

Stakeholder Engagement report

November 2023

Contents

1.0	About this document.....	3
2.0	Our structure and governance.....	4
2.1	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>4</i>
2.2	<i>Our engagement method statement</i>	<i>5</i>
2.3	<i>Our engagement framework</i>	<i>6</i>
2.4	<i>External factors that informed our engagement framework</i>	<i>7</i>
3.0	Who we engaged with.....	10
3.1	<i>Regulators.....</i>	<i>10</i>
3.2	<i>Statutory consultees</i>	<i>11</i>
3.3	<i>Non-statutory consultees.....</i>	<i>12</i>
3.4	<i>Other regional water resource groups.....</i>	<i>14</i>
4.0	How we engaged.....	16
4.1	<i>Direct engagement</i>	<i>16</i>
4.2	<i>Our wider engagement with stakeholders.....</i>	<i>21</i>
5.0	Consulting on our emerging regional plan.....	24
5.1	<i>Emerging regional plan consultation webinars</i>	<i>25</i>
5.2	<i>Media engagement.....</i>	<i>26</i>
5.3	<i>Social media, films, and engagement platform</i>	<i>27</i>
5.4	<i>Other stakeholder engagement</i>	<i>27</i>
6.	Consulting on our draft regional plan.....	28
6.1	<i>Consulting on our draft regional plan.....</i>	<i>28</i>
7.0	What happens next?	34
Appendix 1.....		35
	<i>Stakeholder method statement changes</i>	<i>35</i>
Appendix 2.....		38
	<i>Engagement log</i>	<i>38</i>

1.0 About this document

Our role is to develop a regional plan to secure water supplies for South East England. We are taking a long-term view and considering the water needed for homes and businesses, as well as for the environment, agriculture, to generate electricity, for industry, recreation, and to support wellbeing.

Stakeholder engagement was essential to developing our regional plan. This includes understanding the needs of different stakeholders and sectors, identifying potential options to address the future shortfall in water supplies and communicating our plans and consultations to gather feedback on what was proposed.

This document outlines the stakeholder engagement we undertook to develop, inform and promote our regional plan to secure water supplies for the South East of England. It provides details on:

- our structure and governance arrangements and engagement framework
- the stakeholders we engaged with to develop our plan
- the methods we used to engage stakeholder throughout the development of the plan
- the engagement carried out during our emerging regional plan consultation
- the engagement carried out following our emerging plan consultation and during our draft regional plan consultation.

We have also included to appendices:

- Appendix 1 explains how we updated our method statements in response to stakeholders' feedback and changes to guidelines
- Appendix 2 is a log of our engagement activities.

We will continue engaging with our stakeholders as we finalise and publish our regional plan in 2024.

2.0 Our structure and governance

2.1 Introduction

The strengthened role of regional planning, as set out in the National Framework for Water Resources, required us to change how we are structured and governed. This enabled:

- greater access for a wider set of stakeholders to influence the process, methodologies, decision-making and delivery of solutions – and take important steps to better understand the needs of multi-sector water users
- stronger links with other regional groups so our plan is an integral part of the national water resources picture.

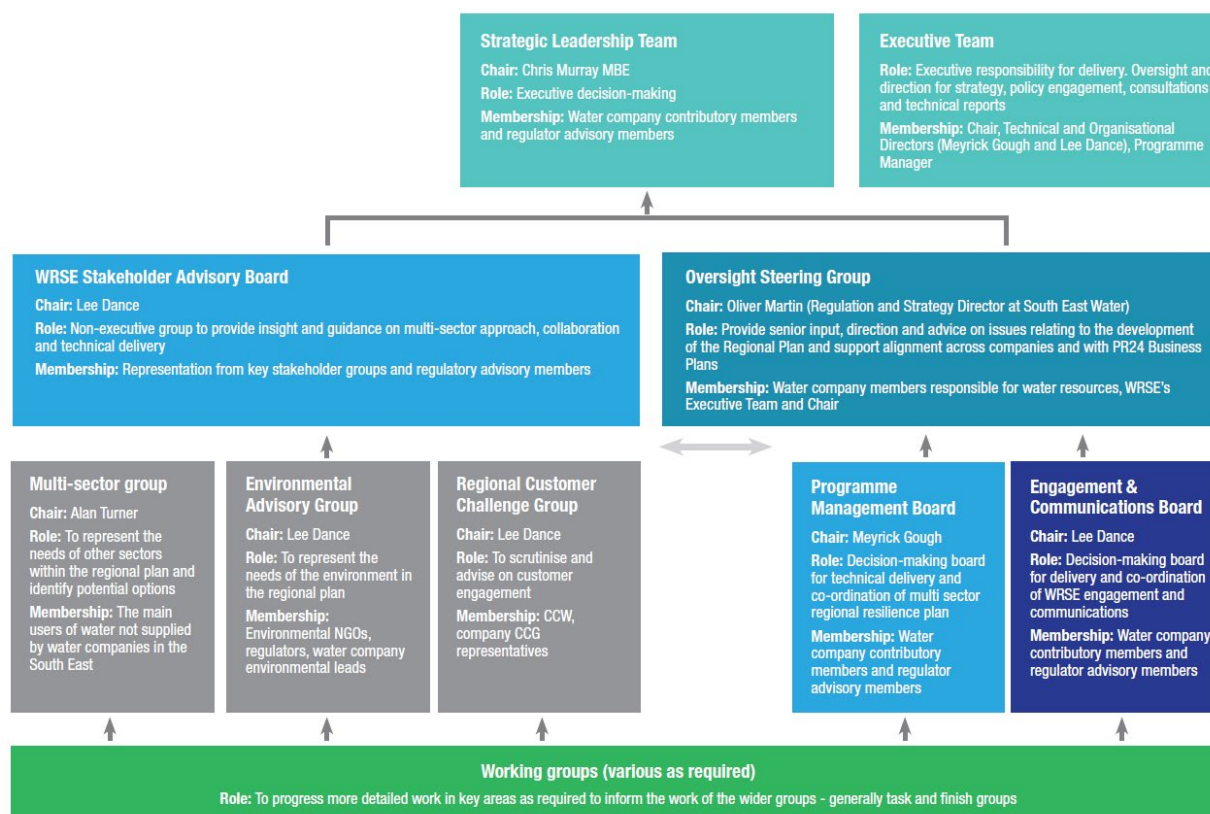
Our Engagement and Communications Board (ECB) is an important part of our governance structure. Each member company is represented, alongside the Environment Agency, and helps guide and inform our stakeholder engagement and communications.

This group also enables us to coordinate engagement, messaging and events across the region – this makes engagement on the interlinked regional plans and WRMPs easier for stakeholders.

Figure 1 shows our structure and governance and how this enabled our engagement to contribute to the regional plan's development and influence our decision making.

The rest of this section explains our engagement method statement and framework – including how we updated this in response to external factors.

Figure 1 WRSE's structure and governance framework



2.2 Our engagement method statement

We delivered a comprehensive programme of engagement, in partnership with our member companies, so the regional plan was developed with insight from customers and stakeholders. We worked hard to engage with a wide range of water users to understand their future needs and priorities and ensure we reflected these in our regional resilience plan.

Engaging with a wide range of water users – customers, businesses, other sectors and stakeholders – was an important part of developing our regional plan. The people, sectors, organisations and interested third-parties engaged with is a diverse, often time-constrained community, with different interests, needs and requirements.

We aimed to be open and transparent by sharing information in a timely way, across a range of channels and activities, to maximise active participation.

Our dedicated [Stakeholder Engagement Method Statement](#) set out our approach to engagement, via an established programme to make sure our activity is coordinated, inclusive and effective.

Our approach evolved, both in response to strategic and technical developments (such as publication of the Environment Agency's final Water Resources Planning Guideline) and feedback from stakeholders specifically as we consulted on our specific Engagement Method Statement. The changes and improvements we made are summarised in Appendix 1.

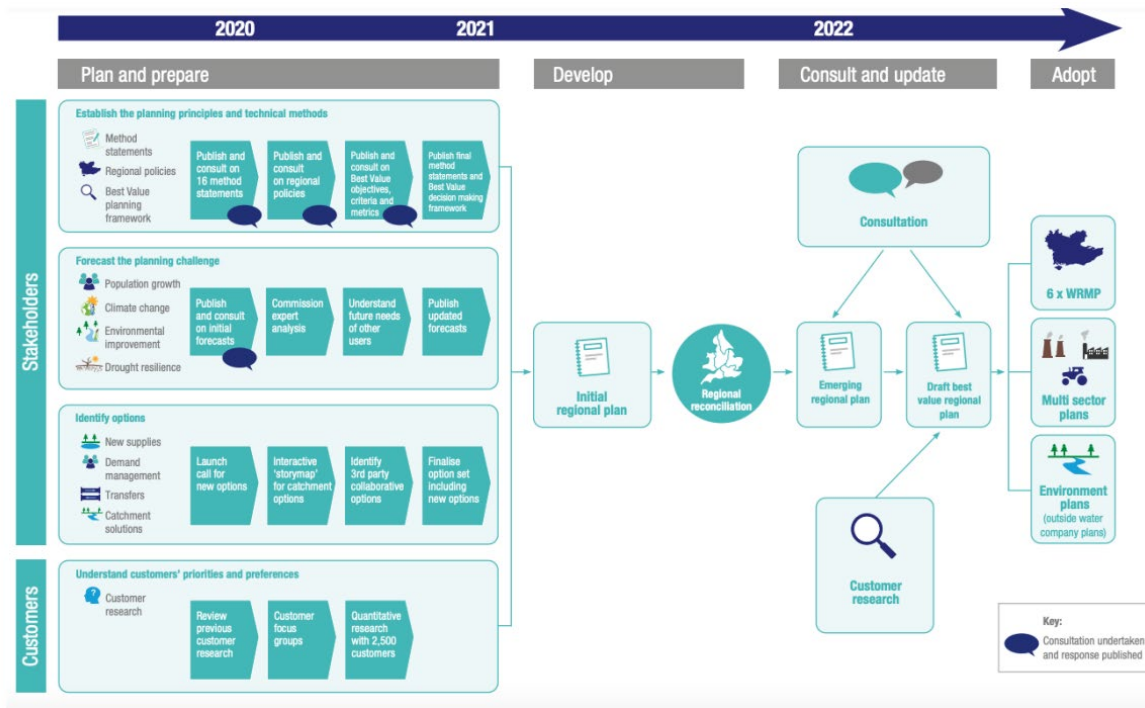
2.3 Our engagement framework

We divided our engagement framework into four distinct phases:

- plan and prepare
- develop
- consult; and
- adopt.

Each phase had several important deliverables to ensure our engagement intentions were clear and that we remained on track to produce the plan within a challenging regulatory timetable. Figure 2 shows how our engagement framework has been designed.

Figure 2 WRSE engagement framework



Section 4 explains the activities we delivered in more detail.

2.4 External factors that informed our engagement framework

2.4.1 National Framework and Water Resources Planning Guideline

We designed our engagement framework and programme to meet the expectations set out in the Environment Agency's National Framework¹ and Water Resources Planning Guideline². This meant we worked with stakeholders to:

- ensure we developed a plan which will provide a secure and sustainable water supply and meets the future needs for public water supply and other sectors, supports the well-being of society and economic growth

¹ Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources; Environment Agency, March 2020

² The Water Resources Planning Guideline; The Environment Agency, July 2021

- agree the strategic challenges facing the region e.g. climate change, population growth, protection and enhancement of the environment, as well as the foundation data and scenarios used to develop the planning forecasts
- inform the policies adopted in the plan – specifically around key areas such as environmental ambition, risk and resilience, and the use of drought orders and permits
- build understanding of the technical methods, data and assumptions we employed in the plan
- contribute to the solutions considered in the plan, including catchment, nature-based and multi-sector solutions, as well as innovative proposals
- engage on the strategic resource options considered in the development of the plan
- agree the objectives, criteria and metrics used to inform the development of the best-value plan and built an understanding of, and agreement to, the decision-making process to help determine the preferred plan
- provide challenge to our plans and ensure we explained how this challenge influenced the decisions we – and our member companies – took
- gain support for our overall plan and increase awareness of our work and consultations.

2.4.2 Other regulatory and policy matters

Our engagement framework and activity sought to shape the future regulatory and policy landscape to ensure we can achieve a more resilient, sustainable water supply in South East England.

We engaged with government, regulators, policy makers and the other four regional water resource groups on the development of our plan and the strategic outputs from it. This has been achieved by:

- senior representatives from the Environment Agency, Defra and RAPID (Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) regularly attending WRSE Senior Leadership Team meetings
- RAPID, the Environment Agency and Natural England being represented on the WRSE Stakeholder Advisory Board
- the Environment Agency and Natural England being represented on the WRSE Environmental Advisory Group
- continued engagement with the National Framework Senior Steering Group, Policy Task and Finish Group and Regional Coordination Group
- contributing to government policy development consultations (with formal WRSE responses) and scrutiny at government committees such as the Public Accounts Committee.

2.4.3 Coordinated planning on regional and local water resources plans

Our regional plan is the foundation for our member water companies' Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs), which are due to be finalised in 2024.

The planning timetable was designed to facilitate this important linkage. We worked closely with our member companies to coordinate consultation activity on the regional plan with the statutory consultation on the WRMPs, and help stakeholders navigate through the process.

A number of strategic water resource options that serve more than one company are being progressed through a gated process in parallel to the regional planning and WRMP process. This is being overseen by RAPID, and these schemes are subject to their own engagement and consultations. As these options have been considered in the regional plan, we have tried to coordinate activity as much as possible.

Water resources planning at this scale is a complex, inter-related landscape of decision making, consultation and eventual plans with deliverables. We worked hard to ensure:

- a clear line of sight between all the decision-making processes
- engagement activities and consultations are complementary and joined-up; and
- stakeholders are clear about why they are being consulted, the scope of the consultation and how that fits in with the wider water resources planning landscape.

3.0 Who we engaged with

3.1 Regulators

Regulators set out their expectations for how regional groups should engage, reflecting the role of regional planning in underpinning individual water companies' WRMPs. Our engagement directly supported water companies WRMP pre-consultation activities.

The guidance also sets the parameters for this engagement with an emphasis on the need to clearly set out the plan's ambitions alongside the methods and approaches the regional plan took.

The water industry regulators are involved at all levels of our governance structures and actively engaged and provided advice throughout the development of the regional plan. Regulators are also involved in the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) to ensure a responsive regulatory approach to the regional plans being prepared.

We held a series of additional briefings with regulators on specific topics as including, but not limited to, the below:

- a series of workshops with the Environment Agency on the technical methods being used to develop the plan (September 2020)
- a series of meetings with the Environment Agency on Environmental Ambition (monthly since February 2021 with EA area leads, and monthly since September 2021 with EA national leads and company representatives from PMB)
- documentation discussion with RAPID (August 2021)
- meetings with RAPID and the All Company Working Group (ACWG) (October 2021, October 2020, September 2020)
- a series of working group meetings with RAPID (September 2021, June 2021, May 2021, April 2021, March 2021)
- climate Change meetings with the Environment Agency (February 2021 and November 2020)
- a series of meetings with the Environment Agency regarding the regional system simulator model (January and February 2021)
- a series of workshops focussing on National Supply and Demand (October and November 2020)
- workshop led by RAPID on bulk supply agreements and pricing (November 2020).
- draft regional plan discussion with Ofwat (July 2022)
- discussions with Defra on the emerging and draft regional plans (July and October 2022)

- briefings with Defra, the EA, NE, Ofwat and RAPID through our draft regional plan consultation and afterwards to address feedback and alignment with company WRMPs.

3.2 Statutory consultees

Statutory consultees are those organisations and bodies which must be consulted on relevant plans. Our regional plan is not part of the statutory WRMP process but, given the role the regional plan plays in informing companies' WRMPs, we operated as if it is and engaged with:

- Ofwat
- the Environment Agency
- Natural England
- the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
- relevant authorities dealing with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Much of our engagement with these statutory consultees occurred through our various working groups which these consultees are members of (see Figure 1). For example, the Environment Agency is represented at all levels of WRSE – the Senior Leadership Team (governance) the Programme Management Board (technical) and the Engagement and Communications Board (engagement).

We held additional specific engagement events with statutory consultees, including Ofwat, the Environment Agency and Natural England at a senior level. This included weekly meetings with Ofwat and RAPID to update on the latest developments and any address any outstanding actions and engagement ahead of our consultations.

Engagement with relevant SEA and HRA statutory consultees was achieved through our Programme Management Board which has met fortnightly since 2019. The Environment Agency is a member of this group.

Options in our plan that could affect a designated site in England or Wales require close liaison with Natural England. This has been undertaken by company members of our Programme Management Board by working with their specific area's Natural England lead(s). We also engaged directly with the regional Natural England lead where required, and Natural England have been part of our Environmental Advisory Group (meeting approximately every quarter since July 2020).

3.3 Non-statutory consultees

We carried out extensive engagement with other non-statutory consultees as we developed our plan. Table 1 shows who we have engaged and how.

Table 1 Non-statutory consultee engagement

Who	How
engagement with other regional water resource groups	Through the National Framework Senior Steering Group, the Regional Co-ordination Group and the reconciliation process
water companies that have bulk supply or shared resource agreements with those that operate in the South East	Regional Co-ordination Group and reconciliation process
neighbouring water companies	
any water supplier affected by your supply system	WRSE does not operate a supply system so this engagement has been undertaken by water companies
local catchment partnerships	<p>WRSE's Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) and the cascade from environmental organisations</p> <p>Series of catchment workshops and the use of an online 'story map' tool for catchment partnerships and others to submit issues and options (300+ options submitted)</p> <p>Water companies are members of catchment partnerships and WRSE has supported as needed</p>
any other groups your plan is likely to affect	

any potential water supplier, company or third party you may wish to trade with	<p>Dedicated engagement with the main water using sectors in the South East through a multi-sector subgroup which has met regularly since June 2020</p> <p>Representatives from the Greater London Authority and South East Councils on Stakeholder Advisory Board</p> <p>A series of webinars held on key topics including Best Value Planning, the planning challenge, the options and adaptive planning promoted to a range of stakeholders by WRSE and water companies.</p> <p>Bespoke meetings with other stakeholders</p>
CCW (formerly Consumer Council for Water)	<p>Active member of rCCG and the Stakeholder Advisory Board</p> <p>Member of the National Framework SSG</p> <p>Bespoke meetings</p> <p>CEO attendance at one SLT meeting</p>
water retailers for business	<p>Presentations given to the Retailer Wholesaler Group formed by MOSL</p> <p>Previous attendance at the Stakeholder Advisory Board</p> <p>Receive regular communication from WRSE through newsletter and webinars</p>
DWI	Senior regulator meetings, RAPID and technical engagement
RAPID	SLT, senior regulator meetings, SSG, RCG, Quarterly Liaison Meetings, bespoke meetings, webinars and newsletters

National Infrastructure Commission	bespoke engagement – series of meeting and engagement with open invitation to engage
local nature partnerships (where applicable)	cascade from environmental advisory group _ companies lead for local stakeholders and WRSE has supported as needed
water efficiency groups	Direct engagement with Waterwise

In addition to the formal meetings listed, many of these stakeholders also attended one or more of the webinars we organised during our consultations.

3.4 Other regional water resource groups

Engagement with the other regional groups was carried out primarily through the Regional Coordination Group (RCG). Membership includes the Environment Agency, RAPID, Ofwat, Defra, Natural Resources Wales and the five regional groups (WRSE, WRE, WRW, WCWR and WRN).

This group provides a link between the National Framework Senior Steering Group and the regional plans and is supported by working groups on specific issues where required. RCG has been meeting approximately monthly since June 2020.

3.4.1 Regional Reconciliation

Between October 2020 and December 2020, the regulators and regions undertook a series of workshops to determine what should be aligned between the regional plans. The process for integrating the regional plans together is referred to as the regional reconciliation process. The conclusion was to outline an agreed set of intraregional transfers to support each region's emerging plans.

We worked with the other regions to understand any changes to availability of resources for regional transfers and incorporated these into the draft and revised draft regional plans. The regional reconciliation approach for the draft regional plans was aligned through the Regional Coordination Group and is summarised in a report, available on our website.

3.4.2 National webinars

On behalf of the National Framework, we organised a webinar in September 2021 to provide an update to stakeholders on the reconciliation process and raise awareness of the consultations planned for January. This was attended by around 150 stakeholders from across the country from a wide range of organisations including regulators, national and local environmental groups, business groups and trade associations representing large water using sectors.

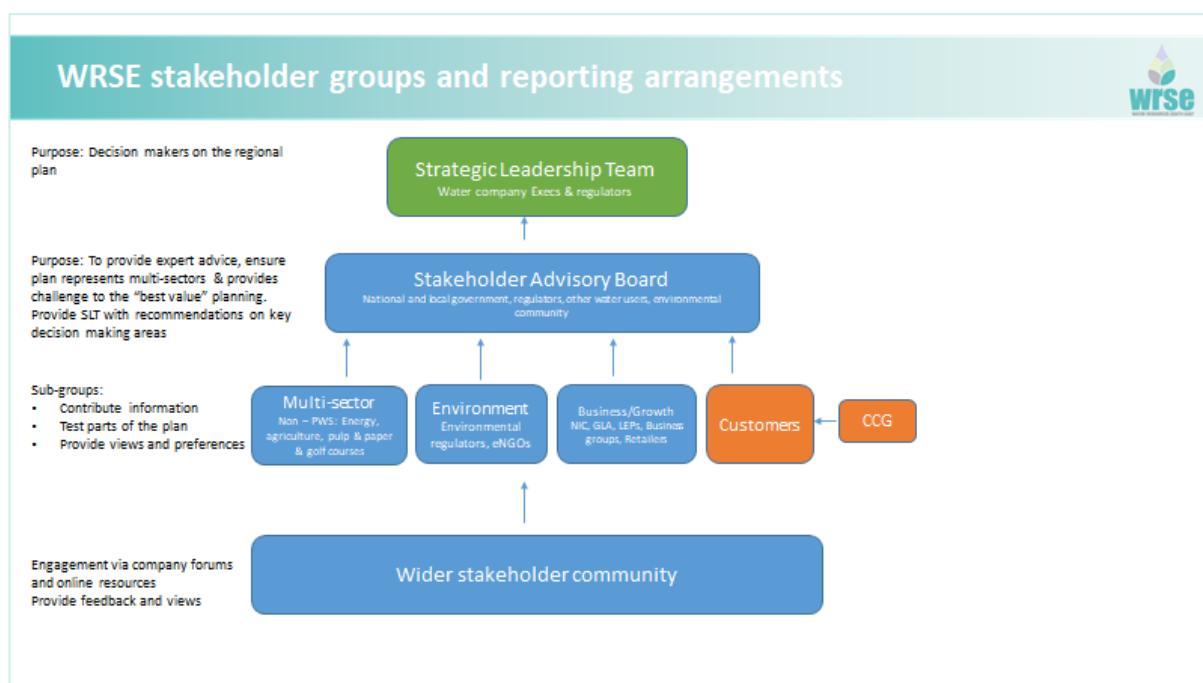
We also organised webinars in January and November 2022 for the National Framework and all five regional groups to launch consultations on the emerging and draft regional plans respectively.

4.0 How we engaged

4.1 Direct engagement

We have a series of advisory groups which enable stakeholders to remain briefed and contribute to the development of our regional plan. Our stakeholder groups – and their reporting arrangements – are illustrated in Figure 3 and described below:

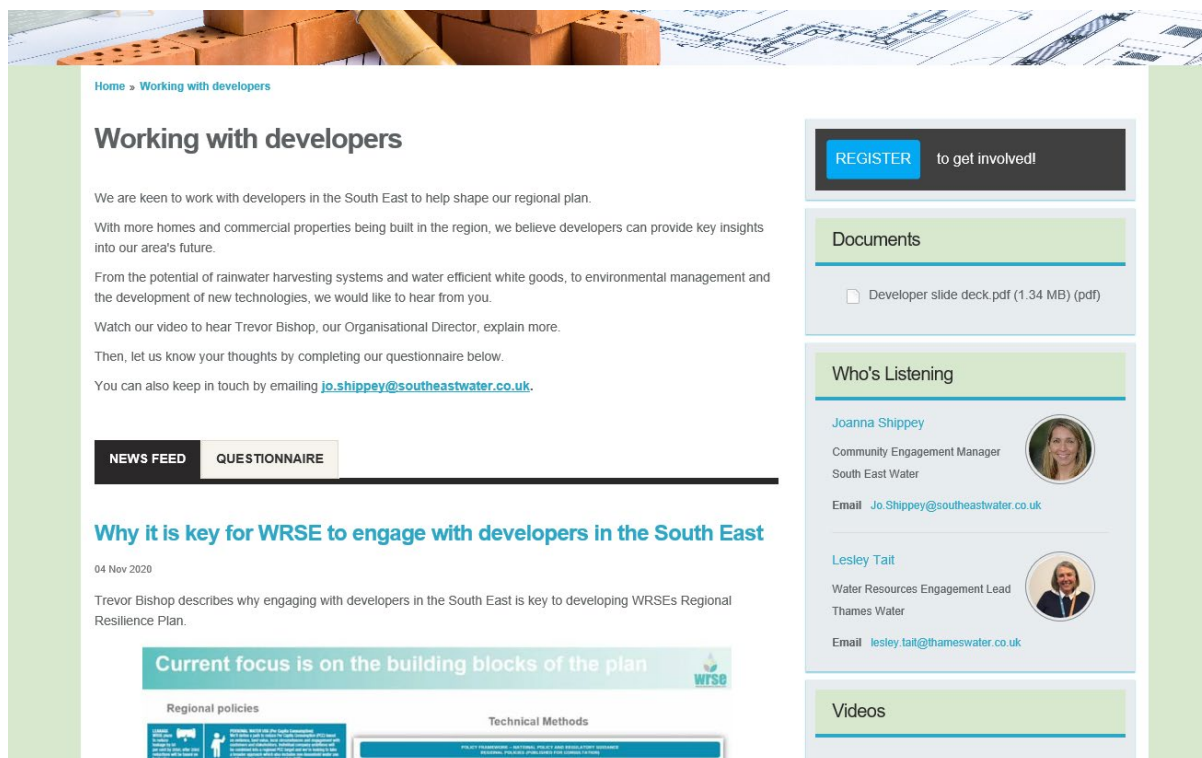
Figure 3 WRSE stakeholder groups and reporting arrangements



- **Stakeholder Advisory Board:** This comprises expert representatives from across the region, as well as organisations involved in determining future water policy and strategy. The purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Board is to ensure a broad range of interests are represented, to provide challenge, and to help shape the direction and content of the plan.
- **Multi-sector Advisory Group:** This comprises representative of other water-using sectors in the region. The purpose of this group is to understand these other sectors' future water needs, the resilience of their own water supply systems and potential solutions that they could deliver in partnership with us.
- **Environment Advisory Group:** This comprises environmental groups and regulators to develop the plan's environmental ambitions (beyond the statutory minimum) and to advise on environmental policy.

- **Business/Growth:** We intended to establish a group to cover business and the economy. However, the diversity of this sector and the pressures from the meant it was been possible to form a sub-group with relevant stakeholders. In lieu of this, we sought to engage with a range of organisations to share our approach and seek input including Local Enterprise Partnerships, the House Building Federation, developers and Chambers of Commerce. See Figure 4 as an example.

Figure 4 Illustration of engagement with the developer community



Alongside our stakeholder groups, we engaged with water company customers and the wider stakeholder community.

- **Customers:** we engaged with customers through a phased programme of research to understand and take account of their views and preferences. See our [customer engagement method statement](#) for more detail on our customer research programme
- **Regional Customer Challenge Group:** membership comprises CCW and representatives for the region's water company Customer Challenge Groups with the aim of scrutinising and challenging the design and execution of the research and engagement around the plan with customers.
- **Wider stakeholder community:** through meetings and events, hosted both by WRSE and the individual water companies, documentation, consultation and online channels e.g., webinars, on

topics as diverse as resilience, method statements, options appraisal, best value and regional reconciliation.

Webinars became a dominant feature of our wider stakeholder engagement as a result of the COVID19 restrictions in place during most of 2020 and 2021. They are well attended and have been positively received by stakeholders.

We ensure participants can submit questions to our technical and member-company leads during the session. After the event, we publish responses to all questions after the event. We also share the presentation slides and recordings on our engagement platform.

4.1.1 Stakeholder Advisory Board

This group acted as the vehicle for our strategic stakeholder engagement.

Terms of reference

The WRSE Advisory Board will work with the WRSE senior leadership team (SLT) to ensure that the multi-sector, regional resilience plan meets the needs of all water users, the environment and supports the regional economy. Specifically, the members of the group will:

- contribute to the development Best Value plan criteria and metrics and provide and advise the SLT on whether the chosen criteria reflect the needs of all water users
- review the updated Future Water Resource Requirement assessment (demand and supply forecasts) and advise SLT on whether it reflects the needs of all water users based on the engagement and technical work carried out
- review and assess the draft plan consultation results and make recommendations to the SLT on changes that should be made to the plan to reflect customer and stakeholder views
- partner with WRSE, and its member companies where appropriate, to promote the development of the regional plan and WRSE's wider objectives.

Current external members

- CCW (formerly Consumer Council for Water)
- RWE Generation
- Chair of the Multi-sector group
- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Chalk Streams First
- Blueprint for Water
- South East Councils

The members are joined by the following regulatory observers:

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- RAPID

Minutes of the Stakeholder Advisory Board can be found at wrse.org.uk/library

4.1.2 Multi-Sector Advisory Group

This sub-group was set up specifically to act as the platform for engagement with major water users in the region which are not supplied directly by any of the six water companies to ensure our regional plan addresses the needs of other users and meets the expectations of the National Framework.

Terms of reference

- agree on the scope of non-public water supply sectors that will be considered in the WRSE regional plan
- understand the future requirements of non-public water supply users (using the National Framework report as the starting point). This work covers future demands, drought vulnerability and future availability.
- help define whether loss of supply is tolerable to certain sectors or not – this will help with the resilience service provision definition for each sector
- advise on sector-specific policy issues and technical processes that need to be considered as the regional plan is developed
- identify opportunities for new water resource options and shared resources that could be promoted through the regional plan and understand the full range of solutions that could potentially be helpful for non-public water supply users, including funding arrangements
- create a forum for ongoing collaboration to deliver improved water management across the South East (water efficiency, sustainable abstraction, drought management etc)
- provide independent advice to the Senior Leadership Team (CEO/senior regulators) group.

The starting point for this group's membership was the work carried out by the National Framework to identify the main water users in the region. We undertook broader engagement to capture sectors not included in the original analysis and beyond this formal sub-group. This is addressed in the next section.

External members

- Alan Turner (independent chair)
- NFU
- West Sussex Growers
- RWE Generation
- Uniper Energy
- Environmental Consultant, BIGGA/England Golf

- DS Smith (paper manufacturer)
- Confederation of Paper Industries
- Mineral Products Association
- Canal and Rivers Trust
- Vitacress
- Environment Agency

4.1.3 Environmental Advisory Group

This sub-group was set up to create a forum for environmental bodies, regulators, policy makers – all with broad, cross-cutting environmental expertise – to agree a number of critical policy and practical issues, including:

Terms of reference

- create a forum to agree shared ambition, use of evidence, definition of process and policy/regulatory gaps
- review the Environment Agency's proposed environmental scenarios and advise if others are required
- advise and inform on the process of setting of environmental ambition beyond the statutory minimum by reviewing the current evidence, future challenges against the needs of the environment using agreed scenarios
- advise on WRSE's environmental policy and be part of the environmental assessment method consultations
- provide a review of potential environmental solutions.

The group has worked with us to ensure our regional plan addresses the expectations of the National Framework regarding environmental expectations and establishes stronger links from regional plans through to company WRMPs and business plans.

External members

- Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Blueprint for Water
- South East Rivers Trust
- Chalk Streams First
- The Rivers Trust
- Environment Agency
- Natural England.

A log of our key stakeholder engagement activity to date can be found in Appendix 2.

4.2 Our wider engagement with stakeholders

4.2.1 Consultations on our method statements and frameworks

We ran a series of consultations between March 2020 and January 2021 on the ‘building blocks’ of the regional plan to allow stakeholders the opportunity to engage with and shape the process we used.

We reviewed the feedback received and recorded our response in a series of consultation response summary documents. We also consulted on our emerging and draft regional plans as detailed above.

Table 2 Consultations on our policies and method statements

Consultation	Consultation date	Response document
Future Water Resource Requirements	March 2020	Microsoft Word - WRSE ResponseFWRRFinal May20
Resilience Framework	June 2020	resilience-framework-response-to-feedback-03-august-2020_final.pdf (wrse.org.uk)
Regional policies	August 2020	wrse-response-to-policies-consultation_051020.pdf
Method statements	August 2020	Updated method statements were published with changes highlighted
Best value planning	February 2021	wrse-response-to-the-consultation-on-best-value-planning-april-2021.pdf

All consultations were promoted directly to stakeholders through our and our member companies’ distribution and stakeholder lists. They were also promoted on social media.

4.2.3 Events and webinars

We launched our vision and ambition for our regional plan at a stakeholder event in September 2019. This was attended by more than 60 stakeholders and involved presentations by WRSE, Government and regulators, a panel session involving environmental and other sector representatives and a facilitated discussion session with stakeholders.

The outputs from this session were used to inform our engagement approach and provided early feedback on stakeholder priorities that have been reflected in the development of the plan. The report can be found at www.wrse.org.uk/library

We held webinars on the following topics:

- resilience framework
- method statements
- regional policies
- growth forecasts
- options appraisal process
- environmental ambition
- best value plan
- the planning challenge
- emerging options from the appraisal process (X5)
- adaptive planning
- drought management (with retailers)
- regional reconciliation in conjunction with the other regional groups and the National Framework.

These webinars were typically attended by between 40 and 100 people, representing a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

We also supported engagement events carried out by the individual water companies including Thames and Affinity Waters' quarterly stakeholder forum, Southern Water's Strategic Environment Panel and Western Area stakeholder group, SES Water's Environment Scrutiny Panel and South East Water's Environmental Scrutiny Group.

4.2.4 WRSE newsletter

Since February 2019, we have produced a quarterly newsletter to provide regular updates on our activity, wider industry activity related to water resources and content from many third party stakeholders such as regulators and our member companies. Since its inception, the distribution list has increased significantly as a result of more people registering for updates through our website (to ensure compliance with GDPR). It is now sent directly to nearly 2,000 people and is promoted on our website and social media channels. All editions can be found at wrse.org.uk/library.

4.2.5 WRSE website

We launched a new website in May 2020 to help stakeholders access our work. It provides stakeholders with an overview of our work and houses all the technical and strategy documents we have produced.

4.2.6 Engagement platform

To supplement our website and enable more interactive engagement with stakeholders, we established a dedicated engagement platform and consultation hub.

We have used interactive features such as surveys, films and blogs to help stakeholders engage with the content. The platform has also been used to host recordings from our of webinars, enabling stakeholders unable to attend to engage at a time that suits them. It also hosts all the details of our customer research programme including the detailed reports.

4.2.7 Films

We produced a series of short films to help explain our regional plan. We first produced these in summer 2021, ahead of the emerging plan consultation to help stakeholders to understand the context of the plan and break it down in an engaging and accessible way.

4.2.8 Social media

We established a LinkedIn page in 2020 to reach a wider audience and share updates on our work – including our webinars, films, blogs and newsletters. This enabled us to reach out to interested stakeholders included those working within the water industry, the supply chain and in other sectors.

We have not established a wider social media presence. However, our members companies have promoted key WRSE content through their own social media pages – including our consultations and events.

4.2.9 Media

We focused our attention primarily on the water industry trade media with features in The Water Report and Utility Week. We promoted particularly innovative and progressive areas of our work such as how we engaged with customers, approached resilience and how we worked to integrate different planning activity.

The purpose of this was to demonstrate leadership within the sector and the role regional planning is playing in delivering wider sector priorities.

Around our consultations we engaged with local and national media to promote our work and to respond to pieces on water resources planning, demand reduction policy and on some schemes included in our plan.

5.0 Consulting on our emerging regional plan

Between 17 January 2022 and 14 March 2022 we consulted on our emerging regional plan to secure water supplies for the South East and received over 1,150 responses from stakeholders and customers.

In May 2022, we responded to the feedback we received in our Consultation Response Document. This is available on [our website](#). Specific detail about engagement during our emerging regional plan consultation is below.

We received responses from a broad cross-section of stakeholders including:

- environmental groups
- local authorities – County, Unitary, District, Borough and Parish Councils
- regulators
- trade associations – including those representing large water-using sectors
- local interest and campaign groups – including local political parties
- Canal and Rivers trusts

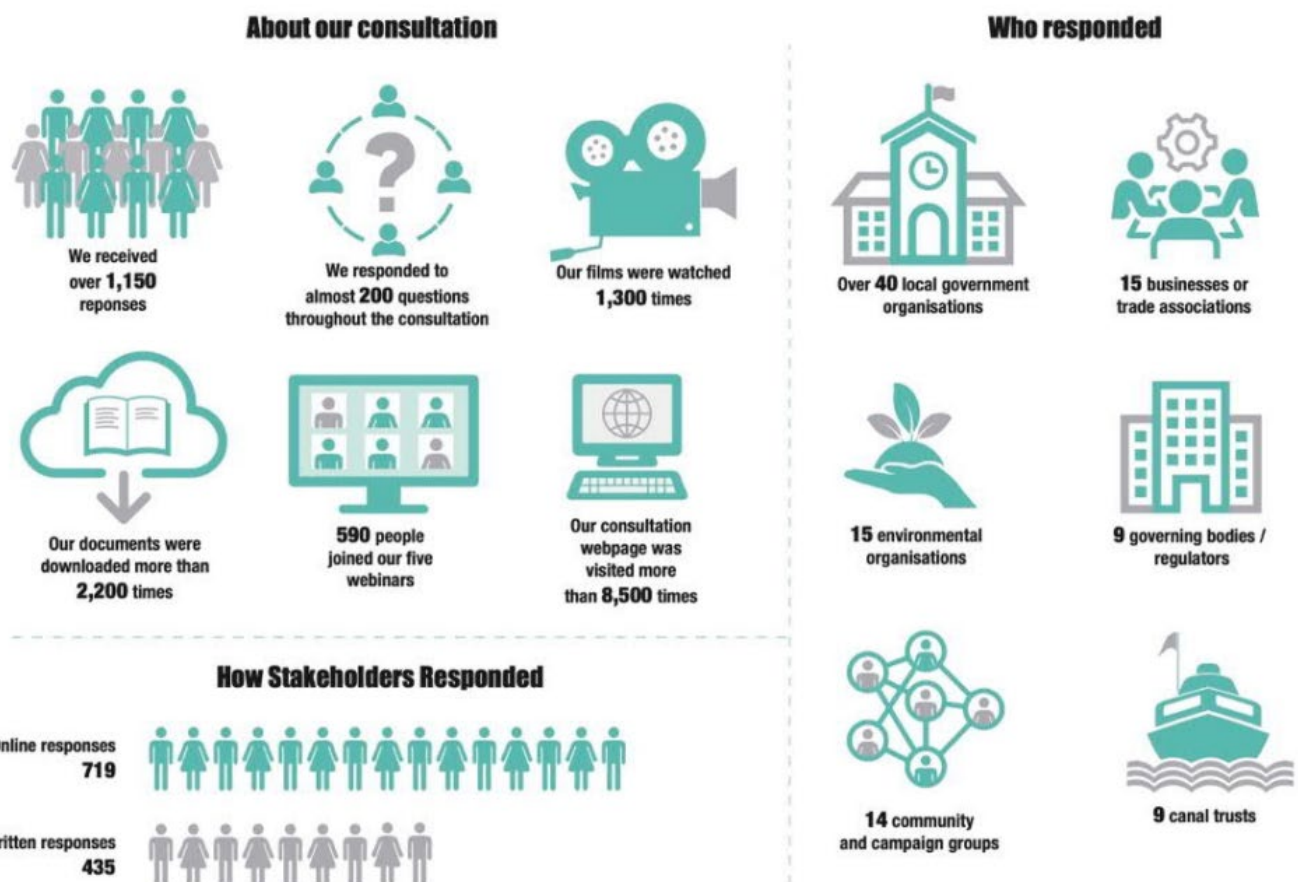
Our engagement included webinars, an interactive Q&A session, updating our bespoke engagement platform and website, coordination with our member companies to promote the consultation directly to their stakeholders, films, LinkedIn posts and an edition of our newsletter focussing on the consultation.

Figure 5 below, taken from our consultation response document, outlines some key statistics from our consultation engagement.

In its response to our emerging regional plan consultation³, Ofwat said “The WRSE approach to stakeholder engagement has been positive. It has hosted a range of well attended webinars and supported the launch of all five regional groups.”

³ <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/14-03-2022-WRSE-regional-plan-letter-for-web.pdf>

Figure 5 Engagement highlights from our emerging regional plan



5.1 Emerging regional plan consultation webinars

During our emerging regional plan consulted, we arranged and hosted five webinars:

- a webinar to launch the regional plans in coordination with the National Framework
- a webinar to launch WRSE's emerging regional plan
- more detailed webinars focussing on the East, West and North of WRSE's region respectively, supported by our member companies

In total, over 590 different stakeholders attended at least one of our webinars with some joining multiple sessions.

Each webinar provided an overview of the plans being discussed and the wider strategic context, followed by a Q&A and panel session.

Attendees could submit their questions via Microsoft Teams chat function or through an interactive Q&A platform. Any questions not responded to during the webinar were responded to in writing afterwards. All our webinars were recorded and shared afterwards on our engagement platform.

Table 3 Emerging regional plan consultation webinars

Webinar	Date	Attendees
National Framework webinar	17 January	More than 270 people from over 200 organisations
WRSE launch webinar	20 January	Over 160 attendees from more than 100 organisations
WRSE Eastern area webinar	31 January	Over 110 attendees
WRSE Western area webinar	1 February	Over 125 attendees
WRESE Northern area webinar	2 February	Over 110 attendees

In addition to these sessions, we held an interactive Q&A session on 1 March, where stakeholders could submit questions through our engagement platform to be answered the same day. Where we could not respond to the question in the same day, we responded in writing within a few days.

In total, we responded to more than 200 questions submitted during the consultation through our webinars, interactive Q&A, website and engagement platform.

5.2 Media engagement

We proactively engaged with local and national media during the consultation, resulting in widespread coverage across national, regional, local and trade media. This included:

- in depth- features on BBC News 24 and regional BBC and ITV channels
- interviews on regional and local radio stations
- coverage on BBC News website and in local newspapers and their websites

5.3 Social media, films, and engagement platform

Leading up to and during the consultation we used LinkedIn to promote the consultation and engagement activity such as the webinars and interactive Q&A. We also worked with our member companies to provide collateral and messaging to support their social media campaigns.

We created a series of films to explain different core elements of our plans. These included:

- our approach to adaptive planning
- demand management
- nature based solutions
- a network to move water around the region
- three films on the new sources in our plan.

These were shared on our engagement platform and social media channel. In total, they were viewed over 1,300 times during the consultation.

We used our engagement platform to host films, content explaining the consultation and directed stakeholders to this platform to read our documents and respond. Over 8,500 people visited our consultation webpage and our documents were downloaded over 2,200 times.

5.4 Other stakeholder engagement

We complemented our wider engagement with briefings to individual stakeholders where appropriate and requested.

During our consultation we attempted to organise a webinar specifically for retailers in the non-household market. However, due to low interest this event did not take place. We engaged with the UK Water Retailers Council (UKWRC) directly to ensure their members were aware of the consultations and how to respond.

6. Consulting on our draft regional plan

Ahead of the publication of our draft regional plan we continued our proactive engagement with a range of stakeholders.

In May 2022, we attended a UK Water Retailers Council meeting to share our consultation response document and explain how we were moving from our least-cost plan to a best value plan for consultation. We also held meetings with the South East ADEPT (Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport), Oxfordshire County Council and the Horticultural Trade Association.

We held further meetings with our Stakeholder Advisory Board, Multi-Sector Group and Environmental Advisory Group in July 2022 and October 2022 to share progress on incorporating stakeholders' feedback from our draft regional plan consultation, explained the approach we took and allowed them to provide challenge and feedback.

Areas of focus included the level and location of abstraction reduction proposed in the plan and assessment of wider environmental benefits. There was also recognition that further work is needed with other sectors to develop a better understanding of their long-term water needs.

We also held meetings with a range of organisations including Waterwise, South East Rivers Trust, Wildfish and the Institution of Civil Engineers.

6.1 Consulting on our draft regional plan

We undertook a similar level of engagement on its draft regional plan for consultation from November 2022 to our emerging regional plan in January 2022. During this time, our role was to support our member companies' engagement on their statutory Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs).

We held a launch event in parliament and a webinar with the wider stakeholder community to share details of its plan and supported companies' local engagement as appropriate.

We organised and delivered:

- a series of briefings to key stakeholders ahead of the plan's publication to raise awareness of the plan and address concerns their constituents may have

- a launch event in Parliament alongside its member companies to raise awareness of the plan, the strategic links to WRMPs and brief key stakeholders
- a webinar to outline the key elements of the plan to a wider range of stakeholders
- an interactive Q&A session towards the end of the consultation period

This was complemented by refreshed films, targeted media engagement and proactive stakeholder communication to raise and maintain awareness of the consultation and encourage feedback.

Our leadership team also raised awareness of the upcoming draft regional plan by speaking at events including:

- Westminster Energy, Environment and Transport Forum – 30 September 2022
- Utility Week Live – 9th November 2022
- The Water Report Social Contract Summit - 19 January

We also took part in stakeholder briefings during the consultation, including engaging with retailers and the non-household sector through UKWRC and supporting member companies' stakeholder engagement where appropriate.

On 18 October 2022, we supported Southern Water's engagement with the Kent MP Forum to outline their draft WRMP and how this links to our regional plan. This was attended by 11 MPs or their offices.

6.2 – Briefings for Parliamentarians

On 2 November we held a roundtable briefing to share embargoed details of our draft regional plan. This was targeted at MPs from across our region with an interest in water resources or large schemes in their constituencies. We also invited chairs of select committees from the House of Commons and House of Lords, and Labour's shadow environment minister.

We were joined by:

- Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown – MP for the Cotswolds (Chair and sponsor for the meeting)
- Damian Green MP – MP for Ashford with an interest in Broad Oak reservoir
- A representative from Layla Moran's office – MP for Abingdon and West Oxfordshire with an interest in SESRO
- Alex Sobel MP – Labour's shadow Environment Minister
- Daisy Cooper – MP for St. Albans with an interest in reducing abstraction to protect chalk streams

We had late cancellations from Flick Drummond (MP for Meon Valley with an interest in Havant Thicket reservoir) and Andrew Griffith (MP for Arundel and South Downs with an interest in water neutrality challenges and Blackstone reservoir).

On 3 November, we briefed Baroness Parminter and Baroness Young of Old Scone (Chair and a member of the House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee respectively). This briefing was offered as they were unable to join our 2 November roundtable.

Both these sessions included an overview of regional planning, the challenges our region faces and the mix of solutions being proposed. We were challenged on the deliverability of demand and leakage management, as well as some of the planning assumptions made around population growth and environmental protection.

Overall, Parliamentarians were supportive of our approach, with many welcoming the concept of long-term, adaptive planning and an appreciation of the challenges we face. We also clarified how their constituents will be able to respond to our consultation, and water companies' water resources management plan statutory process running in parallel.

6.3 – Briefing for regulators and National Infrastructure Commission

A pre-briefing was held with senior representatives from the water industry regulators Ofwat and the Environment Agency, RAPID, CCW and the National Infrastructure Commission. The briefing covered key aspects of the plan including the scale and mix of investment and the role of demand management measures in achieving security of supplies. We also highlighted areas with potential deliverability risks associated with the plan.

6.4 – Consultation engagement

We published our draft regional plan for a 14-week consultation on 14 November 2022 – alongside supporting technical documents – and used our engagement platform to host customer and stakeholder focussed explainers and videos, as well as our survey.

We carried out direct and indirect awareness raising ahead of the consultation, including publicising the launch date in the WRSE quarterly newsletter, direct emails to stakeholders, pre-briefings to stakeholder organisations and social media updates trailing the launch.

On the day the consultation launched, we emailed more than 2,100 stakeholders to inform them the consultation had started and signpost our engagement platform and materials.

We held a launch event for the draft regional plan⁴ at the Houses of Parliament on 16 November 2022 with guest speakers from RAPID, the National Infrastructure Commission and Chalk Streams First.

⁴ This was supported and attended by our member companies who also used the event to promote the consultations on the WRMPs

More than 60 stakeholders attended including MPs, regulators, environmental groups, local authorities, trade associations for large water users and other water resources regions. South East MPs and peers from the House of Lords also attended with Chairs of parliamentary select committees and All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs).

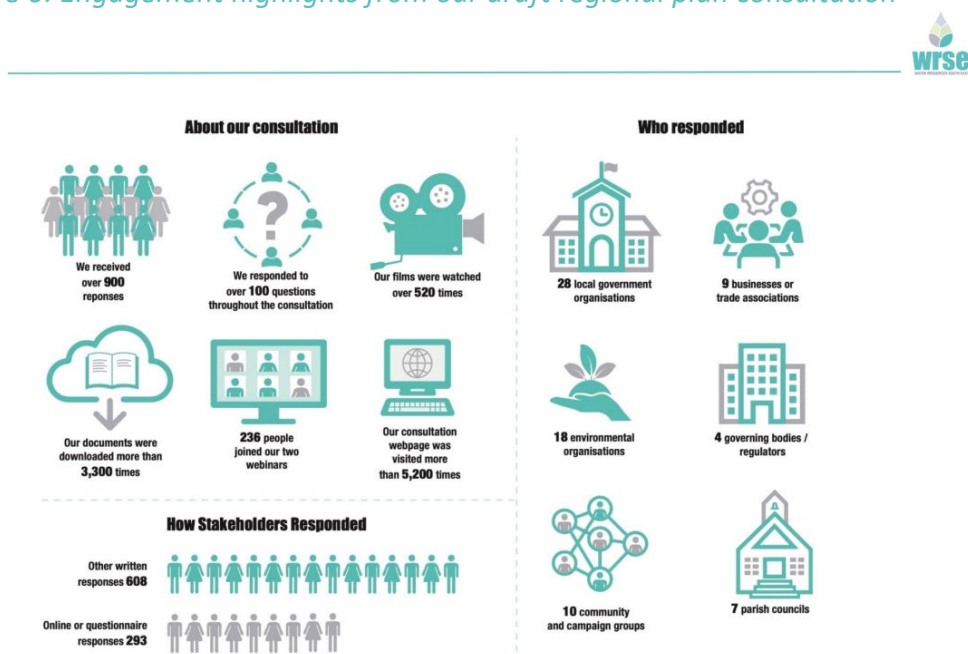
WRSE organised two webinars to raise awareness of our draft plan attended by more than 230 stakeholders:

- 17 November – national launch webinar for the five draft regional water resources plans
- 22 November – launch webinar for WRSE’s draft regional plan

We also took part in four webinars and one in-person event to support our member companies’ engagement on their WRMPs. Our Chair and Organisational director also carried out a number of one-to-one briefings during the consultation period.

We held an online interactive Q and A session on 2 February 2023, where questions were submitted and responded to on the day. This provided stakeholders with an opportunity to ask any outstanding question before the consultation closed. The graphic below shows highlights from our consultation engagement.

Figure 6: Engagement highlights from our draft regional plan consultation



6.5 – Engagement to finalise and publish our revised draft regional plan

After our consultation closed, we worked with our member companies and sector regulators to update our plan based on stakeholders’ feedback and changes to government policy – particularly the [Environmental Improvement Plan](#). This involved regulator meetings with Defra, Ofwat and the Environment Agency – as well as our technical working groups.

We liaised closely with our member companies and Defra throughout the process to align publication of companies’ statements of response and revised WRMPs⁵.

We also continued our stakeholder engagement programme – attending conferences and meeting with key stakeholders. This includes meeting with local MPs, environmental groups, other regional water resources groups and presentations to boards of Ofwat and the Environment Agency.

In addition to our consultation, and wider ongoing programme of stakeholder engagement, we carried out specific customer research on our draft plan in Spring 2023. Some 1,300 household and 400 business customers from our region took part via an interactive online survey to help us refine our

⁵ Southern Water plans a further targeted consultation on its revised draft plan due to some material changes and it is currently liaising with regulators to agree next steps and timing.

proposals, testing their views on the draft plan against some feasible alternatives, including around bill impact.

On 31 August 2023, we published on our website and submitted our revised draft regional plan to Defra alongside our response to feedback received during the draft regional plan consultation.

We informed our stakeholders through a direct email update and our social media channels. We published a consultation response document alongside our full revised draft regional plan and a non-technical summary.

On 20 September 2023, we hosted a webinar to present our revised draft regional plan and enable stakeholders representing a range of organisations and interests to put their questions and comments directly to the WRSE team. Almost 200 people attended this webinar.

7.0 What happens next?

We will continue regularly updating stakeholders through our website, newsletter, social media and business-as-usual engagement.

This includes engaging with stakeholders on specific schemes our member companies will start delivering, alongside technical stakeholder engagement to develop the method statements and policies we will use to develop our next regional plan.

We will also continue our engagement programme to understand what how we can improve future engagement, as well as identifying new opportunities for our next plan.

Appendix 1

Stakeholder method statement changes

Changes made to the Stakeholder Engagement Method Statement following consultation on the emerging regional plan and publication of the WRP.

Summary of consultation feedback relevant to the stakeholder engagement programme

Consultation feedback and requirements of the final WRP	WRSE consideration
<p>Timing of engagement Engage at an early stage especially if your plan is likely to be complex or include significant change thereby reducing the risk of issues being identified at a later stage</p>	<p>The planning challenges faced in the SE are significant and complex and as such the approach and tools used by WRSE to develop the regional plan are detailed and complex. WRSE is committed to develop the plan openly and transparently and has developed a programme of engagement which supports each stage of the technical programme and shares information at a timely and formative stage.</p>
<p>Breadth of engagement Stakeholder engagement on such a complex process will be a significant challenge for WRSE, the methodology statement needs to provide more information on how this challenge will be overcome.</p> <p>Ensure the engagement involves both statutory and non-statutory consultees including other regional groups, water suppliers affected by the supply system, other water companies, local catchment partnerships to ensure consideration of local pressures and local solutions.</p> <p>Ofwat specifically requested pre-consultation engagement prior to the draft regional plan publication.</p>	<p>The WRSE engagement programme involves the wide stakeholder community, as well as customers. As part of the engagement we have checked back on whether the approaches and technical work is clear and understandable and if there is sufficient opportunity to contribute. Overall, the feedback we received was positive. We recognise the pressure on stakeholders and resource constraints, and also the potential for engagement “fatigue”, and have worked to respond to feedback on when and how we engage to ensure the approach is efficient and effective.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a host of cross-regional and strategic planning groups which are attended by WRSE and the SE member companies to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and coordinated activity. • Regulators are members of the WRSE technical and engagement boards and are able to contribute alongside water companies to the design and execution of activities. • WRSE hosted pre-consultation discussions with Ofwat (March 21 and April 21) • WRSE has established stakeholder groups – the Advisory Board, Environmental Group and Multi-sector group, the membership was designed to ensure the groups represent the broad regional stakeholder community. • WRSE has broadened its reach through other channels such as the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Developers Forum, LEPS and Retail associations. • WRSE had led engagement and consultation on the components of the plan as the work has progressed using tiered documentation to respond to the varying appetites of stakeholders and various methods. • WRSE and the water companies have held forums and meetings to ensure the wide stakeholder community is briefed and has

	<p>an opportunity to feed into the development of the plan. This is shown in Figure 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WRSE will also host the public consultation on the draft plan in January 2022.
<p>WRSE Stakeholder Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Advisory Group – CCT commented that the representation is limited in its coverage of heritage, recreational, landscape and other areas outside of the narrower natural environment interests. Multi-sector group should be broader than industries which have a licence to abstract water from the environment and should encompass other sectors that actively manage and invest in water infrastructure, for flood defence, conservation, recreation, navigation Deepen the involvement of the WRSE stakeholder groups in the technical work so that they have more responsibility in the development of the plan. For example, the Advisory and Stakeholder groups should be given some responsibility in the selection of decision making and resilience criteria CCT queried where those stakeholders with a specific interest, such as a specific water resource solution, have a voice within the WRSE stakeholder structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environmental Advisory Group comprises regulators, NGOs and company representatives. The discussions have covered topics including landscape, recreation, and wellbeing, at a high level. We note this concern and will ensure the wider scope continues to be part of the ongoing discussions. We continue to ensure these other, wider interest areas are included within our engagement processes and have the opportunity to scale up/down their level of direct engagement to fit with their needs. We have reviewed and revised the Terms of Reference of the Stakeholder Advisory Board to strengthen its remit in the development of the plan, with specific areas of focus and outputs. The WRSE programme of engagement is multi-faceted and aims to provide multiple touchpoints for stakeholders to get involved and contribute to the development of the plan for example consultation on technical outputs, at meetings and through the consultation. If the current channels are not considered to provide sufficient opportunity or cover the topics of interest, we are happy to meet and discuss.
<p>Clarity and transparency Need for transparency in methods, data, assumptions, and decisions so that customers, stakeholders, regulators, and government can understand and comment</p>	<p>WRSE recognises that the activity is technically complex and has endeavoured to share information in a clear and accessible way. Method Statements covering the technical aspects of work have been consulted on and published.</p> <p>WRSE has sought feedback on topics for discussion and we have responded to this such as hosting a webinar on the demand forecasts and the adaptive planning framework.</p>
<p>Environmental destination Important that there is consultation to define the long-term environmental destination, including engagement at a catchment level to help in developing catchment options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the updated Future Water Resource Requirements (May 2021) we set out the environmental scenarios being considered. We have held many discussions on this at stakeholder meetings as this work evolved recognising it is significant in shaping the plan In collaboration with the EA we have defined a suite of scenarios to reflect the scale, pace, and delivery mode for the environmental destination. We have discussed these with the EAG who supported the approach. We will share the modelling outputs to enable informed discussion on the path to take. We have engaged with catchment groups, and the wider stakeholder community, to identify catchment issues and potential opportunities, some of which will be taken forward for consideration in the regional plan and others will be promoted to be progressed through other delivery routes such as DWMPs.
<p>Best value planning framework – objectives, criteria, and metrics Objectives should be informed by Government and regulator policy and the aspirations of company, customers, and stakeholders and WRSE should explain how stakeholders are</p>	<p>WRSE developed a draft best value planning framework including objectives, criteria and metrics taking account of statutory, regulatory and policy expectations and sought feedback via a consultation held in February 2021. WRSE responded to the feedback and published a response document, an overarching summary document as well as the</p>

involved in this process and how these are used in decision making including the sensitivity of the plan to metric scoring.	updated Best Value Planning Method Statement which will set out the approach in detail including weighting criteria and sensitivity testing.
Best value planning decision making As part of the decision-making processes WRSE should gather the views of a representative range of customers and stakeholders, who should be aware of the implications of their preferences on the investment programme. Any engagement should make clear the consequences and cumulative impacts of customer or stakeholder choices or preferences.	WRSE is developing an interactive tool to support engagement with customers and stakeholders to help communicate alternative programmes and seek feedback on the programmes. . The detailed decision-making process is set out in the Best Value Planning Method Statement
Adaptive planning Clarity on how WRSE will define the range of adaptive pathways, the thresholds of uncertainty to justify an adaptive plan, as well as scenarios.	WRSE has shared the principles of its approach with stakeholders and hosted a webinar to provide the opportunity for stakeholders to “deep dive” on this topic in response to stakeholder requests. Further details are set out in the Best Value Planning Method Statement.

Appendix 2

Engagement log

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
17/5/19	Advisory Board	Members	Introduction to WRSE Overview of National Framework Priorities/views of members for WRSE plan	https://www.wrse.org.uk/media/i2ply5w5/wrse_file_1145_stakeholdergroup_minutes_17may2019final.pdf
27/9/19	Stakeholder Event – delivering resilient water supplies to the South East	54 regional stakeholders	See event report	Microsoft Word - WRSE Stakeholder Event 270919 Final Report
10/19	Thames / Affinity Forum	TW/AW stakeholders	The evolving water resource planning framework A resilient, multi-sector plan – WRSE approach Strategic Water Resource options	Minutes available
13/2/20	Advisory Board	Members	Update and overview National Framework WRSE Future Water Resource Requirements WRSE forward programme Terms of reference / how best we work with stakeholders	wrse stakeholdergroup minutes 130220.pdf
02/20	Thames / Affinity Forum	TW/AW stakeholders	Overview of national and regional planning Strategic Strategic Water Resource options Focus on the environment	Minutes available
18/6/20	Advisory Board	Members	Update on WRSE programme	wrse advisorygroup 18-06-20.pdf

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
			Engagement framework Policy assumptions for the regional plan	
18/06/21	Resilience Framework webinar	49 stakeholders	Presentation and Q&A on the Resilience Framework Resilience Framework Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)	Feedback received from 12 organisations and 4 individuals resilience-framework-response-to-feedback-03-august-2020_final.pdf (wrse.org.uk) Update to framework underway
24/6/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Overview of the WRSE programme Non public water supply demand – review of Woods work / early output of non-household demand	Consider membership of group, needs to reflect all abstractors including those going through the EA's new authorisation process. Come back with examples of multi-sector options
06/20	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Introduction , terms of reference and agreement for how group was to proceed	ToR available
06/20	Thames / Affinity Forum	TW/AW stakeholders	WRSE – what we've done and what's ahead WRSE – working with you How do we make sure the regional plan is resilient – Resilience Framework	Minutes available
07/07/20	Environmental Advisory Group	Members	Objectives for group WRSE Introduction – environmental workstreams WRSE – Resilience Framework consultation Term of reference for group	ToR revised
30/7/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Update since last meeting Resilience Assessment – how we develop non-PWS element Multi-sector – take group through existing options	Work to understand all abstraction to be progressed with EA and to understand consumptive element Work to take place with each sector to feed into the Resilience Framework over coming months Presentation on identified multi-sector options
07/08/21	Method Statements overview webinar	28 stakeholders	Presentation and Q&A on the method statements	Method Statements Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
10/08/20	Regional Policies Consultation webinar	17 stakeholders	Presentation and Q&A on the regional policies consultation Regional Policies Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)	Feedback received from 15 organisations WRSE response to Policies Consultation 051020.pdf_3d728d9a4be8c784d2c59f4f0df3f578 (amazonaws.com)
25/08/21	Growth Forecasts webinar	71 stakeholders	Presentation by Edge Analytics on the method used to develop the growth forecast	Method Statements Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
26/8/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Update since last meeting Multi-sector approach method statement – feedback Vulnerability assessment Regional connectivity model	Formal feedback on method statement to be provided – recognition that other sectors don't plan in the same way, including on drought resilience and that all use different terms/language Add seasonality scenarios into the vulnerability assessment
09/20	Thames / Affinity Forum	TW/AW stakeholders	WRSE update Setting our environmental destination Deciding on a Best Value plan What options are we looking at?	Minutes available
9/20	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Best Value Planning Phase 1 customer research - update	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
15/9/20	Environmental Advisory Group	Members	Update Terms of Reference How outputs feed into WRSE 'process' Catchment workshops – whats coming up WRSE Environmental method statements - feedback Plan of how outputs from group are translated into action.	Individual comments received on method statements from members
28/9/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Update since last meeting Trading experiences – five examples of different trading experience presented by group members	Water use for livestock should be pulled out separately Further work needed to understand canal and river abstraction Month by month time slice of abstraction in the catchment would be helpful to understand peaks of water use

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
				A multi-sector engagement tool is being developed for submission of options, Mott MacDonald will gather feedback from members
10/09/21	Option Appraisal Webinar	26 stakeholders	Presentation and Q&A on the options appraisal method	Method Statements Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
5/10/20	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Phase 1 customer research update	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
13/10/20	Advisory Board	Members	Update on WRSE programme Regional policies consultation Best Value Plan – criteria and metrics Customer research update	wrseadvisorygroupminutes_13-10-20.pdf
13/10/20	Environmental Advisory Group	Members	Chalk Streams Catchment Workshops - update Workshop on SEA Scoping Report	Detailed feedback to team on developing the SEA scoping report
26/10/20	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Update on Phase 1 research – fieldwork	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
16/10/20	Environmental Ambition webinar	26 stakeholders Members of EAG invited	Presentation and Q&A on environmental ambition	Method Statements Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
10/20	Catchment workshops x 4	120 stakeholders – regulators, catchment partnerships, eNGOs, land users	Workshops in partnership with Atkins and The Rivers Trust to introduce the online catchment tool and invite stakeholders to contribute issues and ideas.	More than 300 local issues and a further 300 potential opportunities were submitted which have been reviewed and categorised. Catchment portfolios are being developed to bring this together and provide a picture of each catchment to inform the future decision making and activity that will be carried out. Around 170 options will go forward to the next phase of screening for this regional plan and the rest need further work and development.

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
12/11/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Options workshop Resilience Framework	Review of context for regional plan including environmental protection expectations set out in the National Framework. Overview of options available and discussion about multi-sector options, particularly demand-side option such as smart metering. All member asked to submit potential options through the online engagement tool. Overview of updated Resilience Framework was presented. Mott MacDonald to contact members individually to go through in more detail.
11/12/20	Environmental Advisory Group	Members	National Framework - guidance Resilience and the 25 YEP Best Value Plan – pre- consultation discussion	Feedback on the Best Value plan to inform the consultation documentation.
12/20	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Phase 1 customer research update	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
16/12/20	Multi-sector group	Members	Update on WRSE programme Non-public water supply (non-PWS) demand forecast Resilience Framework update Environmental Destination – presentation by the EA on updated environmental scenarios	Artesia work on non-PWS demand forecast shows there is little information available post 2050 so discussion about holding demand at 2050 or projecting forward. All sectors asked to provide feedback on this. Support for the Resilience Framework and the role it could play in showing the benefits interventions could bring and enabling more collaboration. EA presented update forecasts for abstraction reduction and explained how these have been developed. The majority will impact public water supply abstractions but important we see the full picture. Further work needs to be done by WRSE to look at what this means for water companies.
12/20	Thames / Affinity Forum	TW/AW stakeholders + wider stakeholders	WRSE update Looking at potential options Developing a best value plan – discussion	Minutes available

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
20/01/21	Multi-sector group	Members	Non-PWS demand forecast Environmental Destination Resilience Framework Best Value Plan development and sign-off	Updated non-demand forecast presented which includes abstractions previously not included known as 'new authorisations'. The farming sector felt the figures for spray irrigation need consideration, particularly as more storage reservoirs are likely to be built to hold water abstracted in the winter. Energy sector also to feed in potential future scenarios regarding the Didcot site. All sectors asked to feedback. WRSE presented an update on work to be carried out to understand impact of updated EA forecasts on abstraction. Group agreed that consideration needed to how this is communicated and presented. Recognition that although primarily as water sector issues it could impact other abstractors.
01/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Reporting Phase 1	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagemthq.com)
12/02/21 and 16/02/21	Best Value Plan consultation webinar	75 stakeholders	Presentation, discussion and Q&A on the Best Value Plan objectives, criteria and metrics	Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies Final criteria and metrics to be published in BV Method Statement
18/02/21	Advisory board	Members	Introduction to refreshed advisory board, terms of reference and work programme Best Value planning approach	wrse_advisorygroup_minutes_18-02-21final.pdf
02/03/21	Environmental Destination workshop	Regulators and EAG members	The Environment Agency presented its updated abstraction reduction scenarios and WRSE explained the work being done to develop this further to identify the environmental destination for the regional plan and its work to develop catchment portfolios.	EAG members were positive about the fact that EA was looking towards the Enhanced scenario, particularly for some sensitive catchments. The representative from Chalk Streams First highlighted some aspects of its action plan that he felt should be considered as part of the work. Blueprint for Water supported the development of catchment portfolios and the fact that it brought a range of issues and potential solutions together.
03/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives	Scoping Phase 2 customer research	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagemthq.com)

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
		from company CCGs		
08/03/21	Environmental Advisory Group	Members	Environmental destination BV planning – criteria and metrics Options – focus on catchment options Forward plan	
17/03/21	Multi-Sector group	Members	Overview of position for each sector	
05/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Co-design activities with customers	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
18/05/21	Stakeholder Advisory Board	Members	Workshop on the customer research and stakeholder engagement approach	
w/c 24/5, 7/6, 14/6	Options webinars	Wider stakeholders	A series of webinars focused on: The planning challenge ASR and reservoir schemes Desalination and reuse Catchment schemes Demand management Intraregional transfer Interregional transfers Adaptive planning	Up to 50 stakeholders attended each webinar and much positive feedback was received about the content and the presentation. All webinars are available online. Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies
05/21	Agriculture / horticulture working group	Sub-set of the multi sector group	First session to look in detail at what opportunities there are for shared options with agricultural and horticultural stakeholders	
23/6/21	Multi-sector group	Members	Update on the modelling work Discussion about next steps for agriculture/horticulture working group	
06/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives	Update on Phase 2	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
		from company CCGs		
2/07/21	Retailer webinar	Retailers	Focussed on the company drought plan consultations and introduced the regional plan	
07/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Further update on Phase 2	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
17/09/21	WRSE EAG	Members	Focus on the environmental destination for the SE	
22/09/21	Agriculture / horticulture working group	Subset of multi sector group	Workshop to explore options put forward by members	
29/09/21	Multi-sector group	Members	Update on modelling and RR Outputs of agriculture/horticulture workshop	
30/09/21	Regional reconciliation webinar	Wider stakeholders	Recap on role of regional planning Overview of reconciliation process Updates from regional groups	Being organised by WRSE and run in partnership with the National Framework and the other regional groups. Over 100 stakeholders registered to date.
11/21	Regional CCG	CCW and representatives from company CCGs	Plans for consultation	Customer Engagement Water Resources South East (engagementhq.com)
20/10/21	WRSE SAB	Members	Focus on the adequacy of the approach to ensure stakeholder and customer views are considered in the development of the plan.	
17/11/21	Stakeholder Group workshop	Members of the SAB, EAG and MSSG and rCCG	Focused on the adaptive planning approach and the scenarios that have been used in the adaptive pathways. Provided early sight of the key consultation areas and questions and gathered feedback on this. Provided an update on multi-sector element of the plan.	

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
17/11/21	Presented to Horticultural Trades Association	WRSE, HTA, other stakeholders	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
19/11/21	Briefing to CPRE	WRSE and CPRE	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
	Thames /Affinity Forum	TW and AW stakeholders	Update on WRSE plan and SROs	
07/12/21	Briefing to the NFU	WRSE and NFU	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
09/12/21	Briefing to CCW	WRSE and CCW	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
09/12/21	Briefing to South East Water's Environmental Advisory Group	SEW, WRSE, Group members	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
13/12/21	Briefing to Blueprint for Water	Blueprint members	Provided an overview of the emerging plan and how it is performing against the Blueprint's scorecard for regional planning	
15/12/21	Briefing to South East Rivers Trust	WRSE and SERT	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
07/01/22	Briefing with National Infrastructure Commission		Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
11/01/22	Presentation to SES Water Environmental Scrutiny Group	Group members	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
12/01/22	Presentation to Souter Water's Western Area stakeholder group	WRSE and group members	Briefing on the emerging regional plan	
17/01/22	Draft plan consultation	Wider stakeholders	Launch of draft plan consultation via email to stakeholders from WRSE and member companies	
17/01/22	Water Resources National	Wider stakeholders	National Framework lead webinar on the national water resource picture including a	Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
	Framework webinar		summary of each regional group's regional plan.	
20/01/22	WRSE consultation launch webinar	Wider stakeholders		Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies
31/01/22	WRSE consultation webinar (West)	Wider stakeholders		Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies
01/02/22	WRSE consultation webinar (East)	Wider stakeholders		Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies
02/02/22	WRSE consultation webinar (North)	Wider stakeholders		Invitation issued to all stakeholders on WRSE's stakeholder list and sent via the water companies
19/05/22	Briefing to Water Retailer Council	WRC members	Briefing on the plan with a focus on the role of retail	
26/04/22	Briefing to SE ADEPT	SE ADEPT members	Briefing on the plan with a focus on the relationship with local government	
07/06/22	Water Resources Forum – Thames and Affinity	TW and Affinity Water stakeholders	Protecting and improving the environment Managing demand New water sources Adaptive planning	
08/06/22	Meeting with Oxfordshire County Council	WRSE and OCC		
05/07/22	Briefing to Ofwat	WRSE and Ofwat		
06/07/22	Briefing for Defra	WRSE and Defra		
28/07/22	Briefing to Wildfish	WRSE and Wildfish	Briefing on plan and focus on environmental programme	
11/07/22	WRSE SAB meeting (including Environment and Multi Sector members)	Members of the SAB, EAG and MSSG and rCCG	Focus was on feedback from the emerging regional plan, development of the updated least cost plan, process of developing the best value plans, updated adaptive pathways.	Minutes can be found in WRSE document library
28/09/22	Briefing to ICE on draft regional plan	ICE Water Panel	Briefing on plan and focus on infrastructure	

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
30/09/22	Westminster environment, Energy and Transport Forum	Range of delegates	Briefing on regional planning	Transcripts available from the Forum
06/09/22	Discussion with RWE	WRSE and RWE	Discussion on power demands	
09/09/22	Discussion with NFU	WRSE and NFU	Discussion on agricultural demands	
09/09/22	Discussion with CaBA	WRSE and CaBA	Discussion on environmental destination profiles, prioritisation framework and implications for CaBA chalk streams first	
09/22	Water Resources Forum – Thames and Affinity	TW and AW stakeholders	Update on the water resource situation Update on regional planning and autumn consultations	
04/10/22	Briefing to Waterwise on draft regional plan	WRSE and Waterwise	Briefing on plan and focus on water demand management	
07/10/22	WRSE SAB meeting (including Environment and Multi Sector members)	Members of the SAB, EAG and MSSG and rCCG	Focus was on the draft best value plan, differences between alternative plans, the level of environmental ambition and the needs of other sectors.	Minutes can be found in WRSE document library
18/10/22	Kent MP forum	Hosted by Southern Water	A number of MPs with an interest in water resources and the plan	
20/10/22	Regional CCG meeting	rCCG members	Meeting discussed the draft plan consultation and the proposed approach to the next phase of customer engagement.	
24/10/22	Briefing to Defra	WRSE and Defra	Outline of the regional planning approach and the draft regional plan	
27/10/22	Briefing to SERT on draft regional plan	WRSE and SERT	Briefing on plan and focus on environmental programme	
02/11/22	Parliamentary roundtable	Parliamentarians	A pre-launch discussion to highlight the main features of the plan and cover issues of interest	

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
02/11/22	Regulator roundtable	Ofwat, EA, RAPID, CCW and NIC	A pre-launch discussion to highlight the main features of the plan and cover issues of interest	
03/11/22	Briefing to The Lords Environment and climate change committee	Environment and climate change committee members	A pre-launch discussion to highlight the main features of the plan and cover issues of interest	
03/11/22	Water Resources Planning: Stochastic weather data for drought assessment	Range of stakeholders	Stochastics webinar hosted by WRE on behalf of the National Framework for Water Resources Regional Co-ordination Group (RCG).	
07/11/22	Utility Week Forum	Range of delegates	Overview of regional planning and WRSE plan	
17/11/2022	National Launch webinar	Range of stakeholders	Launch event for the five regional water resources plans	
22/11/2022	WRSE launch webinar	Range of stakeholders	Launch event for WRSE's draft regional plan	
28/11/2022	Affinity Water's online water resources forum	Range of stakeholders	Supporting Affinity Water's WRMP engagement	
29/11/2022	Joint webinar for SES Water, South East Water and Southern Water	Range of stakeholders	Supporting companies' WRMP engagement	
7/12/2022	Joint webinar for Southern Water and Portsmouth Water	Range of stakeholders	Supporting companies' WRMP engagement	
31/1/2023	Thames Water's water resources forum	Range of stakeholders	Supporting Thames Water's WRMP engagement	

Date	Activity	Stakeholders	Agenda/Topic	Comments/Notes
2/2/2023	Interactive Q&A	Range of stakeholders	Allowing stakeholders to have rapid responses to questions ahead of consultation closing	
7/3/2023	Blueprint for Water water resources group meeting	Blueprint for Water	opportunity to discuss Blueprint for Water response to regional plan	
19/4/2023	Meeting with David Johnston MP	David Johnston MP	Addressing MP's concerns with our regional plan and engagement	
3/5/2023	Water Advisory Group Meeting	GLA	Discussion round water resource plans	
10/5/2023	EA Environment and Business Board meet	EA Environment and Business Board	Invited by EA to present on the water resource challenges in the SE and how WRSE is responding.	
24/5/2023	Ofwat board meeting	Ofwat board members, RCG Chair	Discussions on what's next for regional planning	
21/6/2023	Meeting with NIC	NIC	Role of regional planning and how WRSE can provide technical support to the NIC	
01/08/2023	Inter-regional workshop for regulators	Regulators	Opportunity for the 5 regional groups to present and discuss their respective revised draft regional plans and answer questions from regulators.	
08/08/2023	Pre-briefing for regional plan	Regulators	Provide regulators an update on the changes to our revised draft regional plan and timings	
20/9/2023	Webinar on our revised draft regional plan	Range of stakeholders	Opportunity for stakeholders to hear about changes made for revised draft regional plan and to ask questions.	Webinar included on website

