

Our Mission Statement is:

to develop an affordable, sustainable and resilient regional approach to water resource management: one that delivers for customers, society and the environment

Introduction

In 2007 most of the south east was officially designated by the Environment Agency as being in serious water stress. This area holds approximately one third of the UK's population, contributes some £627 billion to the UK economy and is served by six water companies. The area also has some of the highest population growth numbers and numerous ecological and landscape designations. Therefore, to help meet these regional challenges, we require a robust regional solution, which is developed with other sectors and stimulates potential third party solutions. This is the purpose of the *Water Resources in the South East* group (WRSE) group, which takes a *regional* approach to managing this precious resource, ignoring company boundaries.

We believe that taking a regional approach to manage water resources in the south east of England is the best way to recognise the true value of water to society and the economy. It allows us to better balance the needs of people and the environment, and ensure that risks are adequately addressed to ensure resilience for the future.

As a collective we believe that it is better to work together and to find ways to collaborate to overcome the challenges that arise from operating in a water stressed area, where resources are scarce, and where there are significant risks posed by extreme drought.

As a result, we will be moving further with our regionally-driven approach to become increasingly resilient and meet future challenges. We will continue to listen to, and work alongside, government bodies and the National Infrastructure Commission, looking to meet their aspirations and recommendations

As a result, our mission statement is made up of regional outcomes and objectives, key areas of work to meet our aims, and the success criteria that we will use to evaluate our progress.

Our Regional Outcomes

There are several outcomes that we wish to achieve:

1. Develop and use a regional strategy for water resource management that includes natural and social capital assessment
2. Create a multi sectorial, long term resilient regional plan for public water supply for the South East region
3. Create a framework for multi-sectoral resilience to minimise water scarcity and risks posed by extreme drought
4. Embed an appreciation of the value of water and the economic impact of water scarcity
5. Ensure the wise use of water on a regional basis to deliver sustainable abstraction and environmental enhancement
6. Provide an interface between other regional groups and the national framework
7. Contribute to social and economic wellbeing through the provision of water
8. To be trusted and respected by customers and key stakeholders
9. To become sector leaders in innovation and ambition

Our Objectives

We will achieve these outcomes through our objectives:

- To explore water resource needs at a regional scale to identify explore the potential opportunities to develop regional interventions following a triple track approach in the south east of England
- To engage with stakeholders across different sectors to understand their future water requirements
- To work towards implementing the long-term recommendations from the NIC and Defra

- To work collaboratively to overcome the complex nature of water resource availability, distribution and supply in the south-east region
- To consider and develop a regional water grid, where this enhances trading opportunities, improves resilience or enables strategic growth in line with government expectations;
- To develop regional drought responses to ongoing situations and consider the use of company specific drought interventions to solving the future needs of customers and the environment;
- Incorporating the region's natural capital value, and the societal and economic impact of water scarcity into the decision-making process
- The development and examination of different potential future scenarios to assess the water challenges facing the region, including extreme drought, climate change, population increase and the environmental sustainability of existing abstraction licences
- To explore new and innovative ways to trade and share water and to co-create new sources of water
- Championing the value of water and the need to use water wisely and encourage water efficiency; and to
- To create a regional water resources plan that will inform WRMP24 submissions

Our Work Areas

We will focus our attention on the following areas:

- Resilience and investment in strategic assets, and testing the WRMP process in advance of the development of a regional plan creation
- Innovation in water trading and price transparency to incentivise and enhance regional water sharing
- Regulatory and commercial issue identification and resolution
- Innovation in water efficiency and leakage reduction
- Assessment of water resource needs (multi-sector) and innovative option development and co-creation
- Engagement and stakeholder liaison
- Skills and knowledge promotion, that will foster new thinking and develop industry leading practice
- Pilot Projects, that will explore new methodologies and establish innovative approaches

Our Ethos

We will measure our progress and success using the following benchmarks

- A focus on the utility of water not on water utilities
- Customers are at the heart of what we do
- Access to water for all at a fair price
- Common standards of service
- Universal metering
- Resilient supplies for our customers- whatever the weather
- Transparent, accountable and accessible
- World class modelling and analysis
- A regional market for water