



Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024

Foreword by Cathryn Ross,
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Welcome to our revised draft Water Resources Management Plan 2024.

It is our job to provide a reliable supply of quality drinking water to all our customers and businesses today and for the future. We take this very seriously; we currently provide 2.6 billion litres of drinking water every day.

Our water resources are under pressure and the recent weather patterns have provided a real warning that we need to be planning for an uncertain future. We forecast that we'll need an additional 1 billion litres of water every day for customers by 2075 to accommodate climate change, a growing population and to reduce the amount of water we take from our rivers and chalk streams to protect the environment. This is a massive challenge and it's critical that we plan ahead now to ensure we have the water we need for generations to come.

We're working with neighbouring water companies, through Water Resources South East, to coordinate a regional response to the challenge. This collaborative approach has allowed us to look beyond our boundary and play our part in making the right decisions for the whole of the South East region, which has informed our own statutory Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP).

In December 2022 we published our draft WRMP which set out the actions and investment needed to secure our water supplies for the next 50 years and sought your feedback. We want to thank everyone - our customers, local communities, and stakeholder groups – who participated in the public consultation. We've listened to your feedback and taken account of the changes to the guidance from government and regulators. This is set out in our Statement of Response. In our revised draft WRMP we've set out the actions and investment needed to create the secure and sustainable water supply our society needs, and to protect and enhance our environment for the next 50 years.

By far the most significant change in our revised draft WRMP is the greater emphasis on demand reduction, enabling us to meet the government's requirement to reduce water use and leakage. We've committed to more than halve leakage by 2050, transitioning from patching up our network to a programme of mains renewal. We've also committed to supporting our customers to help achieve a daily water use of 110 litres per person by 2050. With current water use in our area at around 140 litres per person, this will be very challenging and will involve installing a further one million smart water meters in customers' homes by 2030. Meters not only enable us to help customers reduce their water usage by providing personalised water saving advice, but with close to a quarter of leakage on customer's pipes, it also allows us to assist in helping fix this too. These measures will make up around 80% of the forecast shortfall and will need support from government, and close working with local authorities and our customers, if we are to be successful.

We'll also need to invest and build new water sources - a new river abstraction and water recycling scheme in West London in the early 2030s and a new reservoir in Oxfordshire by 2040, which will be developed in collaboration with Affinity Water and Southern Water. We recognise that new infrastructure can cause disruption and we will work closely with local communities who could be affected, but as a society we need to make choices and plan for the long-term, as putting off vital investment now will inevitably lead to a deterioration in service and unfairly burden future generations.

To safeguard our future water supplies and further protect the environment will require additional customer funding. Continued access to private finance means that we can smooth the cost of this investment over decades to come, limiting the impact on bills in the near term. We recognise that, however modest, this impact comes at a time when many of our customers are facing

financial pressures. But our work, and that of others across the industry, has shown that the risk of not taking action now will lead to higher costs in the future.

We are proud to publish our updated WRMP. We look forward to government approving our plan and to government and regulators allowing us to implement the actions that will allow us to protect our customers and businesses from the challenges that lie ahead. This will ensure we can continue to provide a reliable supply of quality water, whilst improving the protection we provide to the environment for the ongoing enjoyment of generations to come.

Cathryn Ross,

Interim Co-Chief Executive, Thames Water