

## Welcome from Chris Murray MBE, Independent Chair of WRSE

*I would like to begin by thanking everyone who took part in our consultation on our emerging regional plan for South East England in the opening months of this year. The quantity and quality of the responses we received was phenomenal! I'm also very grateful to everyone involved in producing the consultation document and associated materials, as well as planning and delivering a wide range of communications and engagement activity over the course of two months.*



Chris Murray

It's striking that our plan attracted a higher level of feedback than any of the four other regional water groups. That's a further indication of the scale of the challenge we face in our area around providing resilient future water supplies. There was much support for the emerging plan, particularly in terms of how it sought to address the growth, climate change and environmental protection challenges. However, it is also true to say that some respondents would prefer other options than those included in our plan at this stage of its development.

An important step for us, following the consultation, has been to look at all the comments we received. We've compiled and published a summary of what we've heard, together with information on how we're responding to people's views. You

can read more about this later in this newsletter, but I want to stress how key it is that we maintain a 'You said, we did' approach, so that everyone is clear on how their feedback is being considered throughout.

The consultation on our emerging regional plan has been a major milestone in our journey towards delivering our final regional plan for South East England next year. It's been vital to gauge views from customers and stakeholders on our work to date, to help guide the next phase of plan development – namely, to produce our Draft Best Value Regional Plan.

We will consult on this from 14 November 2022, with the updated plan factoring in the variety of wider benefits - to the environment, customers and society as a whole - that could be delivered through it. The consultation will build on the positive feedback we've had about how we consulted on our emerging plan, while also addressing areas for improvement, such as further enhancing the accessibility of the consultation material.

Throughout the process of developing our regional plan, we mustn't lose sight of what we are seeking to achieve for people and for nature - particularly given the volume of work we need to complete within a very tight timetable.

That's why it's been really important to make an ambitious start through our

emerging plan, helping us to ultimately create the best possible regional plan we can over the next 18 months. We look forward to continuing to engage with you and gather your views and ideas to help shape our final plan.

With best regards,

**Chris Murray MBE,**  
Independent Chair,  
Water Resources South East.

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- [The Environment Agency's view on the five emerging regional plans \(Page 4\)](#)
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- [A round up of our engagement with stakeholders in our region. \(Page 5\)](#)

## Emerging regional plan consultation - our response and next steps

*Since our consultation on our emerging regional plan closed in March, we've been analysing the 1,000+ responses we received from stakeholders and customers from across the South East.*

*Once again, we would like to thank everyone who took the time to give us their views and suggestions.*

We've now published [a summary of the consultation responses](#) - highlighting the themes and issues raised, together with how we're responding to them.

We will use the detailed comments and information we received in our continuing work to develop our Draft Best Value Regional Plan, which will be published and consulted on later this year.

### Our consultation

In total, we received over 1,150 consultation responses from customers and residents, as well as from stakeholders from lots of different organisations.

These ranged from local authorities and parish councils, to environmental and community groups, and representatives from large water-using sectors, such as farming and power.

Our dedicated consultation website had over 8,500 visits between January and March, with our consultation documents being downloaded over 2,000 times.

Almost 600 people joined the consultation webinars we hosted, and we responded to over 200 questions gathered from those online sessions, via our consultation website and through the interactive live online Q&A we held towards the end of the consultation period.

### Key themes

More than half of the responses we received focused on specific water resources options being considered - such as new reservoirs, water transfers and water recycling schemes.

Many people expressed concern about these schemes and potential environmental impacts.

A lot of the comments we received from stakeholders supported our adaptive planning



approach, although this is an area we're working on further following the feedback we had in.

The significant leakage and demand reduction included in our emerging regional plan were positively received, along with increased environmental protection, through abstraction being brought down.

At the same time, a number of stakeholders were concerned about the level of reliance in the plan on reducing demand for water.

### Next steps

We're incorporating the feedback received during our consultation into the technical modelling and more detailed options assessments we're undertaking to develop our Draft Best Value Regional Plan.

This will be published for consultation on 14 November 2022, alongside the draft Water Resources Management Plans (dWRMPs) produced by five of our member water

companies. Of course, we'll keep everyone fully updated, to make sure customers and stakeholders have the further opportunity to have their say.

Prior to that, in July, Southern Water will be consulting on its dWRMP, which will be based on our emerging regional plan. It is likely that Southern Water will undertake a further consultation on its revised dWRMP in the early part of next year, once it has been updated to align with the WRSE Draft Best Value Regional Plan.

In the meantime, we'll continue engaging with our stakeholders, including our independent advisory groups, as well as our member water companies and colleagues in the four other regional groups.

This will ensure we produce a comprehensive and integrated regional plan, which will safeguard the South East's water supplies.

For the latest updates or for more information about our work, please visit [wrse.org.uk](http://wrse.org.uk).

## In numbers - our emerging regional plan consultation



We received over **1,150** replies



We responded to almost **200** questions throughout the consultation



Our films were watched **1,300** times



Over **40** local government organisations



**15** businesses or trade associations



Our documents were downloaded more than **2,200** times



**590** people joined our five webinars



Our consultation webpage was visited more than **8,500** times



**15** environmental organisations



**9** governing bodies / regulators

### How Stakeholders Responded

Online responses  
**719**



Written responses  
**435**



**14** community and campaign groups



**9** canal trusts

WRSE Emerging Regional Plan:  
Consultation Response Document



## Environment Agency view on emerging regional plans

*The Environment Agency (EA) recently published its [review of the emerging plans](#) put forward by the five regional water groups earlier this year.*

The document is based on the proposals presented for public consultation in January, but acknowledges that the groups have already acted on the feedback they've received, working with the Agency and other stakeholders to make changes to the plans.

In particular, the EA review noted that the regional groups are:

- Proposing demand management options and new water infrastructure solutions to tackle the forecast water supply deficit

- Planning changes that will leave more water in the environment, although the approach to this varies between regions

- Starting to work with other sectors and looking wider than public water supply.

The Agency added that its review shows the regional groups have challenges to overcome, and expectations to meet, before consultation on their draft regional plans in the autumn.

Furthermore, it said the emerging plans did not all show detailed proposals for potential solutions and the planned environmental enhancements were variable and did not meet the EA's expectations in some places.

The review went on to highlight the increasing gap between water supply and



demand, with challenges of climate change, population growth, drought resilience and environmental protection requiring more water to be available – up to 4 billion litres extra per day for public supplies in England and Wales by 2050. Almost half of that total would be needed in our region alone.

To read the Environment Agency's review of emerging regional plans, please click [here](#).

## Havant Thicket Reservoir – update on proposals for enhanced future uses

*Important milestones have been reached for proposals to enhance Havant Thicket Reservoir's future role as a sustainable source of water for the South East.*

Work to build the 8.7 billion litre capacity reservoir in southern Hampshire is already underway after the joint project between Portsmouth Water and Southern Water received planning permission in late 2021.

The scheme that was approved last year will see Havant Thicket Reservoir enable up to 21 million litres of water a day from 2029 to be supplied to Southern Water customers in western Hampshire, when required. Crucially, this will enable less water to be taken from the River Test and River Itchen, helping to protect these rare and sensitive chalk stream environments.

To create even greater resilience and further benefit the environment, Southern Water and Portsmouth Water have been looking at potential enhanced future uses of the reservoir. In particular, the options of topping it up with recycled water and building a new pipeline to transport water from Havant Thicket Reservoir to Southern Water's supply works near Winchester. These proposals are

known as the [Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project](#).

Water industry regulator [Ofwat recently gave the go ahead](#) for the proposals to progress to the next stage of plan development, following a detailed assessment by RAPID, [the Regulators Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development](#).

### Planning update

The Hampshire Water Transfer and Water Recycling Project has now been classified as a development of national significance. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has granted permission for the project to be taken through the Development Consent Order consenting regime, rather than the Town and Country Planning Act route.

Mark Wintringham, Southern Water's Head of Project Delivery said: "The Development Consent Order, or DCO, consenting regime provides the best opportunity to deliver this significant and regionally important water resource project, which will provide a resilient water supply for customers and protect Hampshire's rivers, as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"The DCO route is better suited to the geographic scale of the project and provides a streamlined, single authorisation process

for securing all the permissions, consents, licences and statutory powers needed to deliver this complex, but crucial water resource project in a timely manner. Under the Town and Country Planning Act route, the scale and complexity of the scheme would mean that multiple applications would need to be made to up to six different local planning authorities. Separate consideration by multiple local planning authorities would potentially lead to considerable delays in delivery of the project and the benefits it will bring."

Mark continued: "Under both planning regimes, we would carry out significant pre-application consultation and engagement to ensure stakeholders have opportunities to shape the project as it is developed, including the upcoming summer consultation on pipeline route options in July. It is important to note that there is considerably more consultation and engagement under a DCO compared to the Town and Country Planning Act.

"We will now look to carry out two further public consultations on our emerging plans, alongside extensive engagement with key stakeholders, before submitting an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2023."

# WRSE members at heart of new Leakage Routemap 2050

*The South East's water companies are playing a key role in the national drive to significantly reduce the amount of water lost through leaks.*

In the spring, water companies in England, headed by trade body Water UK, published their [Leakage Routemap to 2050](#) - a landmark report setting out plans to triple the rate of leakage reduction by the end of this decade and, ultimately, halve leakage by the middle of the century.

The development of the Routemap was sponsored by the Chief Executives of WRSE member companies Affinity Water and Portsmouth Water, in conjunction with Anglian Water's CEO - on behalf of the water industry.

The document details the actions for water companies to take, in order to meet both their 2030 leakage goal and the 2050 proposed reduction. These include the following:

- Improved quantification of background levels of leakage – that's leakage that can't be detected with current technology
- Improved quantification of leakage inside customers' properties
- Development of a sector-wide code of practice on how to ensure that water mains are laid without leaks
- Development of a strategy to tackle leaks on customers' water supply pipes.

Building on the PALM model (Prevent, Aware, Locate & Mend), the report recommends future adaptive pathways, to take account of a range of potentially variable factors.

It also considers different leakage reduction scenarios, including increased active leakage control, smarter networks and improvements due to upgrading assets, such as pipes and control systems.

The Routemap calls on regulators to support the replacement of leaky pipes. Unless replacement rates closer to European levels

are achieved, then the goals for 2050 will be much harder to realise.

Reducing leakage presents a significant technological challenge. With over 345,000 kilometres of water pipes, enough to go around the world eight and a half times, England's water companies are adopting some of the latest technology and innovation to reach every leak.

For example, Portsmouth Water have invested heavily in fixed acoustic noise logging - enabling them to 'listen' for leaks. This system now covers 50 per cent of their entire network, including 90 per cent of metallic pipes, helping to drive leakage down to a record low for the company.

Furthermore, SES Water have become the first UK water company to roll out intelligent technology across their entire water distribution network. Coupled with their innovative District Metered Area (DMA) asset health programme, this will help them cut leakage by 15 per cent by 2025. Firstly by preventing leaks happening, and then by being able to identify hidden leaks and bursts in near real-time, so action can be taken more quickly.

Jeremy Heath, Innovation Manager for SES Water, has been closely involved in the development of the Leakage Routemap 2050, in particular in leading the Zero Leakage research programme carried out by UK Water Industry Research (UKWIR). He said: "This report is vital in setting out the pathways that water companies, and their suppliers, need to adopt in order make the best use of available water resources and, in turn, meet the challenge of reducing the amount of water taken from the environment.

"The adaptive pathways and leakage scenarios will be used to drive not only decisions on investment, but also our research and innovation for years to come".

RPS Technical Director Dr Joe Sanders led the consultancy consortium that supported the development of the Routemap. He added: "This plan is a once in a lifetime opportunity to help shape the future of a sector that impacts us all on a daily basis. The team brought together the leading experts in the country on leakage economics, strategy and operations to deliver the Routemap. Thank you to all the team and our stakeholders who have contributed to the report."



*New technology is already helping to tackle leakage.*



## WRSE stakeholder engagement round up

*We've continued engaging with stakeholders after our emerging regional plan consultation closed in March, to build stronger relationships and lay the foundations for future discussions.*

Last month, WRSE Organisational Director Trevor Bishop met with the South East Board of ADEPT – the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.

Trevor commented: “It was a very positive meeting, where we discussed how WRSE’s proposals could support green skills, as well as our shared interest in a more sustainable future and the consumer benefits this will bring. We also talked about how we can help coordinate discussions to mitigate the impacts on communities of new infrastructure.

“In addition, we identified opportunities to collaborate on meeting the challenges of climate change and using nature-based solutions to deliver environmental improvements and wider societal benefits.”

Later in May, Trevor also held discussions with the UK Water Retailers Council – the trade body representing most of the non-household retailers in England.

Trevor explained: “Retailers and non-household customers are important stakeholders – both in understanding their water resources priorities and for developing and delivering demand reduction strategies.

“We talked about the importance of working with non-household customers to reduce their water use and how to identify ways we can work together. We also focused on the best ways to involve the sector in the transition to smart metering and what Government interventions we need to meet ambitious new water efficiency targets.”



Trevor Bishop

Trevor added: “Between now and our Draft Best Value Regional Plan being published for consultation on 14 November this year, we’ll continue talking with our stakeholders across the region, focusing on pinpointing new ways in which we can collaborate and futureproof our region’s water supplies.”

## Have your say on new UK Water Efficiency Strategy

*Waterwise, the independent, not-for-profit NGO focused on reducing water consumption in the UK, has published its draft Water Efficiency Strategy to 2030.*

The new document details how, as a nation, we could save up to 1.5 billion litres of water a day by the end of the decade - enough to fill 600 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

It includes 10 proposed strategic objectives to help deliver the vision of “A UK in which all people, homes and organisations are water-efficient”, as well as proposals for governance and how progress can be tracked.



Waterwise is welcoming comments on its draft strategy by Friday 8 July 2022, with the strategy document and an online feedback survey available via [www.waterwise.org.uk/strategy2030](http://www.waterwise.org.uk/strategy2030).

A consultation webinar is also being held

from 10-11am on Wednesday 29 June 2022. To register to attend please click [here](#).

Nicci Russell, Waterwise’s Managing Director, said: “Our updated strategy clearly sets out why increased water efficiency is needed to help ensure there’s enough water for people, the economy and the environment, both now and in the future.

“We’d really like to hear from as many people as possible during our consultation. In particular, given that delivering the new strategy will require a wide range of stakeholders to contribute, we’re keen to hear how everyone would like to be involved going forward.”

