Written submission from Scottish Water

Scottish Water would like to thank you for the invitation to comment on the aforementioned consultation paper. Our comments are restricted to the section covering shellfish waters.

PART 4: SHELLFISH, Protection of shellfish waters

Framework of Environmental Objectives

We note that the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003 (WEWS) will be amended by the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Bill (The Bill) to:

- include the protection of shellfish waters
- incorporate the broad principles of the Shellfish Water Directive into the River Basin Management Planning (RBMP)
- develop a framework of environmental objectives

We would like to understand how the framework of environmental objectives will be developed, and whether this will be subject to public consultation? This is important as it may lead to specific actions for Scottish Water that need to fully understood.

Designation

We note the proposed alignment of designation and de-designation of shellfish protected areas from the current two-three year cycles to the minimum 6 yearly cycle in-line with RBMP. On the basis of the information provided we understand that the process will be undertaken during the “current condition and challenges for the future” consultation period of RBMP. We would ask for clarity on the approach taken to achieve alignment, and the year when alignment will be achieved. This is important to Scottish Water to ensure alignment with regulatory investment planning decisions through the Quality and Standards (Q&S) process.

Disproportionate Cost

We welcome that, in considering the continued protection of the shellfish industry, disproportionate costs to other sectors and bodies, such as Scottish Water, will be considered. Scottish Water has already invested substantial sums to enhance assets in the vicinity of shellfish waters and it is important to ensure investment is both proportionate and effective. In many cases Scottish Water may not be the primary cause of water quality problems and we welcome the commitment to address sources of diffuse pollution.