



Water Resources Act 1991

1991 CHAPTER 57

PART IV

FLOOD DEFENCE

Main river functions

107 Main river functions under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

- (1) This section has effect for conferring functions in relation to main rivers on the [F¹appropriate agency] which are functions of drainage boards in relation to other watercourses.
- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (3) of section 21 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (power to secure compliance with drainage obligations), the powers of the [F¹appropriate agency] in relation to a main river shall, by virtue of this section, include the powers which under that section are exercisable otherwise than in relation to a main river by the drainage board concerned; and the provisions of that section shall have effect accordingly.
- (3) The powers of the [F¹appropriate agency] in relation to a main river shall, by virtue of this section, include the powers which under section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (powers for securing the maintenance of flow of watercourses) are exercisable in relation to an ordinary watercourse by the drainage board concerned; and the provisions of that section and section 27 of that Act shall have effect accordingly.
- (4) Sections 33 and 34 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (commutation of obligations) shall have effect where—
 - (a) any person is under an obligation imposed on him by reason of tenure, custom, prescription or otherwise to do any work in connection with the drainage of land (whether by way of repairing banks or walls, maintaining watercourses or otherwise); and
 - (b) that work is in connection with a main river,

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross Heading: Main river functions. (See end of Document for details)

as they have effect in relation to an obligation to do work otherwise than in connection with a main river but as if the [^{F1}appropriate agency] were under a duty to take steps to commute the obligation and the references in those sections to the drainage board for the internal drainage district where the works fall to be done were omitted.

- (5) In this section—
- (a) references to the exercise of a power in relation to a main river shall include a reference to its exercise in connection with a main river or in relation to the banks of such a river or any drainage works in connection with such a river; and
 - (b) expressions used both in this section and in a provision applied by this section have the same meanings in this section as in that provision.
- (6) The functions of the [^{F1}appropriate agency] by virtue of this section are in addition to the functions of the [^{F1}appropriate agency] which by virtue of the provisions of the ^{M1}Land Drainage Act 1991 are exercisable by the [^{F1}appropriate agency] concurrently with an internal drainage board.

Textual Amendments

F1 Words in ss. 105-107 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 274\(b\)](#) (with Sch. 7)

Marginal Citations

M1 1991 c. 59.

108 Schemes for transfer to the [^{F2}appropriate agency] of functions in relation to main river.

- (1) The [^{F2}appropriate agency] may at any time prepare and submit to either of the Ministers for confirmation a scheme making provision for the transfer to the [^{F2}appropriate agency] from any drainage body of—
- (a) all rights, powers, duties, obligations and liabilities (including liabilities incurred in connection with works) over or in connection with a main river; and
 - (b) any property held by the drainage body for the purpose of, or in connection with, any functions so transferred;
- and the [^{F2}appropriate agency] shall prepare such a scheme and submit it to one of the Ministers if it is directed to do so by that Minister.
- (2) A scheme prepared and submitted under subsection (1) above may make provisions for any matter supplemental to or consequential on the transfers for which the scheme provides.
- (3) The Minister to whom a scheme is submitted under this section may by order made by statutory instrument confirm that scheme; and Schedule 14 to this Act shall have effect with respect to the procedure to be followed in connection with the making of such an order and with respect to challenges to such orders.
- (4) An order under this section may contain provisions with respect to the persons by whom all or any of the expenses incurred by the Ministers or other persons in

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross Heading: Main river functions. (See end of Document for details)

connection with the making or confirmation of the order, or with the making of the scheme confirmed by the order, are to be borne.

- (5) Where, under a scheme made by the [F²appropriate agency] under this section, liabilities incurred in connection with drainage works are transferred to the [F²appropriate agency] from a local authority, the [F²appropriate agency] may require the local authority to make contributions to the [F²appropriate agency] towards the discharge of the liabilities.
- (6) If the amount to be paid by a local authority by way of contributions required under subsection (5) above is not agreed between the [F²appropriate agency] and the local authority, it shall be referred to the arbitration of a single arbitrator appointed—
 - (a) by agreement between them; or
 - (b) in default of agreement, by the Ministers.
- (7) The relevant Minister shall by regulations provide for the payment, subject to such exceptions or conditions as may be specified in the regulations, of compensation by the [F²appropriate agency] to any officer or other employee of a drainage body who suffers loss of employment or loss or diminution of emoluments which is attributable to a scheme under this section or anything done in pursuance of such a scheme.
- (8) Regulations under subsection (7) above may include provision—
 - (a) as to the manner in which and the persons to whom any claim for compensation by virtue of the regulations is to be made; and
 - (b) for the determination of all questions arising under the regulations.
- (9) In this section—

“drainage body” means an internal drainage board or any other body having power to make or maintain works for the drainage of land;

“the relevant Minister”—

 - (a) in relation to employees of a drainage body wholly in Wales, means the Secretary of State;
 - (b) in relation to employees of a drainage body partly in Wales, means the Ministers; and
 - (c) in any other case, means the Minister.

Textual Amendments

F2 Words in s. 108 and heading substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), [Sch. 2 para. 274\(b\)](#) (with [Sch. 7](#))

109 Structures in, over or under a main river.

- (1) No person shall erect any structure in, over or under a watercourse which is part of a main river except with the consent of and in accordance with plans and sections approved by the [F³appropriate agency].
- (2) No person shall, without the consent of the [F³appropriate agency], carry out any work of alteration or repair on any structure in, over or under a watercourse which is part of a main river if the work is likely to affect the flow of water in the watercourse or to impede any drainage work.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross Heading: Main river functions. (See end of Document for details)

- (3) No person shall erect or alter any structure designed to contain or divert the floodwaters of any part of a main river except with the consent of and in accordance with plans and sections approved by the [F³appropriate agency].
- (4) If any person carries out any work in contravention of this section the [F³appropriate agency] may—
- (a) remove, alter, or pull down the work; and
 - (b) recover from that person the expenses incurred in doing so.
- (5) Subsections (1) and (2) above shall not apply to any work carried out in an emergency; but a person carrying out any work excepted from those subsections by this subsection shall inform the [F³appropriate agency] in writing as soon as practicable—
- (a) of the carrying out of the work; and
 - (b) of the circumstances in which it was carried out.
- (6) Nothing in this section shall be taken to affect any enactment requiring the consent of any government department for the erection of a bridge or any powers exercisable by any government department in relation to a bridge.
- [F⁴(7) Subsections (1) to (3) above shall not apply to any work if—
- (a) carrying out the work is a licensable marine activity,
 - (b) the [F³appropriate agency] considers that, in view of the terms and conditions that will be included in the marine licence, the provisions of those subsections may be dispensed with, and
 - (c) the [F³appropriate agency] issues a notice to that effect to the applicant for the marine licence.
- (8) In subsection (7) above “licensable marine activity” and “marine licence” have the same meaning as in Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.]

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in ss. 109-111 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 274(b)** (with Sch. 7)
- F4** S. 109(7)(8) inserted (6.4.2011) by [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 \(c. 23\)](#), **ss. 82(2)**, 324(3) (with **ss. 76-81**, 111, **Sch. 9 para. 10**); S.I. 2011/556, art. 3(2)(a)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 109 modified (16.3.1992) by [London Government Act 1992 \(c. iii\)](#), **s. 32(9)(10)**
S. 109 modified (18.12.1996) by 1996 c. 61, s. 52, **Sch. 15 Pt. III para. 11**
- C2** S. 109 amended (16.3.1992) by [Aire and Calder Navigation Act 1992 \(c. iv\)](#), **s. 33(12)**
- C3** S. 109 amended (18.6.1992) by [British Railways \(No. 2\) Act 1992 \(c. xi\)](#), **s. 42(8)**
- C4** S. 109 amended (16.3.1992) by [Midland Metro Act 1992 \(c. vii\)](#), **s. 21(9)**
- C5** S. 109 excluded (5.11.1993) by 1993 c. 42, **s. 25(1)** (with s. 30(1), **Sch. 2 para. 9**).
- C6** S. 109 applied (21.7.1994) by 1994 c. xv, **s. 43(11)**
- C7** S. 109 applied (with modifications) (7.3.1995) by S.I. 1995/519, **arts. 3(9)**, 57-64
- C8** S. 109 excluded (2.4.2004) by [Docklands Light Railway \(Woolwich Arsenal Extension\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/757\)](#), arts. 1, **4(8)(b)**
- C9** S. 109 excluded (11.2.2005) by [Merseytram \(Liverpool City Centre to Kirkby\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/120\)](#), arts. 1, **5(9)** (with arts. 65, 66)
- C10** S. 109 modified (22.3.2005) by [Midland Metro \(Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and Miscellaneous Amendments\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/927\)](#), **Sch. 11 para. 11** (with art. 51)

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross Heading: Main river functions. (See end of Document for details)

- C11 S. 109 modified (26.8.2005) by River Tyne (Tunnels) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/2222), art. 1, **Sch. 10 para. 14** (with arts. 45(1), 48, Sch. 10 paras. 21, 29)
- C12 S. 109 excluded (25.11.2005) by Docklands Light Railway (Capacity Enhancement) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/3105), arts. 1, **5(7)(a)** (with arts. 3(5), 15(3))
- C13 S. 109 modified (11.1.2006) by The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/3523), art. 1, **Sch. 11 para. 10** (with art. 52)
- C14 S. 109 excluded (22.11.2006) by Docklands Light Railway (Stratford International Extension) Order 2006 (S.I. 2006/2905), arts. 1, **4(8)** (with art. 43)
- C15 S. 109 modified (19.3.2007) by Ouseburn Barrage Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/608), art. 1, **Sch. 6 para. 18** (with arts. 46-48, Sch. 6 paras. 17(5), 23)
- C16 S. 109 excluded (23.8.2007) by Docklands Light Railway (Capacity Enhancement and 2012 Games Preparation) Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/2297), arts. 1, **5(8)(a)** (with arts. 3(6), 12(3))
- C17 S. 109 modified (28.9.2007) by London Gateway Logistics and Commercial Centre Order 2007 (S.I. 2007/2657), art. 1, **Sch. 3 para. 13(1)** (with arts. 19, 28, Sch. 3 para. 13(2))
- C18 S. 109 modified (16.5.2008) by London Gateway Port Harbour Empowerment Order 2008 (S.I. 2008/1261), art. 1, **Sch. 10 para. 12(1)** (with arts. 41(1), 45, 54(2), 55, 56, 57, 58(6))
- C19 S. 109 modified (22.7.2008) by Crossrail Act 2008 (c. 18), **Sch. 17 para. 11**
- C20 S. 109 excluded (9.6.2009) by Nottingham Express Transit System Order 2009 (S.I. 2009/1300), arts. 1, **5(9)** (with Sch. 13 para. 14(2), Sch. 14 para. 19, Sch. 16)
- C21 S. 109 modified (20.7.2010) by The Network Rail (Nuneaton North Chord) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/1721), art. 1, **Sch. 11 para. 12**
- C22 S. 109 modified (27.8.2010) by The Llangollen and Corwen Railway Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/2136), art. 1(1), **Sch. 4 para. 12**
- C23 S. 109 modified (1.9.2010) by The Port of Bristol (Deep Sea Container Terminal) Harbour Revision Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/2020), art. 1(2), **Sch. 6 para. 11(1)** (with arts. 18, 19)
- C24 S. 109 modified (1.2.2011) by The River Mersey (Mersey Gateway Bridge) Order 2011 (S.I. 2011/41), art. 1, **Sch. 10 para. 41(1)** (with art. 51, Sch. 10 paras. 6885)
- C25 S. 109 disappplied (26.9.2012) by The Network Rail (Ipswich Chord) Order 2012 (S.I. 2012/2284), arts. 1, **4(a)** (with art. 26(2))

110 Applications for consents and approvals under section 109.

- (1) The [^{F3}appropriate agency] may require the payment of an application fee by a person who applies to it for its consent under section 109 above; and the amount of that fee shall be £50 or such other sum as may be [^{F5}prescribed].
 - (2) A consent or approval required under section 109 above—
 - (a) shall not be unreasonably withheld;
 - (b) shall be deemed to have been given if it is neither given nor refused within the relevant period; and
 - (c) in the case of a consent, may be given subject to any reasonable condition as to the time at which and the manner in which any work is to be carried out.
 - (3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(b) above the relevant period is—
 - (a) in the case of a consent, the period of two months after whichever is the later of—
 - (i) the day on which application for the consent is made; and
 - (ii) if at the time when that application is made an application fee is required to be paid, the day on which the liability to pay that fee is discharged;
- and

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross Heading: Main river functions. (See end of Document for details)

- (b) in the case of an approval, the period of two months after application for the approval is made.
- (4) If any question arises under this section whether any consent or approval is unreasonably withheld or whether any condition imposed is reasonable, the question shall—
- (a) if the parties agree to arbitration, be referred to a single arbitrator appointed by agreement between the parties or, in default of agreement, by the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers; and
- (b) if the parties do not agree to arbitration, be referred to and determined by [^{F6}the Minister] or the Secretary of State, according to whether the determination falls to be made in relation to England or Wales.
- (5) The power of the Ministers to make an order under subsection (1) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
- [^{F7}(6) In subsection (1) above “prescribed” means specified in, or determined in accordance with, an order made by the Ministers; and any such order may make different provision for different cases, including different provision in relation to different persons, circumstances or localities.]

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words in ss. 109-111 substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Natural Resources Body for Wales \(Functions\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/755\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 274(b)** (with Sch. 7)
- F5** Word in s. 110(1) substituted (subject to other provisions of the amending Act) (21.9.1995) by [1995 c. 25, s. 120\(1\)](#), **Sch. 22 para. 147(1)** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); [S.I. 1995/1983](#), **art. 3**
- F6** Words in s. 110(4)(b) substituted (subject to other provisions of the amending Act) (21.9.1995) by [1995 c. 25, s. 120\(1\)](#), **Sch. 22 para. 147(2)** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); [S.I. 1995/1983](#), **art. 3**
- F7** S. 110(6) inserted (subject to other provisions of the amending Act) (21.9.1995) by [1995 c. 25, s. 120\(1\)](#), **Sch. 22 para. 147(3)** (with ss. 7(6), 115, 117); [S.I. 1995/1983](#), **art. 3**

Status:

Point in time view as at 06/04/2013.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Water Resources Act 1991, Cross
Heading: Main river functions.