

Future water resource requirements for South East England – our response to feedback from stakeholders

May 2020

Water Resources South East

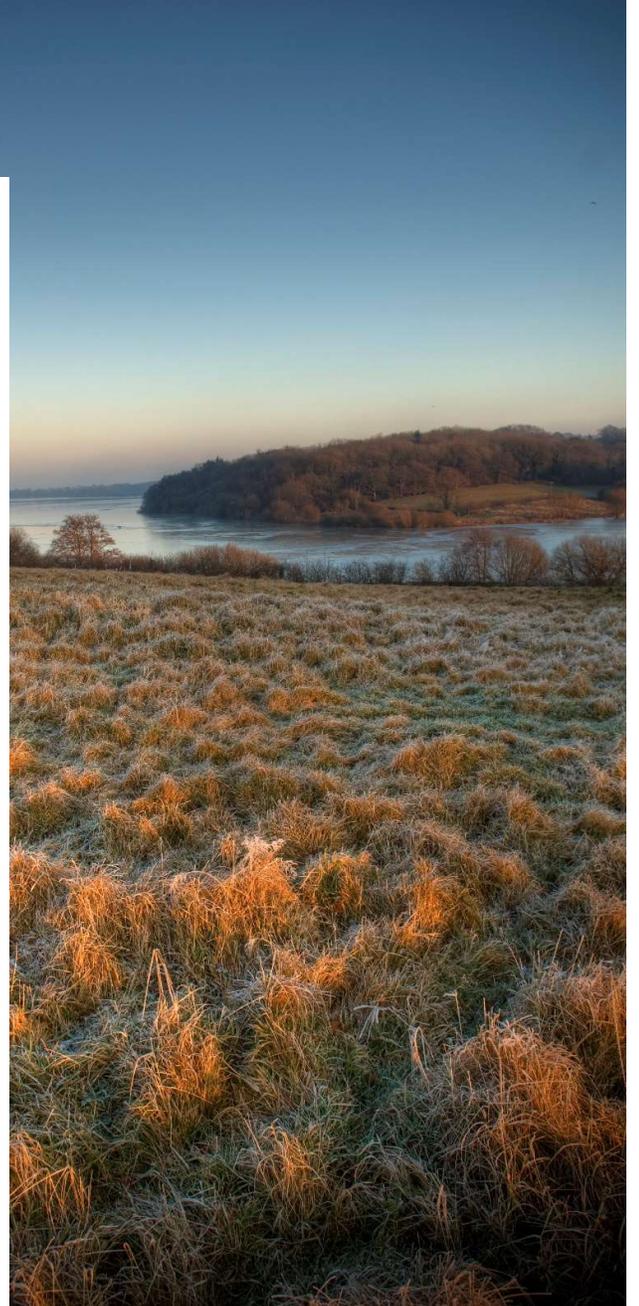




Table of contents

Section 1: Introduction 3

Section 2: Future water resource requirements in the South East 5

Section 3: Summary of feedback and our response 7

Section 4: Next steps..... 23

Section 1: Introduction

Water Resources South East (WRSE) is developing a multi-sector, resilience plan for the South East of England to ensure water supplies are sustainable and resilient in the future. We are taking a long term view, looking ahead to 2100, and are considering the water needs for public water supply, the environment and that required by all other major users in the region – this is primarily agriculture, electricity generation, industry (paper mills) and golf courses.

The first step is to indicate whether the South East region is likely to have a deficit in the future and, if so, invite third parties to submit potential options to considered as we develop our plan.

In March 2020 we published “*Future Water Resource Requirements for South East England*”. This set out the initial picture of the region’s future water resource requirements, drawing on existing published data and the National Framework¹ published by the Environment Agency.

The purpose of the document was two-fold. Firstly, we wanted feedback from stakeholders on the planning challenge, the types of solutions we can promote in the plan and how we work together in developing the plan; and secondly, it would enable interested parties to review the water requirement projections and propose options for managing current resources effectively, providing new supplies of water and catchment management solutions.

We asked for feedback on our future water resource requirements. We asked six questions covering aspects of the forecasts and our approach to future planning, as well as giving the opportunity for wider comments.

Thank you to everyone who read the document and provided feedback. Of the 16 responses received, 11 were from organisations and four individuals, and one further individual raised queries with respect to the data presented to inform a response

¹ The National Framework presents a picture of England’s future water needs by 2050 taking account of all water using sectors. It was published by the Environment Agency in March 2020.

submitted by a stakeholder organisation. The organisations who responded are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder organisations who provided feedback.

| |
|---|
| Action for the River Kennet (ARK) |
| Agua DB |
| Angling Trust |
| Blueprint for Water |
| Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) |
| Chalk Streams First (CSF) |
| Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) |
| Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) |
| Salmon and Trout Conservation |
| Regional Rivers Trusts (collective of six river trusts) |
| Thames 21 |

We have presented the feedback on a question by question basis, summarising the main issues followed by our consideration and response to the points raised. Two of the responses would like to discuss a potential option for the region.

The remainder of this document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 summarises the future water requirements in the South East
- Section 3 presents a summary of the feedback and our response to points raised
- Section 4 summarises the next steps.

Section 2: Future water resource requirements in the South East

The South East faces some of the most significant challenges to water resources in the future, namely:

- Planning for growth – the population is set to grow, with major growth corridors planned in some areas
- Preparing for climate change – the impact of climate change will be felt most acutely in the region, reducing the amount of water that is available for abstraction
- Improving the environment – the region is home to some of the nation’s most sensitive habitats including renowned chalk streams. We need to manage catchments differently and reduce some abstraction to protect vulnerable catchments and deliver long-term environmental improvement.

As a starting point to determine the future water resource requirements for the region we took the forecasts for public water supply from the South East water companies’ Water Resource Management Plans 2019 (WRMP19s)² and forecasts produced by the Environment Agency for non-public water supply projections. The headline messages from this analysis were:

- Our population is forecast to grow by approximately 9 million people by 2100, to a total of 29 million. Combined with climate change this is estimated to reduce the amount of water available by over 1,400 MI/d
- The amount of water abstracted to help to protect and improve the environment is likely to be between 274 MI/d, which reflects commitments made in WRMP19s, rising to 998 MI/d
- The amount of water available from sources during a 1 in 500-year drought is estimated to reduce by over 200 MI/d
- The amount of water needed by other sectors, including agriculture, power and industry is forecast to increase from 157 MI/d in 2025 to 211 MI/d in 2100. It should be noted that most of these sectors do not produce long-term forecasts akin to those for public water supply, they operate to a shorter planning horizon responding to the needs of their markets

² Water companies’ 2019 Water Resource Management Plans

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- Taking all these factors into account, we forecast a shortfall of around 1 billion litres of water per day by 2050, rising to over 1.7 billion litres by 2100, noting that the deficits vary across the South East and at different times of the year
 - The Environment Agency reported a significantly higher shortfall for the South East of 1,765 MI/d by 2050 based on their assumptions around per capita consumption, drought interventions, and environmental ambition.

The forecasts published by WRSE are initial figures and for a single scenario only. We will undertake further work to refine these forecasts, working closely with the Environment Agency and other sectors.

We will publish an updated forecast in Spring 2021, ahead of the development of our regional resilience plan which will show a range of potential futures that we could face.

Section 3: Summary of feedback and our response

Q1: Are there any further key challenges and opportunities we face in the region with regard to water resource availability that you believe we should consider?

Concerns were raised around the differences in the projections presented in the National Framework and the WRSE assessment, with the main focus on the scale of reduced abstraction needed to protect the environment. Stakeholders requested further analysis on this as a priority. GARD challenged the extent of the sustainability reductions included in the forecasts which are additional to those allowed for in the water companies' WRMP19s.

GARD and CPRE challenged the population growth and demand forecasts, stating that the forecasts are over-estimated and queried the rationale to adopt a higher scenario compared to Government projections. GARD and CPRE also set out the need for confidence analysis for the forecasts of population growth, and other projections including climate change, sustainability reductions and effectiveness of demand management measures.

On climate change, the majority of environmental stakeholders supported consideration of the updated climate projections (UKCP18) and suggested that WRSE should consider the impacts of high emissions scenarios to give a realistic upper estimate of impacts on seasonal variations and resource availability. The availability of refined models, with localised projections, was flagged and WRSE was urged to keep abreast of the latest models and data to ensure decisions for the regional resilience plan were based on the most up-to-date information. Conversely, GARD proposed that allowances included for climate change in London are too high and suggested that these forecasts needed to be reviewed.

CPRE questioned the proposal to increase resilience, moving to a 1 in 500-year resilience measure, suggesting that this is overly cautious particularly when headroom is already incorporated into the plan. GARD similarly argued that the buffers included for uncertainty are excessive.

GARD challenged that the projected shortfall presented by WRSE does not take full account of the demand management programmes included in the water companies' WRMP19s, arguing that these measures would reduce the forecast deficit.

GARD also asked for WRSE to clearly present the drivers for the scale and timing of the deficit and called for more ambition in both demand (PCC) and leakage reduction across the region; whilst Thames 21 flagged the significant challenge to deliver the ambitious forecast demand reductions, particularly without stricter government enforcement and policy, and stated that this should be reflected in the scenario analysis to support the development of the regional resilience plan.

The Regional Rivers Trusts supported the need to consider all water using sectors and emphasised the need to consider previously non-licensed demand, for example horticultural trickle irrigation. They also suggested that the current period of COVID lockdown presents an opportunity to further assess household and non-household demand.

There was a suggestion that the regional resilience plan should take a more holistic approach to water management, understanding not only the availability of water for water users but also the links to wastewater management, water quality and flood management. The Regional Rivers Trust and Thames 21 flagged the opportunity offered in regional planning to consider synergies with Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs) with potential for environmental improvements and cost efficiencies.

Our response

We note the comments raised around the differences in the projections presented in the National Framework and the WRSE assessment. We have continued to work with the Environment Agency and confirmed the main areas where our assumptions differed were those set out in our document. The data used in the analysis was taken from water companies' WRMP19s, which were compiled in line with the current Water Resource Planning Guideline³³, and the Defra analysis on other sector demands. We are working with the Environment Agency, local authorities, and other organisations, to confirm technical approaches and methods, and to collate updated

³³ Water Resources Planning Guideline produced by the Environment Agency, Ofwat, NRW and Defra

datasets. We will share our work on technical methods with stakeholders in July 2020.

Specifically, on the growth forecasts we intend to work with local authorities to agree a range of population growth forecasts. We commissioned an expert consultancy, Edge Analytics, to produce a regional population growth forecast which we will share with local planning authorities in the region. Furthermore, we intend to increase our engagement with water retailers on the non-household forecasts produced and to work closely with other sectors to improve our forecasts of their future water needs.

We are also reviewing the policies that will be adopted in the plan including environmental ambition, the level of resilience that is planned for and the extent of demand management activities. The National Framework and the National Infrastructure Commission set out the need to strengthen resilience to drought, noting the consequences of severe water restrictions on society, the environment and the economy. There is also a strong steer from Government to protect and improve our environment. We note the comments raised on these topics and will be seeking the views of customers and stakeholders in setting the policy ambitions for the region. This work will be undertaken between July and October 2020.

With regards to taking a more holistic approach to water management, this is indeed our ambition and a key reason we have committed to develop a regional resilience plan which assess systems – part of a long journey of better integration. For example, we are starting to coordinate the growth forecasts prepared for both water and wastewater planning purposes (e.g. via Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans) where there are already discussions around potential new solutions.

Q2. We have set out our first thoughts on environmental ambition. Do you think this is focused on the key opportunities in our region? Are there any other areas of opportunity you think we could benefit from?

The need for a greater focus on environmental protection and improvement was voiced by the majority of respondents. The protection of vulnerable watercourses and chalk streams were specifically cited in several responses, with a call to work collaboratively to ensure pressures and impacts are addressed holistically across catchments.

The majority of respondents suggested that WRSE should go beyond current requirements and adopt the higher levels of environmental improvement presented in the National Framework, noting that the plan presents an opportunity to protect some of the rare and protected habitats in the region.

There were also references to measures which should be considered which will help to drive enhanced protection, such as: the use of the Common Standards Monitoring Guidance (CSMG) flow targets being defined by Natural England for designated rivers; assessment of abstractions and drought permits on a regional scale taking account of combined and cumulative impacts; and the opportunity for catchment management schemes to feed into Local Nature Recovery Strategies, thereby supporting environmental and biodiversity benefits and partnership working.

Chalk Streams First presented a proposal to make better use of the enhanced flow from the chalk streams and asked that this should be fully considered. GARD supported the proposal and stated that allowance should be made for the enhanced chalk stream flows becoming available for the abstraction in the lower reaches of the Thames, Lea, Itchen and Test.

Thames 21 suggested that water transfers could be considered to allow the replacement of some of these unsustainable abstractions with those from more robust sources and should be considered on a case-by-case basis to assess their environmental impacts. The Angling Trust stated the need to create more water storage capacity in the South East to further reduce the reliance on abstraction.

Our response

We note the wide support for environmental protection and improvement and welcome the feedback on both leading methods and the need to take a catchment-wide perspective in long-term water resource planning.

A key objective of the regional plan is to deliver long-term environmental improvement across the region and leave a positive legacy for future generations. This has been agreed at the WRSE Senior Leadership Group.

The environmental ambition will be defined to meet legal and regulatory requirements and will take account of the preferences of customers, stakeholders, regulators and Government. Funding the ambition is a key factor, to ensure it is deliverable. We have identified the following priority areas to be led by WRSE in collaboration with environmental groups and wider stakeholders:

- To develop an environmental scoping methodology that will provide a consistent approach to environmental and social benefit and impact assessment for WRSE and the member water companies
- To contribute to decision-making around the environmental policies and level of environmental ambition, particularly related to abstraction from chalk streams, that will be embedded into the regional resilience plan
- To contribute to the decision-making process about how far the plan moves from least cost to best value
- To ensure the right balance of catchment management options are delivered through the regional resilience plan
- To contribute to work on the future use of environmental drought orders and permits.

We propose to convene an environmental stakeholder group, with broad representation of both national and regional stakeholders, to progress this work.

Q3. What are your views on how the region could or should use temporary approaches, such as drought permits, to managing continuous water availability in drought events?

ARK and the Regional Rivers Trusts argued the need for greater emphasis on communications and education to help increase public awareness of water scarcity and the importance of water for people and wildlife. It was also noted that this should be a sustained activity, not only ramped up in response to drought – although

ARK noted that, during a drought, effective communications are essential to engage with people on the need to conserve water supplies. Thames 21 stated that the Regional Rivers Trusts are well placed to support this educational and engagement effort and welcomes stronger collaboration with WRSE and water companies.

Several respondents commented that the use of temporary approaches, such as Temporary Use Bans, that seek to protect the environment are acceptable within either baseline or drought scenarios. CPRE also stated that the use of occasional hosepipe bans is acceptable in preference to the development of new infrastructure. In respect of drought permits, environmental stakeholders widely agreed that these should not be included in the baseline water resource position and their use was considered to represent a failure to achieve sustainable water resources management.

Furthermore, several environmental stakeholders stated that the use of drought permits within the planned-for resilience level is not acceptable due to the environmental damage they will cause, with more investment to create long-term resilience needed to avoid this – with some stakeholders arguing that new water sources are urgently required to protect the water environment and its dependent species. Thames 21 argued that whilst they consider drought permits to be a last resort their use should be reviewed in collaboration with catchment partnerships to understand local pressures.

GARD argued that resilience had already been increased from ‘worst historic’ drought to 1:200 years for WRMP19s and suggested that in planning for a higher level of resilience (1:500 year drought), recognising the infrequency of occurrence and the natural ability of environments to recover from rare adverse events, it would be appropriate to allow some temporary approaches such as easing of environmental restrictions for protecting designated sites with incorporation of drought measures into licence conditions.

Our response

Working with Government, regulators and stakeholders under the National Framework we will actively contribute to the need for effective and co-ordinated communications and education programmes.

We note that the majority of respondents consider that the use of temporary measures is acceptable in a drought and an important tool to protect the environment; and that drought permits should not be included in the baseline or considered as acceptable options in the development of the plan.

These points largely echo the preferences of customers. We intend to revisit these points as part of the research and engagement with customers and stakeholders on the policies to be applied in the regional plan, and this work will take place between July and October 2020.

Q4. Do you think we have missed any key water users within the region? If so, can you please provide details of these water users and the sectors they may be in?

The Regional Rivers Trusts suggested that consideration of the environment as a water user is much less ambitious than they would expect, and measures to protect the environment based on current WRMPs are insufficient.

Blueprint for Water promoted the use of a natural capital assessment to ensure a robust and comprehensive account is taken of environmental and social value in decision-making, citing the need to ensure factors such as loss of public amenity created through over-abstraction, and the increase in value created by protecting watercourses from pollution.

One stakeholder specifically cited the need for some industrial processes such as Fawley (Esso) Oil Refinery in Hampshire and others on Thames Estuary e.g. Sheerness/ Canvey Island etc, to be required to source their own water supplies via the desalination of seawater for such industrial processes.

Thames 21 also flagged the wide range of uncertainty around non-public water supply and non-household demand set out in the National Framework and the need to assess and monitor these demands, particularly for sectors such as horticulture, which may expand as a result of a changing climate.

Our response

We note the feedback and can confirm that there is ongoing work to develop the methodology that will be used to fully assess and include environmental and social parameters in the decision-making process. This is a new area of work for WRSE, with evolving methods and approaches, and we welcome the expertise and input of Blueprint for Water in this area.

We note the comment on industrial users. Our regional resilience plan will consider all water users across the region, including water for homes, business, recreation, agriculture and industrial activities and will be considering a wide range of potential options to address the water resources challenge including wastewater re-use and desalination.

We note the comment on the projections for non-public water supply and can confirm we plan further work with those sectors to improve our understanding of future water needs, and the level of confidence that we can apply to these forecasts.

Q5. We have set out the initial options for managing water resources in the region. What are your suggestions on further options we could consider?

Overall, stakeholders supported measures to make the best use of the water resources that are available with calls for: advancement of metering across the region; changes to legislation governing the installation of water meters; strengthened planning requirements and building regulations such that new homes are built to higher water efficiency standards; and the introduction of water labelling.

Whilst there was a call for more focus on promoting the efficient use of water and achieving sustainable behaviour change, the challenge of effective public engagement about water scarcity, as a general communication as well as specific to drought events, was recognised. There was support for more collaboration, such as with the Regional Rivers Trusts, on such matters.

With respect to reducing the amount of water lost through leaks in pipes, reference was made to the additional headroom that can be provided thus enabling reduced abstraction from sensitive watercourses. This was echoed by ARK which suggested that savings achieved through reduction in leakage should be used to support reduced abstraction in sensitive areas. The link between leakage levels and water temperature was set out with suggestions for further work to explore how water temperatures of greater than 5⁰C can be achieved – for example through in-pipe energy production arising from the movement of water.

Blueprint for Water welcomed the inclusion of all surplus water in our projections, thereby using water which is already available rather than developing new sources or relying on Drought Orders, both of which may have significant environmental downsides. Blueprint for Water noted that this will need to be facilitated by enhanced intra-region transfers.

One stakeholder also noted that options to transfer water both within and from outside the region must be combined and not be looked at in isolation, while issues such as water quality, treatability with respect to nitrates, Cryptosporidium and potential issues from mixing river and groundwater, need to be fully considered.

There was support for more engagement with the agriculture and horticulture sectors, noting future needs for spray irrigation and potential opportunities for water management such as small farm reservoirs, water harvesting, water conservation (including smarter irrigation) and crop choice. Stakeholders signposted the work of Water Resources East as good practice in this area and opportunities for funding through the forthcoming Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS).

There was strong support to consider catchment management schemes to address pressures more holistically, and potentially provide multiple benefits such as:

- water quality (reducing nutrient and pesticide inputs and improving quality of run-off water)
- water quantity (buffering and storing high flows to release water more slowly increasing infiltration and potential recharge, reducing need for irrigation)
- increased protection from flooding and create resilience across the catchment.

The Regional Rivers Trusts' view is that catchment management offers greater opportunities than currently recognised. Thames 21 stated that there are several active projects which provide opportunities for learning.

Chalk Streams First set out its proposition to re-naturalise flows in the Chilterns chalk streams by reducing, or stopping, chalk groundwater abstraction in the upper parts of the Colne and Lea valleys, and substituting those sources with water taken from outside or downstream of the chalk valleys, potentially enhancing flows in the downstream Colne and Lee and other sources. The Chalk Streams First coalition asked that the downstream resource benefits of upper chalk stream flow-recovery should be carefully investigated as part of the strategic water resource options.

GARD proposed that a reduced allowance for emergency storage in the London reservoirs, and opportunities to use the groundwater instead as drought sources (similar to the West Berkshire Groundwater Scheme) should be reviewed.

Opportunities for wastewater recovery, treatment and re-use were raised, including direct re-use. There was specific reference to Southern Water's Water for Life programme, and integrated planning for the re-use scheme proposed at Thames Water's Deephams Sewage Treatment Works to ensure catchment knowledge is considered to provide the best outcome. There were also suggestions for the use of greywater as a non-potable resource such as for irrigation.

The use of aquifer recharge and storage to store excess winter run-off/river flows was also proposed, noting this has been shown to be successful in other countries and regions.

Desalination was mentioned, with the caveat that the benefits and drawbacks need to be clearly outlined.

GARD referenced commentary it had previously submitted on options presented in both Thames Water's and Affinity Water's WRMP19s and requested that points previously made by GARD are considered in the ongoing work of WRSE.

Whilst noting that providing new water supplies for the region is a complex issue, one stakeholder suggested that the problem is not a lack of options but instead the process to agree a coherent, effective plan and actioning it.

Our response

We welcome the comments submitted on potential future options. Measures to manage demand and reduce leakage will continue to be the foundation of our regional resilience plan and the water companies WRMP24s. Whilst the targets will be ambitious, these measures on their own will not be sufficient to address the future water resources challenge. We will also need greater connectivity across the region and a combination of new resource solutions to ensure a resilient and sustainable water supply.

We note the range of potential resource solutions that have been proposed. WRSE has started work to identify and assess options, building on the work completed by companies for WRMP19s.

The scope of work includes looking for innovative catchment-based solutions, encouraging third parties to propose solutions (such as the Chalk Streams First proposition) and will consider multi-sector solutions and the strategic resource options that are being investigated collectively by water companies under the governance of RAPID. We have commissioned Mott MacDonald to review potential options in the South East and the development of new options and will take forward the solutions proposed by stakeholders into this work. We will share our approach to assess options as part of our Method Statements workstream in July.

Specifically, on the Chalk Streams First proposition we will, alongside Affinity Water and Thames Water, review the proposal to understand the potential resource benefit. The benefit gained from new schemes and cessation of abstraction from chalk groundwater sources is not straightforward, and is affected by several factors:

- The impact of drought coincidence on the yield of schemes
- The amount by which discharges into watercourses upstream of Teddington and Fieldes Weir change as a result of variation in demand
- The amount that river flows increase as a result of reductions in abstraction from the chalk
- The impact of effluent volumes on water quality and ‘no deterioration’.

The work has been scoped and will be completed in collaboration with Chalk Streams First.

Q6. This plan requires engagement across a wide range of stakeholders. What are your views on how best to achieve this and are there any key stakeholders you suggest the plan engages with?

Overall stakeholders were positive around participating in the development of our regional resilience plan and companies' WRMP24s. However, there were suggestions for improvements. Thames 21, whilst welcoming engagement by WRSE, stated that the current type of engagement does not provide sufficient insight and opportunity to provide feedback, as well as being resource intensive. GARD stated that, to date, the work led by WRSE had not been shared with stakeholders in a timely and formative stage and requested greater transparency going forwards.

Some of the specific suggestions made were as follows:

- Catchment partnerships and environmental groups should be engaged more actively in the future. There should be more consideration around how to work effectively with partners, drawing on local knowledge and information, and using partner networks to extend the reach. For example, catchment partnerships could potentially become delivery partners as well as facilitating engagement with water-focussed stakeholders through their networks
- Exploring the use of different communication and engagement methods to help manage resources, time and better target information to the audience. Some stakeholders requested more detailed information to be made available, whilst others requested less complex and more targeted engagement
- Thames 21 suggested shorter supporting documents and resources like webinars, meetings or presentations to provide meaningful information of technical details to a non-specialist audience, and the opportunity to review documents in smaller groups with the opportunity to ask detailed questions
- GARD asked that work is shared at a formative stage, giving the opportunity to input and shape work as it evolves
- There was a call for greater transparency suggesting that a greater degree of openness and access to the models and numbers used to create scenarios and predict impacts would be welcomed to allow necessary scrutiny and new ideas to come forward
- Housing developers were identified as an important sector to engage with.

Our response

Our plan will address the needs of multiple sectors and we recognise that stakeholder engagement is a critical part of developing it.

We are keen to work with stakeholders to agree on the strategic challenges the South East region faces in the future such as climate change, population growth, the environment both for public water supply and non-public water supply; and also to identify the strategic regional issues that the plan should address, either through the planning process or by facilitating action e.g. abstraction from chalk streams, sufficient water to facilitate growth in the South East.

We have established a Stakeholder Advisory Panel, with representatives from Government, regulators, the environmental community and other water users. The Panel will work with the WRSE Senior Leadership Team to ensure that a broad range of interests are represented and to help shape the direction and content of the regional resilience plan. Specifically, the members of the groups will:

- contribute expert insight into the long-term interests and future water needs of the sectors they represent
- provide advice and challenge to WRSE as the regional resilience plan is developed to ensure it reflects the needs of multiple sectors
- to partner with WRSE and its member companies where appropriate to further promote the development of the regional plan and WRSE's wider objectives.

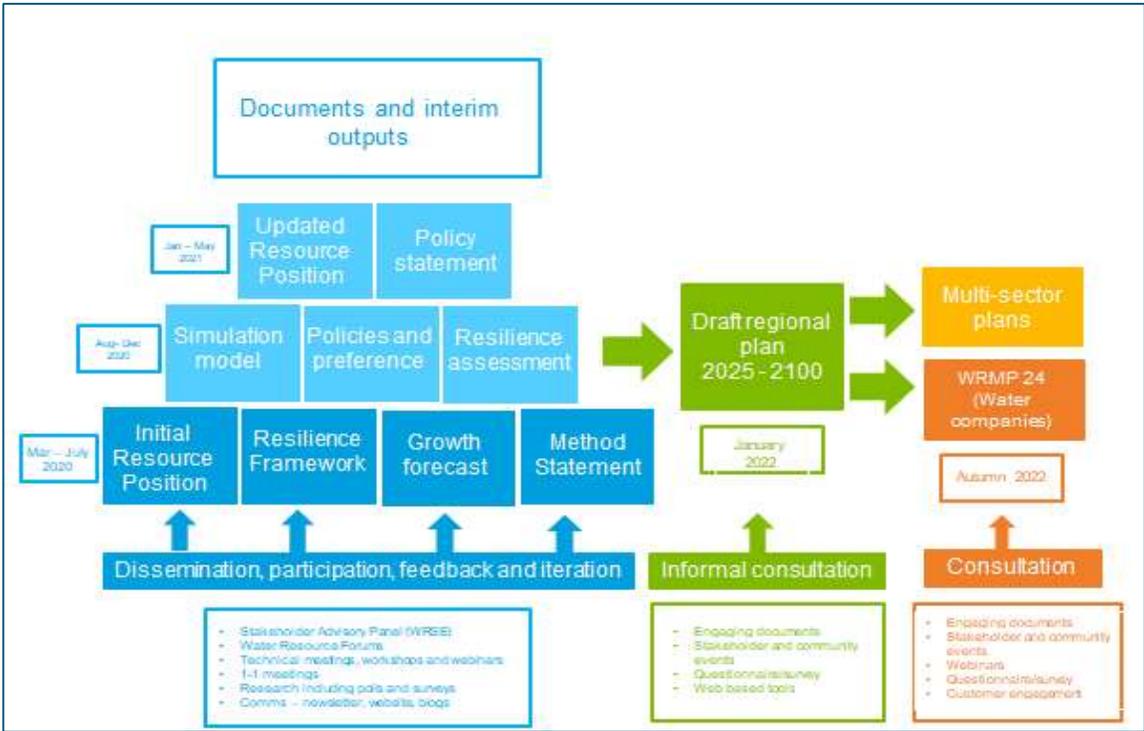
We are also setting up groups covering the environment and multi-sector needs, which will consider key topics in greater detail and feedback to the Stakeholder Advisory Panel.

We will also continue to engage widely with interested stakeholders on all aspects of our plan. We hold regular forums and are considering alternative mechanisms to supplement these and allow targeted engagement on topics of interest, to an appropriate level of detail, for the audience.

We will ensure our engagement approach covers all aspects of the plan and there will be multiple opportunities for engagement and feedback as shown in Figure 2.

We will continue to review our approach, taking account of your feedback, to ensure we are working effectively with customers and stakeholders in shaping our regional resilience plan.

Figure 2: Opportunities for engagement



Q7. Do you have any further comments?

Respondents stated their support for the development of both national and regional plans and specifically the need to consider the current water resource challenges, and potential future solutions, within a wider context.

One respondent cited the need for more realistic and transparent planning, with progress frequently monitored and accountability for implementation, to ensure effective delivery.

Several respondents also confirmed their interest in continuing to be involved in the development of our regional resilience plan, welcoming the opportunity to feed into the process and provide feedback on outputs and documents as it is developed.

One stakeholder emphasised the importance and sensitivity of the globally rare chalk streams and called for WRSE to deliver net gain to the environment with the value of this habitat and the high environmental cost of abstraction reflected in the environmental appraisal process.

Our response

We welcome the feedback from stakeholders, which reflects the shared interest we have in shaping future water strategy. We confirm our commitment to work openly and transparently with stakeholders, listen to feedback and reflect this in our approach and the technical work we undertake as we develop our regional resilience plan.

Section 4: Next steps

The feedback provided covers a wide range of topics associated with our regional resilience plan and will be considered in the policy and technical work we will undertake.

We will continue to share our work and findings as it progresses. We have listened to the feedback and will expand the methods and style of engagement, and we will engage with the wider stakeholder community.

A summary of our timeline for the development of the regional resilience plan and the documents that will be published are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of regional resilience plan

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| May/June 2020 | Resilience Framework – this will assess how resilient the plan is to drought and other events |
| July 2020 | Method Statements – these will set out the methods we will use to develop the Regional Resilience Plan including demand forecasts, environmental appraisal and options |
| July - October 2020 | Policies and preferences – these are the policies that we plan to embed in the Regional Resilience Plan such the extent of the environmental ambition and the pace to achieve this |
| Winter 2020/21 | Produce the resilience assessment of the South East region using the Resilience Framework |
| February 2021 | Update and re-publish our Future Water Resource Requirements for South East England |
| Spring 2021 | Confirm the policies and preferences that we will embed in our Regional Resilience Plan |
| August 2021 | Reconciliation of the South East regional plan, with the other regional plans, to ensure alignment across England |
| January 2022 | Publish our Draft Regional Resilience Plan for informal consultation |
| Spring 2022 | Produce a summary of responses to our consultation on our Draft Regional Resilience Plan and how we'll address them |

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|-------------|---|
| August 2022 | Publish a Revised Draft Regional Resilience Plan. Water companies will also submit their individual Draft Water Resource Management Plans to Defra ahead of public consultation |
| March 2023 | Each individual water company in the region will publish their Statement of Response and a Revised Draft Water Resources Management Plan Water |
| Winter 2023 | WRSE will publish its final multi-sector Regional Resilience Plan and companies will publish their final Water Resources Management Plans |