

## Severn and South West border change for river basin districts

### Flood risk and river basin management planning across river basin districts (RBDs)

Flood risk and river basin management planning happens across common RBD boundaries. There are 10 RBDs covering England and 2 of these, the Severn and Dee, cross into Wales (Figure 1). The area within each RBD is divided into smaller hydrological areas called Management Catchments, which help us work with others at a more meaningful scale, supporting [Defra's Catchment Based Approach](#) and [Welsh Government's approach to natural resource management](#).

The boundaries for 2 of the RBDs do not allow the water environment to be managed as effectively as it could be. Currently the boundary between the Severn RBD and the South West RBD divides the Brue from the Axe, despite surface water from the Brue and the Axe being linked in a single hydrological system.

To facilitate better water management the Environment Agency is proposing that these RBDs' boundaries are changed to move the Axe out of the Severn RBD and into the South West RBD. This will mean that both the Axe and the Brue are included in the South West RBD (Figure 2).

### Consulting on the proposed change to river basin districts

We will ask for your views on the proposed boundary change as part of the consultation on the first cycle of flood risk management plans and the second cycle of updated river basin management plans. We will include the proposed new boundaries in the draft FRMPs and draft update to the RBMPs for the Severn and South West RBDs we consult on. Both the draft FRMP and draft update to the RBMP consultations will start in September 2014. The consultation on the draft FRMP will be open until December 2014 and the consultation on the draft update to the RBMP will be open until March 2014.

The first cycle of FRMPs follow on from the Flood Risk and Flood Hazard Maps published in December 2013 for each RBD: these were published according to existing RBD boundaries. No changes will be made to these maps until a decision is made and the final plans are published: this will follow the consultation.

### What will happen following consultation?

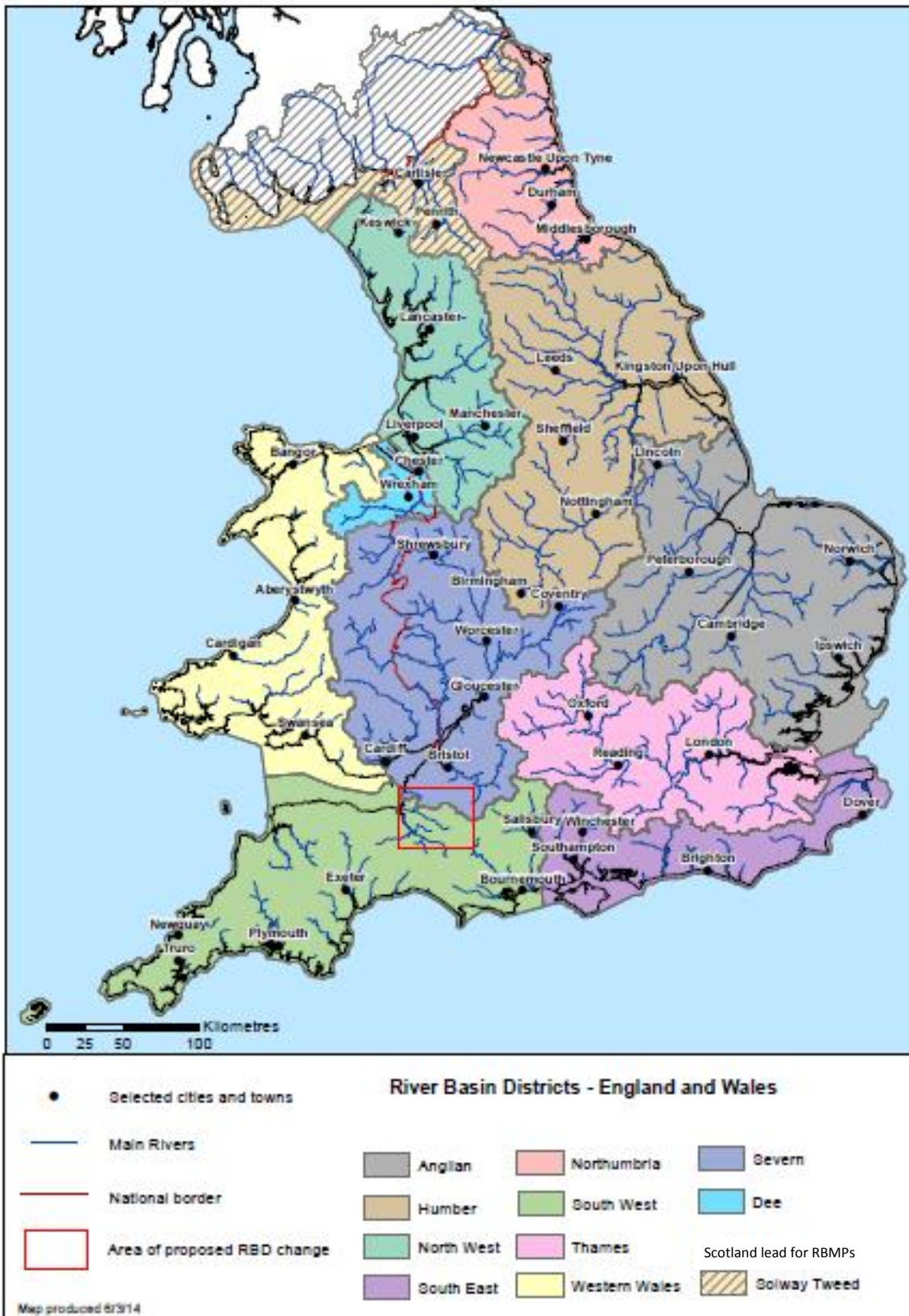
Depending on the feedback received during the consultation, a decision may then be taken to change the boundary for the South West and Severn RBDs for the final FRMPs and updated RBMPs. The final plans will be published by December 2015.

Formally the decision to change the boundaries is made when the final FRMPs and updated RBMPs, including the revised boundaries, are approved. The Secretary of State is required to approve the updated RBMPs for RBDs in England and the Secretary of State and Welsh Ministers are required to approve the final cross border RBMPs. The Environment Agency approves the final FRMPs for RBDs in England and the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales jointly approve final cross border FRMPs.

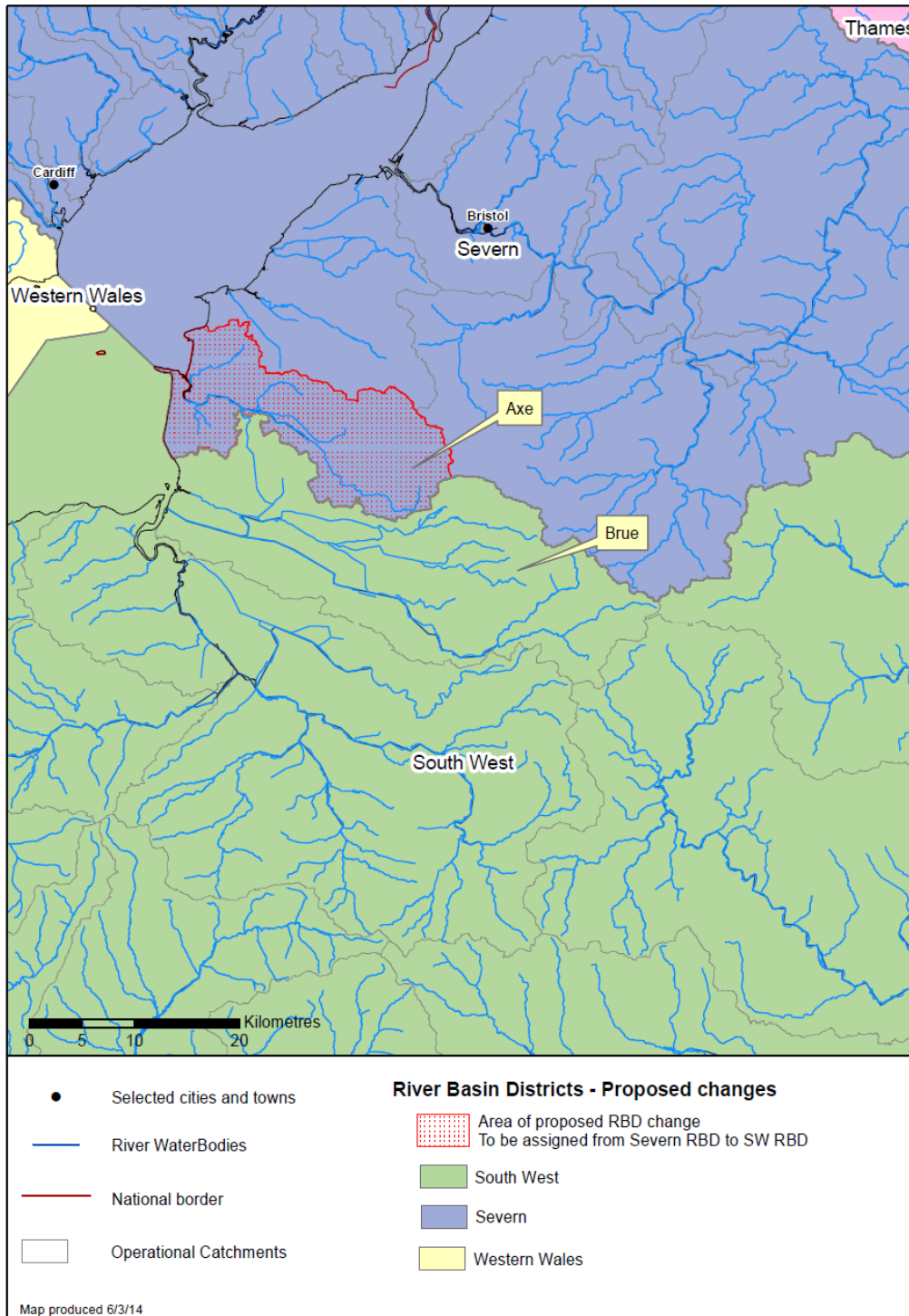
If a decision is made to adopt the proposed changes then we will:

- Inform the European Commission within 3 months of this decision being made. Ideally we will include this notification alongside the established FRMP and RBMP reporting requirement by 22 March 2016.
- Update the Flood Risk and Flood Hazard Maps according to the new boundaries. This will ensure there is consistency in the boundaries on maps and those included in the final published FRMPs. The amended Flood Risk and Flood Hazard maps would need to be approved by the Environment Agency for South West RBD and jointly by the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales for the Severn RBD, as part of the final FRMPs.

Figure 1: The river basin districts that cover England and Wales



**Figure 2: proposed boundary changes to the Severn RBD and the South West RBD**



## Further information

More information is available at the following links

- What FRMPs are and who is responsible for them: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-management-plans-what-they-are-and-whos-responsible-for-them>
- How to prepare them: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-management-plans-frmps-how-to-prepare-them>
- RBMPs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans>