Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2030-2055

Delivering for customers, communities and the environment

Strategic Context Document

March 2026

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Foreword

I'm delighted to present this Strategic Context document, a fundamental first step in the development of our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, also known as DWMP28.

We know communities are already feeling the effects of pollution, flooding, and overstretched systems. Our job isn't just to fix today's problems – it's to build a future where these issues are prevented before they happen.

With a growing population, changing climate, and disappearing green spaces, we need a plan that's robust, resilient, and ready for tomorrow. That's exactly what this DWMP is about – setting out a clear strategy that will improve river health and keep homes, businesses, and communities free from flooding for decades to come.

We're working hand-in-hand with customers and other stakeholders to make sure our plan is grounded in real insight and ambition. The DWMP is our roadmap to co-delivering our shared goals and we're just getting started!

I want to thank every stakeholder who has contributed to the DWMP process so far. Your continued involvement is fundamental to its success, so we'll keep working closely together as we move forward with building our shared plan.

Tessa Fayers
Wastewater & Bioresources Director.

Quick guide to DWMP28

This document provides an overview of DWMP28 and focuses on the first stage within this process, the Strategic Context stage. It's been produced with our region-wide stakeholders and sets out our plan for 2030 to 2055, including:

- the wastewater systems and areas covered
- the current and future trends presenting a risk to our region and services
- the objectives of our shared plan
- how we'll assess the benefits of the investment required

Throughout this document we demonstrate how we've worked with you to define the Strategic Context stage, applying lessons from our previous work, and how we'll continue to collaborate to co-create and deliver our DWMP28.

For more information on our DWMP28 please follow this link to our webpages.

Our DWMP28 webpages

A message from our stakeholders

Gabrielle Garland
Principal Drainage and Wastewater Planner, Environment Agency.

Kate Chandler-Hawkins
Senior Drainage and Wastewater Planner, Environment Agency.

Thames Water's early engagement with stakeholders, such as the Environment Agency, on their Strategic Context helps to set the direction of the DWMP towards finding best-value solutions to current and future challenges.

Having frequent and transparent conversations with Thames Water has meant that we're able to understand what they're trying to achieve, what some of the blockers are and how we can work together to build long-term plans that are resilient to change and meet future needs.

We look forward to continuing this way of working as they begin the next stages of DWMP28.

Chris Thilthorpe
Thames Flood Advisor, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

The Thames Flood Advisors team supported Thames Water through the non-statutory cycle of their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan, aligning with the strategic objective of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to promote forward-looking, integrated schemes that deliver multiple benefits through enabling strong partnerships across Lead Local Flood Authorities.

Thames Flood Advisors' continued support of Thames Water in their stakeholder collaboration and shaping of DWMP28 reflects a shared commitment to manage flood risk and strengthen community resilience.

What is a DWMP?

Aligned to Water Resource Planning, long-term wastewater planning is now a statutory water company requirement. Since the non-statutory DWMPs were published in June 2023, and in collaboration with the water industry, regulators have significantly extended the DWMP scope and requirements.

A DWMP is a plan for how sewerage undertakers will manage and develop their drainage and sewerage systems, to meet current and future demands. Produced every five years, and formally reviewed by regulators, plans must be evidence-based, with robust assessments of asset health, capacity, climate impacts and risks, such as urban creep. The health of the environment is at the heart of the DWMP, with risk to be assessed and mitigated, through routes including nature-based solutions.

As our systems interact with assets owned by other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) eg National Highways, we'll proactively engage with these stakeholders to consider potential impacts on performance.

Through DWMP28, we'll demonstrate our plan to meet capacity and infrastructure needs between 2030-2055, and how we'll improve the resilience of our systems. Although this is a 25-year strategic plan, we'll break it down by catchment so we can more easily see local challenges and identify opportunities for targeted partnership working.

Outcomes we can achieve by working together

The shared ownership structure for drainage means that working in partnership with other responsible stakeholders is fundamental to the development of a DWMP. A collaborative approach will support the DWMP's sustainability, solution efficiency and potential to realise wider outcomes and benefits for customers, communities, the environment and the economy.

A DWMP is a broad and far-reaching integrated plan, with shared goals. We illustrate here its key components and the outcomes that can be achieved by developing it in partnership.

Partnership working: case studies

Over the last five years of DWMP23 and prior, we've worked collaboratively on projects with a broad range of stakeholders including customers, schools, landowners and local authorities. Together we've developed and delivered integrated solutions that are realising sustainable benefits and contributing to positive outcomes for our customers, the communities we serve and our region's environment. The case studies below feature some recent examples. We're proud to demonstrate the achievements from these projects and others we've built together, and aim to develop many more opportunities via DWMP28.

Marylebone Flyover Rain Gardens, Central London

Background

The Marylebone Flyover rain gardens have been created to help tackle London's increasing risk of extreme weather and reduce its potential impacts, particularly localised flooding and storm overflow discharges.

The site of the project is a disused subway underpass originally designed for pedestrians to avoid the busy junction where the A5 Edgware Road and Marylebone Road intersect under the A40 flyover. After the junction was remodelled to make road crossing safer, the subterranean walkway became redundant and was closed in 2018.

Challenge

This project was challenged to significantly contribute to London's climate-resilience by enhancing the local drainage system and reducing flooding risk, but also to achieve this through sustainable nature-based solutions that provide green spaces and increase biodiversity within this built-up urban environment.

Partners

The project was a joint collaboration between TfL, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and Thames Water, with the Marble Arch London BID committed to fund and run the maintenance work. It was part funded by Thames Water and the GLA under the Green Infrastructure Fund programme.

Partnership solution

The partnership solution transformed the ramped and stepped entrances of the unused underpass into porous rain gardens with below ground stormwater storage. The three large rectangular gardens have been designed to withstand extreme weather, including 1 in 30-year storm events*. Combined, the gardens are around the size of 10 double-decker buses and act as giant drains during heavy rainfall capturing up to 3,500 cubic metres of stormwater from roads and pavements and capable of holding around 30,000 gallons of rainwater in total. The gardens will significantly slow down the flow of rainwater into the sewer network as well as reduce the risk of localised flooding and storm overflows.

Featuring trees and thousands of shrubs, and flowers, the planting in the gardens has been selected to provide year-round colour and shade, as well as tolerate extreme weather, support pollinating insects and flourish in local soils with minimum maintenance. The rain gardens are also helping local biodiversity by incorporating native plant species which contribute to healthier ecosystems and air quality.

The once redundant Marylebone underpass has become central London's largest thriving example of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) serving its residents, communities and environment now, and in the future.

Benefits

The project will continue to deliver and contribute to a broad range of social and environmental benefits including:

- Increasing London's climate change resilience
- Reducing localised flooding risk
- Reducing the number of storm overflow discharges
- Increasing wastewater system resilience
- Increasing green spaces to help health and wellbeing
- Boosting the urban ecosystem and biodiversity
- Improving air quality
- Improving environmental and river water quality
- Increasing environmental awareness through engagement with local schools and communities
- Repurposing unused grey infrastructure into green solutions

Timeframe

This collaborative project was delivered in October 2024.

*The probability that a 1 in 30-year storm event could occur each year is approximately 3.3%.

Partnership working: case studies cnt'd

Lye Valley Planters, Oxfordshire

Background

The Lye Valley Nature Reserve, in Oxfordshire, is a rare and unique environment that's home to protected fenland, unique plants and an abundance of wildlife. Two areas of the reserve, the North and South fens, are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), protecting their geological features and wildlife under UK law.

The Lye Valley fens are 'calcareous', a distinctive type of peatland wetland characterised by an alkaline environment. These rare ecosystems rely on high groundwater levels to thrive and are sensitive to disturbance, particularly changes in groundwater levels.

The Lye Brook flows through the middle of the nature reserve. A Thames Water outfall releases stormwater into the brook during periods of intense or prolonged rainfall. Outfalls are designed to release stormwater into rivers, streams, and other water bodies to stop it from pooling on roads and overwhelming the sewer system, which can create flooding and pollution risks. As rainfall events have increased in intensity across the catchment in recent years, the outfall can release up to 1900 litres per second into the Lye Brook. This volume is eroding the bed of the watercourse, making it lower than the natural groundwater level and putting the fens at risk of drying out.

Challenge

This project was challenged to support the protection of the fens by reducing the volume of stormwater released into the Lye Brook by slowing down the flow of rainwater entering the sewers in this area. At the same time the solution was challenged to prioritise natural sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), to manage the flood risk caused by increased rainfall.

Partners

The Lye Valley planters project was a joint collaboration between Thames Water, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Groundwork.

Partnership solution

The partnership solution focused on an innovative community-based rainwater management approach. It engaged local communities and provided Thames Water SuDS planters that were specifically developed for sustainable rainwater management in urban areas.

The planters contain a two-tank system, disguised in a robust wood-effect tank. They capture rainwater from rooftops during heavy storms, storing it for later use and releasing excess water slowly into the drainage system so not to overwhelm it.

This approach will help to reduce the number of outfall releases into the Lye Brook, to protect the fens in the Lye Valley Nature Reserve and the unique ecosystem, with many rare plant and animal species, that the fens support. It's estimated this project has removed over 5,200m^2 of roof area from draining into the sewer network.

Benefits

The project will continue to deliver and contribute to a broad range of social and environmental benefits including:

- Increasing local climate change resilience
- Slowing the flow of rainwater entering sewers
- Reducing localised flooding and pollution risk
- Reducing the number of storm overflows
- Increasing wastewater system resilience
- Improving air quality
- Providing green solutions to communities
- Increasing environmental awareness through engagement with residents and communities
- Developing an industry-wide blueprint for community-based rainwater management
- Encouraging residential communities to adopt rainwater capture tools

Timeframe

The project was delivered collaboratively from October 2024 to March 2025.

DWMP28





A new legal framework

As introduced earlier, the Government has made it a statutory requirement for all water companies to produce and maintain a DWMP. Government guidance has been published to clearly set out the DWMP requirements and expectations. This ensures a consistent industry approach, making it easier for stakeholders to understand and actively contribute to the collaborative DWMP process.

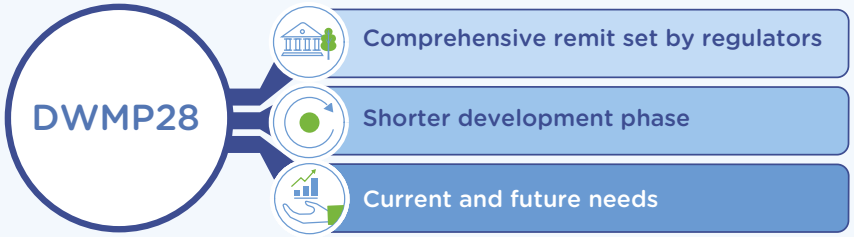
DWMPs came from a growing appreciation of the need for long-term planning in the wastewater sector to more closely resemble the established water supply planning process – the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). The 2021 Environment Act amended the foundational legislation of the whole water industry[1] making the DWMP a legal requirement. The 2025 Water Act[2] further refined the requirement to ensure DWMPs address the use of nature-based solutions within the strategies developed.

A DWMP is developed following a nine-stage process[3], that's illustrated here. The stages move from a consultative and broad starting point through steps that focus on forecasting the emergence of key risks and the appraisal and selection of preferred solutions that will shape how and where investments are made in the future. Critically, the process is 'live' and after 2028, some stages will be reviewed annually and updated where necessary, in response to system changes. The entire process is repeated every five years to keep the plan and our strategies flexible, and adaptable as previous uncertainties become clearer and as key legislation, demographics and technologies evolve.

Legislation states that DWMPs must specifically address:

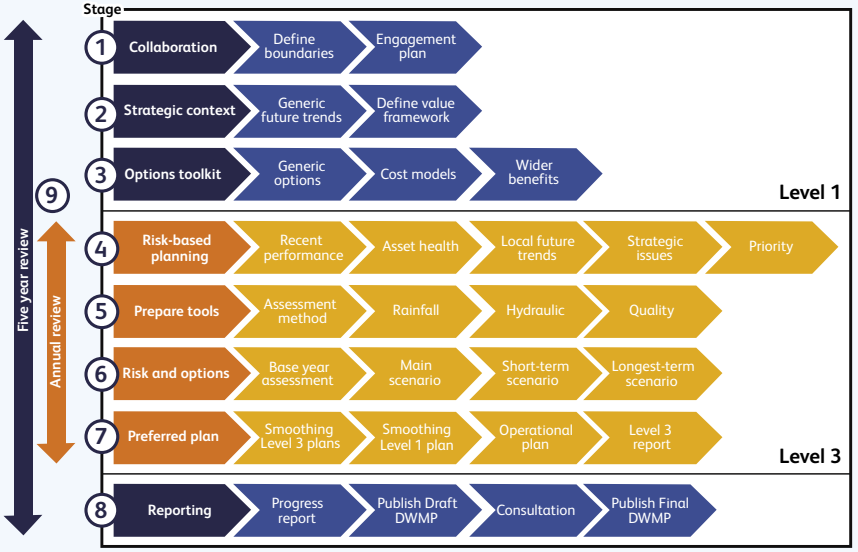
- the capacity of our drainage and sewerage system
- an assessment of the current and future demands on our drainage and sewerage system
- the resilience of our drainage and sewerage system
- the measures we intend to take or continue for the purpose of meeting our statutory obligations
- the likely sequence and timing for implementing those measures
- relevant environmental risks and how those risks are to be mitigated

A statutory plan



DWMP28 Planning process

Overview of planning process[3]



[1] Section 94A(3) of the Water Industry Act 1991
[2] Water (Special Measures) Act 2025
[3] Guidelines for Statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs), May 2025

A broader scope

The new regulatory guidance sets out an expanded scope for DWMP28 beyond that used for the non-statutory DWMP23 completed in June 2023.

The remit of DWMP23 focused on a narrow scope of additional investment, known as enhancement, for needs over and above our day-to-day operational and maintenance costs. However, this excluded some other strategic plans such as the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP). DWMP23 focused on mitigating the impact of growth and climate change on property flooding, storm overflows and sewage treatment works compliance.

DWMP28 scope and joint responsibilities

The expanded remit for DWMP28 now comprises all required drainage and sewerage investment need for at least the next 25 years. This includes previously excluded enhancement spend, such as WINEP, as well as the general costs to keep the service running and meet all legal obligations. This remit connects the DWMP more closely to our wider business activities, informing the short and medium-term wastewater plans that we submit every five years to our economic regulator, Ofwat.

At its core, DWMP28 is a plan for the assets we own, as the sewerage undertaker, but we also consider the interactions with other drainage systems and pathways owned by third parties. The scope of DWMP28 is expanded to consider the risks associated with flooding and pollution that can be considered our 'joint responsibility' with these other responsible third parties, such as local and highways authorities. This wider scope requires greater planning and collaboration. We'll work with other Risk Management Authorities to understand these interactions and align our DWMP with their drainage and flood risk management strategies to achieve shared goals.

The generation, disposal and reuse of sewage sludge, a byproduct of the wastewater treatment process, is a valuable fertiliser and energy source and a fundamental new part of the DWMP remit. However, for DWMP28, sludge is only partly incorporated as we work with regulators to mature our metrics and forecasting for future plans.

Consultation

To enable our DWMP28 to be more adaptable, we must assess the impact of potential different future scenarios, such as variations to climate change and population growth, as well as considering constraints for example deliverability and affordability. We're currently working with regulators on the range of plans to be included in the draft DWMP28. This will be published for consultation by 1st November 2027. The consultation period will be an opportunity to test our preferred and alternative plans with stakeholders, and incorporate their feedback into our DWMP28 ahead of its final publication in August 2028.

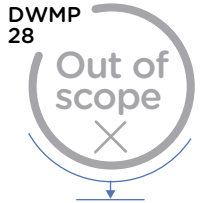
DWMP28 scope

Planning for the impact of:
- Population change
- Climate change
- Asset health
- Operations & Maintenance
- New regulatory requirements including the Water industry national environment programme (WINEP)
- Resilience

Co-creation of solutions:
- Partnership working

Water company-owned assets:
- Short, medium and long-term view

Sewage sludge:
- Treatment, recycling and disposal (Under development)



Assets not owned by us:
- Not owned by the Water company and do not interact with our drainage and wastewater systems

Alignment with other strategic management plans

Risk Management Authorities, such as the Environment Agency and local councils, produce strategies and plans that DWMP28 should align to.

Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) often have responsibilities that interact with those of water companies, such as managing flood risk. As such, the strategies and plans produced by other RMAs will influence, contribute to, or are dependent on the DWMP. These range from the Government's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to more local Flood Risk Management Strategies that are produced by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). Some of these interactions are illustrated here.

Integrated planning is a fundamental part of the DWMP because it helps identify dependencies and opportunities for co-developed investment to be understood and realised. For example, understanding the Surface Water Management Plans of LLFAs will help identify joint areas of risk where a co-developed SuDS scheme would provide multiple benefits including reduced flood risk. This leads to more efficient spending as well as better outcomes for customers and the environment. In addition, the DWMP will provide the investment requirements over 25 years to support the environmental objectives set out by the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans and outline the investment requirements to meet Storm Overflow targets set out in Defra's Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan.

The Government's Water Reform White paper[4] acknowledges that current planning frameworks - requiring over 20 separate plans - are complex and inefficient. It sets out a streamlined water industry planning model that consolidates existing plans and processes into two core planning frameworks: one for the water environment and one for water supply. This represents a significant step forward in integrated planning, for the future.

Highlights from our alignment activities

- Regular touch-point meetings with RMAs and key stakeholders including the Greater London Authority and Environment Agency
- Thames Water's representation at the London Surface Water Strategic Group
- Supporting the Environment Agency's Flood Advisors
- Regular updates to the LLFAs including Surrey and the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
- Developing a shared responsibility Performance Indicator with highway authorities
- Collaboration sessions with Water Resources South East
- Responding to consultations eg on River Basin Management Plans

Interaction of DWMP28 and other strategic management plans

Sets objectives/ outcomes/targets

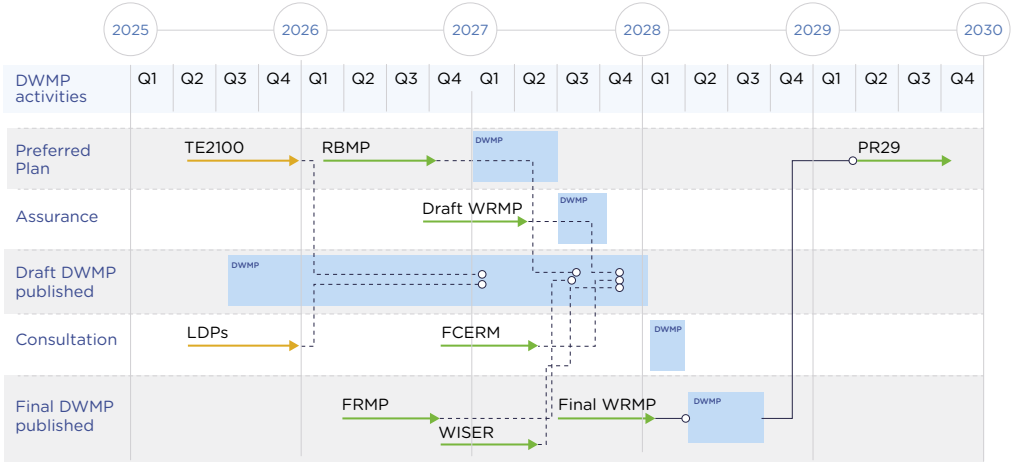
- Water Industry Strategic Environmental Requirements (WISER)
- River Basin Management Plan (RBMP)
- National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (FCERM)
- Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan
- Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP)
- Pollution Incident Reduction Plans
- Adaption Reporting Power Plans
- Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP)

Partnership opportunities/learning from similar approaches

- Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP)
- Local Flood Risk Management Strategies
- Surface Water Management Plans
- Highways Asset Management Plans
- National Highways Long Term Plan and Road Investment Strategy

Locality data on drivers (eg growth, land, biodiversity)

- Local Flood Risk Management Strategies
- Local Development Plans (LDP)
- Spatial Development Strategies
- Water Cycle Studies
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Thames Estuary Plan 2100 (TE2100)



[4] A new vision for water: White paper

What our stakeholders have told us

DWMPs are led by water companies but enhanced through shared learning and delivery. We're working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders, including those outlined below.

Local authorities & Lead local flood authorities

To make sure our plans support local communities and future development

Environment Agency & Other regulators

To protect rivers, wildlife, and meet environmental standards

Catchment partnerships & Community groups

To bring local knowledge and ideas for greener, nature-based solutions

Developers & Landowners

To help us plan for growth in a way that reduces surface water runoff and keeps new homes flood-resilient

Customers

To share priorities and lived experiences so we focus on what really matters

Our own teams

To join up expertise from across Thames Water to turn ideas into action

Learning from DWMP23

To make sure we learn from DWMP23, we held a series of interactive stakeholder focus groups, to gather feedback and valuable insights. The main feedback themes are summarised below, along with some, but not all, of the stakeholders who took part. This feedback is helping to shape a more meaningful, transparent, and action-focused stakeholder engagement approach for DWMP28.

What you told us – Main themes

Environment Agency

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Thames Regional Flood & Coastal Committee

THAMES FLOOD ADVISORS

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LoDEG

ark Action for the River Kennet

CRANE VALLEY COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

What our stakeholders have told us cnt'd

Our approach to DWMP28

We're proud of what we achieved together through our DWMP23, and we'll expand and build on this achievement. DWMP28 is about going further, working closer, and delivering smarter solutions that reflect what matters to our customers and stakeholders.

Here's what we're doing:

- A dedicated contact - We've appointed a DWMP Stakeholder Lead – one point of contact, to enable consistent and joined-up conversations
- Clear roles, clear benefits - We're sharing guidance on who's involved, what's expected, and how your input shapes the plan
- Smarter digital tools - We've invested further in our online portal so you can easily access data, updates, and documents
- Regular updates (without overload) - We're making the most of existing forums and giving you consistent, meaningful opportunities to get involved – without crowding your diary
- Stronger partnerships - We're continuing to work hand-in-hand with Thames Flood Advisors, Catchment Partnerships, and other established networks
- Customer-driven planning - We're making sure customer priorities are front and centre when we build our value frameworks
- Considering all options - We're exploring the full range of potential solutions to get the best possible outcomes for people, places, and the environment

Stakeholder engagement and collaboration

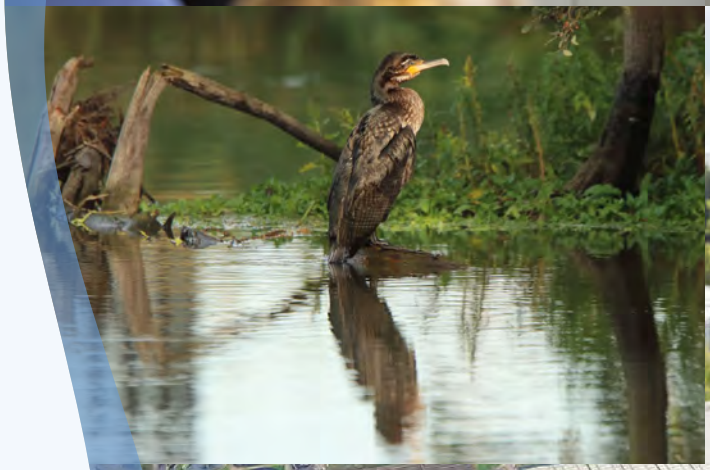
Our focus
Adopt new guidance, collaborate and innovate to align goals, reduce risk and find solutions

Our goals
Promote inclusivity and accessibility to gain a broad perspective, share knowledge and skills, produce a collaboratively driven plan and a database of project opportunities

Our aims
Lead engagement to achieve a common vision with environmental and societal benefits through a comprehensive engagement approach

Our stakeholders
Stakeholders that have a shared responsibility and/or interest in drainage, flooding and protecting the environment. Together with customers, communities and our regulators

The Strategic Context stage



What is the Strategic Context stage?

The Strategic Context stage sets out the scope of DWMP28 and the key parameters in the planning process. It defines the Performance Indicators, the Value Framework for interventions and documents the future challenges and trends likely to affect our shared plan.

As a DWMP is now a statutory requirement, the key components of the Strategic Context stage have been defined in the regulatory guidance. This approach differs from the non-statutory process where more of the scope was defined upfront by region-wide stakeholders.

Planning period

A DWMP planning horizon is at least 25 years. The base year is set at the end of the current Asset Management Plan (AMP). Therefore, the planning period for DWMP28 is 2030 to 2055. This will help us to fully understand the future pressures affecting our region and their impacts on our service, customers and the environment in the long term. The Guidance states that DWMP should take a short, medium and long-term view with planning scenarios based on 5-year, 15-year and 25-year planning horizons. This provides appropriate summaries to support near, medium and long-term business planning.

Planning horizons

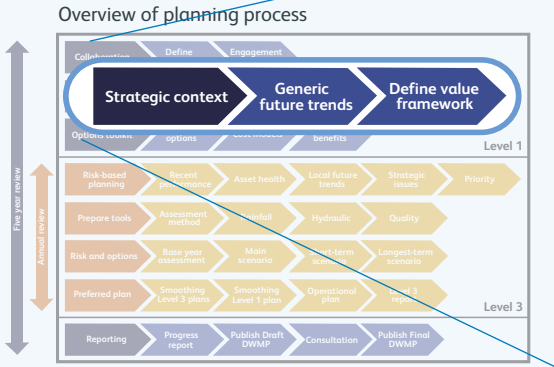
5 year horizon (2030 to 2035)

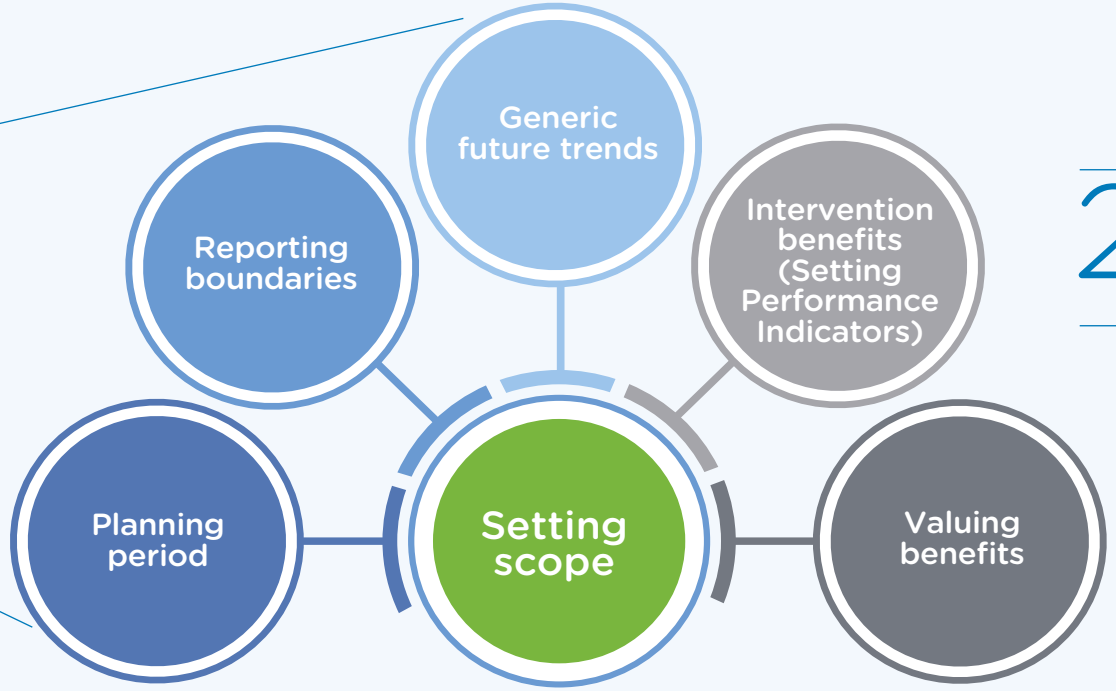
15 year horizon (2030 to 2045)

25+ year horizon (2030 to 2055)

Setting the scope

Overview of planning process





What is the Strategic Context stage? cnt'd

Reporting boundaries

We work in a highly diverse region with varying boundaries, from the densely populated commercial centre of London to the more rural, locally-focused communities in the Thames Valley.

Developing a DWMP that works for everyone is a challenge, but essential. In alignment with regulatory guidance and stakeholder input, to simplify the geography of our DWMP, we've broken it down into the following four levels for collaboration, analysis and reporting:

Level 1	Company level
Level 2	River basins and London sewage treatment works (STW) catchments
Level 3	Sewerage catchment (the areas that drain to one STW)
Level 4	Sewerage sub-catchments (London only)

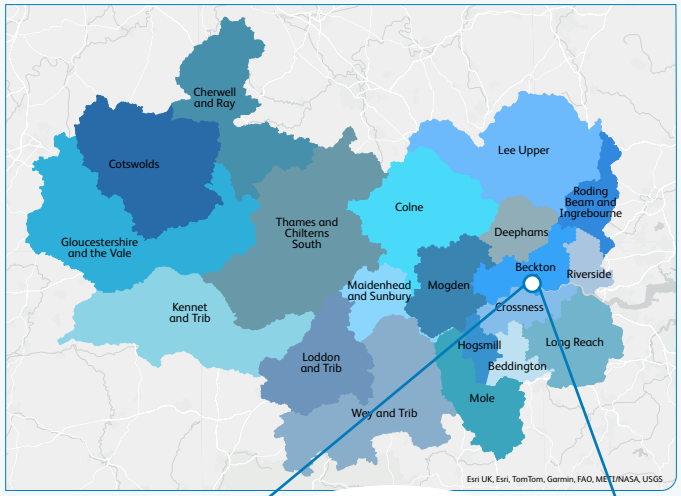
We've reviewed the Defra guidelines and consulted with stakeholders, particularly the Environment Agency and Greater London Authority, who have recommended that we use river basins (specifically 'Management Catchments', as defined in Cycle 3 of the River Basin Management Plan), for our Level 2 boundaries in the Thames Valley. In London, river basins encompass large areas of the capital so are not sufficiently granular for effective collaboration. Furthermore, in central London, many of the rivers have been lost, built over and incorporated into the public sewerage system. Therefore, for London we'll use the eight STW catchments to define our Level 2 boundaries:

1. Beckton
2. Mogden
3. Crossness
4. Riverside
5. Long Reach
6. Hogsmill
7. Beddington
8. Deephams

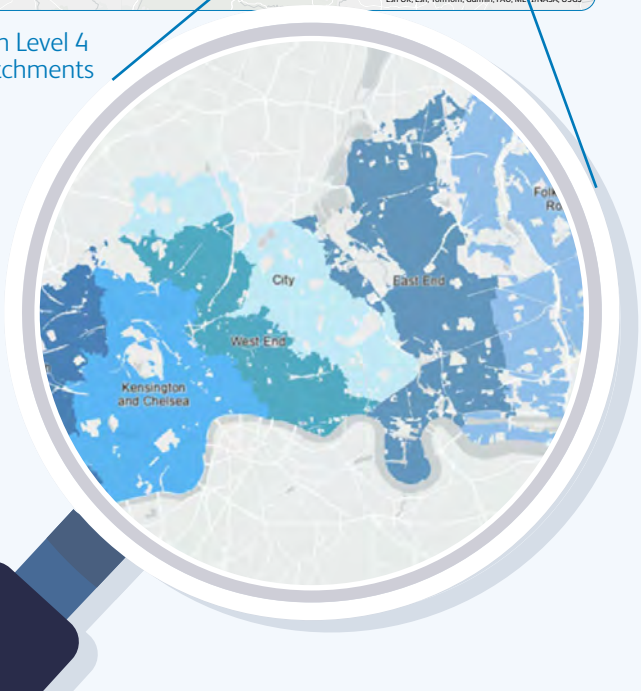
This approach means that for London, our Level 2 areas are the same as Level 3 areas. Due to their size and complexity, we'll further sub-divide these London STW catchments into more manageable Level 4 sub-catchments. This division will be based on the discrete wastewater hydraulic areas draining to pumping stations or trunk sewers. Eg our largest catchment Beckton has been divided into six Level 4 sub-catchments, as shown here.

The Strategic Context stage applies to Level 1. DWMP is a bottom-up plan built up at Level 3 and so local context will also be incorporated and summarised, where appropriate, in our Level 3 DWMP reporting.

Our Level 2 boundaries



Beckton Level 4 sub-catchments



Shaping this stage with stakeholders

We worked with stakeholders to further define the Strategic Context stage, in alignment with regulatory guidance, so that its components are specific to our region and fully reflect the shared challenges we face.

We gained stakeholder input through facilitating webinars and forums, and sharing a draft Strategic Context document that outlined our suggested approach, together with the following consultation questions for feedback.

Stakeholder consultation questions

Strategic Context Area	Question
Future trends	1 Are there any additional generic trends that you would like us to consider that are relevant to DWMP?
	2 Do you agree with our list of the most impactful trends? If not, what trends do you believe should take priority?
Performance Indicators	3 Do you have any suggestions for specific, bespoke Performance Indicators for our DWMP?
Value Framework	4 Are there any gaps in the Value Framework or inconsistencies with approaches used elsewhere?
	5 Do you agree with our approach to defining and measuring value, including how we link Performance Indicators to value and the focus on monetisation?
	6 Are you aware of any sources of monetary values that we've not included in the Value Framework?
Working together	7 Have you any schemes or datasets that present opportunities for co-creation?

You said:

"We recommend active engagement with catchment partnerships. Ongoing projects include surface water strategies, sustainable drainage mapping, sewer monitoring data, runoff opportunity mapping and citizen science waterbody datasets"

Stakeholder feedback on 'Working together', 2025

How our stakeholders have shaped the Strategic Context stage

Stakeholder responses on the Strategic Context stage have broadened our thinking. In particular:

Generic trends: Stakeholders suggested more trends and in response we'll publish our Generic Trends Technical Report. This considers 34 trends and provides a more comprehensive analysis

Value Framework: We're making it simpler and learning from current industry development work

Data sharing: We're sharing data including the latest housing and development data, national flood risk maps, as well as also tracking existing catchment partnerships and the London Surface Water Strategy

Stakeholder feedback from our webinars and Level 1 Forum in 2025

81%
Agreed with the future trends we identified as impacting our region

82%
Agreed with the way we measure the value of interventions, by using indicators and money to show their results

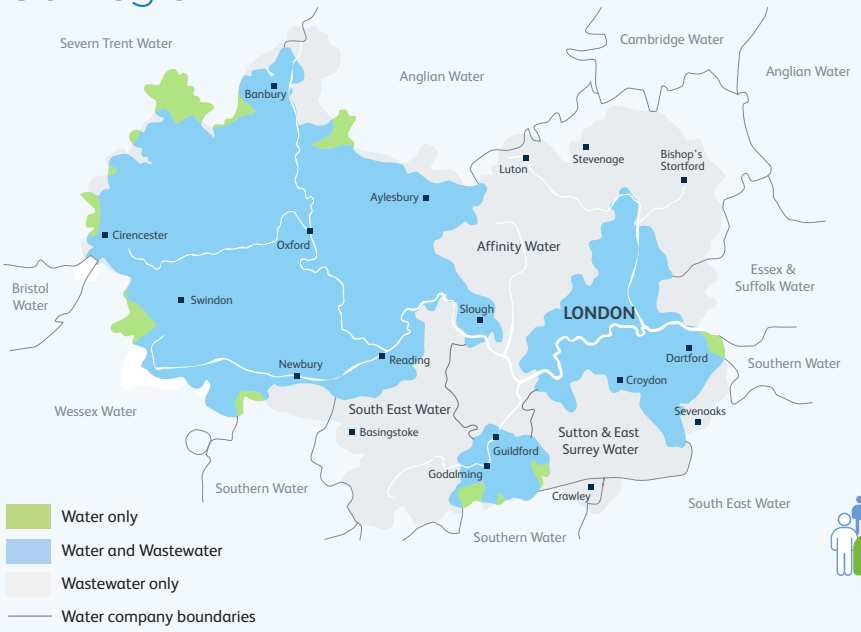
82%
Wanted to share projects and datasets to support shared DWMP objectives

An introduction to our region

Our region follows the iconic River Thames and stretches from Gloucestershire to Essex, covering countryside, villages, towns and London, our capital city. We've millions of customers to provide for and hundreds of communities to support.

Every day, we manage the unique challenges our region places on our wastewater services, from its rural terrains and geology to its growing infrastructure and densely populated areas. To serve and protect our region, it's important to understand these current conditions and challenges, as a foundation for effective planning. We'll work collaboratively with stakeholders to assess and agree ways to sustainably address these and future challenges in our DWMP.

Our region



Our wastewater services

Taking wastewater away from
16 million customers every day

Treating
4.7 billion litres of wastewater every day and returning treated water safely back to our local rivers

Pumping wastewater from our
5,144 pumping stations
to be treated at
352 sewage treatment works
from the largest in Europe in East London to community assets serving hamlets in the Cotswolds

Maintaining and enhancing
110,000 km of sewers through
1.79 million manholes

Providing more green spaces for communities to use and enjoy across our region

How our region challenges our wastewater services

2 We serve two contrasting areas from the densely populated capital city of London, to the more rural town and cities in the Thames Valley

4 We share boundaries with four other waste and sewerage companies; Anglian Water, Severn Trent Water, Wessex Water and Southern Water

90% Our region has some of the UK's most environmentally-important watercourses and 90% of the world's chalk streams. Most are in the south of England

SSSI We've many designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), in which we must protect rare geological features and unique wildlife under UK law

160 Much of London's critical wastewater infrastructure was built in the 19th century and is around 160 years old. These ageing assets are now deteriorating

48% Outside London, 48% of our foul network is more vulnerable to groundwater infiltration and overwhelm, due to porous geology and dramatic changes in water levels

You said:

"Infrastructure should be improved to cope with existing weather patterns as well as future climate trends"

"Additional priority needs to be given to chalk stream catchments, to protect them and the underlying groundwater"

Stakeholder feedback on 'Our region', 2025

Our vision for the future

VISION2055

We are a trusted infrastructure company – employing **1000s of dedicated people** who deliver clean, safe, reliable water and take away the wastewater and clean it for **millions of customers.**

We're prepared for the challenges we know are coming, making sure we **deliver for our customers,** the public and the environment today and for the future.

And we do it in a way that shows our **customers** the money they pay us is being spent on the things that matter most – and means we can make the **investments** our **customers** and the **environment** need.

How we do it

- We provide our customers with safe, **high-quality water,** that's there when they turn on the tap
- We take away our customers' **wastewater**, clean it up and put it **safely back into rivers**
- We help our **customers** when they need it by being easy to deal with, getting it **right first time** and providing **support** to those most **vulnerable**
- We operate **hundreds** of water and wastewater treatment plants across the region and maintain the **thousands of miles of pipes** and **pumps** that connect to our customers' taps and toilets – so that they're **effective, efficient and protect our environment**
- We invest in improving our pipes, pumps and treatment plants – so that they're fixed quickly and efficiently when they break – but more importantly, **upgrading** them before they cause a problem
- We find new and **better ways** of doing things that set us up for decades to come
- We work with our **communities and stakeholders** to help us deliver what our **customers**, the **environment** and the **organisations** who have invested in us expect for the long term
- We use our resources **sustainably** and **responsibly**
- We make sure our people have the **knowledge, skills** and **tools** to do a great job and help them develop
- And, ultimately, we keep **everyone safe** and make sure they get home to their family and friends

Our DWMP28

Our DWMP28 vision supports our corporate vision for 2055 and purpose to deliver life's essential service so customers, communities and the environment can thrive.

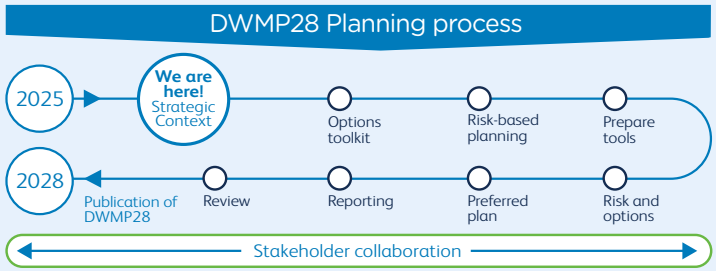
Great service depends on infrastructure and people, DWMP at its heart is an asset management plan for our wastewater infrastructure.

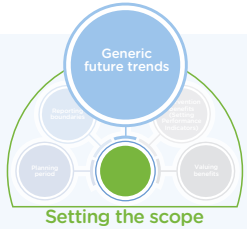
Our vision

Working in partnership to co-create a 25-year plan for drainage and wastewater that strives for our systems to be resilient, fit for the future and for our work to sustainably benefit people, communities and the natural environment in our region.

Our goal

To deliver best-value solutions over the next 25 years and beyond, making smarter use of nature-based solutions and innovation to create healthier, greener places for everyone.





Our changing world

We live in a changing world. As we look ahead to the next 25 years, it's clear that we'll encounter a distinct set of challenges compared to those of the past. Here we show examples of future trends that will impact the DWMP. We'll be publishing more details in our Future Trends document on our **website** soon.

Climate change resulting in more intense rainfall and generally wetter winters and drier summers

- Increases demand on wastewater network and treatment systems causing more flooding and more frequent operation of storm overflows
- Decreases the flows in rivers in summer reducing their ability to dilute wastewater discharges

Relevant DWMP stage: In the baseline assessment of Performance Indicators for treatment works, flooding, storm overflows and pollution incidents

Our DWMP aims to: Future-proof our assets to changing weather

Growing population and development across our region

- Increases demand on wastewater network and treatment systems causing more flooding and more frequent operation of storm overflows, through urban creep
- Requires changes to STW permits, to prevent deterioration in the water quality in receiving environment
- Can result in STWs running out of capacity, requiring upgrades, intensification of treatment processes or the provision of new STWs

Relevant DWMP stage: In the baseline assessment of Performance Indicators for treatment works, flooding, storm overflows and pollution incidents

Our DWMP aims to: Plan for our assets to have capacity for future growth, treating to the required standards, and delivered at the right time

Emerging contaminants in the environment eg from pharmaceuticals

- May drive regulators and society to seek to control the discharge of certain contaminants because of their harm to public health or the environment
- Could lead to the requirement for new and innovative treatment technologies
- May be more energy intensive to remove / reduce

Relevant DWMP stage: In the baseline assessment of ecological harm and compliance with new numeric standards in permits; and options development

Our DWMP aims to: Widen its scope to include the WINEP, and develop more innovative interventions

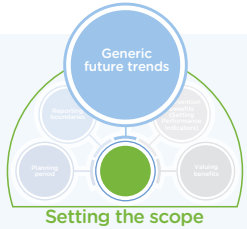
Carbon pricing and taxes

- Will increase the 'price' of carbon (and other greenhouse gases) relevant to wastewater collection and treatment in pursuit of the Government's net zero carbon target by 2050. This will encourage the uptake of lower carbon solutions including nature-based alternatives

Relevant DWMP stage: Through the Value Framework this will influence the type of solution proposed during the Options development stage

Our DWMP aims to: Identify, evaluate and deliver value over the long-term

Our changing world cnt'd



Innovative technologies will become more affordable and commonplace

- Could rapidly transform how we manage wastewater and profoundly affect our long-term plans
- Improve techniques for the rehabilitation and sealing of sewers will reduce groundwater ingress
- Enable more optimised use of existing assets through automation and control, reducing the need for new infrastructure
- Help us to be more efficient and proactive, through application of artificial intelligence

Relevant DWMP stage: Through the Value Framework this will influence the type of solution proposed during the options development stage

Our DWMP aims to: Optimise potential technological advancements that support further efficiencies and opportunities for collaboration

Changing customer habits and behaviour in disposal of commonly flushed items

- Drive a combination of legislation change and education. We expect fewer inappropriate items to be flushed, resulting in less flooding, blockages and pollution

Relevant DWMP stage: In the baseline assessment of Performance Indicators for pollution incidents

Our DWMP aims to: Include options that target customer behaviour and lobby government policy

Ageing asset base

- Increases our focus on system resilience and adaptability. This is fundamental to maintain our essential service, seen most recently through the Covid-19 pandemic. The National Infrastructure Commission highlight the importance of resilient systems and how to achieve this via a proactive framework and adaptive pathways. We must follow this approach so that we can thrive despite the wide range of future pressures we face.

Relevant DWMP stage: In the baseline assessment of asset health

Our DWMP aims to: Deliver resilient infrastructure, and long-term planning using adaptive pathway approaches to provide the services our communities rely on

The influence of stakeholder input

You said:
"The assessment of generic trends should be localised, to reflect catchment-specific influences"

We will:
Where data is available, we're doing catchment / region-specific assessments. This is particularly important for trends such as population change and Per Capita Consumption (PCC)

You said:
"A wider number of economic factors should be used, beyond carbon pricing"

We will:
Consider broader trends. For more information, see our supporting document on **Future Trends**

You said:
"Adaptive planning principles should be applied, assessing each trend across a range of scenarios"

We will:
Scenario planning is at the centre of our DWMP. We'll consider medium and high scenarios for 2030 -2055. Risk assessment results will be available via our DWMP Portal in Spring 2026

Stakeholder feedback on 'Future trends', 2025

Measuring current and future performance

We use Performance Indicators in the DWMP as forward-looking measures to describe how the drainage and wastewater systems can meet their legal obligations now, and in the future.

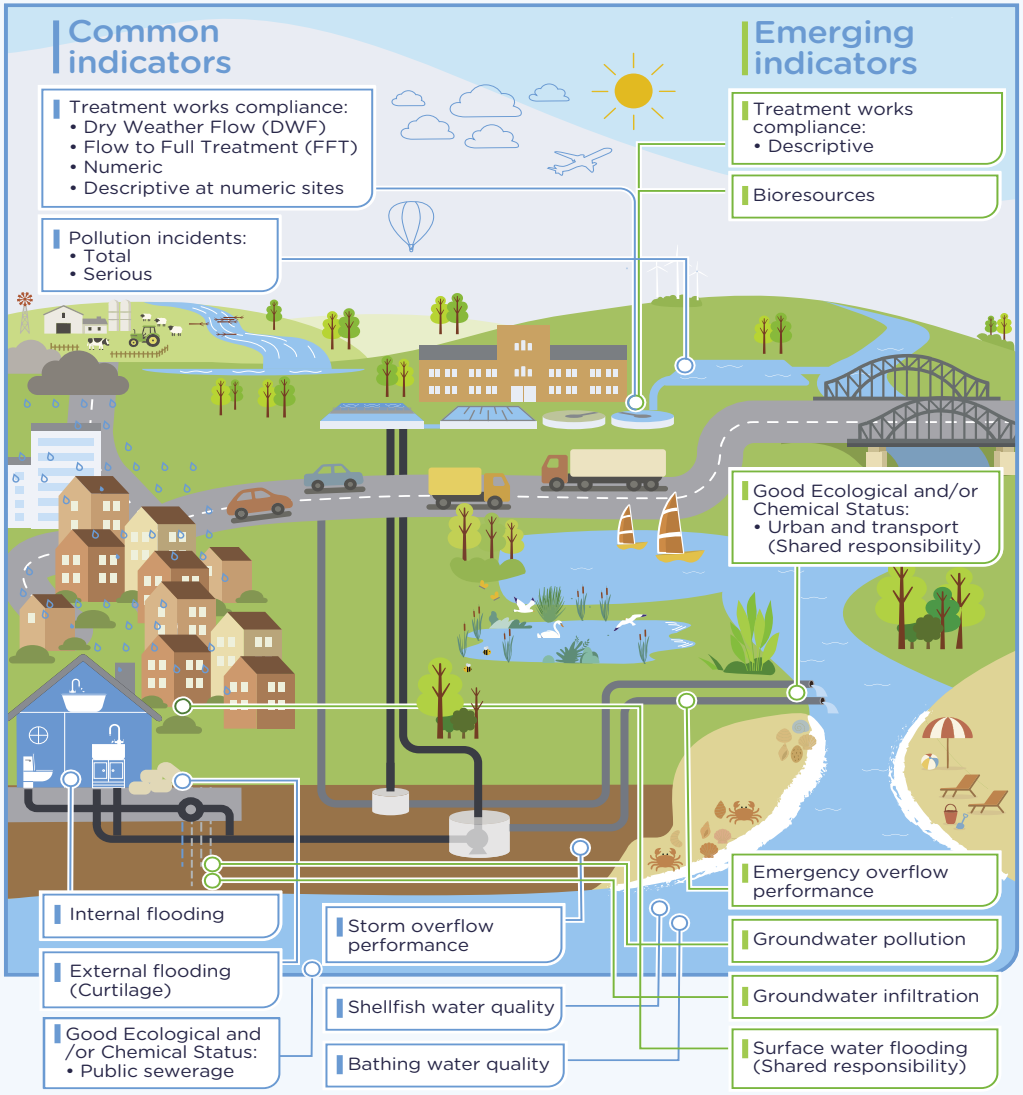
Performance Indicators are measures of risk across the system and the DWMP aims to reduce these risks through investments and management responses that address pressures from climate change, population growth, ageing infrastructure and changing environmental requirements.

There is one set of standard Performance Indicators common to all water companies in England, their groupings are illustrated here. They cover all the issues important to customers and communities as well as critical legal obligations. These include flooding, environmental permit compliance, storm overflows, river water quality, public health issues and pollution incidents.

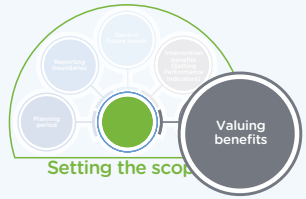
Many of the Performance Indicators have standard reporting thresholds set by government to promote consistency in risk reporting. This means current and forecast performance can be described as either low, medium or high risk. These risks can be described at a company level, the river basin level or the wastewater catchment level. Where the methods or data necessary to evaluate Performance Indicators are immature, the Performance Indicators are identified as being 'emerging indicators' and approaches taken may differ between water companies. Elsewhere, the analysis will be completed consistently across England and Wales providing transparency on the level of risk nationally.

We'll be publishing more details in our Performance Indicators document on our **website** soon.

DWMP28 Performance Indicators



Delivering the best solutions



We need to identify solutions and investments to address challenges in a fair and long-lasting way, considering the benefits to customers, the environment, the economy and different social groups, including future generations.

We're doing this using a value framework, a structured approach used by organisations to identify, measure and communicate the value created by their current or future activities. By looking beyond traditional financial metrics, it can aid decision-making, highlighting the sustainability and wider long-term value potential of different investment options.

We're developing a value framework for the DWMP to consistently and comprehensively identify, evaluate and deliver private and wider societal value over the long term.

We've already piloted the use of value frameworks in our day-to-day planning to identify best-value options and support decision-making.

Integrated decision-making frameworks

Our value framework learns from the multi-capitals approach, an international integrated decision-making framework[5]. The capitals are categories of value that can be impacted by our activities and include natural, social, human and intellectual capital, as well as the traditional consideration of manufactured and financial capital.

Our six capitals DWMP value framework

Natural
- Greenhouse gas emissions: Renewable energy and other
- Water abstraction from the environment / taking care of water
- Climate change adaptation (Inc cooling/ shading)
- Biodiversity
- Quality of waterbodies

Social
- Environmental nuisance
- Recreation and amenity
- Community engagement (inc education)
- Supporting customers who need it most
- Trust
- Health and wellbeing of our customers and communities
- Local economy (inc growth)
- Transport disruption

Human
- Security
- Capacity and diversity of the workforce
- Health, safety and wellbeing of our people

Intellectual
- Innovation, skills and training
- Our data

Manufactured
- Resilience
- Asset health

Financial
- Total cost over the lifetime
- The value of investment
- Benefit return on investment
- Risk

Our DWMP value framework will account for the risk of overlapping values.

The influence of stakeholder input

Our stakeholders provided specific feedback on our proposed value framework approach. We've summarised responses here, including suggestions for further development.

Question to stakeholders	Response	What we need to think about
Do you agree with our overall approach?	Mostly	• Would like more detail • Recognise community impacts • Higher priority for partnership schemes
Are we valuing benefits sufficiently?	Yes	• Recognise values may change in the future • Reduce complexity in the valuation
Any additional datasets?	No	• Learn from Ofwat Innovation Fund mainstreaming nature-based solutions work

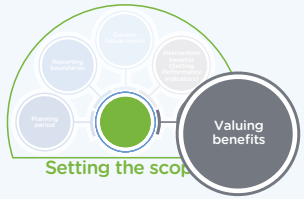
You said:

"We would like to see nature-based solutions specifically identified within the Natural Capital category of the value framework"

Stakeholder feedback on 'Value Framework', 2025

[5] International integrated decision making framework

Measuring the value



We've mapped the impact of DWMP interventions on DWMP Performance Indicators and value.

The first graphic below shows the process we plan to use to assess the performance benefits and wider value of options. Options are first defined and costed, and then linked to Performance Indicators in terms of the performance outcome they achieve. Using the six capitals framework, we also identify the wider value provided by each option. The value of options that involve nature-based solutions can be assessed as part of this process through the changes in land use resulting from such options.

We're aware that there's the potential for overlap and duplication across different elements of value. We'll take this into account when applying the framework.

We can assess value by comparing the outcomes of interventions in different ways. In the past, we've typically used scoring-based approaches, as shown in the value scoring example below. This plots the performance of different schemes against different components of value, enabling us to derive a 'Public Value Score'. However, for DWMP28, we're moving towards combining scores with monetised values of impact, where possible.

Monetised value

The guidance expects a monetary value to be applied to most Performance Indicators, where possible. Monetisation enables us to assess and directly compare interventions, helping to identify those that deliver the greatest value. However, not all measures in the value framework will be monetised. We're currently considering how we'll combine monetised and non-monetised information in the assessment and reporting of value.

We'll publish further details of the value framework, including monetised values, once it's been fully piloted. This will also give us time to consider ongoing industry work, such as the Common Value Framework[6] developed by the Mainstreaming Nature-Based Solutions Programme.

We're attending industry working groups to share learning on applying value frameworks for DWMP decision-making. Our framework will be applied as part of the Optioneering and Plan Balancing stages of the DWMP, and we'll share more information on this in a separate publication.

How we plan to assess options in a value framework

- 42 Generic options set in guidance
- Categories: Customer side, SUDS, Sewerage network, Treatment
- Costed to deliver solutions
- Options may be:
  - Incremental (phased)
  - Modular (can be added to)
  - One-off

- Guidance provides 17 Performance Indicators themed around: Flooding, Water Environment, Economy, Community
- Link the option to the relevant Performance Indicator(s)
- Benefit from performance improvement

- Assess wider benefits of option via our six capitals DWMP Value framework, using scoring (see example on the right) and/or monetisation
- Wider land use assessment to support nature-based solutions

Value scoring

Example radar plot showing the value performance of alternative DWMP options.

There are two options, A and B, to reduce flooding.

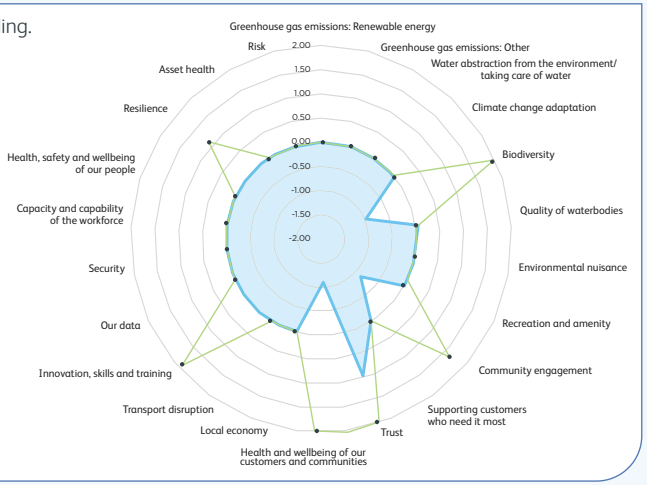
Both options are rated against each value component, scoring between -2 (strongly negative impact) and +2 (strongly positive impact). Benefit duration and importance to customers are factored in, giving overall Public Value scores, for comparison with cost.

Please note that financial capital components are not shown in this example.

Options

Option A
Grey option (Construction of stormwater storage tanks)

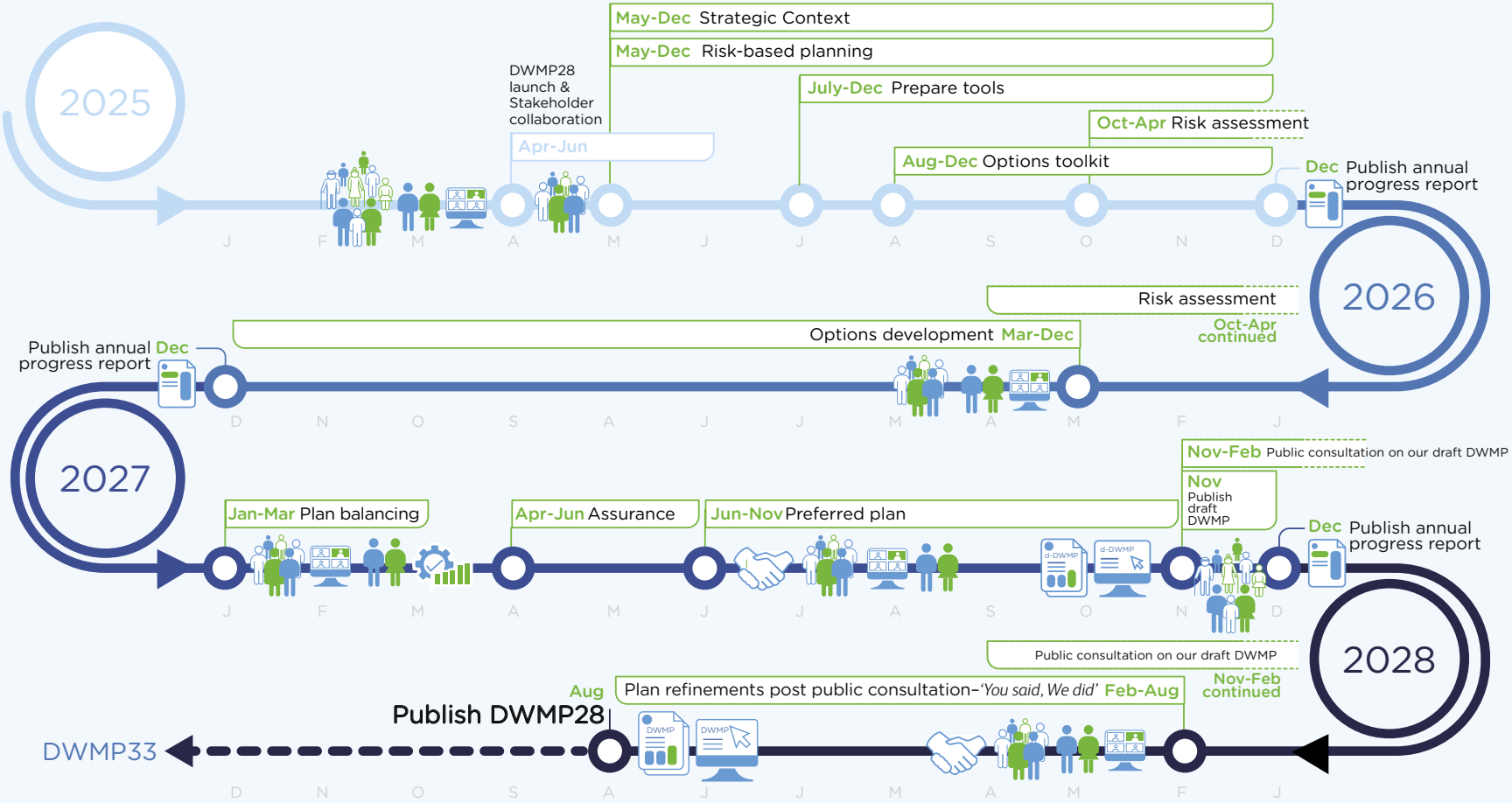
Option B
Green option (Strategic blue/green corridors)



[6] Common value framework consultation

Next steps

Our DWMP28 timeline shows there's lots for us to do before we publish our final shared plan. This 25-year plan will support our corporate vision and guide investment in the first five years of our next business plan (PR29), as well as feed into strategic management plans across our industry and wider sectors. By 1st November 2027, we'll have worked with stakeholders to co-create and publish our draft DWMP28, ready for public consultation. We'll capture feedback and refine our final DWMP28, publishing it by the 31st August 2028. Our final shared plan will strive to make our drainage and wastewater systems more resilient, future-ready and deliver sustainable benefits for people, communities and the environment in our region.



Get involved

Work with us

Roles you can play

Our DWMP is a shared plan, so it's your plan too, and there's a role for everyone. Whether you bring technical expertise, local knowledge, or a community perspective, your input helps shape smarter, more inclusive solutions. You might help identify local flooding hotspots, share data, suggest partnership projects, or test our proposals to make sure they work on the ground.

How we'll work together

Think of DWMP28 as a partnership, not a process. We'll keep things open, honest, and collaborative – sharing updates through our digital portal and showing you exactly how your feedback is shaping the plan with plenty of "you said, we did" consultation periods. We'll celebrate progress together, keep the conversation going and relevant, and make sure that working with us feels easy, positive, and worthwhile. Our Portal's Engagement Hub is live. It's designed for stakeholders and enables joint areas of risk and opportunity to be highlighted, discussions to be held and you can also see the progress of existing partnership schemes. If you have a partnership idea, you can access our portal **here.**

Time needed

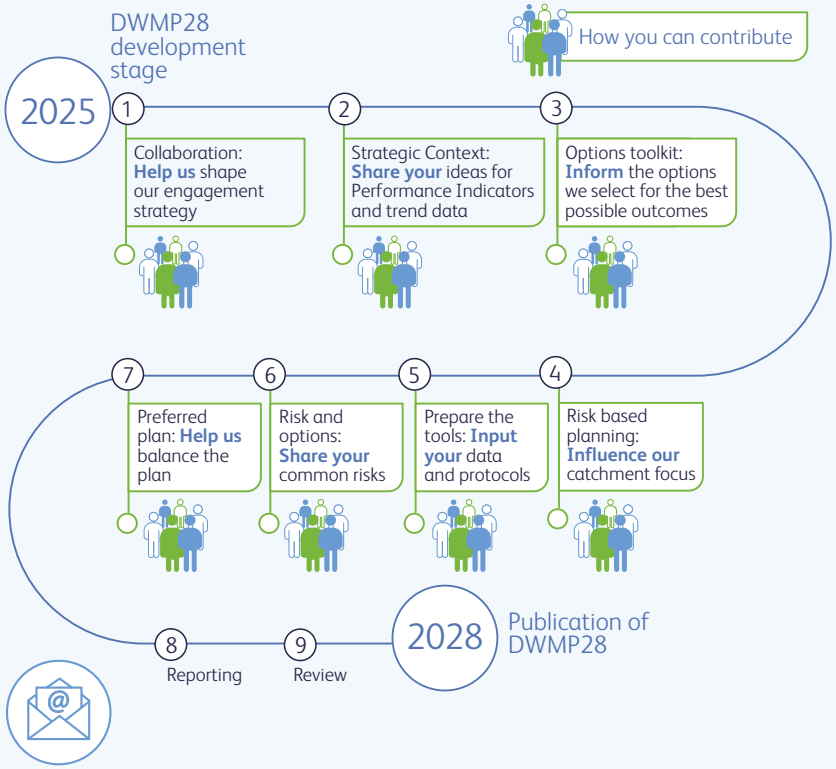
We know your time is valuable, so we've made it easy and flexible to get involved. You can dip into brief online consultations, join focused workshops for key discussions, or come along to short catchups to stay informed of the latest progress. We'll make sure whatever time you can spare will go a long way, helping us shape decisions that protect communities, rivers, and green spaces for the long term.

Benefits for you

By getting involved, you're helping shape a future that benefits everyone – cleaner rivers, greener spaces, and safer, more resilient communities. You'll get early sight of new and innovative ideas, the chance to influence where investment goes, and the opportunity to connect with others who care as much as you do. Together, we'll create a plan we can all be proud of – one that leaves a lasting, positive legacy for generations to come.

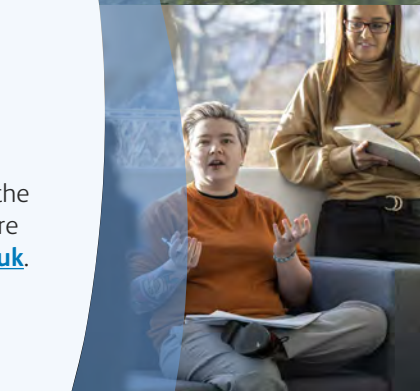
More partnership-working opportunities

We're creating lots more opportunities for you to work with us to develop DWMP28, as this timeline shows. We'll contact you in advance of any meetings or events and hope you can join us - we value your contribution and support!



Working with you

Please involve us in any of your planning work and events that may be related to the DWMP. We'd be happy to work with you and contribute to your plans, to make sure our goals are aligned. You can contact us by emailing **DWMP@thameswater.co.uk**.



How everyone can help

Looking after our drains is easier than you think, and a few small changes at home can make a big difference to the environment!

Bin the fat

Did you know just one tablespoon of cooking oil can clog over a metre of pipe? Instead, let it cool, pop it in a container, and put it in the bin, saving your drains (and our sewers!) from fatbergs.

Flush only 3Ps

Pee, poo, and paper – that's it! Everything else (yes, even "flushable" wipes) can block pipes and cause flooding. Each year we clear over 75,000 blockages caused by wipes, nappies, and cotton buds. You can help bring that number down.

Check your drains

Misconnected water pipes can send dirty water straight into rivers, harming fish, wildlife, and water quality. This often happens during home improvements. A quick check – or asking a plumber – can prevent pollution and keep rivers clean for everyone.

Protect green spaces

Rain-friendly gardens can soak up the equivalent of 250 bathtubs during a storm! When planning home projects, pick permeable paving so rain can soak away naturally. And don't forget a water butt provides free water for your plants and less strain on local drains when it pours.

What the DWMP means for you

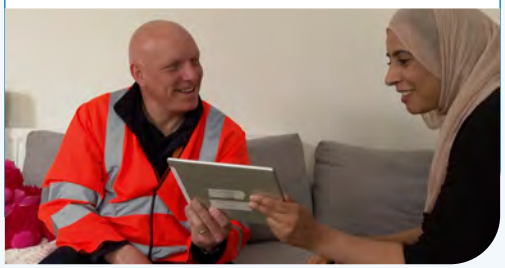
Future protection

We're planning for tomorrow, so future generations can grow up with cleaner, healthier rivers, thriving wildlife, and communities free from flooding. By investing now, we're building a legacy, for our children and grandchildren.

Investing wisely, supporting You

We're making essential improvements, and while bills may rise, we're focused on keeping costs fair and delivering real value. Maintaining our 110,000km network protects services now, and helps manage bills in the future.

Need help with payments? Support is available – online or in person. You're not alone. See **here**.



Peace of mind

We're reinvesting your money where it matters most, protecting homes, families, and local communities from flooding and pollution. Every investment helps create safer streets, cleaner rivers, and a future where the next generation can thrive.

More green spaces

We're working with partners to create more green areas for you to enjoy. Urban greenery doesn't just look good it can cool streets by up to 4°C on hot days and boost wellbeing too.

Glossary

AMP	**Asset Management Plan** A five-year period for a water company's business plan, with AMP8 being the current period (2025-2030).
DWMP	**Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan** A plan for how the sewerage undertaker will manage and develop its drainage system and sewerage system so as to be able, and continue to be able, to meet its obligations under Part IV of the Water Industry Act 1991.
LLFAs	**Lead Local Flood Authorities** Local councils (unitary or county councils) responsible for managing surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourse flooding within their local areas.
NBS	**Nature-based solutions** Natural drainage solutions such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and Natural Flood Management, used to manage surface water runoff, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and increase community amenity.
PI	**Performance Indicators** Measures used to assess the risks and performance of drainage and wastewater systems over time, focusing on internal flooding, pollution incidents, sewer blockages, external flooding, and the impact on environmental assets including bathing waters.
RMAs	**Risk Management Authorities** Organisations responsible for managing flood and coastal erosion risk, including the Environment Agency, lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) such as unitary or county councils, district councils, highways authorities and water and sewerage companies. The RMAs have a duty to cooperate and share data to manage flood risk effectively, as mandated by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
STW	**Sewage Treatment Works** A site designed to treat and clean sewage and waste water, using physical, chemical, and biological methods to remove contaminants, before it's released back into the environment.
SuDS	**Sustainable drainage systems** Drainage solutions for surface runoff that mimic natural drainage regimes and provide an alternative to a network of pipes and sewers.
TRFCC	**Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee** A committee established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to take an overview of flood and coastal erosion risk management. from Oxfordshire and Swindon to London and Essex.
VF	**Value framework** A value framework is a structured, evidence-based method of comparing and prioritising investment options. Its purpose is to go beyond traditional financial metrics integrating broader environmental and stakeholder needs to identify and deliver best-value, sustainable solutions.
WRMP	**Water Resources Management Plan** Water companies are legally required to produce a WRMP every five years. It sets out how they will provide a secure and sustainable supply of water to their customers, while protecting the environment.
1 in 30-year storm	A storm that has a 1 in 30 chance (3.33% probability) of being equalled or exceeded in any given year. This does not mean that a 30-year flood will happen regularly every 30 years, or only once in 30 years.

We welcome your views on this Strategic Context Document. Please share them with us by emailing DWMP@thameswater.co.uk.