

# Policies to shape the South East's multi-sector, regional resilience plan

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

[GET STARTED >](#)

AUGUST 2020



## Contact

<b>Section 1:</b> Introduction	3
<b>Section 2:</b> Our proposed policies at a glance	6
<b>Section 3:</b> Saving water	7
<b>Section 4:</b> The environment and resilience	10
<b>Section 5:</b> Pathway to net zero carbon	15
<b>Section 6:</b> Ethical buying, social equity and public value	16
<b>Section 7:</b> Your feedback	17

# Section 1

## Introduction

**W**ater Resources South East (WRSE) is an alliance of the six water companies which cover the South East of England and our aim is to secure the water supply for future generations through a collaborative, regional approach.

*We are currently developing a multi-sector, regional resilience plan to secure water supplies for the South East until 2100.*

*This plan is taking a long-term view and considering the water we need to use at home and at work, as well as that required by agriculture, to generate electricity, for industry, recreation, the environment and to support the well-being of society.*

Water resources are coming under increasing pressure, particularly in the South East, as we strive to reduce abstractions to protect and enhance our environment, increase our resilience to droughts and other challenges, meet the needs of a growing population and adapt to climate change.

### Our plan will seek to:

- Ensure there is enough water for a growing population and to support economic growth
- Improve the environment by leaving more water in the region's rivers, streams and underground sources
- Increase the region's resilience to severe drought and other extreme shocks and stresses
- Address the impacts of climate change on demand for water and how much is available.



**We plan to publish our draft regional plan for comment in early 2022 and this year we're seeking feedback on various aspects of our approach. So far, we have:**

#### September 2019:

Set out our vision and approach for our multi-sector, resilience plan.

#### March 2020:

Shared our initial resource position and future need for water.

#### June 2020:

Published our draft resilience framework, designed to make sure water supplies are reliable and adaptable for the future.

#### August 2020:

Set out our draft method statements for how we'll develop the plan.

## Contact

## Section 1 Introduction (Continued)

In this document we're setting out WRSE's initial policy positions in a number of key areas. All six of our member water companies have signed up to these initial policies, which will define some of the key assumptions we'll include in our regional plan.

As our plan is also designed to consider the water needs of other sectors, such as agriculture, paper making and power generation, we're also working with wider organisations through our multi-sector subgroup to understand relevant policies for their sectors to meet our shared ambitions.

Our multi-sector subgroup includes representatives from agriculture, energy, paper producers, golf courses, the canal and rivers trust and mineral products associations. In particular we'll be exploring their future demands, need for resilience and opportunities for developing shared options which could be included in our plan.

We'd like to hear what you think of our proposed policy positions so please share your feedback by September 4, 2020 – see page 17 to find out how.

***For more information on WRSE and its members, the development and purpose of the regional plan and how it fits into the national picture, please visit [wrse.org.uk](http://wrse.org.uk).***

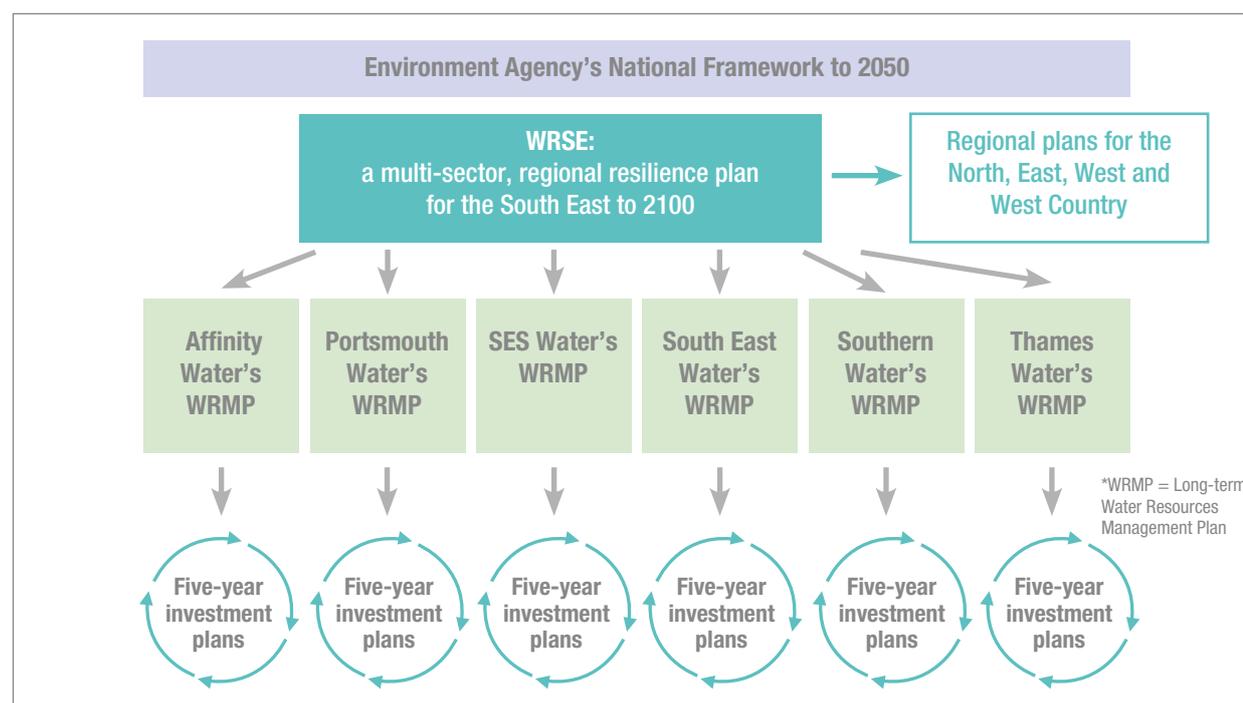
### How policies will inform our planning

The initial policy positions we outline in this document will inform our long-term multi-sector, regional resilience plan for the South East. This is the first time we've put forward regional policies, as opposed to each individual water company setting their own, and the first time we're taking account of the policies of other water-using sectors.

We're developing policies in the areas where we believe there is discretion for us, customers and stakeholders to make choices about our priorities and services. They will be incorporated into the development of a best-value plan which is tailored to our region. If national policies are mandated by the government as we progress our plan then we'll automatically adopt those.

Our initial policy positions represent the choices we have made based on the evidence of our own and others' technical work, government policy, earlier feedback from customers and stakeholders and guidance from water industry regulators.

These choices will shape the regional plan and the subsequent options which will be taken forward in individual company's Water Resources Management Plans and five-yearly investment plans. So, it's vital we have good evidence and agreement from customers, stakeholders, regulators and government. This open and transparent process should provide confidence our approach is based on evidence, which will be a key consideration for regulators making decisions on funding.



Contact

## Contact



At this stage, we're not able to detail the costs which arise from these policy positions, but they'll become clearer as we develop different scenarios for the plan. We, our customers and stakeholders will be able to make choices based on these costed scenarios when our draft plan is published for consultation in early 2022.

Much of our thinking is aligned to approaches published in the Environment Agency's National Framework for water resources<sup>1</sup> and the National Infrastructure Commission's reports on preparing for a drier future<sup>2</sup> and resilience<sup>3</sup>.

We're also part of a national group, along with other regional groups, which is in the early stages of looking at the same policies. This is chaired by the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development ([RAPID](#)) – a group made up of the three water industry regulators the Environment Agency, Ofwat and the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI).

The quality of the drinking water we source for the future is paramount and as part of our planning we'll be following the DWI's recently published guidance on [Long-term planning](#)

[for the quality of drinking water supplies – Water Resources and Sufficiency of Supplies](#).

As we refine our policies further, we'll also continue our conversations with:

- Customers and their representative groups (e.g. Customer Challenge Groups, the Consumer Council for Water)
- Other sectors involved in our plan – environmental groups, businesses, other abstractors
- The other regional water resource groups in England and Wales.

This is the first publication of our initial policies and we'll continue to consider them, taking into account your feedback, ahead of making decisions in October to inform the first phase of modelling for our plan.

<sup>1</sup>Environment Agency: Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources 2020

<sup>2</sup>National Infrastructure Commission: Preparing for a drier future. England's water infrastructure needs 2018

<sup>3</sup>National Infrastructure Commission: Anticipate, React, Recover, Resilient Infrastructure Systems 2020

## Section 2

# Our proposed policies at a glance



### Policy based on best value

We often refer to best value as we develop our plan. Best value is the most advantageous combination of cost, quality and sustainability to meet our needs and those of future generations – i.e. secure high-quality, resilient water supplies. Best value considers cost alongside social and environmental benefits and customer and stakeholder preferences. It can also consider associated benefits as well as direct benefits. Many of our policy decisions are based on this approach. The water industry research body UKWIR is due to publish a framework for best value in water resource planning in August 2020, which will help guide our plan and water company WRMPs.

### LEAKAGE

WRSE plans to reduce leakage by 50 per cent by 2050; after 2050 reductions will be based on best value.



### PERSONAL WATER USE (Per Capita Consumption)

We'll define a path to reduce Per Capita Consumption (PCC) based on evidence, best value, local circumstances and engagement with customers and stakeholders. Individual company ambitions will be combined into a regional PCC target and we're looking to take a broader approach which also includes non-household water use and focuses on environmental sustainability.



### CARBON

WRSE will follow national best practice to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 for operational carbon. We'll develop an approach for embodied carbon and operational carbon beyond 2030, again following national best practice and industry guidance as it develops.

### ENVIRONMENTAL AMBITION

Environmental ambition has never been as important as it is now. We're pursuing our strategic and technical work, as well as our engagement with customers and stakeholders, to understand how we can play our part to identify and deliver a progressive level of environmental protection, enhancement and adaptation for our region. We'll continue to work with regulators and government to discuss how to make this a practical reality, including the best way to secure funding.



### LEVELS OF SERVICE

The WRSE water company members plan to work towards a common service level for all customers in the South East for Temporary Use Bans and also potentially Non Essential Use Bans.



### PRIVATE WATER SUPPLIES IN DROUGHTS

We plan to work with other sectors to make provision to support private water supplies where public health or the welfare of animals could be at risk in a severe drought.

### DROUGHT PERMITS AND ORDERS

WRSE plans to align with the approach set out in the Environment Agency's National Framework on the use of drought permits and drought orders and the role they may play to improve levels of service and drought resilience to one in 500 years in the next plan. That is, we will only plan to use them if they don't unnecessarily harm the environment.



### RESILIENCE

We plan to increase resilience to drought so the need for rota cuts and standpipes reduces to no more than once every 500 years on average. We'll use our resilience framework to define other resilience standards supported by customers and stakeholders.



### ETHICAL BUYING, SOCIAL EQUITY AND PUBLIC VALUE

We believe water transfers or shared infrastructure with other regions should meet the same principles and standards which form the basis of our plan. We plan to include social and public value in our approach and we'll work with regulators on how this should be done.

Contact

## Section 3

# Saving water

*Saving water and using water more efficiently is a matter of huge importance to deliver environmental improvements and resilience. As water availability becomes increasingly stretched by pressures from climate change, population growth and rising demand, the more customers and businesses can do to reduce their water demands the more sustainable our future will be.*



While nationally leakage has fallen by 40 per cent since 1997, a fifth of all drinking water is still lost through leaks in water pipes and there is expectation of a step change in the future, pushing beyond the average 16 per cent industry-wide reduction already pledged in business plans by 2025.

Personal water use ranges from an average of 127 to 155 litres per person per day in the South East and the majority of customers in the region have already been switched or are due to be switched to metered charges over the next five years – a key water company activity to reduce demand.

While water-saving interventions may not always be the lowest cost solutions to secure reliable supplies, they are high on the agenda in terms of long-term sustainability. Our ambitions to reduce water use and leaks will, however, require support and interventions by regulators and government if these policies are to represent best value in our plan.

While water companies are focused on targets to reduce leakage and personal water use, we also plan to explore relevant water-saving policies for other sectors in the South East so we can jointly plan with everyone who relies on the same water resources.

### Leakage



#### Our proposed policy

WRSE and its water company members are committed to reducing leakage by 50 per cent by 2050. From 2050 to 2100, the level of leakage reduction in our plan will be based on the assessments of all options to determine which offer the best value.

#### What this is based on

In our last strategy [From Source To Tap](#), published in 2018 we presented three scenarios and in all of them we put forward a collective target of 15 per cent reduction in leakage by 2025.

Our long-term target to reduce leakage by 50 per cent by 2050 takes us on the next step. While an aspiration to reduce leakage by half is not mandatory, it has strong support from the Environment Agency's recommendation in its National Framework, which states that water companies should plan to achieve this by 2050. The National Infrastructure Commission promoted the same target in 2018.

## Contact

## Section 3 Saving water (Continued)

This target also builds on a public interest commitment made by all water companies through [Water UK](#), the body which represents the sector, to triple the rate of leakage reduction by 2030.

Taking progressive steps to reduce leakage has consistently received strong support from customers and stakeholders during the companies' consultations and insight work.

### What more do we need to know?

The six member water companies of WRSE currently have different levels of leakage and their leakage rates have changed at varying rates over the past few years. We need to explore what would be involved in delivering this 50 per cent reduction across all the companies – the cost, how it could be delivered, any additional benefits and the risks of not being able to meet the target. The costs will become clearer as we develop our draft plan next year and we'll share these for consultation in 2022.

### Who do we need to engage with?

When we have a better understanding of what would be involved, we plan to share this with customers, interested groups and industry regulators to see if they support our future ambitions.

For the 50 years to 2100, we need to discuss our proposals with customers and stakeholders again, working with regulators to understand what would represent the best value to everyone. We will explore whether there is a will to reduce leakage further, even if other options such as new resource schemes or water efficiency offer better value.

As funding for this target will need to be agreed through successive five-year water company business plans and Water Resource Management Plan cycles, particularly if significant long-term investment is needed to replace water mains, this policy will require on-going engagement and review.

## Per Capita Consumption



### Our proposed policy

We'll define a path to reduce Per Capita Consumption (PCC) (water use per person) based on evidence, best value, local circumstances and engagement with customers and stakeholders.

Individual company ambitions will be combined into a regional PCC target and we're looking to take a broader approach which also includes non-household consumption and focuses on environmental sustainability.

As this policy is reliant on gathering evidence from our modelling and consultation work, we'll need to wait until the draft plan is published for consultation in 2022 to be able to set out the cost and likely bill impacts of investment to reduce water use and show its overall impact on PCC.

### What this is based on

In our last strategy [From Source to Tap](#), published in 2018 we presented three scenarios. We put forward a collective target of 110 litres per person per day by 2050 in our most ambitious scenario and a target of 135 litres per person per day by 2080 in our other two.

There is currently no mandatory national target for PCC and our member companies have their own variable targets, based on their customers use and preferences and whether they have introduced measures such as metering or smart metering.

The Environment Agency's National Framework proposes a national average PCC of 110 litres per person per day by 2050, based on high-level assessments. This national average is not broken down to reflect regional or company factors and is reliant upon government policy interventions.

WRSE members, along with other water companies in the UK, are calling on government to use the Environment Bill to set a formal national target for reducing water use and if they do so we would expect to adopt this in our plan.

As things stand, we plan to collate the individual targets set by the six companies, based on their unique situations, and model options to create a best-value ambition for the whole region, which is supported by customers and regulators.

This best-value assessment will not include reductions which depend upon government policy interventions. However, we will show the effect of these potential interventions in different scenarios for our plan so everyone can consider the impact of adopting them.

## Contact

## Contact

### What more do we need to know?

We want to gain further evidence on the costs and benefits of interventions to reduce personal water use.

While companies have been able to deliver important reductions already in personal water use through investment such as metering and helping to change customer behaviour, the next big reductions will be reliant on government policy.

Areas like water labelling for goods like washing machines and changes to building regulations represent some of the most cost effective options and would play a pivotal role in reducing per capita consumption, so we need to know if the commitment to these made in the Environment Agency's National Framework are likely to be supported through government policy. Our member water companies are asking government to include these in the Environment Bill later this year.

We're hopeful the government will allow compulsory metering across all our member water companies in the South East where it represents best value, not just those in seriously water-stressed areas.

So, we intend to assume all water companies in our region will be able to do this, which would allow Portsmouth Water (which is currently excluded) to align with our five other water company members who have already been able to promote universal metering due to their serious water stress status. This will be modelled as a scenario in our draft plan for consultation in 2022.

We could also investigate customers' views on introducing alternative types of tariff to incentivise reductions in water use.

Finally, the Covid-19 lockdown has resulted in an overall increase in water use as more people stay at home and use water differently. We'll need to assess if this recent shift will have any longer-term impacts if some people continue to work at home more and how it may affect our future ambition.

### Who do we need to engage with?

We need to engage with customers, interested parties and regulators to understand their support for existing and future targets and how they prioritise these against other options. In particular we need to engage with government to determine if mandatory policies are expected in time to inform our plan.

We also need to engage with water retailers and industry to explore their role in the more efficient use of water.



### Using water into supply as an overall measure

WRSE members are keen to work with a national initiative to improve the way we measure our progress on reducing water use and in the future move to measurements which better support our ambition to reduce the impact of water supply on our natural environment.

This could involve introducing an overall measure of how much water is put into supply and its environmental footprint. If we focus on ensuring the overall amount of water supplied is sustainable (for households and non-households) this will better support our ambitions to protect the environment and manage an uncertain and challenging future.

## Section 4

# The environment and resilience

*We face an environment and climate crisis in the South East and WRSE shares the ambition of its customers, interested groups, regulators and government to protect and improve the environment in our region.*

*Part of this is to reduce abstraction of water from rivers and groundwater where this causes unacceptable harm to vulnerable environments, particularly during droughts, with a particular focus on internationally significant and rare chalk streams.*

We also want to work with regulators and other stakeholders to integrate options such as land use and broader catchment management activities, to create resilient catchments where we reduce risks to water quality and quantity from other causes, such as run off from land and highways and the use of pesticides and fertilisers.

While many actions have already been identified, the National Framework suggests significantly more changes are needed in the future and we believe it's in the best interests of customers and the environment to start planning for these now.

We want to make a step change on protecting both customer supplies and the environment to future shocks and stresses, as outlined in our five policy positions below on the environment, resilience, levels of service, drought orders and permits and supporting private water supplies during drought.

### Environmental ambition



#### Our proposed policy

Environmental ambition has never been as important as it is now.

We're pursuing our strategic and technical work, as well as our engagement with customers and stakeholders, to understand how we can play our part to identify and deliver a progressive level of environmental protection, enhancement and adaptation for our region.

We'll continue to work with regulators and government to discuss how to make this a practical reality, including the best way to secure funding.

#### What this is based on

Our approach will be based on the requirements set out by the Environment Agency in [WINEP](#) (Water Industry National Environment Programme) – these are mandatory actions designed to improve the health of the water environment.

The Water Framework Directive sets the legislative context for our environmental ambition and will form the basis on which we'll define our investment in environmental sustainability.

We'll work with government and regulators to make sure they support the ambitions of our customers and stakeholders to create a sustainable environment so we're confident funding can be secured through water company business plans and potentially other sectors.

## Contact

### What more do we need to know?

- We'll work with the Environment Agency to make sure we have timely information on WINEP.
- More detailed investigation is needed to understand the complex relationship between abstraction and the environment so it's clearer where action needs to be taken.
- The scale of future reductions in abstraction under the Water Framework Directive ranges from 450 million litres of water each day to 1,200 million litres each day, so we need more confidence that options geared towards the higher end of this scale are likely to be supported if brought forward earlier on in our plan.
- We'll work with government and regulators to understand if changes to designations, such as for chalk streams and salmon and trout rivers, are expected which may help funding and support improvements.
- In order to ascertain the extent of customer, stakeholder and regulator support for a more ambitious policy, we need to understand more about the potential impact on customer bills as our plan is developed and what funding may be available from other sectors.
- We're currently running a series of catchment workshops with interested parties which will help inform how these options can offer best-value solutions for the environment.
- We'll work with regulators to help inform how the funding process for 2025-2030 business plans can provide confidence that ambitious environmental outcomes can be delivered.

### Who do we need to engage with?

The determination of our environmental ambition requires on-going engagement with customers, other water users, landowners, local environmental and recreation groups and regulators on a range of scenarios, including those taking us beyond the mandatory requirements, to consider the choices, impact of those choices and the associated costs.

We'll engage with regulators to gain clear direction on what is required, how this may change, and how support for funding could be gained for options and interventions.

We have created an environment advisory subgroup to support us in the development of our plan – made up of a wide range of representatives including the Environment Agency, Natural England and Wildlife and Countryside Link, an environment and wildlife coalition representing 57 organisations in England – and we'll develop our plans with their insight.

## Resilience



### Our proposed policy

We intend to increase resilience of the region's water resources to drought so the need for emergency drought restrictions, such as rota cuts or standpipes, reduces to no more than once every 500 years on average.

Other aspects of resilience supported by customers and stakeholders will be explored through our [resilience framework](#), which we published in June for feedback. This aligns with the National Infrastructure Commission's recently published resilience document – [Anticipate, React, Recover](#).

Importantly, we'll work with other sectors to develop a wider understanding of the vulnerability of water in the region and how a joined-up approach to resilience planning can offer better value for everyone.

### What this is based on

This position takes companies beyond their current levels of drought resilience (most are already at or working towards once in every 200 years on average).

While this new drought resilience standard is not currently mandatory, it is publicly supported by regulators. The ambition is included in the National Infrastructure Commission's Preparing for a drier future report, as well as the Environment Agency's National Framework, which says regional plans 'should' plan on this basis.

The Environment Agency has also included a requirement for English water companies to be resilient to any drought of a return period of once in 500 years in its updated draft water resources planning guideline, which is out for consultation until October.

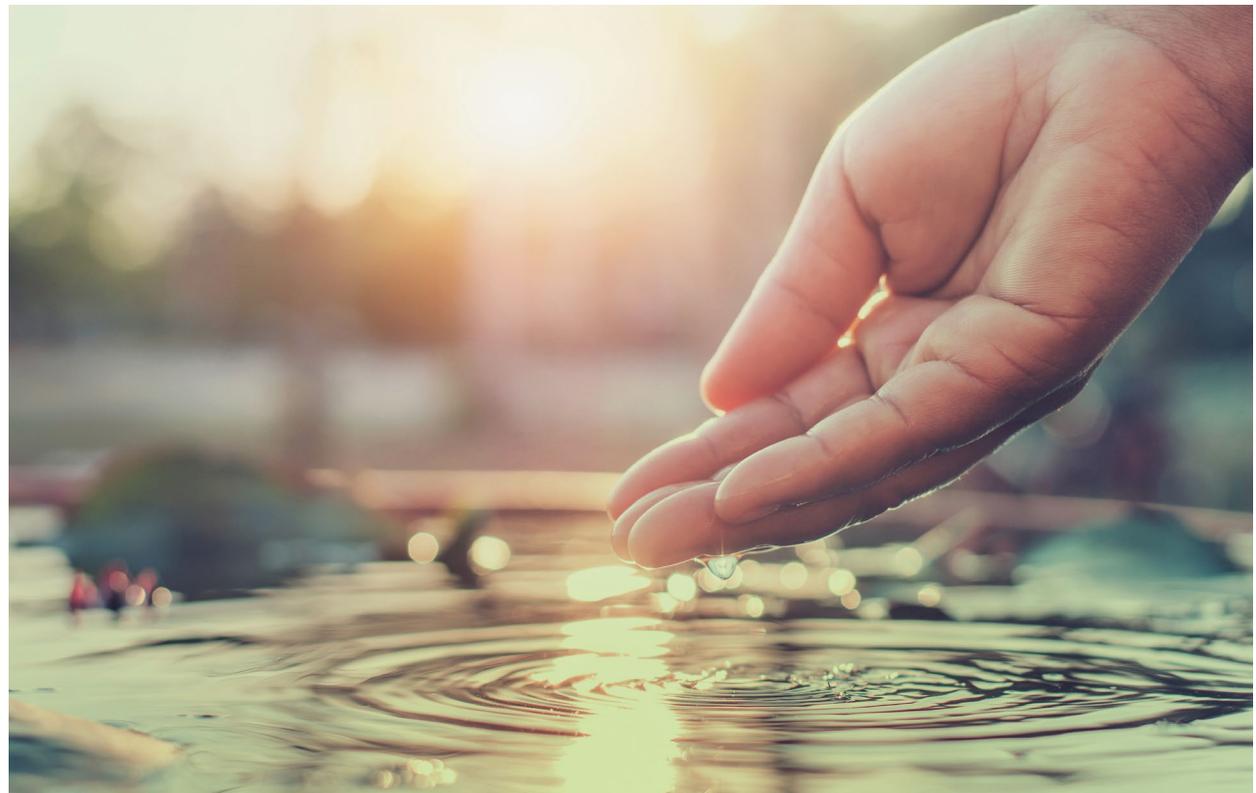
## Section 4 The environment and resilience (Continued)

### What more do we need to know?

- We need to fully understand the commitment of the Environment Agency, Defra and Ofwat to move to this higher level of drought resilience, given a likely increase in customer bills.
- We need to explore if customers and interested parties support this move or not, how much their voice should influence our policy and if that would be accepted by regulators.
- It may be better value to plan for different levels of resilience across the South East depending on the potential consequences of failure.
- To inform our assessment of wider resilience through our resilience framework, we'll work with regulators and government to understand if they would like to set other resilience standards – as suggested by the National Infrastructure Commission in its recently published [document on resilience](#).
- We'll also work with our multi-sector partners to explore resilience of non-public water supplies through our resilience framework to shape our multi-sector policies.

### Who do we need to engage with?

To clarify the standards of resilience appropriate for the South East, we'll be engaging further with our regulators, government and our customers and other interested parties, such as other water users and environmental groups.



Contact

## Contact

### Levels of service



#### Our proposed policy

The WRSE water company members plan to work towards a common service level for all customers in the South East for Temporary Use Bans and also potentially Non Essential Use Bans.

#### What this is based on

Water companies include the use of Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) (formerly hosepipe bans) and Non Essential Use (NEU) bans (the next step of restrictions which also extend to businesses) as part of their long-term water resource planning.

This balances the need to invest significant amounts in water sources which otherwise would not be needed very often but would drive up customers' bills. Currently these planned frequencies range across the six companies from once in every 10 years on average to less than once in every 20 years for TUBs; and once in every 20 years on average to less than once in every 80 years for NEU bans.

However, as we move towards a single, long-term plan for the South East we want to move to the same levels of service to provide consistency and clear messages for customers. In practice, the six member water companies already work closely to align on the introduction of TUBs when they are needed, but they are less aligned on NEU bans.

The move to a one in 500-year likelihood of emergency drought restrictions will help start this journey, although we anticipate it may take about 20 years to become fully aligned.

#### What more do we need to know?

At the moment, the companies' levels of service are based on the types and resilience of their water sources and support from their customers for more frequent or less frequent restrictions.

To move towards a common goal, we need to explore how the existing systems can support this and if customers and interested parties are willing to support further investment.

We need to carry out more technical work to see what it would take for all six companies to move to the same service levels, what these levels could be and how long this process could take. We'll be able to share this insight when we publish our draft plan for consultation in early 2022.

### Who do we need to engage with?

We need to work with our six member companies to understand what would be needed to align on these service levels, the timescales and potential costs. We then need to explore the options with customers, interested parties and our regulators.

### Drought permits and orders



#### Our proposed policy

WRSE plans to align with the approach set out in the Environment Agency's National Framework on the use of drought permits and drought orders and the role they may play to improve levels of service and drought resilience to one in 500 years. That is, we will only plan to use them if they don't unnecessarily harm the environment.

#### What this is based on

Our water company members have a range of drought permits and orders they can call upon to secure supplies for customers during droughts by taking actions such as temporarily increasing abstractions, lowering minimum flow limits or bringing new abstractions online.

The Environment Agency made clear in its National Framework these could be used to deliver increased resilience, but not at the cost of the environment.

However, given the very sensitive nature of the environment in the South East, particularly vulnerable chalk streams and customers' and stakeholders' concern for the environment, we don't plan to include permits and orders to deliver permanent improvements in resilience unless the Environment Agency is satisfied they pass suitable sustainability tests.

## Section 4 The environment and resilience (Continued)

If a drought permit or order could be used without risking unnecessary harm to the environment and was signed off by the Environment Agency and Natural England, then we could potentially include it as an option. However, we'd expect this to be the exception rather than the rule.

We might find new, more sustainable, strategic options take decades to deliver so we may also find drought orders and permits are required, as tactical options, as an interim measure.

Keeping some permits and orders in reserve would allow us to further avoid the use of extreme restrictions like rota cuts and standpipes, something customers have repeatedly said they would find unacceptable.

### What more do we need to know?

Our water company members, together with our regulators, plan to review all the current drought permits and orders to better understand their impact and classify their risk to the environment.

Our regional plan also considers the needs of other water users so we need to understand the impact of drought permits and orders on the sources they rely on, so they can understand any risk to their supplies and put forward funding for options to mitigate them.

### Who do we need to engage with?

We need to explore our ideas and assessments on drought permits and orders with our regulators and customers and stakeholders to see if they agree with our classifications of risk and if they are acceptable. We also need to engage with other sectors on their risks and options for mitigation.

## Private water supplies during drought



### Our proposed policy

WRSE plans to make provision in its plan to support some private water supplies where public health or the welfare of animals could be put at risk in a severe drought.

### What this is based on

During a severe drought, private water supplies which support agriculture, animal farming and private homes can become unreliable or unavailable. Water companies may, and often do, step in to share supplies under public health and animal welfare legislation.

WRSE plans to make provision for these resources in its regional plan so they do not place additional pressure on resources and the environment at a time when they are already severely stretched. Agriculture currently makes up about a third of non-public water supplies in the South East.

### What more do we need to know?

We'll undertake a vulnerability assessment of licensed private supplies to identify, broadly, which abstractions may fail during the most extreme droughts. We can then work out how much additional water we should plan to supply at these times, in which circumstances and to which sectors.

### Who do we need to engage with?

WRSE will engage with regulators and the government to gain guidance around the development of our policy in this area, as well as working with the private supply sector to better understand its needs.

## Contact

## Section 5

# Pathway to net zero carbon

*The UK became the first major world economy to set a target for achieving net zero on greenhouse gas emissions into law – committing to net zero emissions by 2050. As one of the more energy-intensive sectors in the UK and a major contributor to emissions, the water industry has set itself a stretching target to achieve this by 2030. WRSE has a key role to play to be part of the solution.*

### Our proposed policy



WRSE will follow national best practice to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 for operational carbon, ahead of the government's aspirations for 2050.

We'll develop an approach for embodied carbon and operational carbon beyond 2030, again following national best practice and industry guidance as it develops. Further thinking is needed on this approach given the large amount of new infrastructure likely to be promoted between now and 2100.

### What this is based on

Our policy is aligned with the water industry's commitment to work together to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030, one of five challenging goals outlined in the Water UK Public Interest Commitments and supported by all WRSE water companies.

Our plan will be based on achieving net zero carbon emissions as a shared target across all the WRSE members. We'll follow best practice guidance being developed by the sector research body, UKWIR, as it focuses on how the sector can remove more carbon than it emits by 2050.

### What more do we need to know?

More policy work is being explored by Water UK to also consider how embodied carbon may be calculated and reflected in how decisions are made. We need to decide if we'll also be taking embodied carbon into account in this plan.

We also need to consider what our policy should be on operational carbon after 2030, whether that should be maintaining net zero or going further.

### Who do we need to engage with?

We need to explore our position beyond 2030, and on embodied carbon, with the national water company group focused on this area at Water UK. We also plan to explore customer and stakeholder views on our aspirations through our on-going research and workshops.

## Contact

## Section 6

# Ethical buying, social equity and public value

*WRSE is one of five regional plans being developed in England and Wales to secure resilient water resources for the future. As expectation grows for increased collaboration to create a strategic network across water company boundaries, it's important to consider how these will be evaluated in our multi-sector, regional resilience plan.*

### Our proposed policy



We believe water transfers or shared infrastructure with other regions should meet the same principles and standards which form the basis of our plan. We plan to include social and public value in our approach and we'll work with regulators on how this should be done.

### What this is based on

By ethical buying we mean applying the same standards to others as we do to ourselves. In order to meet the policies outlined in this document, we need to apply the same standards to options and interventions which are reliant on other regional plans.

In particular, this includes our positions on resilience and environmental ambition. For example, we wouldn't want to degrade the environment in another region just to provide water to the South East.

### What more do we need to know?

As shared resource options and other regional plans are developed, we'll engage with the regional groups and their member water companies to understand their policy positions so we can make sure we align.

### Who do we need to talk to?

Our conversations with the wider regions and regulators will continue, in particular with RAPID, as we and they further develop policies around shared infrastructure and transfers.

Contact

# Section 7

## Your feedback

We'd like to hear your feedback on our proposals until **4 September, 2020**.

You can find out more and share your feedback online on our engagement website at [wrse.uk/engagementhq.com/regional-policies](https://wrse.uk/engagementhq.com/regional-policies). Or you can email your responses to [contact@wrse.org.uk](mailto:contact@wrse.org.uk)

We're also holding a webinar to share and discuss our policies on **Monday 10 August**. Please visit our [engagement site](#) to register on Zoom for this event. We'd particularly like you to consider the questions we've included in this document, so please tell us what you think via the channels outlined above.



Contact