

OFFICIAL



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

David Hill
Director General
Water and Strategy
Defra

Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Dame Glenys Stacey
Chair
Office for Environmental Protection

30 July 2024

Dear Dame Glenys,

I am writing to update you on Defra's approach to responding to the Office for Environmental Protection's (OEP) review of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive Regulations and River Basin Management Planning in England, published 9 May 2024.

As you will be aware, the statutory deadline for the government to respond to the OEP's report is 8 August 2024, which falls within parliamentary summer recess. This, combined with the timing of the general election, has reduced the amount of time Ministers have had to consider the recommendations in the report from the three months required in the Environment Act, to three weeks.

The report provides substantive recommendations for the government to consider regarding one of the fundamental components of England's water legislative framework. It has not been possible for ministers to properly consider the recommendations made in the OEP's report and provide the full and thorough response which the report deserves, before summer recess.

Therefore, we have laid before Parliament a preliminary, high-level response to the review. As agreed between officials here in Defra and at the OEP, the initial response promises to Parliament that the Secretary of State will lay a further, detailed response to the report and its recommendations in September, once the House returns.

This Government is committed to protecting and restoring nature. We look forward to engaging positively with the OEP as we deliver on this mission.

David Hill

OFFICIAL