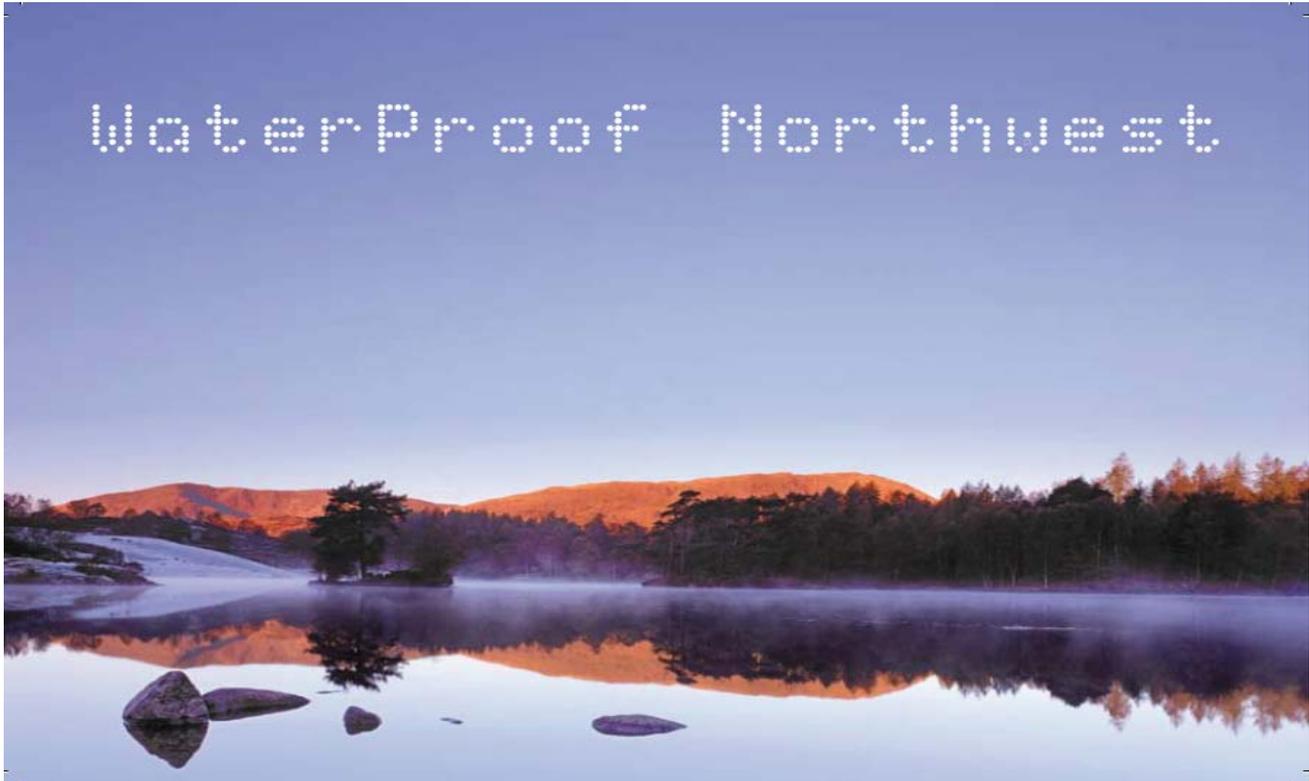


WaterProof Northwest



Date: Jan 2009 – March 2010

Background

Following on from the success of the ENMaR project, Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) wanted to deliver a project to further engage local authorities (and in particular planners) in the delivery of the EU's Water Framework Directive. It was decided that a partnership project between the University of Manchester and MBC would be organised and that the project would use the process of scenario planning to identify the challenges and opportunities that could impact on delivery of the WFD in the Northwest. The overall aim of the project was to produce four contrasting scenarios that could be used to enable better planning and decision-making with regards to the future management of the region's water environment.

Project

It was decided that 2030 would be the timeframe for the scenarios to complement a similar set of scenarios developed by the Environment Agency. A leaflet was produced promoting the project aims, which was then distributed widely at MBC events.

In the project's early stages, roundtable meetings were organised to identify drivers for change that would possibly impact on society and the environment over the next 20 years. A long list of all the possible drivers was produced and through further consultation, a shortlist of priority drivers was produced. Further consultation was provided by MBC who went out to key-stakeholders and conducted interviews that were then transcribed and the results fed into the University's research. Along with a large amount of desktop research, these drivers helped inform the scenario prototypes. An artist was commissioned to produce visual representations of the prototype scenarios.

Further consultation was then done assessing the prototype scenarios and their accompanying images. An interactive display was produced which featured a brief summary of each scenario as well as their accompanying images. The display board was taken to various events and people were asked to cast a vote as to which scenario they felt was the most likely vision of the Northwest in 2030. This display board was also a valuable tool for raising awareness of the issues and promoting the project to a wider audience

The University of Manchester then produced the final scenarios and the results were disseminated via a half-day event and a final report.

How we did it

- Partnership between MBC and the University of Manchester was decided and project proposal produced.
- Funding secured from the Environment Agency.
- Leaflet produced by communications agency and distributed at MBC's events.
- Desktop research conducted by the University to identify drivers for change.
- Roundtable with key stakeholders organised to consult drivers and identify other possible drivers.
- Interviews with key stakeholders carried out by MBC were recorded on a minidisk player. These audio interviews were then transcribed and sent to the University.
- Shortlist of priority drivers produced.
- Prototype scenarios produced and artist commissioned to produce visual representations of the four scenarios.
- Consultation on the prototype scenarios and their images was conducted at a workshop.
- Display board produced by a design agency and the display was taken to various MBC events where delegates were asked to cast their vote on the scenarios.
- Final scenarios produced and distributed to key stakeholders.
- Final report produced by the University of Manchester.
- Event held to disseminate results of the project with wider stakeholder group.

Publicity

The WaterProof Northwest leaflet and display were used to publicise the project. The project had a dedicated page on the MBC website and an e-newsletter was also produced and sent out to stakeholders. The final report and event publicised the results and outputs of the project.

Project Value and funding Sources

Funding of £49,000 was provided by the Environment Agency. United Utilities contribution was in-kind, through providing a project manager for the project.

Who was involved?

MBC's Policy Advisor – acted as project manager for the project, liaised with the University, commissioned production of the leaflet, organised roundtable meetings, conducted interviews with stakeholders and organised the final event.

University of Manchester – conducted research for the project, led roundtable meetings and workshops and produced the final scenarios and report.

Environment Agency – funded the project and helped inform the scenarios.

United Utilities – provided project manager for the project and helped inform the scenarios.

MBC's Graduate Intern – made reports of discussions at roundtable meetings and workshops, made audio recordings of interviews and commissioned their transcription, project managed the production of the interactive display board.

Stakeholders – members of United Utilities, the Environment Agency, MBC and the local authorities of Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and Trafford City Council, all provided input into the development of the scenarios.

Lesson learned

Engagement is part of the product – the process of engaging with stakeholders throughout the project was important for two reasons. It helped shape the scenarios and it raised awareness of the issues.