DWMP 28

Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2030-2055

Delivering for customers, communities and the environment

Performance Indicator Methodology - Shellfish Water Quality

March 2026

Thames Water

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This methodology document is a working draft based on the requirements of the published DWMP guidance and informed by agreements made through the Water Industry Task and Finish Groups for each Performance Indicator (PI). As the DWMP stages for each PI progress, this methodology will be refined to reflect the practicalities of deployment and feedback from stakeholders. A final published methodology document will describe the detailed approach followed.

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides a detailed description of the **Shellfish Water Quality Performance Indicator** and its purpose and contribution to forming our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP). This Performance Indicator measures the impact that our operations have on designated shellfish waters (or potential future shellfish waters).

2. Purpose of this document

2.1 The purpose of this document is to outline the methodology that will be used to establish the base year and future baseline forecasts for the **Shellfish Water Performance Indicator**, as part of our DWMP for the 2030-2055 planning period. The base year is 2030 and it is our best estimate of expected performance for this indicator at the end of the current investment period (2025-2030). It reflects the outcome of schemes and maintenance activities planned for this period. We then forecast what is expected to happen to the indicator at baseline points in the future if no change in investment is made. These future points are set in the short term (2035), the medium term (2045) and the long term (2055).

2.2 In addition, it sets out threshold values (if applicable) that will be used to summarise the level of risk and further guide the development of options for the 2030-2055 planning period.

2.3 The requirements for Performance Indicators are set out in Government guidance for DWMPs[1] and subsequent clarifications by the Environment Agency (EA)[2]. To understand the general approach to our DWMP, please also refer to our Strategic Context document on our website[3].

2.4 Assessment of the base year and future risks for each of our Performance Indicators is an important step in the development of our DWMP. It informs our understanding of how the drainage and wastewater system is able to meet legal obligations and meet the needs of customers and the environment. The DWMP approach requires completion of a risk assessment for the following Performance Indicators for each future planning horizon at the wastewater catchment scale:

- Internal flooding
- External (curtilage) flooding
- Storm overflow performance (England)[$]
- Treatment works compliance (numeric)[$]
- Treatment works compliance (descriptive at numeric sites)[$]
- Treatment works compliance (Dry Weather Flow (DWF))
- Treatment works compliance (Flow to Full Treatment (FFT))

[1] Guidelines for Statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs) - GOV.UK
[2] EA letters to water companies with feedback on performance indicators (02/10/2025), (23/03/2026) and reporting thresholds (17/10/2025).
[3] DWMP28 | Drainage and wastewater | Thames Water

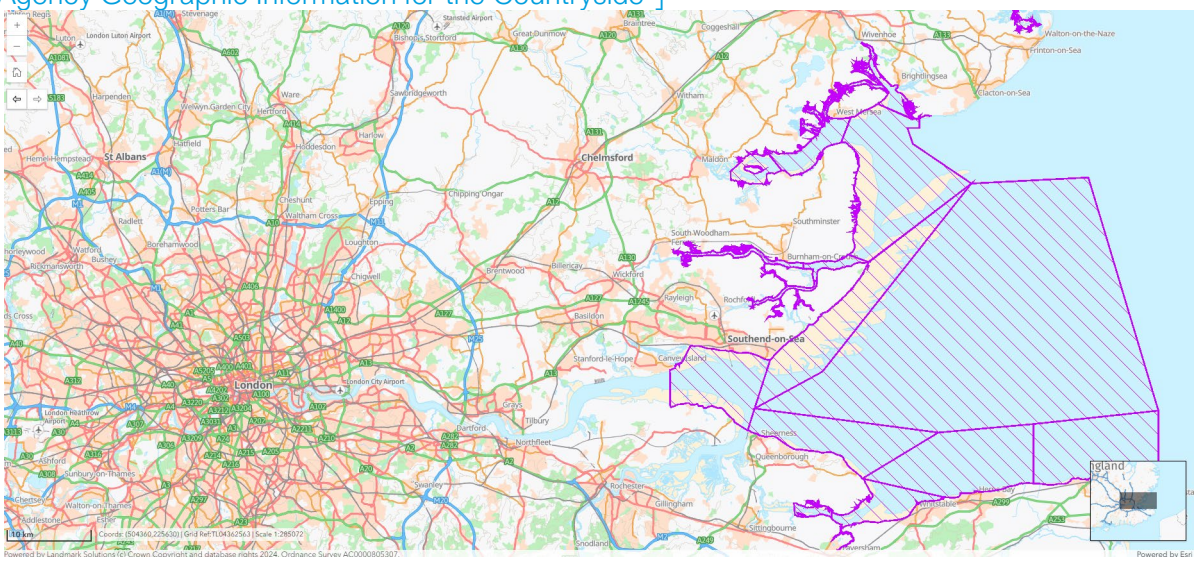
- Good Ecological and/or Chemical Status: Public sewerage
- Pollution incidents: serious[$]
- Pollution incidents: total
- Bathing water quality
- **Shellfish water quality**
- Surface water flooding (Shared responsibility)[β]
- Good Ecological and/or Chemical Status: Urban and transport (Shared responsibility)[β]
- Emergency overflow performance[$β]
- Treatment Works Compliance (descriptive)[β]
- Groundwater pollution[β]
- Groundwater infiltration[β]

2.5 Performance Indicators marked $ will use a nationally consistent suite of thresholds to describe the general level of risk[1,2]. Performance Indicators marked β are considered more experimental in nature and are recognised as inherently difficult to forecast and will hence be trialled in DWMP28 as emerging Performance Indicators and then possibly refined for subsequent DWMPs[1].

3. Background

3.1 There are currently no designated shellfish waters within our region as shown in Figure 1 below. The nearest shellfish water, at Southend, can be found at the mouth of the Thames Estuary, greater than 30 km away from our closest sewage treatment works. We do not have any storm overflows within 10 km from the closest shellfish water boundary.

Figure 1. Designated shellfish waters (shaded purple) around the Thames Estuary [source: Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside[4]]

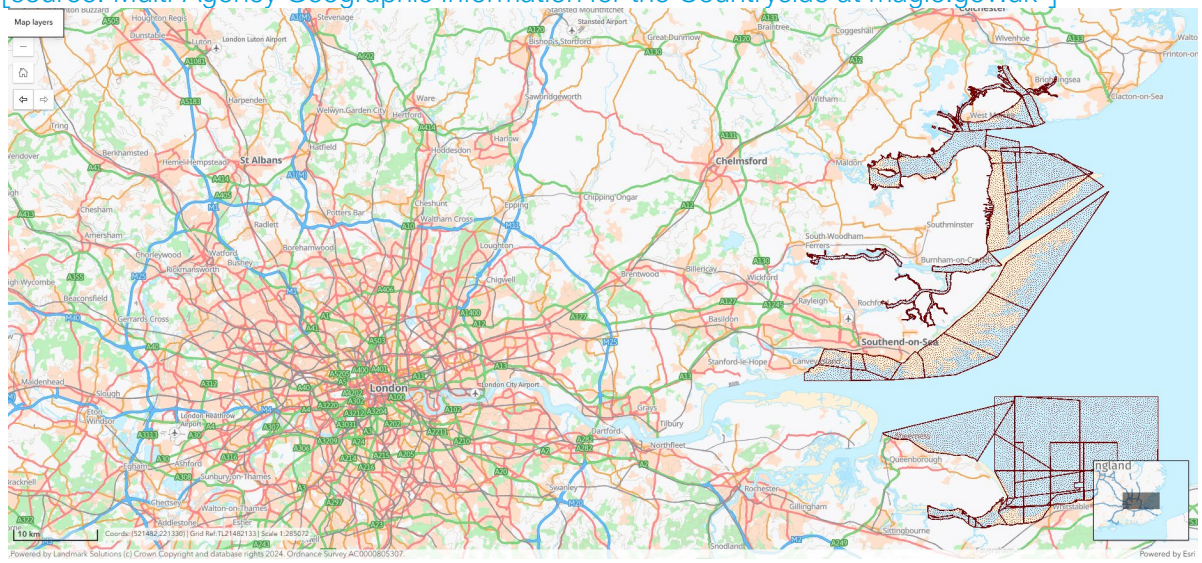


[4] Natural England (2013) *Registered Common Land (England* [geospatial data]. Scale not given. Using "MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)" Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/ (Last accessed: 6 January 2026). This map reflects the list of shellfish water protected areas in England available at List of shellfish water protected areas in England - GOV.UK

3.2 Historically, given the distance to the closest shellfish water boundary and the level of dilution of discharges from our assets, impact has been considered immaterial and therefore investment has not been requested. Similarly, the Environment Agency 2024 Price Review (PR24) Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) driver guidance on storm overflow reduction provides requirement for prioritisation for investment related to presumed impact for discharges into or less than 1 km upstream of a designated Shellfish Water.

3.3 Environmental regulations or directives related to Shellfish Waters[5] have not always included, and therefore offered the same levels of protection for, classified Bivalve and Mollusc Harvesting Areas. As shown by Figure 2, however, Harvesting Areas in this region are covered by existing Shellfish Water designations and therefore it is considered that there is little likelihood of new Shellfish Waters being designated at locations closer to our assets and / or locations that our assets might impact before 2055.

Figure 2. Classified bivalve mollusc harvesting areas (shaded brown) around the Thames Estuary [source: Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside at magic.gov.uk[6]]



3.4 Due to the absence of designated Shellfish Waters in the waterbodies we could affect, the low likelihood of new areas being designated, and the considerable distance between our assets and Shellfish Waters in neighbouring regions, we consider the risk of our operations to be negligible. Therefore, no investment is required for the Shellfish water quality Performance Indicator within DWMP28.

[5] The Surface Waters (Shellfish) (Classification) Regulations 1997, The Shellfish Water Protected Areas (England and Wales) Directions 2016 and The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.

[6] Natural England (2013) *Registered Common Land (England)* [geospatial data]. Scale not given. Using "MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)" Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/ (Last accessed: 6 January 2026).

We welcome your views on this technical methodology. Please share them with us by emailing DWMP@thameswater.co.uk.

Our Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan 2030–2055 will include a number of technical methodologies, like this one. They will all provide detailed information on specific topics featured in our draft Plan such as climate change and sustainable approaches to drainage. You will be able to access all of the technical methodologies on our DWMP webpage.

For more DWMP28 information please visit our DWMP webpage and portals on our website.

Thames Water