2006 World Water Week conference in Stockholm and is keen to enter a future round of the Stockholm World Water Prize competition. These activities could raise further the global profile of the Campaign.

### **Publicity and Communications**

Communication and education is a fundamental element of the Campaign's activity. A Communications Review and Strategy was produced in 2002 and the Strategy continues to be the key reference point for the Campaign's communication activity. The key elements of the strategy involve brand development, events and networking, publicity materials, media relations, online development and reaching out to young people.

The way in which the Campaign communicates with partners is tailored to meet the needs of different audiences – this is most evident in the design of conferences and other events. The importance placed by the Campaign on effective communications in recent years has increased. Going forward considerable potential is seen in the field of new media, with a new post to be funded in this area during the financial year 2006/07. An increased focus on young people is also a priority for the Campaign. The Campaign's involvement in various communication related activity is detailed below:

#### **Source NW Magazine**

The Campaign produces Source NW magazine on a quarterly basis. Originally the Campaigner, Source NW is a broad based publication which provides information on the environment, water and regeneration and promotes the regeneration of the Mersey Basin area. The magazine is distributed to approximately 11,000 people with a potential interest in waterside regeneration, such as politicians, business leaders, local authorities, and other key partner organisations. Distribution of the magazine has recently been rationalised ensuring that copies reach a carefully targeted audience.

#### **MBC Website**

A new MBC website was launched in late 2004 which is designed to provide wider and easier opportunities to disseminate news and information on the role of the Campaign and waterside regeneration in the area more generally. Increasing the use, and improving the functionality, of the website are key priorities in the medium term.

Other key elements of the Campaign's communications activities include:

- Maximising media coverage, particularly within local media for the work of the Action Partnerships;
- The Mersey Basin Campaign Annual Conference which attracts more than 200 attendees;
- The Annual North West Business Environment Awards; and
- One off events and dinners targeted at raising the profile of the Campaign's work amongst senior opinion formers in the public and private sectors.

#### **Policy Development**

The Campaign regularly develops submissions in response to various government consultations in related policy areas. Recent submissions have included engagement in the Periodic Review of Water Prices, the Freshwater Fish Directive, developing and implementing the Water Framework Directive in the North West, the revised North West Regional Economic Strategy and Manchester's Waterways Strategy.

## 2.3 Financial Performance

The Campaign received £520,000 in 2005/6 via the Government Office for the North West. This annual contribution is deployed primarily to meet the core staff and operational costs of the central team (Foundation). A typical breakdown of the Campaign's yearly budget is outlined in Table 2.1 below.

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Total Budget 2005/6</b>
Staff Costs & Chair	270,900
Travel & Subsistence	12,000
Training & Conferences	5,000
Professional Bodies	15,250
Office Equipment	14,000
Accommodation & Facilities	94,500
Business Meetings	12,000
Development	15,000
Community Development	80,000
Marketing	5,000
Studies and Research	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>533,650</b>

A direct financial leverage ratio of between 1:2 and 1:3 has been achieved since 2001, highlighting the effectiveness of the Campaign in securing funding from a range of sources – the increase in project income from 2004/05 was primarily due to the successful bids for Interreg funding.

The grant of £520,000 is non inflationary and has remained constant in nominal terms for the past 5 years. In order to allow staff costs to be uprated, this has required the Campaign to make continuous savings in other operational budgets. Whilst the relocation of the Campaign to a more cost effective location has helped to reduce the operational cost total, there is concern within the Campaign itself that further cost reductions will begin to adversely impact on some of the Campaign's activities. The future funding of the Campaign is considered in Section 5

<b>Source</b>	<b>2001/02</b>	<b>2002/03</b>	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>	<b>2005/06</b>
Project Income	764,896	755,477	744,922	1,244,096	1,265,627
ODPM Grant	435,000	440,000	470,000	520,000	520,000
ODPM Grant (MB Trust)*	80,000	80,000	50,000	-	-
Other Income	15,000	699	-	2,492	1,000
Bank Interest	14,000	8,694	6,947	10,325	9,581
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,308,896</b>	<b>1,284,870</b>	<b>1,271,869</b>	<b>1,776,913</b>	<b>1,796,208</b>

Source: Mersey Basin Campaign \* £80,000 is now set aside for community development activities from the Foundation, in lieu of the previous ODPM grant.

The financial contributions received by the Campaign only capture a proportion of the leverage generated, with significant indirect and in-kind contributions made by a number of partners. The Campaign has recently begun to gather information on other contributions and plans to continue to collect this information in future years. Table 2.3 overleaf presents the estimates for contributions in financial year 2005/06.

Category	Source	Value
Action Partnership contributions	Volunteer time, goods in-kind, staff representation at steering group meetings etc	£1,032,594
Professional Contributions	Secondments, legal work, audit etc	£64,000
Accommodation, Facilities & Overheads	AP co-ordinators housed with partners	£37,800
Project Contributions	Project value not captured in the MBBF/HWT accounts	£2,117,386
Healthy Waterways Trust	Expenditure by the Trust on MBC activity)	£36,911
Media Coverage	Equivalent commercial advertisement value	£150,616
<b>Total</b>		<b>£3,439,307</b>

The additional contributions comprise a mix of funding received by projects not captured directly by the Campaign's financial systems e.g. through the Artery programme and Regional Park and in-kind contributions to Campaign activities such as the work of the Action Partnerships. The approach adopted by the Campaign in calculating these contributions is robust and a conscious effort has been made to avoid double counting. The leverage ratios achieved are impressive and are key part of the added value obtained by the Campaign.

Project expenditure over the past 5 years has totalled £4.7 million, which is roughly equally split between the costs of the Local Action Partnerships' activity and other project expenditure. Only a small amount of funding to deliver projects comes from the yearly core grant, with the vast majority coming from other funding sources both public and private e.g. the Mersey Basin Annual Conference is funded by United Utilities, and Unilever contribute towards the production of Source NW Magazine.

Source	Total Project Expenditure (£)				
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
RVI / AP Project Expenditure	397,909	366,258	333,733	593,101	352,195
MBBF Project Expenditure	328,259	343,746	378,744	691,350	989,026
Government Grant	80,000	50,000	50,000	-	-
Payments to MB / HW Trust	14,100	8,694	6,947	10,325	9,581
Staff Costs & Chair	246,019	282,991	265,881	290,649	295,156
Running Costs Combined <sup>2</sup>	122,580	143,356	151,953	139,789	141,592
Development	78,980	76,876	9,849	20,596	15,828
Marketing	74,268	66,022	4,439	4,485	3,638
Studies and Research	2,896	5,186	8,124	12,484	10,356
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,345,011</b>	<b>1,343,129</b>	<b>1,209,670</b>	<b>1,762,779</b>	<b>1,817,372</b>

<sup>2</sup> Running Costs include – Travel and subsistence, Training and Attendance at Conferences, Professional Bodies, Office Equipment, Accommodation & Facilities and Business Meetings

The Campaign's overall financial performance is very positive, with the achievement of a high level of private sector sponsorship a particularly noteworthy feature. It is evident that the core grant is providing the foundation for a much larger package of activity and investment.

## 2.4 Quantified Outputs and Outcomes

The Campaign's Corporate Plan identifies a set of annual activities and targets against which progress towards the three objectives is measured. Whilst the framework provides an insight into some of the Campaign's achievements, it is recognised that the quantified outputs do not fully capture the Campaign's impact and added value – broader outcomes and qualitative benefits are considered in Section 4.

In order to provide an example, the achievement of targets in 2004/5 is set out in Annex E. This summary shows that the Campaign achieved or exceeded its target for around 70% of its indicators during 2004/05. As the Campaign's activities and targets evolve on an annual basis, it was not possible to undertake a trend analysis of performance. However, the data for 2004/5 provides a useful snapshot of the Campaign's effectiveness in this regard.

The summary of 2004/5 achievements presents a generally positive picture – key targets such as increasing the scale of Mersey Basin Week and increasing the activity of Action Partnerships were exceeded, albeit ensuring that 100% of active chairs are in place remains an ongoing challenge. Of the other targets which the Campaign did not meet, on the whole they were only just missed, for instance as regards the nominations and entries received for various awards ceremonies; website hits; and business and community engagement in the Artery project, the latter link to the delays in the delivery of the Stockport Riverside element of the scheme. Further commentary on how the Campaign is managed and evidence of its achievements collected is provided in later sections of the report.

## 2.5 Water Quality Changes in the Mersey Basin Area

### Context

The first of the Campaign's key core objectives involves water quality improvements in the Mersey Basin Catchment area. This section provides details of the recent trends in water quality over recent years in order to provide a picture of the changes which have occurred.

The aftermath of the industrial revolution led to rapidly declining water quality and diminishing fish stock in the river Mersey to the extent that it became known as one of Europe's most polluted rivers. In 1976, a target to achieve 10% dissolved oxygen levels across the length of the Mersey Estuary was set<sup>3</sup>. Low oxygen levels were still being recorded during the 1990s, but the situation has recently improved to the extent that oxygen levels were sufficient to support fish along the entire Mersey Estuary by 2002, and salmon are now known to occupy the waters as far upstream as the River Goyt.

Water quality has continued to improve over recent years, principally due to the massive investment made under Asset Management Programmes managed by United Utilities and the regulation of the Environment Agency. Investment levels have been as follows: £1.8 billion in 1990-95; £2.5 billion in 1995-2000; £3.0 billion in 2000-2005; and a projected £2.5 billion in 2005-10.

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<sup>3</sup> Source – The Environment Agency

## Measuring Water Quality Improvements

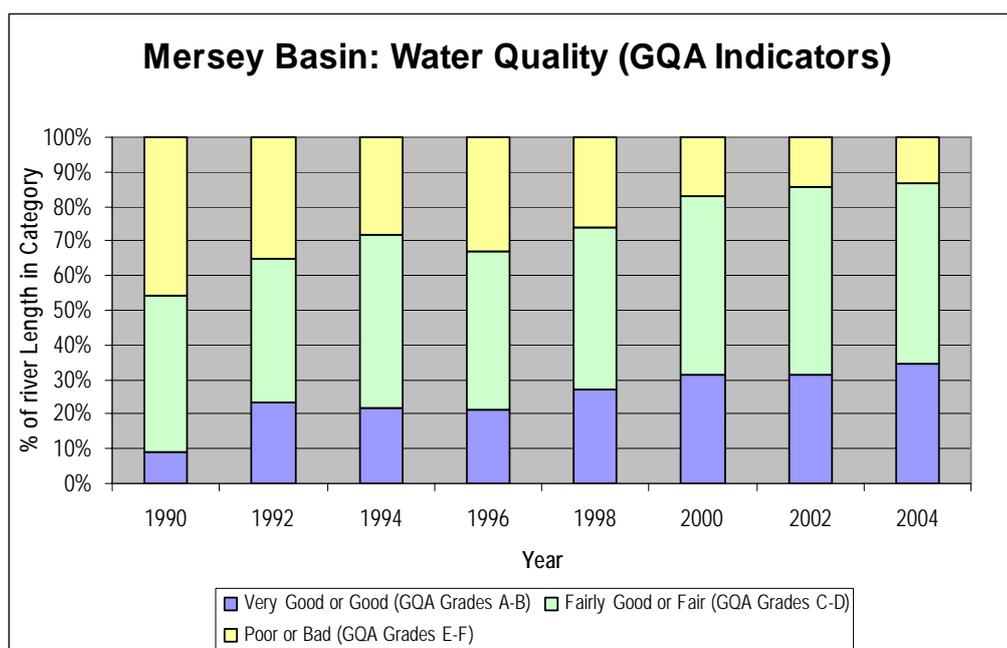
The Environment Agency undertakes water quality monitoring relating to general quality, dissolved oxygen levels, biology, nitrate and phosphate quality at a large number of sites across the Mersey Basin Catchment Area. The most recent measurements have taken place at a total of 604 sites across a stretch of 2760.8km. Earlier measurements, however, did not cover such a large stretch of the catchment area and measurements have not taken place at all of these sites over the past 15 years.

As a result, quality can either be measured across all of the sites, or for those sites for which a measurement has taken place every year. Whilst the former provides greater geographical coverage, for comparator purposes it is more useful to look at the same stretches compared over time. This is the method adopted in this section of the report, though data relating to all of the sites where measurement has taken place is provided in Annex F. In addition, as a result of changes in the way the Environment Agency measures water quality, base data can only be provided for 1990. The previous scoring system used in 1985 is now obsolete and no longer used. Furthermore, the base data for nitrate quality under current measurements is taken from 1990, biological quality under current measurements taken from 1995, whilst only recent nitrate measurements have been provided.

### General Water Quality (GQA Indicators)

As part of the water quality monitoring undertaken by the Environment Agency, General Quality assessment Indicators provide the basis for understanding overall water quality, with a ranking used from grades A-F (very good to bad). Figure 2.1 below details the changes in the quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin catchment area over the period 1990-2004 using this indicator.

Figure 2.1



Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across 1577.3km.

Significant progress has been made in the quality of the Mersey Basin's rivers since 1990. Across a stretch of nearly 1600 km, the water quality of rivers within the Mersey Basin Catchment has improved significantly. Over a third of rivers are now classed as good or very good. This represents a huge increase from less than 10% in 1990. Consequently, only 13% of the rivers in the Catchment area are currently classed as bad or poor in quality. This is a significant decrease from 1990 when nearly a half of the rivers in the area were classed as in the lowest two grades.

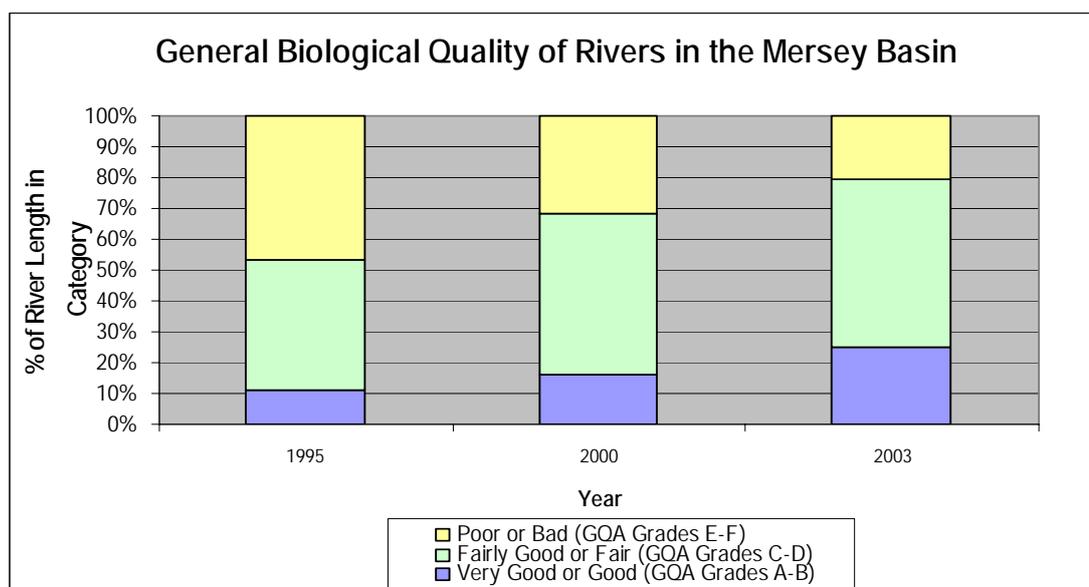
In summary, over the period 1990-2004 continued improvements have been seen to the general water quality of rivers within the Mersey Basin catchment area.

### Biological Quality

Figure 2.2 below sets out the general biological quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin over the period 1995 – 2005, with reference to stretches of water across nearly 1,300 km of the catchment area.

In 1995, approximately 10% of rivers were classed as very good or good in terms of biological quality. However improvements over the following 10 year period have led to over twice that proportion currently classed as good or very good. Conversely, the proportion of rivers classed as having poor or bad biological quality has fallen dramatically from nearly half in 1995 to just 20% in 2005.

Figure 2.2



Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 1286.2km

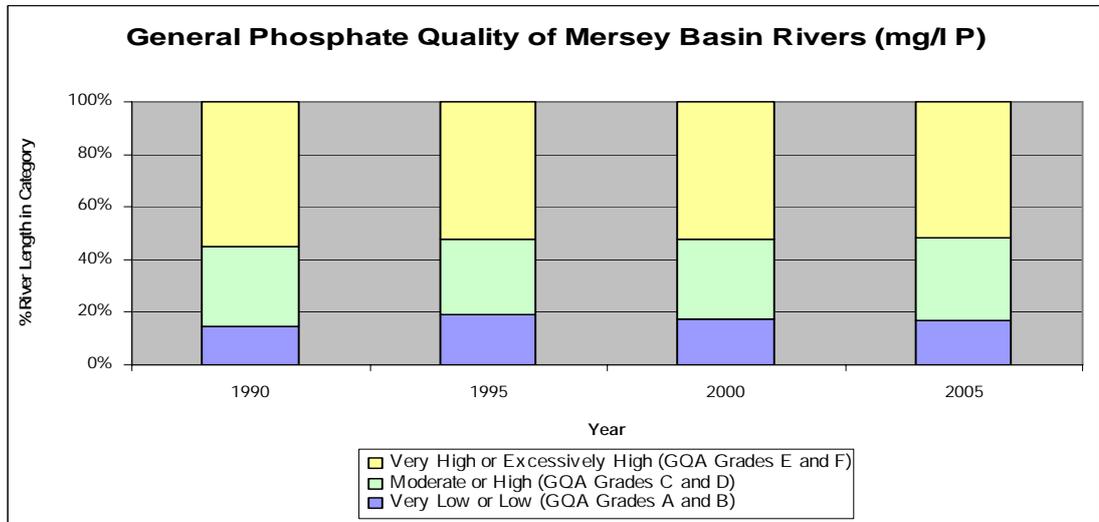
In summary the general biological quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin has improved significantly since 1995 to the extent that now 80% of the river is classed as fair or better in biological quality.

### General Phosphate Quality

Figure 2.3 overleaf details the general phosphate quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin Catchment area covering a stretch of over 1600km.

General phosphate quality in 2005 is similar to that in 1990. Currently, over half of the rivers sampled have a very high or excessively high phosphate quality, whilst less than 20% have very low or low quality.

Figure 2.3



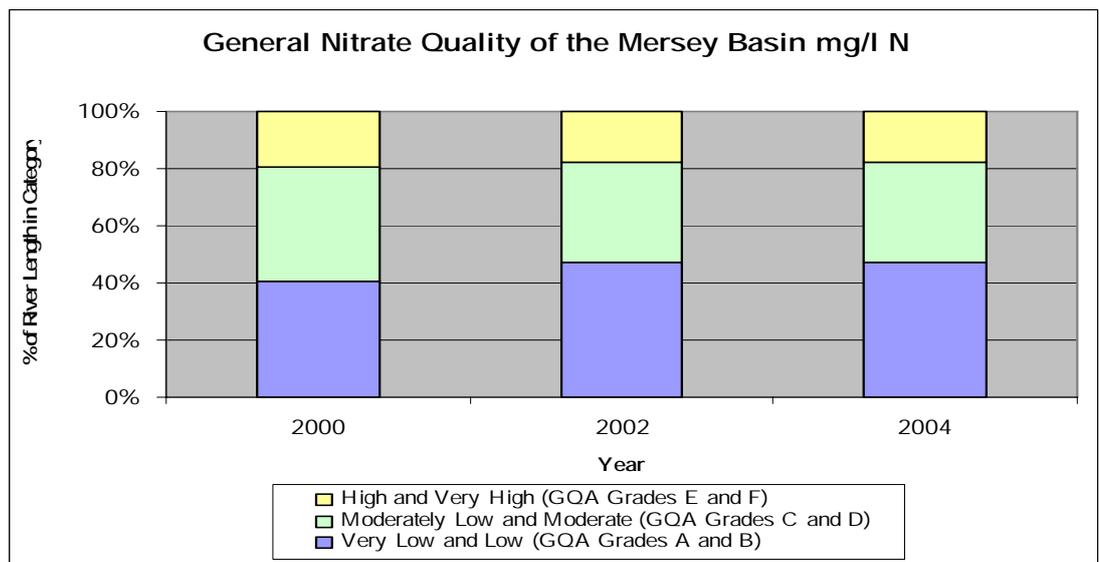
Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 1655.3km

Over the period 1990-2005, there have been slight fluctuations in the phosphate quality of the rivers, though these changes have been less than in other quality measurement terms. It should be noted, however, that the reduction of phosphate and other nutrient levels has not been a high priority for the water industry over AMPs 1, 2 and 3. These issues are priorities which are only now being addressed in AMP4, as well as the focus on more diffuse pollution sources such as agricultural runoff which will be driven by the Water Framework Directive.

**General Nitrate Quality**

Figure 2.4 below details the changes in the general nitrate quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin catchment area over the period 2000-2004. These figures refer to measurements taken at stretches of rivers covering an area of more than 2700km across the Mersey Basin Catchment area.

Figure 2.4



Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 2742.2km

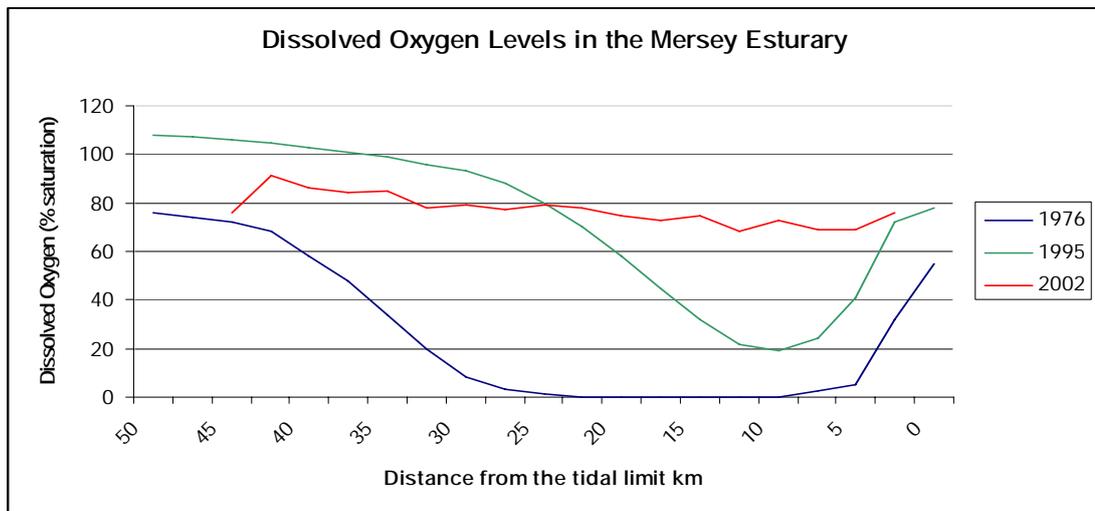
Data examining the general nitrate quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin only covers a fairly recent period, though over the past 4 years the proportion of areas with low or very low nitrate quality has increased slightly.

In summary, because of recent changes in the way nitrate quality is measured, it is not possible to analyse changes in the nitrate quality of rivers in the Mersey Basin catchment accurately over a significant period of time. This is one area where it would be useful to see further measurements in future years.

### Dissolved Oxygen Levels

Figure 2.5 below details the dissolved levels of oxygen within the Mersey Estuary between the sea and the tidal limit in Warrington from 1976 to 2002.

Figure 2.5



Source – Environment Agency

In the 1970s, there was effectively no dissolved oxygen in some stretches of the Mersey. This would prevent most species including fish from existing in the river, and would prevent any biological contact between the more healthy upstream reaches and the sea. The dramatic reduction in pollution from the Mersey has allowed oxygen levels to recover over time and thus permitted life to return. The presence of oxygenated water along the full length of the river has been instrumental in allowing the return of salmon to the Mersey Basin.

### Fish in the Mersey Basin Catchment Area

The sight of dead fish floating in a river is the simplest public indicator of inadequate water quality. Conversely, the presence of salmon is often cited as the indicator of good water quality. Whilst in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a plentiful supply of salmon in the Mersey, for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century salmon could not survive in the river, highlighting its poor water quality.

The work to improve water quality in the Mersey reached a critical milestone in 2001 when three salmon were caught in the Mersey - the first for fifty years. A further milestone was reached in 2005 when during a routine fisheries survey on a stretch of the River Goyt near Stockport, three juvenile salmon were caught. The fish are the first juveniles of this species to be recorded in the river for many decades and confirm that successful breeding has occurred.

The key issue for the further strengthening of the fish population is now no longer the water quality, but the barriers such as weirs erected across the river that hinder fish movement.

## 2.6 Waterside Regeneration Changes to the Mersey Basin Area

The second of the Campaign's core objectives is to secure the regeneration of waterside sites. Prior to 1985, many of the waterways and watersides of the North West had been derelict, undervalued and underused. However, along with the water quality improvements, the Mersey Basin Catchment area has seen significant levels of investment around the waterfronts. Twenty years on, waterfront locations are seen in an extremely positive light and have acted as a catalyst for significant urban and rural regeneration. This has involved a mixture of offices, housing, leisure and tourism attractions funded through a variety of public and private sector money and undertaken by a range of developers. The redevelopment activity has generally been characterised by partnership approaches and have included new buildings, the regeneration of existing buildings, landscaping and major environmental improvements. Notable examples are the major redevelopment schemes such as Castlefield in Manchester, Salford Quays, the Albert Docks in Liverpool, Wigan Pier and the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.

In 2002, research undertaken as part of the NWDA and Forestry Commission's Derelict, Underused and Neglected (DUN) land survey, together with data held within the National Land Use Database, identified over 3,800 DUN sites in the NWDA area, totalling an area of over 26,000 ha. Nearly a third of their number is within 25m of a watercourse, canal or coast, and when measured by area, such sites comprise nearly 45% of the total.

Despite the presence of such data, however, a standard way to accurately quantify the levels of sustainable waterside regeneration has not yet been developed. This is a gap in data which has obvious implications for the way in which the Campaign can be monitored against the second of its core objectives.

## 2.7 Community Engagement in Water Quality and Watersides

Increasing community involvement in actions to improve water quality and watersides is the third primary objective of the Campaign. Whilst a detailed baseline of community participation was not developed at the outset, there was a general recognition that in many parts of the Estuary community understanding, involvement and ownership of the water assets was limited.

Measuring the extent to which community involvement and ownership of the Estuary has improved more broadly as a result of the Campaign's work is not straightforward, and there was no scope within this evaluation to carry out extensive primary research with local residents and other groups. This research would be useful in any future assessment, possibly part of a wider study looking at community involvement in conjunction with other partners such as Groundwork.

There is a range of evidence from the Campaign's activities to show a growing level of community interest and involvement in waterside regeneration:

- There are now over 4,000 participants annually in Mersey Basin Week activities and events, a 100% increase in the past five years alone.
- New community and voluntary groups have been established to address specific problems of litter, fly tipping and security/safety in their immediate area.
- Participation has extended out from the core of activists in the voluntary sector, although residents from low income households and disadvantaged areas continue to be under-represented.

- Community engagement with, and ownership of, parts of the Estuary has increased, for example in the Stockport Riverside Park in the Heaton Mersey area of Stockport.

Overall, the Campaign's impact on community involvement has been substantial, and much of the increased participation and ownership which it has facilitated should be sustainable in the longer term.

## 2.8 Summary

The Campaign has performed well against its key finance and output targets, assisted by a more strategic and robust approach to the planning and delivery of activity through the annual Corporate Plan. With substantial monies and in-kind contributions levered in by the Campaign, it is evident that the core GONW grant is enabling a much larger programme of activity to be delivered.

The macro changes in the Mersey Basin are very positive, with substantial improvements in a range of water quality and other environmental indicators achieved over the Campaign's life and in the past decade in particular. Whilst these improvements reflect a number of major investments including the AMPs, the work of the Campaign has made an important contribution. This contribution is considered more fully in the following chapters of our evaluation.

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## 3 Water Quality and Regeneration Policy Context

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### 3.1 The Changing Context

At the time of the Campaign's inception, the rivers of the Mersey Basin were in an appalling condition. Much of the basin was devoid of fish life, and there was often a strong odour from certain reaches. As a result, the towns and cities in the Basin physically turned their backs on their local water bodies, access to the watersides was often restricted, and the people of the region lost their contact with the rivers. Whilst dealing with this legacy has been a considerable challenge, much progress has been made. The Mersey now supports a breeding salmon population, odours from the rivers are largely gone, and waterside sites now command a premium, with water serving as a catalyst to urban regeneration. In addition, people are increasingly visiting waterside sites, such as Salford Quays and the Mersey Waterfront.

It is important to understand the organisational and political changes that have caused this transformation. The start of the Campaign is attributed to the Toxteth Riots in 1981, the appointment of Michael Heseltine as minister for Merseyside, and the recognition that the state of Britain's urban areas was not acceptable. In parallel, other political drivers have been the growth of the "Green" lobby in British politics which has emphasised the need to improve the UK's natural environment, and the considerable reduction in "heavy" industry in the region which has led to a reduction in their deleterious emissions.

These changes are encapsulated by the sustainable development agenda. Since 2003, Ofwat, the water industry regulator, has had increased responsibility to embed sustainable development principles in its work in line with Securing the Future. More broadly, the "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" framework identifies a series of principles for protecting and improving waterways and other spaces, as part of a comprehensive approach to improving liveability and quality of life in communities.

In parallel there have been two other major drivers, the European Union and the restructuring of the water industry. Since the 1980s, a series of EU Directives have been established which, transferred in UK law, have created the necessity for the considerable investment in effluent treatment that has played a key role in the improvement in river water quality in the Mersey Basin. The main early legislation was Directive 91/271/EEC (OJ L135/40/91) concerning urban waste water treatment, brought into UK law by the Urban Waste Water Treatment (England and Wales) Regulations SI 1994/2841 and similar for Scotland and Northern Ireland. This required that all urban waste water was treated to an appropriate standard, and also set requirements for discharges from certain industrial activities and for the disposal of sludge. It was to meet these standards that the large investments in effluent treatment were undertaken.

The key current policy driver is the Water Framework Directive (WFD) 2000/60/EC. This rewrites existing water legislation into a new overarching programme to deliver long-term protection of the water environment and improve the quality of all waters – groundwaters and surface waters – and associated wetlands. It combines numerous important water related directives and sets ambitious targets for around water quality and river basin management in the UK which are required to be met by 2015.

In parallel with the Urban Waste Water Directive, the restructuring and privatisation of the Water Industry took place. This included the separation of the regulatory functions out of the former Water Authorities

into initially the National Rivers Authority in 1988, which was then combined with other environmental regulators to create the Environment Agency in 1996. The creation of the privatised water companies facilitated the considerable investment in new waste water treatment facilities required by the EU Directives.

In addition to the improvements in the quality of waterways, there have been increasing quality of life expectations of the general public. This has influenced not only the increased development of the waterways, but also more generally in terms of recreational activities. As water quality has increased, so have the expectations of the public and the demand for use of the waterways. The continued drive to further improve the quality and use of the waterways is likely to have an impact on the future activity of the Campaign. New technologies and advances in new media are also likely to have an impact on the Campaign's future communication and research activities.

The Campaign operates at different geographical levels, from the work of the Action Partnerships at the local level, through to its involvement with European projects and international events. The following sections place the Campaign in the policy context of the various geographies in which it works.

## 3.2 International

The World Summit on Sustainable Development which took place in 2002 sets out the national context for the Campaign, outlining the global challenges with regards water related issues. The main elements of these include issues around water supply, sanitation, the use of new technologies, integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans.

Other significant activity is occurring at a global level which links in with the activities of the Campaign. For example the International Hydrological Programme is a trans-national scientific programme led by UNESCO involving improving knowledge of the water cycle amongst member nations around the world and helping them to better manage and develop their water resources. The UN-wide World Water Assessment Programme aims to improve the supply and quality of global freshwater resources through: assessing the state of the world's freshwater resources and ecosystems; identifying critical issues and problems; developing indicators towards the sustainable use of water resources; and helping countries to develop their own assessment capacity.

The United Nations announced that the years 2005-2015 are to be the "Water for Life" decade in order to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water related issues. In addition to tackling global issues of water scarcity and access to sanitation and health, themes include integrated water resource management, trans-boundary water issues, the environment and biodiversity and pollution and energy. In addition, each year a different UN agency co-ordinates events for the World Water Day, with the latest event delivered by UNESCO under the banner "Water and Culture".

Whilst the majority of the Campaign's activities are focused at the European level and below, much of its activity complements international priorities around the management and development of water resources. The international effects of global warming, the need to generate new energy sources and the water efficiency agenda may influence the Campaign's activities going forward.

### 3.3 European

Water policy has always been a key element of the European Union's activity, however there was a recognition that EU water policy had become fragmented with a need for a single framework to address water related issues. The European Commission has therefore recently made water protection one of its main priorities and developed a new European Water Policy through the EU Water Framework Directive. The Framework Directive is now the operational tool which sets such objectives for future water protection.

The aims and work of the Mersey Basin Campaign are very closely related to a number of elements of the new EU Water Framework Directive. These include the aim to achieve "good status" for all waters by 2015; a water management based on a river basin approach; and citizen involvement in the process. The first of these fits in with the Campaign's first objective of improving river quality in the Mersey, citizen involvement is part of the Campaign's third aim and a river basin approach typifies the work of the Campaign. The Mersey Basin and Ribble Basin are part of the wider River Basin District set out by the Directive which includes much of the North West of England. The Campaign is involved in delivering the WFD for the UK's pilot catchment area of the Ribble.

The Water Framework Directive has key implications for the activity of the Campaign going forward, as do European funding streams and trans-national projects which provide the Campaign with the opportunity to become actively involved at a European level and develop new European partners. This has already been a feature of the Campaign's activity over recent years and is likely to be an area which the Campaign will further develop over the coming years. There is, however, limited focus on waterside regeneration within the Water Framework Directive. In contrast, the Campaign has consistently managed to provide a combined focus on both water quality and waterside regeneration within its core work.

One of the priorities of the European Sustainable Development Strategy, also developed by the European Commission, involves managing the world's natural resources more responsibly and stopping biodiversity decline. There is a review of the Strategy ongoing, which is due to be completed later in 2006. The revised Strategy will include priorities and actions to progress towards long-term sustainable development and integrating the domestic and international dimensions of sustainable development.

### 3.4 National

The UK's new Sustainable Development Strategy was launched in March 2005 and now provides a national context for the Campaign's work. Many of the principles set out in the Strategy accord with the Campaign's involvement in, and approach to, waterside regeneration e.g. a need for delivery at a local level and a focus on engaging people and communities to contribute to environmental improvements within their neighbourhood. Other relevant elements of the Strategy relevant to work of the Campaign include: engaging businesses in sustainable development, a focus on reducing waste, and joined up, partnership solutions to environmental issues.

Amongst recent urban policy, there has been an increased focus on the Liveability agenda which focuses on improving public space and the local environment and creating cleaner, greener, safer communities where people choose to live and work. Extensive funding was committed to a Liveability Fund through the Sustainable Communities Plan. The Campaign has been involved in the Liveability Pilot project in Glossop, which is one of the twenty seven Liveability pilot projects taking place across England. The

cleaner, safer, greener aim is to be achieved by service level reform within the local authority, with implications for the use of rivers and the adjacent waterside environment.

DEFRA is the government department responsible for all aspects of water including water supply and resources and the systems for regulating the water environment and the water industry. A policy document<sup>4</sup> setting out the Government's strategic vision for the direction of water policy was produced in 2002 highlighting the need for better integration between different strands of water policy. The Water Bill was enacted in 2005 and builds upon existing legislation to: further the sustainable use of water resources; strengthen the voice of water consumers; increase the opportunity for competition in the supply of water; and promote water conservation. These are all elements of the Campaign's current activities. In parallel, the 2005 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act provides greater powers to local authorities and others to address some of the problems affecting waterways, including waste disposal, litter and fly tipping.

OFWAT is the economic regulator of the water and sewage providers in the UK and set water prices for the region for the period 2005-2010. The next price review will take place in 2009. The organisation also works with the Environment Agency and Drinking Water Inspectorate to ensure environmental and drinking water quality standards. Water UK is the industry association representing all of the UK's water suppliers at a national and European level, engaging with government, regulators, stakeholders and the general public. Within the North West, the Campaign's role in assisting the implementation of national policy is primarily through engagement with United Utilities and the Environment Agency, as well as through GONW.

### 3.5 Regional and Sub-Regional

At a regional level, the revised 2006 Regional Economic Strategy sets out the economic priorities and future economic direction of the North West. The elements of it which relate to the Campaign include regional image, the environment and its wider regeneration activity. More specifically its greatest relevance is by highlighting the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park as a signature project in a heritage and tourist sense. The Campaign's involvement as a key consultee on the revised RES has helped to enhance the focus on sustainability within the final Strategy.

The Northern Way Growth Strategy was launched in 2005 in order to develop the full economic potential of the North of England and to narrow the gap between the North and South of the country. One of the key aims of the strategy is to create truly sustainable communities by promoting the region's quality of life and offering a desirable place to live and work. As part of the Northern Way, there has been an increasing focus on City Regions.

City regions have become an increasingly important focus for investment and policy makers, with the concept of an economic growth corridor covering the areas of the three northern Regional Development Agencies. The City Region Development Programme being an important element of the Northern Way Growth Strategy, with the success of the Northern Way based upon creating successful city regions which are effectively and efficiently linked. There are currently 8 city regions within the North of England, of which three (Manchester, Liverpool and Central Lancashire) are located within the geographical boundary of the Campaign.

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<sup>4</sup> "Directing the Flow – Priorities for Future Water Policy", The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2002).

A large element of the Government's Sustainable Communities plan of action in the North West region involves reviving coastal resorts, which could potentially link in with the work of the Campaign. The regional park agenda in the North West has gained significant momentum in recent years, with the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park soon to commence its second phase and the development of other such initiatives for example the Ribble Estuary Regional Park and the Weaver Valley Regional Park. The Regional Spatial Strategy (currently in draft) sets out the spatial development strategy for the region and involves ensuring a high quality environment. In each of these, the Campaign has played an important role in making the case for water and waterside improvements as a key strand of broader regeneration strategies.

### 3.6 Local

At the local level, Local Strategic Partnerships and Community Strategies now provide the policy context for the Campaign's work. The focus of NRF and other initiatives on the most disadvantaged communities has been mirrored by much of the Campaign's activities at a local level through Action Partnerships. Although not formally part of LSPs, the Campaign and Action Partnerships have developed links and influenced a range of policies relating to water and waterside regeneration, including for example the scope of waterside development.

The planning framework is also providing an opportunity for the Campaign to advise on sustainable development policies. The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the preparation of a new spatial strategy at the regional level, the draft of which is currently out to consultation, and Local Development Frameworks. The Campaign is beginning to play a role in influencing the content of LDFs to ensure that the value of water environments is recognised and opportunities for sustainable waterside development are maximised. There appears to be a role for the Campaign to play at a strategic level in providing guidance to local authorities in this regard.

### 3.7 Summary

The policy context within which the Campaign operates has evolved considerably in the past decade, and a key part of the Campaign's work has been to interpret, disseminate and raise awareness of the key developments in policies on water quality, sustainable development and other related issues to a range of interests across the Mersey Basin. With the Water Framework Directive and other EU and UK legislation continuing to raise the bar with regard to water and environmental standards, the work of the Campaign demonstrates a clear fit with the overall policy agenda.

Within the North West, the Campaign has played a valuable role in the development and delivery of the RES, draft RSS and other key policies, providing an additional perspective on a number of issues including the links between environmental quality, regeneration and economic performance. The Campaign's influence can be clearly seen in a number of strategies and policies which further the sustainable development of the North West.

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## 4 The Impact and Added Value of the Campaign

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### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have presented an overview of the Campaign's structure, involvement with recent activities and the changing policy context within which it now operates. In addition, commentary is provided around how the core funding has been spent, the leverage that has been achieved, the improvements to water quality and levels of waterside regeneration which have occurred over recent years and the agencies involved. This section of the report links the information obtained in the desk based research with the views obtained from stakeholders around the impact and added value of the Campaign under its core objectives, seeking to identify, and where possible quantify or link back to clear evidence, the impact and added value of the Mersey Basin Campaign.

The main focus is on the impact which the Campaign has had since the mid-term report of 1997, particularly over the past few years to the current day. The views obtained are those of 14 key stakeholders as well as 39 participants in 8 themed workshops. These themes were deemed the most appropriate in order to gain an understanding of the range and impact of recent Campaign activity, whilst the list of consultees was agreed by Government Office in co-operation with the campaign. Further information on the method used is set out in Section 1.3 and Annex B.

Whilst this report is structured with separate sections covering each of the Campaign's objectives, there is recognition that for many activities in which the Campaign is involved there is substantial overlap and linkages. Much of the focus during the workshops was on the particular theme, though views were also sought on the impact and future role of the Campaign more generally. In reporting views which were expressed, an indication of the level of feedback gained from the consultees on each issue is provided.

### 4.2 Impact of MBC Activity Against Objective 1 – Improving Water Quality

The first of the Campaign's core objectives is to "improve water quality within the Mersey Basin Catchment Area". Section 2.5 provided an indication of the extent to which water quality has improved within the Mersey Basin Catchment Area over recent years. The section highlighted that significant improvements have occurred across a number of indicators such as general water quality, biological quality, oxygen levels and the fish population.

Going forward, the Water Framework Directive provides the main focus in delivering improvements in water quality and the water environment. In this study, we focus on the Campaign's specific role in these improvements. The question sought to be addressed in the consultation process was to discover the role which the Campaign has played in these improvements, where they have added value and, if possible, to quantify their impact.

**There is widespread recognition of the improvements in water quality instigated by the substantial Asset Management Programmes.**

Most consultees were aware that substantial water quality improvements had occurred within the Mersey Basin Catchment Area during the past 20 years. Such improvements can principally be attributed to the major investment made through Asset Management Programmes managed by United Utilities and regulated by the Environment Agency. The role which these programmes have played in improving water quality through effectively dealing with a plethora of point source pollution issues was acknowledged by most consultees.

**The Campaign has also played a key role in the water quality improvements in the Mersey Basin.**

The Campaign claims that it has played a role in the improvements in water quality, primarily through its involvement in a number of specific water quality improvement projects, for example Salford Quays, and their lobbying, educational and partnership development role. Most consultees also felt that the Campaign had played a significant role in the region's water quality improvements, though it is difficult to quantify the Campaign's exact impact in this regard. This difficulty is recognised by the Campaign itself.

Particular areas where the Campaign's role under this objective has been highlighted through the consultation process included: the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project; overseeing the research project into water quality in the Manchester Ship Canal; working with local authorities to develop an effective response to the implications of the new European Water Framework Directive; lobbying for access to environmental funding during the 1990s; acting as an independent interface between United Utilities and the Environment Agency; acting as a catalyst to bring other partners together under the water quality improvement banner; generating activity; and promoting the benefits of water quality improvements.

**The Campaign played an important role in the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project, one which has had extensive, wide ranging benefits.**

Discussion with consultees regarding the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project revealed that the Campaign was seen as instrumental in the initial development and subsequent success of this project. It played a key role in brokering the scheme, acting as an independent body bringing together all partners and, through the Healthy Waterways Trust, acting as the third party body successfully managing, monitoring, supervising and overseeing the project. It was widely agreed at this discussion that, had the Campaign not been in operation at the time of the project, no other organisation could be thought of to play these distinctive roles. Salford City Council also recognised the role which the Campaign played in this project and its importance in the wider regeneration of the area.

As well as the water quality improvements, the wider benefits from this project have been extensive, including stimulating investment in the regeneration of the area both for housing and commercial uses; increasing in visitor numbers to the area by providing a clean attractive setting for significant cultural attractions such as the Lowry and Imperial War Museum; and the wider publicity and promotion gained for the Quays and sub-region through the sight of swimmers in the Quays as part of the Commonwealth Games and Salford Triathlon. In summary, the Campaign's role in overseeing and managing partners in this project has, to a large extent, helped to enable the water quality improvements and waterside regeneration which has occurred subsequently in the Quays.

**The Campaign, via the Healthy Waterways Trust, is currently playing an important role in overseeing research into water quality in the Manchester Ship Canal.**

The Campaign, via the Healthy Waterways Trust, is currently overseeing a £1 million research project into the water quality in the Manchester Ship Canal which it is hoped will lead to the water quality improvement needed in the Canal. Again, consultees viewed the Campaign as the most effective, independent body to undertake this role.

**The Campaign is an organisation which has played a key role in lobbying partners, developing partnerships and brokering solutions in an independent and effective way.**

The fact that the Campaign is viewed as an independent organisation capable of bringing partners together under a common goal of improving water quality was highlighted by a number of consultees. It is noticeable in this regard that consultees from the Environment Agency and United Utilities recognise and support the role of the Campaign and how it is operating, also acknowledging that it has assisted them in facilitating collaborative productive working relationships. The independence of the Campaign has enabled it to play such a role in a particularly effective way, enabling solutions to be made to various waterside regeneration issues.

**The activity of the Action Partnerships has had a beneficial impact on water quality at the local level through projects such as clean ups, environmental improvements and litter traps.**

At a local level, consultees familiar with the role of the Action Partnership co-ordinator saw their role as important in organising events and seeking funding for locally based water projects such as clean ups and litter traps. Feedback from consultees suggests that the Campaign's work at the local level has been effective, particularly around improving aesthetic water quality through the locally based clean ups which have taken place as a result of the work of the Action Partnerships. The Campaign has also been successful in establishing long-term funding support for measures such as litter traps and litter boats which will provide longer term solutions to this issue. These initiatives have arisen directly from the Campaign.

Although not a "water quality" issue as defined through the Water Framework Directive and other such policy, the Campaign has played an important role in addressing the problems of water based and waterside litter. This is an issue which falls outside of the statutory responsibilities of most agencies and which often requires a partnership approach to ensure that effective solutions are put in place in the short and long term.

**The Campaign has played a key role in communicating the implications of new legislation and research around water quality improvement in an effective way to local authorities.**

Some of the consultees from local authorities had been present at ENMaR seminars organised and run by the Campaign and deemed these extremely useful in outlining the planning implications of the new Water Framework Directive. In addition, largely through its communication activities, it was remarked that the Campaign has played a role in forcing water quality improvement up the agenda at a variety of levels. More information on the work of the Campaign at the local level and its communication activities is provided in Section 4.4.

**Our Assessment:**

“The Campaign has played a key role in the water quality improvements which have occurred within the Mersey Basin catchment, though the impact is difficult to quantify”

Whilst there have been substantial water quality improvements in the Mersey Basin Catchment area, due largely to the Asset Management Programmes, it is impossible to quantify exactly the extent to which the Campaign itself has had an impact on these. The MBC’s budget does not enable it to invest in a similar way to others in the direct water quality improvements which have occurred, though despite this the Campaign should be credited with playing a significant role and impact under this objective. This has primarily been through its ability to bring people together, develop partnerships, become involved in projects, promote the benefits of water quality improvements and through clean ups at the local level. It is likely that most of this would not have occurred in the absence of the Campaign.

### 4.3 Impact of MBC Activity Against Objective 2 – Encouraging Sustainable Waterside Regeneration

The second of the Campaign’s core objectives is to “encourage sustainable waterside regeneration”. Section 2.6 provided a brief commentary on the scale of the waterside regeneration activity which has occurred across the Mersey Basin Catchment area over recent years and the policy context section detailed the shift in recent policy towards more sustainable regeneration practices. The large scale waterside regeneration which has taken place is due to a mixture of large scale public and private investment in areas surrounding the waterways. These include significant investment by organisations such as NWDA, EP, Development Corporations and private sector partners including Peel Holdings. The question posed in the consultation process was the extent to which the Campaign and its activities had played a direct role in the sustainable waterside regeneration process which has occurred, and to seek to establish the extent to which it has added value to ongoing initiatives.

The Campaign has recently been involved in a number of waterside regeneration projects, one of which, the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project, has been mentioned in detail in the previous section. Other specific waterside regeneration projects captured through the consultation process where the Campaign has had an impact include the EU funded Artery projects at Speke Garston Coastal Reserve and Stockport Riverside Park and particularly its role in the initiation and development of Phase 1 of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.

The key points from the consultations with regards to the Campaign’s impact under objective two, encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration, are detailed in this section.

**The Campaign’s useful involvement in the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project.**

Section 4.2 above notes the important role which the Campaign played in the initiation, brokering of a solution and delivery of the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project which has led to improvements in water quality in the Quays and acted as a catalyst for significant investment around the waterfront.

**The Campaign has been an effective UK lead body for the EU funded Artery projects, particularly in relation to securing funding, developing partnerships, brokering solutions and engaging partners from all levels.**

The Campaign is the UK lead partner for the Artery project, which is a €12 million EU funded Interreg riverside transformation project. A discussion group on this project revealed the role which the Campaign has played in managing the two UK Artery projects, the Stockport Riverside project and the Speke Garston Coastal Reserve project. In both cases, the consultees who had been involved in these projects were very positive about the role which the Campaign had played. The first of these involved the transformation of a post-industrial landscape into a green and accessible space for the local community in Stockport. The Campaign was credited with securing European funding for Stockport Council and introducing them to the European funding and appropriate European partners. In addition, the Campaign was credited with providing the link between the Council and local community in this project through the formation of a reference group of local residents and interested parties. The Campaign secured funding for the redevelopment of the Liverpool Sailing Club site and surrounding area as part of the Speke Garston project.

Without this intervention, it was acknowledged that the redevelopment would probably not have occurred. The Campaign's role in both of these projects was seen as beneficial by all the consultees involved, particularly in relation to their ability to network and source funding, gain involvement of all stakeholders from businesses to local communities, work with local authorities and generate beneficial partnership approaches to implement solutions. It was suggested that the Campaign's involvement with European partners in the Artery project has been mutually beneficial, and that European partners have learnt significantly from the way in which the Campaign brings together public and private sector bodies under the umbrella of waterside regeneration.

Peel Holdings, a very significant land owner in the region, is a close partner of the Campaign and has a high regard for the way in which the Campaign sees the private sector perspective on waterside regeneration issues, particularly in relation to the Speke Garston Coastal Reserve project. The way in which the Campaign provides a link between large public agencies, private sector organisations and the local community in bringing all partners together was praised. Despite this notable example however, it was suggested elsewhere, however, that the Campaign's relationships and influence with developers and small landowners are actually quite limited and this issue is considered in the recommendations for future activity.

**The Campaign has played an important role in the initiation and ongoing development of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.**

The Mersey Waterfront Regional Park is a large scale waterside regeneration initiative which the Campaign has helped to initiate and since develop. Whilst the initial idea for the Regional Park emerged through the North West RES process, the Campaign played a critical role in underwriting and facilitating a research exchange programme which defined the scope and role of the Regional Park on Merseyside. In addition, the provision of staff time through a secondment and also through representation on the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park board is seen as a useful ongoing contribution to the success of the project in regenerating the area's waterfront.

At the workshop held to discuss the Campaign's role in the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park, it was felt by the majority of attendees that the Campaign's involvement in the project and the strength of partnerships it had forged around the Estuary Environment has played an important role in the success of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park over and above the other parks in the region. The Campaign has also been involved to a lesser extent in the initial development of the Weaver and Ribble Regional Parks.

**The Campaign has a varied engagement with developers, and certain local authorities.**

The previous section mentioned the way in which the Campaign has assisted local authority planners in interpreting new legislation and directives which, as well as improving water quality, links in with this second strategic objective. The Campaign has worked effectively with a number of local authorities on this, and other projects. It was also recognised that the Campaign works more closely with some local authorities than others and that it does not appear to be fully engaged with all of the local authorities within its geographical area.

In addition, whilst the Campaign has an established and effective working relationship with Peel Holdings and other private sector partners, it was suggested that it has not engaged as effectively with other developers in the region. These are two areas where, if engagement was increased, the Campaign could potentially have had a greater role in encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration.

**There is a particular difficulty in isolating and quantifying the Campaign's impact under this objective.**

The main impact which the Campaign has had under this strategic objective has been in the development and management of a number of specific projects and the way in which it acts as an independent organisation capable of bringing partners together, sourcing funding and brokering solutions around waterside regeneration.

Of the three objectives, the consultations have revealed that this is perhaps the most complex area with which to isolate the specific role and impact of the Campaign. A number of consultees could easily pinpoint particular impacts which the Campaign has had on the other objectives, but were less able to do so for this objective. There are broader statistical issues in measuring sustainable waterside regeneration which partly explain this, though the broader involvement with developers and some local authorities and the difficulty in isolating the Campaign's particular impact should also be recognised.

**Our Assessment:**

"The Campaign has had an impact on encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration mainly through its involvement in certain specific projects, though it is difficult to pinpoint and isolate the Campaign's influence under this objective"

The past 20 years have seen significant waterside regeneration throughout the North West, but particularly in urban settings where the waterside is now seen as being a positive focus for regeneration. The Campaign has played a role in encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration, mainly through its involvement in sourcing funding for specific projects such as the EU Artery projects, and particularly in the initiation and development of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park. In addition a major land owner in the North West, Peel, is supportive of the role which the Campaign plays. This highlights the dual focus of the Campaign, both on environmental improvements and economic regeneration. The Campaign is an effective mechanism to bring organisations together and develop partnership based solutions to waterside regeneration issues. However, whilst it is agreed that the Campaign has played a role in this regard, out of the three Campaign core objectives, this is the one where it has been most difficult to isolate the impact and identify where it adds value through playing a distinctive role that other organisations could not.

#### 4.4 Impact of MBC Activity Against Objective 3 – Public Information, Participation and Involvement

The third of the Campaign's objectives relates to public information, participation and involvement as a key element of creating more sustainable communities. In activity terms, the Campaign's impact can be readily measured, for example events held, participants involved, clean ups carried out and so on. However, this captures only part of the Campaign's role and impact. The areas where the Campaign has had a particular impact under this objective includes its Conferences and Fora, the Source North West Magazine, the awards events, Mersey Basin Week and its work at the local level particularly through the work of the Action Partnerships. The question to be answered here is how effective the Campaign is at providing public information and encouraging involvement in the waterside regeneration process, and essentially involves exploring the Campaign's various communication related activities and work through its Action Partnerships.

The key points from the consultations with regards to the Campaign's impact under objective three, public information, participation and involvement, are detailed below.

**Positive feedback has been provided on the organised and professional approach of the Campaign.**

To begin with it is worth noting the widespread positive feedback obtained on the organised and professional way in which the Campaign has co-ordinated events under this objective such as the conferences, fora and Mersey Basin Week. This has provided a good basis from which the Campaign can effectively impact upon its core objectives.

**The Campaign has engaged effectively with a wide range of partners.**

The consultation process has revealed one of the key successes of the Campaign to be in the way that it engages with a wide variety of partners across the waterside regeneration process. The vast majority of feedback obtained about the Campaign has been positive based on the views of a range of partners from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors. One potential area of improvement is the need to ensure that the whole of the Catchment area feels engaged in the Campaign's activities, particularly those in the Ribble Catchment. There is a recognition that the Campaign has made progress in embracing a wider geographical coverage, though it needs to ensure that this is not at the expense of its impact. In principle, the Campaign could usefully engage further with developers, certain local authorities, smaller businesses and more schools, if resources allow – it is recognised that the Campaign has had to prioritise its engagement activity in order to meet make best use of its resources.

**Mersey Basin Week is an effective mechanism for the involvement of an ever increasing range and number of participants in water based activities.**

Mersey Basin Week has expanded greatly in recent years, with the 2005 Week involving more than 4,500 people taking part in over 300 events. Applications for event sponsorship now exceed available funding.

Feedback was extremely positive from consultees who had been involved in the Week. It was seen as well organised and beneficial to have a particular focal point for local activity within the year. It was considered that the Campaign played a strong role in organising groups and enabling funding for activity through its relationships with corporate sponsors.

Particular benefits from the Mersey Basin Week which were highlighted include the way in which a variety of groups such as school-children, local and voluntary groups, the private sector and some socially excluded groups are brought together through the various activities. There are significant locally based environmental benefits from the various projects which have taken place during the week, such as clearance and clean up activities, tackling the aquatic litter problem, the promotion of recycling and raising awareness and the use of the waterside. There were few negative comments made regarding the Week and it was felt that the level of activities and media profile gained would not have been achieved to the same extent through dispersed activity. In addition the core sponsors MWH noted that it would be unlikely to sponsor such events at a local level to the extent that it does during the week without the role of the Campaign.

**Though serving different purposes and very different in nature, the Annual Conference and Sub-Regional Fora were seen as extremely beneficial events.**

The value of the various conferences, fora and seminars which the Campaign organises were also widely praised by consultees, both in terms of the way in which they were organised and co-ordinated and the increased awareness which they brought to a variety of people around use of the waterways. The mix of attendees at the annual conference was identified by consultees as being a particularly beneficial aspect of the conference, enabling people from all backgrounds to rub shoulders with key policy makers and key note speakers such as Jonathan Porritt and Catherine Day that they would otherwise not be able to do. Some consultees were, however, unsure whether specific actions came from the conference and this may be an area for the Campaign team to address in the future. Nonetheless, it was however seen to have a distinct purpose, with its value in influencing key policy makers such as senior staff, Council members, MPs and, to an extent, partners from the private sector whilst at the same time enthusing and motivating local activists.

The sub-regional fora in contrast were generally perceived to result in more actions such as developing new partnerships to take forward locally based projects, increasing peoples' understanding of the waterways and increasing participation at the local level. These were seen as an effective mechanism to give local people a voice and chance to express their views.

**The Campaign has played a beneficial role in engaging with partners to understand the implications of new legislation.**

The Campaign has organised and delivered seminars on the implications and understanding of the Water Framework Directive for local authorities as well as others on understanding the Government's position on Sustainable Drainage Systems. Feedback was obtained from participants in these seminars who suggested that they were very beneficial, particularly with regards to an increased understanding of complicated legislation, learning in a group and establishing new contacts for certain issues. Those consulted could not think of a similar organisation that could run these events as effectively as the Campaign. It was felt by a few of the local authorities consulted that they, in particular, often do not have the time and capacity to fully interpret such legislation and that there will always be future legislation and policy where the Campaign could play a role in interpretation, dissemination and provision of advice. Local authority involvement in these seminars was varied however, and one area where the impact of these could be increased is if those authorities who are not currently engaged become actively involved. It should, however, be recognised that the Campaign has made attempts to engage as many local authorities in the region in this process.

**The Action Partnerships play a valuable role at the local level, and the improved structure of these enables greater action to occur at a local level.**

The Action Partnerships continue to play a key role at a local level. Two of the round table discussions focused on the work of the Action Partnerships across the region. The role of the centrally funded co-ordinator was deemed as critical to the success of the partnerships in terms of the assistance provided to the chair of the groups and its members. Areas where they were particularly effective include gaining involvement from the wider community in locally based activities, and in this case their independence is seen as a particular bonus especially in terms of operating under less constraint than local authorities and in instigating action in a flexible and timely manner. The assistance which the co-ordinator provides the partnership with regards potential funding bids is seen as valuable. Where there is no co-ordinator in place, the scale of activity at a local level is perceived to slow down, suggesting that the retention of staff is key to the impact of the partnerships. Some felt that the restructuring of the Action Partnerships enabled greater action on the ground, and prevented some of the emphasis on process which limited the impact of some of the previous river valley initiatives. There was a recognition that some Action Partnerships are still more effective than others and also that there is not full geographic coverage, with some action partnerships not currently active. The work and beneficial impact of the Action Partnerships is also referred to under the impact on first of the Campaign's core objectives in section 4.2.

**Source Magazine is a high quality and beneficial production, the website has improved and other media activity has been effective though there is a need to constantly review the Campaign's communication activities to ensure beneficial impact.**

There was a consensus amongst consultees that the Source North West Magazine is a high quality publication which has an excellent content and a good style. Its quarterly publication and length are deemed appropriate. It is seen as a high level strategic magazine which reinforces the Campaign's objectives and image amongst key policy makers in the region.

At the local level, communication strategy is focused more on attracting local media coverage to raise awareness and provide public information. Whilst there have been some improvements in the way in which the Campaign distributes the magazine, it was felt that improvements could potentially still be considered in terms of the method with which it is distributed and the distribution list being more focused on its target audience. It was felt that the Magazine would be a major loss if it were to be stopped, however potentially this could free up resources to carry out other activity. Other areas of improvement suggested include: becoming more challenging in nature; including good practice examples from elsewhere to inform North West partners; potentially broadening its geographical focus; and undertaking an updated reader survey to gain feedback and suggest areas for future improvement.

Feedback from consultees with regards other communication activity suggested that the website has improved though there is still work to be done in this regard. Relations with the media could also continue to be usefully increased.

**The awards ceremonies organised by the Campaign both locally and with businesses are seen as beneficial for varying reasons.**

Feedback obtained through the consultations revealed some positive feedback about the awards ceremonies which the Campaign holds. Firstly, at a local level the Unilever Dragonfly awards were seen as a beneficial way in which to reward local people for their involvement with locally based waterside activity. In addition to this, the prize in terms of a grant to the winner enabled significant additional activity

to take place at the local level. The North West Business Environment Awards had a different focus, the few people with whom we consulted that were familiar with these felt that they were beneficial both in terms of encouraging businesses to become involved in useful environmental projects and also in engaging businesses with the Campaign's activities.

**Our Assessment:**

"The Campaign's work is particularly effective at the local level in terms of involving people in the process of waterside improvement, hosts well organised and effective conferences and fora and is professional and effective in the way in which it communicates to a range of partners".

Given that the organisation is effectively a "Campaign", it is perhaps no surprise that this third objective is the area where it has been easiest to pinpoint the effectiveness of the Mersey Basin Campaign and where it is felt to add particular value. The information obtained through the consultation process suggests that this is the objective under the which the campaign has had the greatest impact. The Campaign has been an effective mechanism to get people from a variety of levels involved in waterside regeneration, it has ensured greater involvement at the local level particularly through the Action Partnerships and the Mersey Basin Week, and it is extremely effective at providing accurate and interesting public information around water related issues through such mechanisms as the Source Magazine, conferences and Fora. The quality and professional approach adopted by staff funded through the core grant has enabled particular success under this objective. Despite the significant success in this regard, further improvements to the way in which activity under this objective is co-ordinated could further increase its impact.

## 4.5 The Structure of the Campaign

The Campaign underwent a significant restructuring process in 2002. A number of consultees expressed an opinion on the current governance arrangements as detailed in this section.

**The current structure of the Campaign is appropriate and enables significant and effective action to be taken against the three core objectives.**

Of those who expressed an opinion on the current governance arrangements, it was recognised that the structure has improved since the changes and now enables more effective action. It enables the Campaign to lobby and engage with partners at a variety of levels. The structure of the Mersey Basin Business Foundation enables good engagement with businesses, particularly the larger private companies such as Unilever and Peel. In addition, the Healthy Waterways Trust is an effective mechanism through which to operate.

**At the time of the restructuring process there was some level of disquiet within the voluntary and community sector, though no evidence has been found that this still persists.**

Feedback indicated that there was a significant level of disquiet amongst some community and voluntary groups which was around the time of the restructuring. However the voluntary and community sector consultees with whom we have spoken and who are currently engaged in the Campaign's activities have generally been positive about the restructuring process and there is currently an active voluntary sector advisory group.

**The Corporate Plan provides a detailed and clear focus for the Campaign's activity, though improvements could be made to the way in which the Campaign measures its impact against this.**

The Campaign's activities have been recognised by a number of consultees as being more structured and focused over recent years with the Corporate Plan providing a good discipline. One consultee, however, remarked that he was unsure of how the Campaign is measured against this, and others suggested that going forward there is a greater need than ever for the Campaign to be very clear about their future strategy and role. This will be explored in more depth in the following chapter.

**Consultees have been positive about the strength and calibre of the Campaign's staff.**

On a number of occasions positive feedback was provided about the strengths and effectiveness of the Campaign's chair and chief executive. As with any small organisation, the role played by a small number of senior individuals is crucial to its effectiveness. The continuity of both positions was highlighted as a positive feature. Positive feedback about the calibre and professional approach adopted by all staff from the Campaign centre to the local coordinators suggests that this is a key strength of the Campaign. There is still an ongoing need to make every effort to ensure that there is a strong and effective Campaign Council. The approach adopted by the Campaign is beneficial in terms of not purely acting as an environmental body, but also embracing the economic and social aspects of waterside regeneration.

**Staff Retention is an issue which the Campaign needs to keep under review.**

Staff retention has been an issue to varying degrees within the Campaign, both at the centre and at the local level. Through its Corporate Plan, the Campaign has recently set targets around staff retention figures to ensure that turnover is minimised in order not to negatively impact upon the way in which the Campaign operates. This issue is common to all organisations of a similar size to the Campaign and could have an impact on the Campaign's work in the medium term, particularly with future funding post 2010 currently unclear.

**The Action Partnerships are now operating more effectively under their new structures.**

Previous mention was made of the beneficial way in which the Action Partnerships have evolved, enabling more action at the local level and a better link to the Central Campaign activity and Corporate Plan. Action at the local level was seen by many as one of the Campaign's key strengths. However there is still more to be done as regards the way in which this network of partnerships is structured in order to ensure better coverage, continuity and impact across the Catchment area. It is apparent that the Action Partnerships are operating in some areas but not others, which in part reflects the decision of the Campaign to focus resources geographically.

**Our Assessment:**

“The principal reason why the Campaign continues to have a beneficial impact against its key objectives is the quality of its staff, and the current structure appears to be enabling this to occur”.

Evidence obtained from the consultations appears to suggest that the current structure of the Campaign is effective. This is highlighted by the way in which the Campaign operates successfully across a number of different areas and engages with a wide range of partners. Improvements however could be made in the way in which the Campaign measures its impact against its core objectives and also it is important that the Campaign continues to seek a consistent geographical coverage and impact particularly at the local level through its Action Partnerships.

## 4.6 Impact and Strategic Added Value of Core Government Funding

Impact and added value has been analysed in several different ways, drawing upon RDA and EU guidance and incorporating both quantitative and qualitative measures.

### **Is the Campaign effective at bringing partners together, developing effective working relationships and enabling funding to contribute to joint activity?**

One of the strengths of the Campaign, as highlighted through the consultation process, is the way in which it brings partners together, develops partnerships and brokers solutions to water related issues. Examples of this include the Campaign's role in the Oxygenation project, the two Artery projects and Mersey Basin Week. The core funding which gives the Campaign a significant element of independence helps enormously in this regard.

### **Does the Campaign add value by co-ordinating regional effort?**

The Campaign is effective at bringing partners together from a variety of different geographies and levels in order to foster collaborative working arrangements. The majority of projects with which it is involved tend to be at the local or sub-regional level rather than operating regionally, and it is effective in co-ordinating effort at these levels. In terms of co-ordinating regional effort, this is perhaps most effectively demonstrated through the conferences and business awards which the Campaign organises. The Campaign plays a number of roles which nobody else currently performs.

### **Does the Campaign have a high ratio of Public/Private Funding?**

Section 2.3 looked at the financial aspects of the Campaign activity, and in terms of direct financial contributions there are leverage ratios of between 1:2 and 1:3. Where in kind contributions are included this ratio rises significantly to between 1:6 or 1:7. The leverage ratios achieved by the Campaign are above benchmarks for similar organisations and a key feature of its added value.

### **Is the Campaign's activity relevant to Regional Needs?**

The Campaign's activity fits in with regional policy, as highlighted in Section 3. The Campaign could point to a few examples of where it is ahead of the policy context in terms of developing effective partnerships and encouraging involvement in the waterside regeneration process. Through the Action Partnerships, the Campaign has responded to local needs, whilst the Annual Conference and general promotion of the

North West and its waterside demonstrates its value to the Region. The Campaign however is not fully regional, and even within its distinct geography it still needs to ensure that partners from the Ribble and Lancashire continue to be fully engaged.

**Is the Campaign effective in co-operation, networking and facilitating the transfer of know-how?**

The Campaign works well at networking and enabling others to engage with a broad range of partners, for example through its conferences, seminars, fora and business awards. These are seen as particular areas of strength of the Campaign. In addition, through the ENMaR seminars in particular, the Campaign has proved effective in transferring knowledge, and is seen particularly by local authorities as an effective body to interpret and provide guidance around the implications of changing legislation and policy. This is an area however where the Campaign could potentially do more in.

**Are the Campaign's timescales and monitoring procedures effective?**

It was recognised at the start of the Mersey Basin Campaign that the problems which existed would take a significant time to resolve, and as a result the Campaign was given a significant lifespan. This has enabled the Campaign to address effectively such large scale problems and to develop its reputation and engage partners.

The way in which the activity of the Campaign has been monitored through GONW has also been effective. The relatively light touch approach adopted has enabled the Campaign to pursue key areas around its core objectives in an effective and proactive way, whilst at the same time the Corporate Plan is an effective way to plan activity. Improvements could be made in the way the Campaign collects evidence to support the impact of its activity, given that in some cases it has been hard to pinpoint the Campaign's exact role in projects. It is already doing this in terms of analysing its in kind contributions, and more ways in which this could be improved are detailed in Chapter 6.

**What would have happened without the Campaign? Would the same level of activity around waterside regeneration activity have occurred without the Campaign?**

One of the main elements of added value is to analyse whether or not the activity which an organisation has been involved in would have occurred anyway even if they had not involved. This is often a difficult issue to analyse. However in the case of the Mersey Basin Campaign it is perhaps best to divide this into the Campaign's 3 key objectives, though again it is noted that there are significant crossovers between these 3.

In terms of improvements to water quality, it could be assumed that this would have occurred anyway given the poor state which the Mersey Basin was in and the drive which there has been around water quality improvements throughout the country in the past 20 years through large capital investments. This would be a harsh view. This study has shown that without the key independent lobbying, partnership development and brokering role played by the Campaign, the improvements would not have happened within the same timescales and to the same extent.

Regarding waterside regeneration, the limited role and influence which the Campaign had over developers suggests that much of the waterside regeneration would have occurred anyway. This ignores, however, the key role played by the Campaign in a number of projects. For example without the Campaign's role in leading the two EU funded Artery projects, it is doubtful whether the same level of waterside regeneration in Stockport and Speke Garston would have occurred. Similarly, the Salford Quays project has been the catalyst for large scale regeneration and it was remarked that had the

Campaign not been in existence to play its lobbying and partnership development role in this project, a similar such organisation would have had to be invented to play this specific role.

The third objective around public information, participation and involvement is perhaps the most straightforward objective around which to look at what would have been achieved without the Campaign. Whilst there are a significant number of local voluntary and community sector groups operating at the local level, it is doubtful that the same level of activity would have occurred at the local level through events such as Mersey Basin Week and the Action Partnerships if the Campaign was not active. Much of the contribution made by others is because of the focus provided by the Campaign through its activities. It is acknowledged that when there is no co-ordinator in place at the local level, activity drops and during Mersey Basin week the activities would not have occurred and indeed the sponsorship obtained had the Campaign not organised these events. The high level of publicity gained through the various communications activities and events would largely not have fallen into the direct remit of any other organisation.

The next chapter looks at the potential negative impact which may occur if the Campaign does not receive further core funding and also explores other options for continuing the Campaign's activities. In terms of added value, it appears that much of the work which the Campaign has been involved in over recent years has been additional, rather than replacement activity.

**Our Assessment:**

"In summary, the majority of the evidence collected suggests that the Campaign does indeed have strategic added value, which has been enabled by the core government funding and the independent banner under which it operates".

There are areas where the Campaign could be more effective in this regard, for instance in the way in which the Campaign collects evidence of its activity, the monitoring procedures adopted and in ensuring full geographical coverage. It should be recognised that there is a very good case to say that the Campaign offers good value for money and the core funding generates significant added value which could be used when looking at the Campaign's future role and funding arrangements. Whilst it is likely that there would still have been improvements in water quality and significant waterside regeneration without the Campaign, it has still added value in this regard and contributed to the improvements. In addition, particularly at the local level, it is unlikely that public information and participation in the process would have been as significant without the intervention of the Campaign. Overall, the Campaign has played an important role in helping to take forward Government objectives and policies on watersides and sustainable development.

## 4.7 Summary on Impact and Added Value

Throughout the consultation process, the majority of views obtained were positive regarding the past impact of the Campaign. Most felt that the Campaign has operated effectively over recent years and has been delivered in a professional manner.

Based on the views expressed, the Campaign has had its greatest impact in terms of developing partnerships, overseeing, initiating and developing particular water related regeneration projects, acting as an independent body promoting the benefits of an improved water environment and enabling

involvement at the local level. The impact of the Campaign is easiest to pinpoint under the third of the objectives around participation and involvement, though it has had a range of indirect impacts under the other two areas. The Campaign's impact under the first two objectives is slightly more ephemeral, involving projects as and when they emerge. This is understandable given the nature of the objectives and the limited direct impact which the Campaign can have on improving water quality and waterside regeneration given the budget under which it operates. In terms of direct impact and activity there has been a greater impact under the third objective, whilst at a higher level the impact has been more around catchment management, acting as a broker, influencer, lobbyist and developer of partnerships.

In summary, the Campaign has played a role in the improvements which have occurred across the Mersey Basin under all of the 3 objectives to a varying degree. Even though the Campaign banner was on certain activities, it wasn't always easy to pinpoint their exact impacts. This reflects the methodological challenges faced by all evaluations of this nature. In addition to the key role played in water quality improvements which have occurred, it is likely that the significant public information and participation in the process would have occurred to the same extent without the Campaign.

Being able to better demonstrate impact is not about the Campaign collecting more data, as the Campaign's impact derives from its role of as enabler and influencer. In this evaluation, we have utilised the views of stakeholders and other participants in order to attribute impact and added value. The development of a scale to measure influence and enabling linked to the identification of specific outcomes may be one option for the Campaign to better demonstrate its impact.

The next chapter looks at:

- whether the Campaign still has a role to play across these objectives up to 2010 and beyond,
- whether there is still a rationale for continued government support ;and
- What activity may potentially be lost, particularly through to 2010, if this ceased.

## 5 Development and Future Role of the Campaign

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### 5.1 Introduction

When the Mersey Basin Campaign was established, it was recognised that the task of cleaning up the Mersey would be a vast one, requiring a partnership approach operating over an extended period of time. Whilst no formal agreement has been in place, a 25 year lifespan was identified for the Campaign, from 1985 to 2010, though there is no contractual commitment to this time period. At the start of each financial year, the GONW formally agrees the funding for the upcoming financial year when it is satisfied that the Campaign's Corporate Plan is in line with current policy and provides central government with value for money.

Through the consultation process, views have been sought on whether there is a continued rationale for the Campaign to continue under current arrangements through to 2010, the role which the Campaign should play over this period in delivering the key remaining elements of its objectives and where the Campaign can add particular value over this period. The views obtained are highlighted in this section, whilst the nature of any potential future role and funding rationale for the period of 2010 to 2015 is explored in more detail in the following section.

### 5.2 Rationale For and Against the Continuation of Core Funding to 2010

#### Reasons For Continued Government Support Through to 2010

The key points arising from discussions concerning the rationale for continuing the current core government support to 2010 are detailed below.

**There is a general presumption that core government funding would continue to 2010.**

It is important to note that there was an initial presumption amongst most consultees that the Campaign would receive core government funding through to 2010. Whilst not necessarily providing a rationale for core government support through to 2010, a withdrawal of funding prior to 2010 could have an impact on other partners' activity if an alternative suitable funding mechanism were not found. This is particularly the case for those organisations that are closely engaged with the Campaign and its activities.

**The vast majority of consultees were in support of the Campaign continuing to receive core government support through to 2010.**

Most consultees were in favour of the Campaign receiving similar core funding arrangements through to 2010. Only a very small minority of consultees questioned whether the Campaign should continue to receive the same support over this period. The reasons provided by these few consultees related to questions over what role the Campaign is playing and impact it is continuing to have under its current objectives given the improvements which have occurred. These are detailed at the end of this section. Whilst these comments should be noted, it is necessary to reinforce the point that the vast majority of consultees had:

- Positive views on the impact of the Campaign to date;
- Positive views on the role which it is currently playing; and
- Support for the Campaign to continue undertaking similar work over the next few years.

Given the momentum that has been built up and the projects which it is currently working on, most consultees would prefer the Campaign to continue to enjoy similar funding arrangements at least over the period to 2010.

**There would be a negative impact if funding was to be withdrawn prior to 2010.**

There is a danger that if Government support was withdrawn for the Campaign before 2010, it would not leave adequate time for other alternative funding to be sought and this would affect the impact which could be gained through continuing existing projects and new areas of activity. The consultation process identified that most other partners, though still committed to engaging with the Campaign and providing project specific funding, do not wish to provide core funding. This is not surprising, reflecting a general move away from core funding of organisations of this kind by larger bodies such as the NWDA, as well as in this case an expectation perhaps that Government funding would be unlikely to be withdrawn. In all likelihood, alternative funding for a number of the Campaign's specific projects would continue even if core funding was withdrawn. In any event, there was a consensus that an appropriate time period was required for the Campaign to identify alternative funding arrangements, should core funding be withdrawn.

**Government Office for the North West has reviewed and appraised the core yearly funding of the Campaign on a yearly basis for a significant period of time.**

The relatively light touch approach adopted by the GONW has been an effective way of monitoring the project. As part of its role, GONW has continued to play an active role in the development of the Corporate Plan. On each occasion, it has been recommended that the yearly grant be awarded to the Campaign. Whilst this does not necessarily provide a reason to continue funding through to 2010, it does demonstrate that the Campaign has been focused on activities within their 3 objectives and benefits are being achieved.

**There are a significant number of key projects and activities which the Campaign can play a significant role in over the years to 2010.**

Particular projects and areas of activity which the Campaign could usefully be involved in through to 2010 are detailed in depth under each of the strategic objectives in Section 5.3. A summary of these are detailed below. The Campaign was specifically highlighted as being well positioned to undertake work in these areas.

- Ensuring that the momentum which has been built up over recent years in terms of water quality improvements continues;
- Overseeing the research into the Manchester Ship Canal and any subsequent actions;
- Influencing, educating and working with Partners on the new water quality improvement legislation;
- Assisting in meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive;
- Achieving a greater focus on issues such as aquatic litter and on coastal areas;

- Further engagement with developers and other local authorities to further encourage sustainable waterside regeneration;
- Potentially managing Artery 2 and other similar projects;
- Continuing to provide public information through Source Magazine, Conferences and Fora, the website, awards ceremonies and other such events;
- Further increased activity and involvement with Mersey Basin Week; and
- Continuing to improve the structure of the Action Partnerships to ensure greater geographical coverage and continuity at a local level.

These are identified as key areas which the Campaign is best placed to deliver on over the next 3-4 years. Without the stability and independence which core funding brings to the Campaign, it is extremely doubtful whether there would continue to be the same beneficial impact in these areas through to 2010.

**The Campaign should continue to receive core Government funding through to 2010 because of the independence which this provides.**

The core government grant provides the Campaign with a degree of independence within the North West, and enables it to achieve a regional focus. Such a position would not necessarily be achieved with alternative funding arrangements e.g. via a group of local authorities. A withdrawal of funding prior to 2010 could lead to the Campaign having to seek alternative funding arrangements which would make it less independent and may have an effect on their ability to engage with a wide variety of partners, develop effective partnerships and broker solutions.

**There is a lack of alternative funding sources which could be put in place quickly and efficiently over this period of time.**

Potentially there are other funding sources which the Campaign may pursue. These may include seeking funding through local authority budgets, a closer relationship with Ofwat or using for funding from bids on a project by project basis. These are explored in Section 5.5. Recommendations are also made that the Campaign should actively seek to develop a potential exit strategy through exploring the benefits and drawbacks of other possible funding arrangements. Overall, it is debatable whether an equally stable funding source could be established in the short term, where Government funding to be withdrawn.

### **Reasons Against Continued Government Support Through to 2010**

Very few negative opinions were expressed as to why the Campaign should not continue to receive the same level of core funding through to 2010. Most consultees were in favour of, and indeed expected, that the Campaign should receive core funding through to 2010. The reasons why it may not be appropriate for the continued core funding of the Campaign through to 2010 are detailed below. It should be noted that these represent the views of a small minority of stakeholders.

#### **The Mersey is no longer a special case**

Some consultees felt that the Mersey Basin area was no longer a special case in terms of the water quality improvements which were needed. Significant investment, combined with the work of the Campaign, had led to a situation whereby the Mersey Basin had seen significant improvements in terms of both water quality and waterside regeneration. As a result the original case for the Campaign's existence, the fact that the Mersey needed special assistance, was no longer the case.

### **The Campaign's core objectives have been achieved**

Because of the improvements which have been seen across the area, it could be viewed that the Campaign's original objectives had been largely met. This was particularly the case with the first two objectives. There had been significant water quality improvements in the area and though aware of the additional water improvement requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, some consultees were unsure of the value of further water quality improvements. Similarly significant waterside regeneration had taken place over recent years and the role of the Campaign going forward under this objective was seen as limited.

### **A lack of clarity about the Campaign's continuing role**

A small number of consultees suggested that they were unsure about the role which the Campaign would play to 2010. Most assumed that the Campaign would continue to be involved with activity such as the Mersey Basin Week, the Action Partnerships and other specific water related projects through to 2010. Views on the Campaign's role post 2010 were more diverse:

- a small minority considered that there was no rationale for the Campaign to continue;
- a majority saw a role for the Campaign to continue its existing activities with the potential to expand into areas such as water conservation, although there was some uncertainty as to whether these new roles were appropriate ones for the Campaign to play.

Overall, there was no consensus on the future direction of the Campaign.

### **Other funding options would be more appropriate**

A possible case for the Campaign not continuing to receive core government funding to 2010 would be that there are more beneficial funding options for it to pursue. This, may for instance, involve local authority funding or direct from partners' own budgets. The independence of the Campaign and how this helped it to work so effectively was mentioned by a number of consultees would counter this argument.

Overall, the majority view and balance of evidence was that the Campaign should receive core Government funding through to 2010. On the whole consultees considered the £0.52 million spent on the Campaign to represent good value for money and saw little benefit in withdrawing this funding prior to 2010, particularly in view of the negative impact on the work of the Campaign.

#### **Our Assessment:**

In our view, it would be sensible for GONW to continue to support the Campaign to 2010. If support was lost in the short term, there is a distinct danger that much of beneficial activity highlighted through the consultation process may be lost. The consensus from the consultation process was that the added value benefits and value for money which the core government funding provides more than outweighs the benefits of seeking alternative funding.

## **5.3 The Role and Activities of the Campaign to 2010**

The Campaign through its Strategic Review is currently looking at its future role to 2010 and beyond. The view of the Campaign is that it needs to strengthen and broaden its main aims to provide the basis for planning its activities over the coming years. This would involve retaining its existing three aims, whilst

also adding two further aims; the efficient use of water and promoting a strategic and coordinated approach to the planning of water resources and land use. These proposals are based on evidence suggesting that firstly there will be increasing pressures on water supplies in the North West and the need for more efficient use of existing supplies, and secondly that there is a need to adopt an integrated approach to water and land use planning.

Under the assumption that the Campaign would continue to work under its current funding arrangements to 2010, consultees provided their views on what should constitute the key components of the Campaign's role over this period.

Broadly, consultees felt that although a lot has been achieved under the Campaign's three objectives over recent years, these were still relevant to varying degrees and there is still a need for it to focus on these objectives in the future. The main conclusion to emerge from the consultations was that the Campaign is an effective body and is having a beneficial impact. As a result, those activities with which it is currently involved are worthwhile taking forward, albeit there are a number of areas for improvement. A key message coming out of the consultation process was the need for the Campaign itself to set out specifically and more clearly the areas in which it is operating over future years and also to communicate these to partners. The Campaign is largely doing this through its Strategic Review which needs to continue and be disseminated to partners in an effective way.

#### **Strategic Objective 1 - Water Quality Improvements**

Sections 2.5 outlined the considerable improvements which have been made around improvements in water quality and Section 4.2 isolated and defined the role which the Campaign has played in this success. The key views obtained through the consultation process with regards the future work of the Campaign to 2010 under the first objective are detailed below.

**The Campaign needs to ensure that the momentum which has been created in the Mersey Basin around water quality improvements is continued.**

A significant number of consultees suggested that although considerable water quality improvements have been made, there is a role for the Campaign to play in ensuring that this momentum is not lost. As standards have increased, so too have people's expectations and desires for further improvements. There is still some way to go over the coming years for instance to meet the Water Framework Directive's water quality standards, and as a consequence the Campaign has a role to play in this. This may involve continuing to:

- Act as an independent broker and lobbyist;
- Build partnerships and networks; and
- Promote further improvements.

Some consultees did, however, suggest that the Campaign needs to be specific about the future worth and requirements of further water quality improvements. This is detailed in the next point.

**There is a need for the Campaign to promote the benefits and needs of further water quality improvements.**

Given that significant improvements had already occurred, some consultees suggested that the Campaign needs to be specific about the future value of, and need for, further water quality improvements, promoting this to a range of partners at different levels, for instance in influencing partners

at a policy making level, or continuing to promote the message at a local level. This links in with the need to ensure that momentum is not lost.

**The Campaign has a role to play in creating partnerships, lobbying and brokering solutions, particularly in the case of the Manchester Ship Canal.**

Specific roles considered important for the Campaign under this objective include playing a role in the water quality improvements in the Manchester Ship Canal and continuing advice and interpretation of new legislation and directives to partners. The Campaign's future role in overseeing the research into the water quality improvements in the Ship Canal is seen as an important area of activity for it to continue. This issue was considered by many to be the North West's largest remaining water quality problem. In addition, once the research is completed and solutions have been suggested, the Campaign may usefully be able play a role in developing partnerships to broker solutions around these issues in a similar way to its role in the Oxygenation project, particularly given the range of partners likely to be involved and the fact that a number of local authorities have a direct interest.

**Influencing, educating and working with partners on new water quality improvement legislation**

The Campaign's role in delivering ENMaR seminars to representatives from local authorities was effective, and given that legislation and policy is continually changing, this is one area in which the Campaign could continue to play an active role, focusing particularly in engaging those partners who are not currently involved such as certain local authorities and developers. Feedback from local authorities in particular suggested that this would be a continued useful role for the Campaign.

**The Campaign could potentially play an increased role in the environmental improvements of coastal areas.**

A specific aspect mentioned which the Campaign could look to explore through to 2010, and possibly beyond, involves a focus on improving the environmental qualities in coastal areas of the North West especially given stringent requirements which may be put in place in the future. The Campaign has had some involvement in coastal areas of the North West, notably through the ICREW research project and presence on the North West Coastal Forum. This is an area where there are potentially a number of roles for the Campaign to play, including the development of River Basin Management Plans as part of the implementation of the WFD.

**There is a potential role for the Campaign to continue to play with regard to the issue of aquatic litter.**

The final area where the Campaign's role is considered important by a number of consultees is the area of aquatic litter. Local authority consultees mentioned that their input into activity around these issues has been beneficial in the past, but there was still a feeling that no organisation is fully taking the lead on this major issue and that the Campaign may be best placed to do so.

**There is a continued need for clarity on the Campaign's exact role, added value and influence, and for this to be disseminated to partners.**

Of the consultees that queried the role of the Campaign over the coming years, the first objective was one area which was cited as needing some clarity with regards the exact role of the Campaign given the improvements which have already taken place and the programmes managed by United Utilities that are addressing the issues. This highlights the need for the Campaign to be specific and list strategic areas

within this objective where it will be involved and the exact role which it could have that would add particular value.

### **Strategic Objective 2 – Encouraging Sustainable Waterside Regeneration**

Sections 2.6 outlined the considerable improvements which have been made around encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration and Section 4.3 isolated and defined the role which the Campaign has played in this success. The key views obtained through the consultation process with regards the work of the Campaign to 2010 under this objective are as follows:

**Involvement in waterside regeneration is the least clear objective as regards previous impact and future distinctive role which the Campaign can play.**

The second objective appeared to be the one under which consultees were less able to identify the Campaign's impact and distinctive role, with the exception of a small number of key projects such as the Artery project and Salford Quays Oxygenation project. This appears to be replicated in discussions around the Campaign's future role to 2010. The Campaign particularly needs to ensure that it effectively plans activity and finds a distinctive role to play under this objective, which adds value and integrates with other partners' activity.

**It has been identified that the Campaign could usefully engage with more developers, planners and a wider range of local authorities.**

On the basis that the Campaign is to continue working under this objective, then one area noted where it could usefully look to explore over the coming years is to further develop its relationships with developers and local authority planners with whom it does not currently engage. With the increased use of sustainable urban drainage systems, this is an area where the Campaign could play a role given its knowledge and experience in this regard - positive feedback from consultees was obtained on the work they have already done in this area.

**The Campaign could potentially play a role in managing Artery 2 projects and future similar European and other projects.**

Feedback from consultees involved the Artery project praises the role which the Campaign has played in leading the two North West projects. Their role was beneficial in terms of securing funding, introducing organisations to European partners, effectively brokering solutions, developing effective partnership approaches and being the link between the public, private, voluntary and community sectors and the general public. The second phase of Artery is currently being developed and the Campaign is well placed to play a role in this in future. More broadly, the Campaign is well placed to build upon and extend the benefits from its network of EU partners.

### **Strategic Objective 3 – Public information, participation and involvement**

Section 4.4 isolated and defined the role which the Campaign has played under its third strategic objective, whilst the key views obtained through the consultation process with regards the work of the Campaign to 2010 under this objective are as follows.

**The third objective is the one where the Campaign's impact has been most effective and future role is most clearly defined.**

This objective is the one for which feedback was the most positive. Even the few respondents which were less positive on the role of the Campaign felt that this was the area under which the Campaign operated

most effectively and fills a gap which no other organisation does to the same extent. In addition, both the Campaign and consultees see this third area, particularly at the local level, as vital to the future role of the Campaign over the coming years.

**Whilst the structure of the Action Partnerships has improved over recent years, there is potential for further improvements to their structure**

The Action Partnerships have improved over recent years, both in the amount and impact of activity and in the way in which they are organised. Through to 2010, consultees hoped that this work would continue in a similar way. Areas where the Campaign may consider improvements include:

- Putting measures in place to ensure a more consistent geographical coverage over the coming years given that a number of the Action Partnerships are currently inactive;
- Ensuring more consistency of impact – there is a recognition that some are operating better than others; and
- A need to ensure that no partnerships or co-ordinators feel isolated.

There is evidence of recent increases in training and development of Action Partnership co-ordinators, though this also needs to continue to be pushed from the centre. With the correct conditions in place to enable the co-ordinators to do what they are best at, namely co-ordinating effective locally based projects, the Campaign can continue to have a beneficial impact at the local level over the coming years.

One potential idea which was discussed during consultation was an expanded direct role for Local Action Partnerships in the design, management and maintenance of waterfront environments. This approach would see the establishment of local area trusts. Local Authorities would provide core revenue funding to the trusts, which would then take responsibility for the enhancement, maintenance and management of the waterfront environment. The local trust vehicle would also act as a vehicle for attracting private sector sponsorship, contributions from new developments (via Section 106 contributions) and would also be able to apply to apply for other public sector and charitable grant funding support as well as revenue funding from MBC. This option should be explored more fully by the Campaign.

**Mersey Basin Week should continue and has potential to achieve an even bigger scale and impact.**

Mersey Basin Week was well regarded by all the participants consulted, and is identified as a priority for the Campaign to continue in the future. The scale of activities undertaken during the Week has expanded over recent years, though feedback obtained from consultees suggested that the Campaign should continue to try to expand this as much as possible, both in terms of the numbers of people and projects involved. Areas of improvement which were suggested include undertaking further work with schools where possible to involve as many young people in the process as possible. In addition, it was suggested that aquatic litter was an area where the Campaign could further develop its role, and it is particularly important to consider this in the context of the future activities of the Action Partnerships.

**There is a continuing need to ensure a consistent geographical process.**

In terms of participation, a number of consultees mentioned that the Ribble and other parts of Lancashire still feeling slightly detached from the Campaign's activities with the Campaign seen more as a Manchester / Liverpool focused organisation. These views may not necessarily be wholly representative of the broader opinion. The consultations also revealed positive feedback around the Ribble Forum,

activity in Blackburn and the Action Partnerships in Lancashire; however it was noted that some authorities did not engage with the Campaign's activities. It is an area which the Campaign should continue to be aware of, especially given that the decision was taken to retain the Mersey Basin Campaign's name and brand. Retaining the name and brand presents a number of challenges for the Campaign in securing effective engagement across the Mersey basin area, not just in Lancashire.

**The Campaign should focus on working with those partners with whom they are not currently engaged.**

Whilst a strength of the Campaign is the wide range of partners with whom it works at a variety of levels, the consultations have revealed a number of groups with whom consultees felt that the Campaign could usefully engage more fully. These include further engagement with teachers and schools, local businesses, certain local authorities and developers, though it is recognised that there are resource constraints to what the Campaign can do.

**The Conferences and fora should continue in the same vein, but with a greater focus on maximising their impact.**

Many consultees suggested that the Campaign's role in organising, co-ordinating and facilitating of the conferences and fora was one of its best features and that the Campaign is good at keeping in touch with people from all levels. The Annual Conference provides the Campaign with a good platform to promote its own activities and those around improving the waterways, and the mix of participants is a particular feature of the Conference praised by consultees.

The Sub-Regional fora, whilst very different in nature from the Conference, provide greater showcasing opportunities for local voluntary and community sector groups to discuss locally based issues. More direct impacts are felt to come from these sub-regional fora. As a consequence of the success and usefulness of these events, it is suggested that they continue to be a prominent part of the Campaign's activity over the coming years. Going forward, the Campaign should continue to check progress in subsequent years of recommendations and actions agreed at previous events. In addition, they should ensure a focus on engaging those local authorities and other organisations particularly from the private sector that are not currently engaged in such events.

**Source Magazine and the Campaign's other communication activities are seen as beneficial, but there is a need to continually review their focus and content.**

In terms of communication, the Source Magazine was considered a high quality and useful production. The Campaign is keen to further develop links with the media, particularly at the local level as well embrace advances in communications activity and new media. There was broad overall support for the Source Magazine to continue, though suggested areas for improvement included the further rationalisation process of its distribution to ensure it reaches its key intended policy makers, possible inclusion of good practice case studies of activity carried out elsewhere in the country and it would be useful to gain additional feedback from the readership about the quality, content and usefulness of the publication. In addition, it was suggested that over the next few years there should be an ongoing review of the Magazine to ensure that it continues to be effective and represent value for money, for example considering areas such as possible outsourcing of more of the content of the Magazine, refining the distribution list and incorporating more thematic articles and discussions.

**Our Assessment:**

There is almost universal support for the Campaign to continue to receive government funding to 2010. This reflects views on its past impact, current role and recognition that the Campaign had a lifespan to 2010. Given the disruption that withdrawal of funding would cause it would appear sensible that funding is continued to 2010 providing that the ongoing conditions are met each year.

The objectives of the Campaign through to 2010 were considered to still be appropriate by the majority of consultees, and there is not a case for a significant switch in focus over the next few years. The Campaign should consider the areas of improvement suggested, and continue to progress its work in producing a forward looking strategy which disseminates clearly to partners the area where the Campaign will aim to work and where it will add value to 2010, and potentially beyond. There is a particular need to ensure that decisions around funding up to 2010 and beyond are made as early as possible to enable both the Campaign and external partners to plan effectively and align activity and responsibilities.

## 5.4 The Role of the Campaign Beyond 2010

Whilst there was overwhelming support for the Campaign to continue to receive core government funding through to 2010, views on funding post 2010 were more mixed. The majority of consultees would be in favour of the Campaign existing post 2010 and a significant number of people put forward suggestions as to why the Campaign should continue to receive core government support post 2010, including the added value benefits, the need to ensure that momentum is not lost and potential for the Campaign to play a role in areas such as water efficiency.

There were others who were slightly more unsure about the continuing rationale for receiving core funding given that:

- significant improvements had been made;
- the Mersey was longer seen as a “special case” in terms of water quality; and
- momentum for waterside development has now been embedded within the Mersey Basin area.

There was also an uncertainty about the exact role which the Campaign would play post 2010 and potential duplication with other agencies.

### **Reasons for Continued Government Support**

Consultees provided a number of reasons why Government funding should continue post 2010, primarily because of the independence, value for money and added value which the current funding arrangements enable. These are detailed below:

#### **The need to continue to build on the momentum gained over recent years.**

One of the key arguments put forward by consultees for continuation post 2010 was that because of the significant improvements in water quality, increases in waterside regeneration and levels of participation which had recently occurred in the Mersey Basin, there was an ongoing need for the Campaign to continue to operate under its current arrangements so that momentum would not be lost.

**The Campaign plays a distinctive role in the waterside regeneration process of the North West that will still be needed going forward.**

Under its current objectives, it could be argued that the Campaign plays a distinctive role that no other organisation does, and this is one that is likely to continue to be needed through to 2010. Table 5.1 below summarises the role of various other organisations which are operating within the context of the Campaign, and details the number and variety of these organisations:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Role and Responsibilities</b>
United Utilities	Managing and operating the regulated water and wastewater networks in North West England.
The Environment Agency	Regulating - the leading public organisation for protecting and improving the environment.
Local Authorities	They have limited statutory responsibility for managing the waterways, but these operate within their boundaries.
The Voluntary and Community Sector	They have no overriding remit in this regard, but are active at the local level in water based activities.
NWDA	Has a focus on co-coordinating economic development and regeneration in the North West.
British Waterways	The responsibility for managing and caring for canals and rivers within its ownership.
Peel and other developers and landowners	Owning, investing in and developing land adjacent to the waterside, includes owning key assets such as the Mersey Ports and Ship Canal.

The Campaign's role within this structure would be acting as an independent body tasked with developing partnerships, lobbying, brokering solutions, promoting further water quality improvements and waterside regeneration.

**There are significant benefits of the Campaign being seen as an organisation with a regional focus who operate with a degree of separation from GONW**

One of the key benefits of the Campaign, identified by numerous consultees, was the regional focus and semi-independent status (or perhaps perception of independence) which the core government funding enables the Campaign to have. This enables the Campaign to operate as an effective body in developing partnerships, brokering solutions and enabling activity to occur at a local level without a statutory role which may lead to excessive bureaucracy. Without this status, the Campaign may operate less effectively under certain circumstances. In addition, there is a danger that without the stability provided by this core funding, the Campaign could potentially be drawn into a situation whereby it becomes more funding driven, rather than operating effectively within its core objectives. A mix of funding sources might avoid this problem.

The perception of independence of the Campaign was also seen as helping it to receive some of its funding. Representatives from two of the Campaign's corporate sponsors doubted whether they would continue to support the Campaign if it did not continue to receive core government funding, demonstrating an added value of core funding. The Campaign's status is also important in securing and retaining a high number of volunteers.

**A "value for money" and "added value" argument exists for the continued central funding of the Campaign.**

The points related to “added value” and “value for money” form the basis for many of the arguments put forward to continue core government funding. Section 2.3 looked particularly at the added value of the Campaign in terms of in-kind contributions and other direct project money obtained. A majority of consultees indicated that for a contribution of £0.5 million the Government is getting very good value for money in terms of leverage and delivery of its policies and priorities relating to sustainable development. There was a view expressed that if the £0.5 million was invested in different ways then the impacts may not be as great or it may not be as effective, though this is not an area which has been explored with Government Office.

**Potential drawbacks have been identified with regards alternative funding mechanisms.**

Other possible funding mechanisms were explored with representatives from a number of local authorities. One possible alternative to the Campaign receiving core yearly government funding would be that contributions are made by a group of local authorities. However it was felt that this would be a less effective mechanism as it would dilute the activity which could be driven by a centrally located Campaign, it would lose its influence gained through being perceived an independent body, would be less of a catchment-wide organisation, effort would be spread too thinly and it would be less effective at brokering solutions where local authority boundaries are crossed. It is noticeable, though not surprising, that there was a lack of other alternative funding sources suggested by consultees and a lack of desire to core fund the Campaign amongst partners consulted.

**The stability of the core funding enables the Campaign to keep an effective core team together in the sector.**

A final point raised with regards the continuation of the Campaign and it receiving government funding is that this is essential to the stability of the Campaign team. Staff turnover has historically been an issue which can potentially hinder the effectiveness of the Campaign, although not currently. Core government funding provides the Campaign with stability and has been a key reason why talented and professional staff have been recruited and retained under the waterside regeneration umbrella. One consultee remarked that, if for no other reason, it is worth Government investing the £0.5 million to retain the wealth and expertise and knowledge of the Campaign team.

**Reasons Against Continued Government Support**

A number of consultees questioned whether continued government funding of the Campaign post 2010 was appropriate. The reasons given for this were largely twofold, firstly around the fact that the Mersey was no longer a “special case” and that the Campaign had achieved its objectives, and secondly that others were unsure about its specific role post 2010. These reasons are elaborated upon below:

**The Mersey is no longer a “special case”, the Objectives have been achieved and 2010 has always been the end date.**

Some consultees suggested that there was no longer a special case to provide the Campaign with funding given the improvements which have occurred across the Mersey Basin Catchment area. The Campaign had set out to achieve a number of objectives around water quality and waterside regeneration which had largely been achieved, and given that 2010 has always been the recognised end date of the Campaign, some felt that this was a natural time for the Campaign to end.

In our opinion, the views expressed in the consultation did not take full account of the changing context and the increased expectations of water quality and waterside environments. Whilst the Mersey Basin

area has improved significantly since the Campaign was established, further progress is needed to narrow the gap with other watercourses in the UK. Many challenges remain to improve water quality and overall environmental amenity in the Mersey Basin.

**There is a lack of clarity amongst some partners of the continuing role, impact and added value of the Campaign.**

Secondly, given the improvements which had occurred some consultees were unsure what role the Campaign could continue to usefully play under its core objectives, particularly the first two of these. It was felt that whilst at such a low base there was a need for an independent Campaign to operate through developing partnerships and bringing people together under sustainable waterside regeneration and water quality, the mechanisms are now in place for these two things to occur. Some thought that these objectives were others' responsibilities and failed to see where the Campaign could potentially add value. This lack of clarity potentially raises the need for the Campaign to be yet clearer in communicating to its partners what its role is and what constitutes its distinctive added value.

**Our Assessment:**

In summary, whilst most people were in favour of the Campaign continuing to operate post 2010, there was a somewhat divided opinion as to whether or not it should continue to be centrally funded. The arguments put forward to keep the central government funding were strong and based mainly around the stability which it provides, the independence it offers and the added value which it brings. The negative opinions suggested that the Campaign had achieved its objectives and failed to see where it would play a role and the rationale for continuing funding post 2010. In our view, it is clear that a case to continue government funding post 2010 does exist, but that the Campaign needs to be particularly clear about where it adds value and the exact role which it would play in certain strategic areas.

Whilst this study together with the Campaign's own Strategic Review process has attempted to answer some of these questions, section 6 underlines the areas where further work is required before a definitive position on funding post 2010 could be reached. This may involve looking at how other organisations are funded, comparing whether alternative models could effectively be applied to the Campaign or whether indeed its current funding arrangements remain the most appropriate. Feedback from consultees highlights the need for this assessment to be done in a timely manner, both from the Campaign and its staff's point of view in order that other options can be explored and for other partners in order that they can also take this into account when planning activity.

## 5.5 Alternative future funding options

Consultees did not provide significant input on potential future funding options which the Campaign may pursue as an alternative to Government Funding. The vast majority of consultees were in favour of the Campaign receiving core funding through to 2010, whilst views on funding arrangements post 2010 were more mixed. A number of possible alternative funding arrangements were identified, which the Campaign could consider when prioritising succession planning in the medium term. Some of the options are set out below:

1. A continuation of its Current Funding Arrangements from central government;

2. An increase in the Current Core Grant from central government (although this may be difficult to achieve in the current budgetary climate);
3. A decreased core grant from central government;
4. An increase in other public / private sector contributions through bidding for competitive funding on a project by project basis;
5. Devolving financial responsibility where possible amongst existing partners, such as the NWDA, Local Authorities, the Environment Agency, Peel and other corporate sponsors;
6. Focusing all activity at a local level through the Action Partnership structure, and obtaining funding from each of the local authorities which would be involved in the new partnership; and
7. A top slice funding approach which would require funding from OFWAT through the AMP funding in order to secure sustainable development objectives.

Carrying out a full options analysis was outside the scope of this evaluation. The continuation of the current funding model would have a number of benefits, enabling the Campaign to provide a core of activity and building on the progress made to date. A project by project approach would run the risk of the Campaign becoming funding led and diverting focus away from the delivery of practical actions.

Agreeing the most effective funding arrangements will depend on the precise nature of the Campaign's role and areas of activity. Given the benefits from the Campaign identified by a wide range of stakeholders, it appears that a partnership approach to future funding would be appropriate.

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## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

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### 6.1 Introduction

This section of the report draws together the findings from the research and provides answers to the four primary questions set out in the brief. The second part of this section then provides a number of recommendations which both GONW and the Campaign itself should consider in relation to future role and funding arrangements.

### 6.2 Conclusions - Impact

#### Q1 – To what extent is the MBC succeeding in achieving its objectives in relation to the delivery of relevant European, Central Government and Regional Policies?

**Objective 1: Improving Water Quality** – There has clearly been significant improvements in water quality over the period since the Campaign was established. The Campaign has played an important role in achieving these water quality improvements which have occurred within the Mersey Basin catchment, though the attributable impact of the Campaign's work is more indirect.

Although there have been considerable improvements in water quality, further work will be required to achieve the standards set out in the Water Framework Directive through to 2015. In addition, it would be useful if the benefits of further improvements continue to be disseminated to public, private, voluntary and community sector partners.

Whilst there have been significant water quality improvements in the Mersey Basin Catchment area, due largely to the AMPs, it is impossible to quantify exactly the extent to which the Campaign itself has had an impact on these. The Campaign's budget does not enable it to invest in a similar way to others in the direct water quality improvements which have occurred, though despite this the Campaign should be credited with playing a significant role and impact under this objective.

Key contributions which have been made by the Campaign comprise:

- Forging, strengthening and sustaining key strategic partnerships between United Utilities, the Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Regeneration Partnerships, the Private Sector, local communities and voluntary sector organisations.
- Direct contributions to a number of 'flagship' projects – particularly the Salford Quays Oxygenation Project.
- Extensive contributions to aesthetic / water borne litter issues.

This has primarily been through its ability to bring people together, develop partnerships, become involved in projects, promote the benefits of water quality improvements and through clean ups at the local level. In doing so, the Campaign has successfully operated at a number of geographical levels.

**Objective 2: Encouraging Sustainable Waterside Regeneration** – Since the inception of the Mersey Basin Campaign, there have clearly been major improvements in the regeneration of waterside derelict land in the Mersey and Ribble catchment areas. The Campaign has had an impact on encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration mainly through its involvement in certain waterside regeneration projects.

The past 20 years have seen significant waterside regeneration throughout the North West, but particularly in urban settings where the waterside is now seen as being a positive focus for regeneration. The Campaign has played a role in encouraging sustainable waterside regeneration, mainly through its involvement in sourcing funding for specific projects such as the EU Artery projects, and particularly in the initiation and development of the Regional Park.

Peel Holdings and Unilever (key private sector partners) are supportive of the role which the Campaign plays. The Campaign is an effective mechanism to bring organisations together and develop partnership based solutions to waterside regeneration issues. Where the Campaign has been involved in facilitating new investment or other activity, its work has largely been praised.

Specific contributions which have been made by the Campaign include:

- Direct involvement in the oxygenation project at Salford Quays
- Playing a central role in the Artery Project
- A central role in the establishment and development of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park.

Again, the Campaign has operated across a range of geographical levels and with partners from across a variety of sectors in encouraging waterside regeneration, though it has not been fully engaged with a range of private sector interests and all of the local authorities within its catchment area.

**Objective 3: Public Information, Participation and Involvement** - The Campaign's work is particularly effective at the local level in terms of involving people in the process of waterside improvement, hosts well organised and effective conferences and fora and communicates effectively with a range of partners and stakeholders.

The Campaign has been an effective mechanism to get people from a variety of levels involved in waterside regeneration, it has ensured greater involvement at the local level particularly through the Action Partnerships and the Mersey Basin Week, and it is extremely effective at providing thought provoking and stimulating public information around water related issues through such mechanisms as the Source Magazine, conferences and fora. The diligent and professional approach adopted by staff has been a major ingredient in the achievements to date. Despite the significant success in this regard, further improvements to the way in which activity under this objective is co-ordinated could further increase its impact ensuring that there is stability and continuity across all local areas.

## 6.3 Conclusions – Added Value

### Q2 – What is the contribution of Government funding to that work?

The annual contribution from Government funding is deployed primarily to meet the core staff and operational costs of the central team (Foundation). A typical breakdown of the Campaign's yearly budget

reveals that just over half of this money is put towards direct staff costs, with the next significant costs those of the accommodation and facilities and community development activity. The remainder of the funding primarily goes on overhead costs such as travel and subsistence, meetings, marketing and a small element of studies and research.

The core Government funding enables the Campaign to secure considerable leverage from a range of public, private and voluntary sources. This includes corporate sponsorship of programmes, projects and events, competitively-won grant funding and other in-kind contributions such as volunteer time, other partners' contributions, and expertise from corporate and professional partners and media coverage. Other key public sector funders of Campaign activities have included the Environment Agency, the North West Development Agency, the former Single Regeneration Budget and the European Union.

Typically, a direct financial leverage ratio of between 1:2 and 1:3 has been achieved since 2001, with a recent increase due to greater involvement with European projects. In addition to this, there are significant indirect and in-kind contributions also secured by the Campaign, including action partnership contributions such as volunteer time, professional contributions (for example secondments and legal work) other project contributions, expenditure by the Health Waterways Trust on MBC activity and significant media coverage. Recently, the Campaign calculated their in kind contributions for 2005/06 with an overall ratio of 1:7. This, combined with the direct financial leverage, represents very successful performance, highlighting the effectiveness of the Campaign in securing funding from a range of sources. The leverage ratio achieved exceeds that achieved by many other similarly funded bodies.

The Campaign's overall financial performance is very positive, with the achievement of a high level of private sector sponsorship a particularly noteworthy feature. It is evident that the core grant is proving the foundation for a much larger package of activity and investment, much of which would not occur in the absence of this contribution.

The evidence collected suggests that the Campaign delivers extensive strategic added value, which has been enabled by the core government funding and the independent banner under which it operates. This latter point was made by a significant number of consultees, and it was felt that the independence which core government funding brought to the Campaign was a particularly noteworthy feature in enabling the Campaign to act as an independent broker and facilitate actions to deliver Government priorities and policies at a local level.

## 6.4 Conclusions – Service Delivery

### Q3 – What still needs to be done between now and 2010 and 2015 to achieve European/government/regional/policy objectives?

The Campaign was originally envisaged to run through to 2010 and amongst consultees there was almost overwhelming support for it to do so. The Campaign is currently engaged in activities at a variety of levels which will be important to deliver over the coming years. Examples include:

- Ongoing partnership coordination, capacity building and best practice dissemination around the application of the Water Framework Directive and other new standards / legislation.
- Ongoing contribution to waterside regeneration activities including an extended involvement in emerging Regional Parks.

- Ongoing activity around water / waterside management and maintenance - especially focused around aquatic litter.
- An ongoing role in addressing specific, complex multi agency water quality projects – including future phases of Salford Quays Oxygenation Project, projects around the Manchester Ship Canal and the EU Artery project.
- Continuing to involve and educate partners from a variety of organisations through activity such as Mersey Basin Week, Source Magazine and the work of the Action Partnerships.

It would be envisaged that over the next 3-4 years the Campaign would largely continue to play a similar role as it does now, though also exploring new areas of activity particularly ones which it may taken forward by the Campaign should its remit be extended post 2010 and through to 2015.

Suggestions were made as to certain areas which the Campaign could become more involved in post 2010. It is generally recognised that whilst over the next few years the Campaign's current activities will still be relevant, but that the Campaign's focus would need to evolve over time to meet changing requirements. Specific areas of future activity suggested included playing more of a role in aquatic litter, further engagement with developers, coastal based issues and a potential role in water efficiency issues. Whilst this report has examined these issues, there is a recognition that over the coming years it will become increasingly important for the Campaign Council to investigate areas where they are best place to be involved post 2010, as part of a strategic partnership based approach.

**Q4 – What lessons can be learnt from the last twenty years and current approaches and activities to guide GONW in advising ministers on whether a centrally funded MBC is the most cost effective way forward?**

The Mersey Basin Campaign has been in existence for nearly 20 years, which is a significant length of time for any publicly funded regeneration project. As a result of such longevity and its substantial achievements during this period, there are a number of key lessons which can be learnt from the way in which it operates, including:

- The importance of periodic re-evaluation of the Campaign and its adaptation to respond to the changing context within which it operates.
- The Campaign has a proven track record in fostering partnership working arrangements. Many respondents have identified the impartiality and independent of the Campaign as being key to its success.
- The structure of the Campaign allows it to successfully engage with individuals, stakeholders and organisations at a range of levels – from resident organisations, to voluntary sector groups, to local authorities, regional agencies and companies through to national and European governmental organisations.

## 6.5 Conclusions – Funding and Future Role to 2010

There is almost universal support for the Campaign to continue to receive government funding to 2010 given its past impact, current role and recognition that the Campaign had a lifespan to 2010. It is appropriate that funding is continued to 2010 providing that the ongoing conditions are met each year.

The objectives of the Campaign through to 2010 were considered to still be appropriate by the majority of consultees, and it would be envisaged that there would not be a significant switch in focus to the short term. The Campaign should consider the areas of improvement suggested, and continue to undertake its work around producing a forward looking strategy which disseminates clearly to partners the area where the Campaign will aim to work and where it will add value before 2010, and potentially beyond. There is a particular need to ensure that decisions around funding up to 2010 and beyond are made as early as possible to enable both the Campaign and external partners to effectively plan and align activity and responsibilities.

## 6.6 Conclusions– Funding and Future Role Beyond 2010

Whilst the majority of consultees were in favour of the Campaign continuing to operate post 2010, there was a somewhat divided opinion as to whether or not it should continue to be centrally funded. The arguments put forward to keep the central government funded were strong and based mainly around the stability which it provides, the independence it offers and the added value which it brings. The counter opinions suggested that the Campaign had achieved its objectives and failed to see where it would play a role and the rationale for continuing funding post 2010. In our view, a rationale exists to continue government funding post 2010 as part of a broader partnership approach. The Campaign needs to ensure that it clarity is established on the exact role which it would play in key areas, in order to demonstrate integration with other organisation's roles and activities.

Whilst this study, together with the Campaign's own Strategic Review process, has attempted to answer some of these questions, further work is required before a definitive agreement on funding post 2010 should be made. This will involve looking at other models to determine whether lessons elsewhere could be applied to the Campaign. Feedback from consultees reinforces the need for this to be done in a timely manner.

## 6.7 Recommendations

There a small number of strategic recommendations from the evaluation which are relevant to both the GONW and Campaign.

1. **The Campaign should continue under similar core government funding arrangements through to 2010 providing ongoing conditions are met and that funding is available.** This is based on a strong case for ongoing central government funding to 2010 based on: the value for money which the funding enables; the impact which it may have over the coming years under the same funding arrangements; the widespread support amongst partners and consultees for continued funding to 2010; and the negative impact which may occur if funding was lost.
2. **Through to 2010, the Campaign should pay particular attention to effectively evaluating and demonstrating the impact and added value of its activities.** A priority of the Campaign, in conjunction with Government Office, over the coming years should be to enhance its performance management framework, set clear targets and effectively monitor its activity. This will help the Campaign's ability to secure any form of funding in the future and will help Government Office to

better identify the added value which central government funding is providing. The calculation of indirect and in kind contributions is an example of a way in which this is already happening. The utilisation of measurement scale for influence and enabling could also assist in this process.

**3. The Campaign should review the content of this report, in order to refine and improve their activity in future years paying particular emphasis on feedback from consultees both positive and negative.** Suggested areas of improvement include: ensuring that support to Action Partnerships achieves a balance between focus and inclusiveness across the Campaign area; focusing on engaging with partners for whom they currently do not have a close working relationship but who they could usefully influence and involve, resources permitting e.g. developers and other private sector interests, certain local businesses, specific local authorities; and disseminating best practice both to partners and also potentially to organisations in other parts of the country who may be undertaking similar activity to the Campaign.

**4. The Campaign should continue to develop its future Strategic Plan, particularly focusing on developing and promoting areas in which it adds particular value over and above other organisations.** This will provide the basis for any remit post 2010.

**5. The Campaign should, as a priority over the year, establish a succession strategy which it may adopt post 2010.** This would involve exploring all potential funding options and seeking to establish how the Campaign would operate under each of these. A full analysis of each option, drawing on those options set out in Section 5.5, should be undertaken.

**6. When considering future funding arrangements, both to 2010 and beyond, GONW and the Campaign Council should make decisions in a timely manner.** This will enable the Campaign to, if appropriate, secure alternative funding and also minimise the disruption that this may cause both in terms of project activity and staffing arrangements. Decisions should be widely disseminated to partners, enabling them to adapt their own activities accordingly.

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# ANNEXES

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## Annex A Bibliography

In the process of this evaluation, particularly through the desk based research, a variety of documentation was consulted.

**A) Specific Publications are listed below:**

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2002), **Directing the Flow – Policies for Future Water Policy**, can be accessed at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/strategy/index.htm>.

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The Northern Way (2005), The Northern Way Growth Strategy, can be accessed at <http://www.thenorthernway.co.uk/>.

**B) Other information which was used is detailed below:**

Artery Website – [www.artery.eu.com](http://www.artery.eu.com).

The Environment Agency General Water Quality Assessment Indicators – obtained via the Environment Agency, some of which is available at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/maps/info/river/?version=1&lang=e>.

ICREW info magazines.

The Mersey Basin Business Foundation Profit & Loss Accounts 2001-2006.

The Mersey Basin Campaign In-Kind Contributions Calculations 2005/06.

The Mersey Basin Campaign Strategic Plan Evidence Gathering and Consultation Notes.

Various Other Mersey Basin Campaign reports and information including Source Magazines, reviews of activity, conference programmes and the Campaign website – <http://www.merseybasin.org.uk/>.

## Annex B List of Consultees

<b>Stakeholder Consultations</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Walter Menzies	Mersey Basin Campaign
Mark Turner	Mersey Basin Campaign
Joe Dwek	Previous Mersey Basin Campaign Chairman
Peter Wilson	Government Office for the North West
Mark Atherton	NWDA
Thomas Lingard	Unilever
David Moorcroft	Mersey Partnership
Rachel Christie	Manchester City Council
Chris Findley	Salford City Council
Mike Callery	Friend of River Yarrow
Peter Neers	Peel Holdings
Gwen Kinloch	Blackburn / Darwen BC
David Crawshaw	United Utilities
George Ager	Environment Agency
Anne Selby	Lancashire Wildlife Trust

<b>Oxygenation Project Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Eric Harper	Independent
David Crawshaw	United Utilities
Bob Lee	Environment Agency
Dr Adrian Williams	APEM Consulting
Alan Hodgkinson	Manchester Ship Canal Company

<b>Action Partnerships Merseyside and Lancashire Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Jane Sansbury	Environment Agency
Paul Corner	AP Co-ordinator Action Wirral Rivers
John Entwistle	Wirral MBC
Lesley Cryer	Action Ribble Estuary / Action Darwen Valley Co-ordinator
Martin Maitland	Chair Action Douglas & Yarrow

<b>Action Partnerships Greater Manchester and Cheshire Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mac Carding	Mersey Forest
Anne Scrase	Environment Agency
Jonathan Sadler	Manchester City Council
Hazel Lord	Action Partnership co-ordinator

<b>Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Louise Hopkins	Mersey Waterfront Regional Park
Ian Wray	NWDA
Ceri Jones	Sefton MBC
Dr Rick Leah	The University of Liverpool
Geoff Woodcock	The Merseyside Environmental Trust
Dave Moorcroft	The Mersey Partnership

<b>The Artery Project Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Louise Morrissey	Peel Holdings
Vanessa Brook	Stockport MBC
Frank Bothman	Artery Secretariat
John Tyson	Chair of the International Advisory Group
Tom Workman	Liverpool Sailing Club

<b>Annual Conference and Sub-regional Fora</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Joanne Dutton	Halton Borough Council
Roger Ford	University of Salford
Peter Jones	Environment Agency
David Hardman	United Utilities
Lucy Burton	Action Irwell / Upper Weaver
Bev Mitchell	Mersey Basin Campaign

<b>Source NW / Communications Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Peter Mearns	NWDA
Claire Smith	Renew NW
Steve Connor	Creative Concern
Jim McClelland	Sustain Magazine
Sue Vanden	Hemisphere

<b>Mersey Basin Week Round Table Discussion</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Cllr John Pritchard	Whaley Bridge Amenity Society
Charles Hamilton	Friends of Etherow Country Park
Alison Bradley	MWH (Corporate Sponsors)

## Annex C Yearly Campaign Targets

The Mersey Basin Campaign Yearly Targets		
2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Strengthening and increasing the stability, productivity and output of the RVI network and increasing their funding	Strengthening, increasing funding and increasing output of the RVI Network	Strengthening and increasing the stability and maximizing outputs of the RVI Network
Establishing a robust research, evidence and intelligence base and network	Improving the Research, Intelligence & Evidence Base	Improving the Research, Intelligence & Evidence Base
Making a substantial contribution to the national WFD pilot for the Ribble	Contributing to the Water Framework Directive	Contributing to the Water Framework Directive
Securing NWDA board level commitment to an integrated waterside reclamation programme	Waterside Land Reclamation	Waterside Land Reclamation
Supporting the development of the Mersey Waterfront Initiative	Supporting the Mersey Waterfront Initiative	Supporting the Mersey Waterfront Initiative
Delivering the Campaign's Communications Strategy	Delivering the Campaign's Communications Strategy	Delivering the Campaign's Communications Strategy
Education – working with teachers to interact with schools	Education – working with teachers / schools	Education – info on waters for use by NW schools
To establish the baseline level of litter across the Campaign area	Litter Abatement – Monitoring & setting targets	Aquatic Litter – stimulating action to tackle litter issues
Informing & influencing sustainable water management of the Mersey Basin and Ribble catchments	Awareness and Participation of communities & businesses	Awareness and Participation of communities & businesses
Establishing key issues to enable a sustainable breeding population in appropriate parts of the Mersey	Sustainable Water Management	Helping to deliver the Artery Programme
To stimulate further participation by communities and businesses in MBC work.	Establishing key issues around salmon in the MB	Helping to deliver the ICREW Programme
		Developing new projects at all geographical levels

Source: Yearly Corporate Plans

## Annex D List of Action Partnerships

Action Partnership	Partnership Status
Bollin	Active
Darwen Valley	Active
Douglas & Yarrow	Active
Etherow & Goyt	Active
Irk & Roch	Active
Irwell	Active
Manchester Waterways	Active
Mersey Estuary	Active
Ribble Estuary	Active
Rossendale Rivers	Active
Sankey Waters	Active
Upper Weaver	Active
Weaver Valley	Active
Wirral Rivers	Active
Alt	Not active
Glaze	Not active
Medlock and Tame	Not active
Worsley Brooks	Not active
Gowy Network	Not active
Merseyside Canal Partnership	Not active
Ribble Valley Initiative	Not active
River Enhancement East Lancs	Not active



## Annex E Performance Against Targets 2004/05

Objective	Target	Forecast	Achieved
RVI Network and Local Communities	Number of Active Chairs in Place	100%	83%
	Reduction In Staff Turnover	14%	7%
	Personal Development Plans for all	100%	A PDP has been started as part of the overhaul of management systems
The Output of the RVI Network	Agreed Action Plans for 80% of targets	80%	100% - Summary Action Plans Used to monitor performance of all RVIs
Programme Development	No of New Local Projects Developed	5	6 – Furey Wood, Northwhitch & Leesbrook, Oldham, Cheshire x 3
	No of new sub-Regional Programmes	3	3 – Glossop, Middleton, Cheshire
	No of new regional capital projects	1	1 – Pride in the Promenades
Research, Intelligence & Evidence Base	Organise and Deliver Research Workshop	1	1 – Integrated River Basin Management Conference
	Developing Research Database	1	1 – As part of the Website
Water Framework / Freshwater Fish Directive	Stakeholder Mapping Methodology Developed	1	1 – Mapping methodology developed and used as part of 2 projects
	Secure European Funding for awareness raising programme	1	1 – Funding Secured for ENMaR programme
ICREW	Co-ordinators trained in water quality sampling techniques	5	5 – Co-ordinators based with MBC, Groundwork & Eden Rivers Trust
	Sites where Recreation facilities recorded & water quality tested	20	30 – Water quality tested at 30 sites & recreation facilities assessed at 77
	No of community Groups engaged in Pilot Action 7	10	8 – Schools and After School Clubs
Waterside Land Reclamation	Secure NWDA commitment to a prog of waterside reclamation	1	0 – The commitment has not been progressed
Artery	Businesses actively engaged in pilot projects	5	3 – Businesses engaged at Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Speke & Garston
	Community Groups engaged in the programme	25	22 – Involves over 500 people consulted
	Hectares of Land reclaimed at Speke / Garston	6.5	6.5 – Land reclamation target achieved
Mersey Waterfront	Estuary development and management compatible with strategy	-	- Estuary strategy, development and management working well together
	NWDA Commitment to MW post 3 year pilot phase 2	-	- In principle agreement secured from NWDA
	Developing 1 funding proposal to achieve MW/MBC Objectives	-	- The MBC led the development of Pride in the Promenades programme

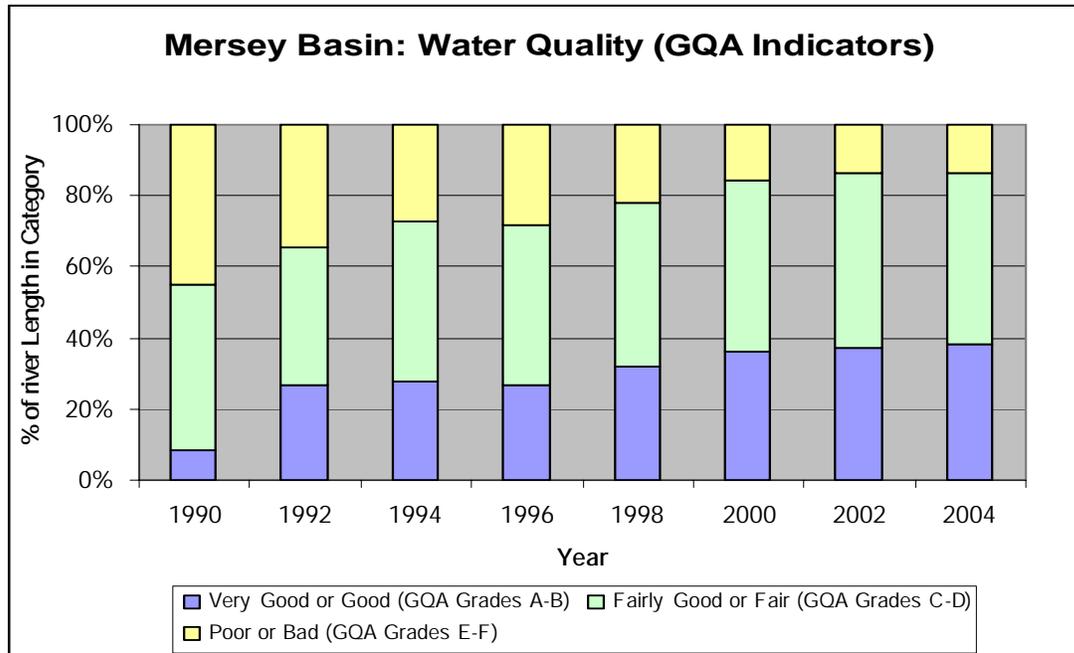
Information & Communications	Increase Hits on MBC Website by 50%	50%	38% - Hits have increased, site was runner-up in a digital awards comp
	Agreement and Implementation of new branding	-	- New branding agreed and implemented
	National Award for Source Magazine	-	- Not achieved
Education	Schools Channel developed on MBC Website	-	- Work commenced on education channel of MBC Website
Aquatic Litter	Aquatic litter programme supported by 100% of RVI areas	-	- Aquatic Litter supported by all RVIs
	Strategic programme of future actions to be agreed	-	- Aquatic Litter advisory group begun work on developing strategic prog
Awareness and Participation	Number of Events in Mersey Basin Week	180	250 – Over 250 events were organised
	Nominations received for Dragonfly awards	50	48 – A total of 48 nominations were received
	Entries to North West Business Environment Awards	100	74 – A total of 74 nominations received
	Voluntary Sector Forum Events	1	1 – Event held with 105 delegates attending

Key – Output – Target achieved or exceeded, Output – Target not achieved

## Annex F Water Quality Improvement Data

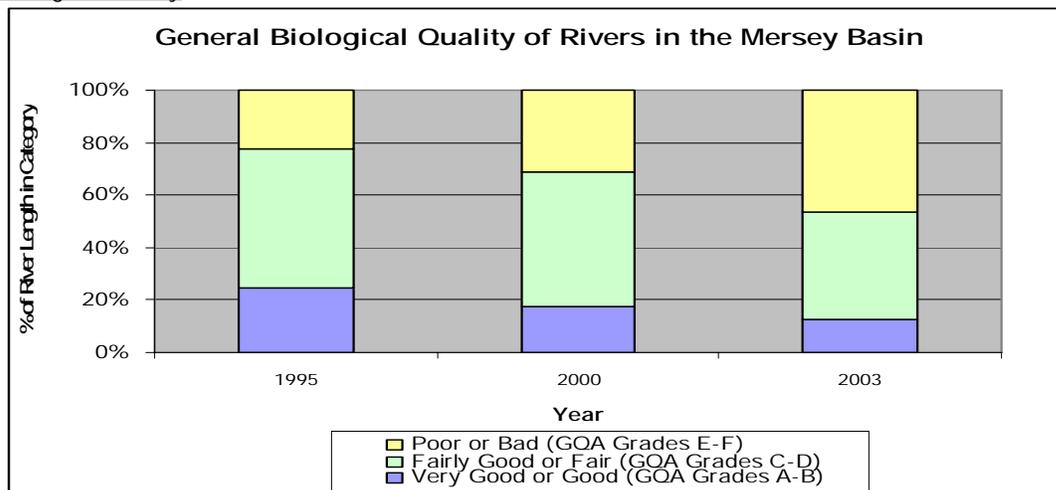
The water quality improvement data presented in section 2.5 refers only to those areas from which measurements have been taken every year. In some years, sample points are not included, whilst new sample points are added each year. The data in section 2.5 provides an accurate reflection of the changes which have occurred within the Mersey Basin given that it compares the same areas over a period of time. In this annex, data refers to the proportion of all measurements taken, thus covering a greater geographical area, but providing a less accurate way of analysing changes to stretches over time.

### Water Quality



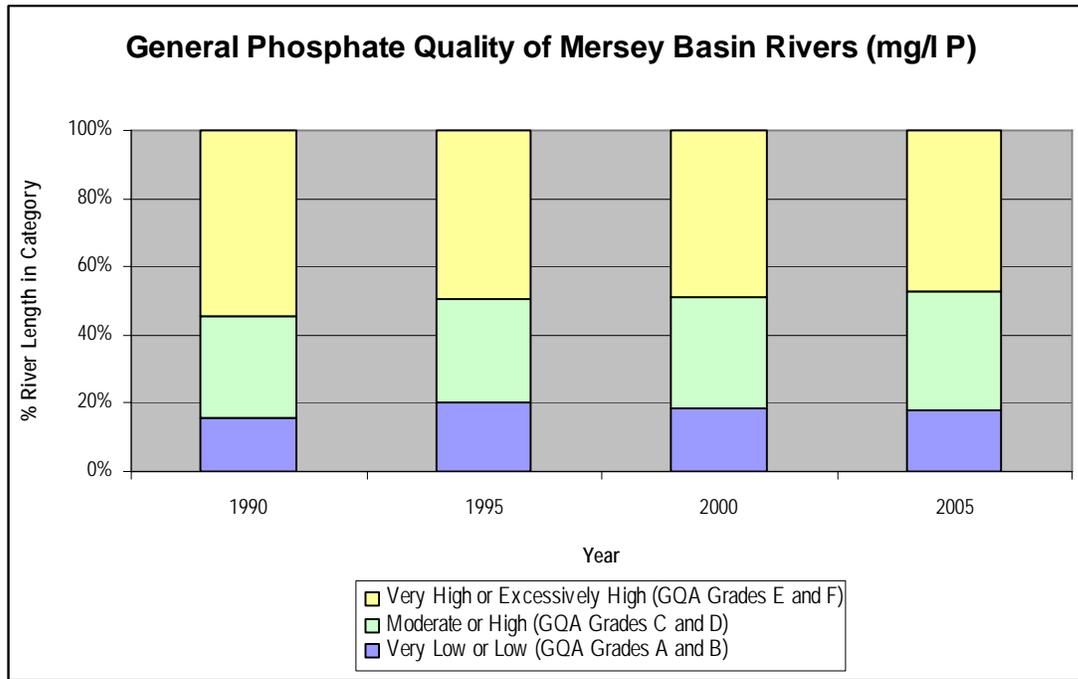
Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across stretches of 1639.6km – 2758.7km.

### Biological Quality



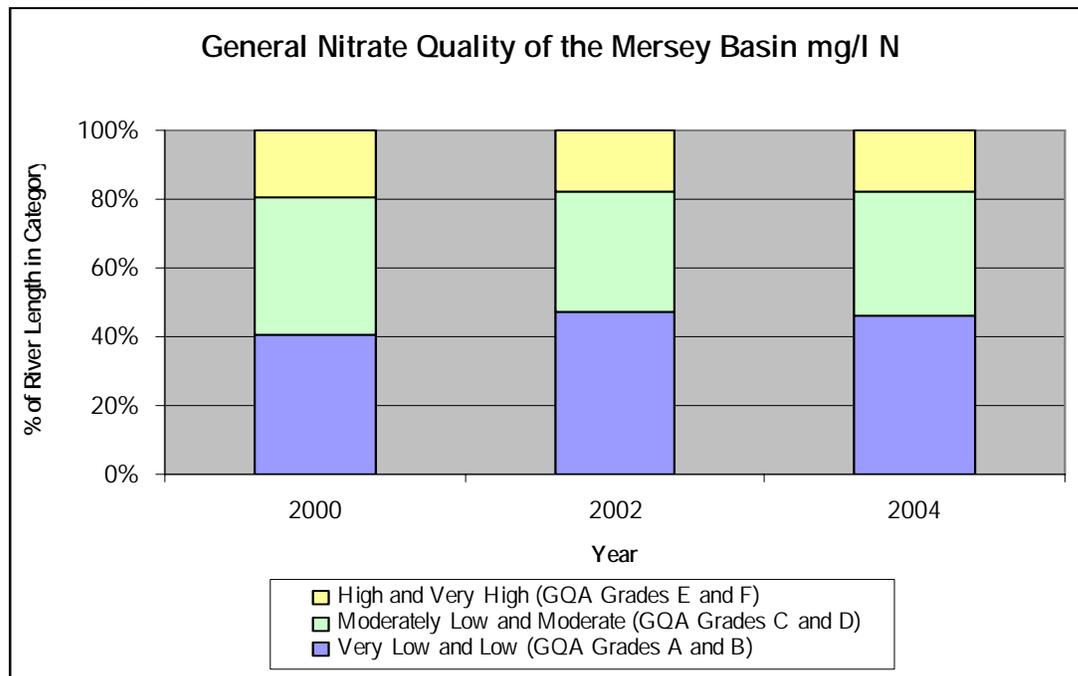
Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 1336.6km – 2120.0km

Phosphate Quality



Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 1686.3km – 2758.7km

Nitrate Quality



Source: Environment Agency General Quality Assessment Indicators across a stretch of 2744.3km – 2760.8km

General Water Quality

General Water Quality in the Mersey Basin Catchment Area (GOA Indicators)								
Classification	River Length in Category (km)							
	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
A - Very Good	41.3	144.0	89.6	112.0	204.6	254.0	262.3	221.5
B - Good	99.8	522.0	663.1	609.4	668.2	736.5	757.9	832.4
C - Fairly Good	403.4	549.2	613.9	773.0	725.3	915.4	862.1	889.4
D - Fair	360.7	418.9	612.4	462.5	538.3	408.3	489.7	446.8
E - Poor	561.6	681.0	595.8	638.4	533.2	379.1	337.6	297.5
F - Bad	172.8	175.9	147.1	125.0	73.8	51.0	42.5	71.1
Unclassified	1121.2	269.8	38.9	40.5	17.4	16.5	8.7	2.1

Source Environment Agency

Biological Quality

Biology Quality in the Mersey Basin Catchment Area			
Classification	River Length in Category (km)		
	1995	2000	2003
A - Very Good	47.3	133.6	58.2
B - Good	282.6	230.3	206.1
C - Fairly Good	365	521.3	460.6
D - Fair	341.4	563.8	406.6
E - Poor	266.9	562.3	734.2
F - Bad	33.4	96.2	254.3
Unclassified	1424.2	653.3	640.8

Source Environment Agency

Phosphate Quality

Phosphate Quality of the Mersey Basin Catchment Area				
Classification	River Length in Category (km)			
	1990	1995	2000	2005
A - Very Low	73.5	60.1	0.8	0.8
B - Low	196	484.9	510.3	488.2
C - Moderate	235.9	421.1	438.9	482.7
D - High	264.8	395.4	453.1	483
E - Very High	540.7	915.4	951.1	1018.7
F - Excessively High	375.4	409.2	390.1	285.3
Unclassified	1074.5	74.7	16.5	2.1

Source Environment Agency

Nitrate Quality

<b>Biology Quality in the Mersey Basin Catchment Area</b>			
<b>Classification</b>	<b>River Length in Category (km)</b>		
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>
A - Very Good	498.4	636	606.8
B - Good	619.2	672.4	665.8
C - Fairly Good	708.6	571.9	572.3
D - Fair	378.3	395.9	424.9
E - Poor	234.8	326.4	311.3
F - Bad	305	158.2	177.6
Unclassified	16.5	0	2.1

Source Environment Agency