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WRMP24 Consultation Questions

December 2022

Everything we do today,
is for tomorrow

How you can help shape our strategy



Our draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP24) demonstrates how we will maintain a sustainable and secure supply of clean drinking water for our customers from 2025 to 2050, building on our previous plan, published in 2019 (WRMP19). The draft plan shows how we will balance the need for resilient drinking water supplies with the needs of the environment, our customers and affordability.

Our customers and stakeholders have helped shape our draft WRMP24 (which can be viewed at anglianwater.co.uk/wrmp). We want this dialogue to continue during our consultation, which runs for 14 weeks from Wednesday 21st December to Wednesday 29th March 2023.

For this consultation, we've highlighted four core areas of our plan, on which we would like your views.

We will use this feedback to refine our future planning, publishing a revised draft WRMP24 later in 2023.





Putting reservoirs at the heart of our strategy

We have identified that two new reservoirs, one in the Fens and the other in South Lincolnshire, should sit at the heart of our draft WRMP24.

These reservoirs, a similar size to Grafham Water reservoir, have been determined by national, regional and local modelling to be low-regret options. This means that we will still gain full benefit from them, ensuring our investment is robust, even if the future turns out to be different to what we currently believe will happen.

Experience gained from the reservoirs we already operate suggests they can provide many benefits beyond a safe, resilient drinking water supply. These benefits include improving or creating environmental habitats, as well as providing a public amenity for local communities. Reservoirs may also provide socio-economic benefits by creating tourism and employment opportunities.

We are working with industries that take water from the environment, as well as others who have an interest in how water is used in our region, to determine how the two reservoirs can provide these benefits to the environment, communities and society.

We have considered all of these potential benefits whilst developing our draft WRMP24, and used them as part of our assessment to compare supply-side options such as reservoirs, desalination and water reuse. This analysis has determined that that these other supply-side options, such as desalination and water reuse, do not deliver as many additional benefits, and that they have higher operational carbon and operational costs. However, they could be constructed and connected to the water supply system more quickly than a reservoir.



Do you support us placing reservoirs at the heart of our draft WRMP24, rather than prioritising other supply-side options such as water reuse and desalination? Please tell us why you think this.



Achieving a balance

We believe that we have developed the best value plan for our region. This means we have created a twenty-five year plan that will ensure we continue to provide safe, resilient water supplies to our customers whilst remaining affordable. The plan also aims to generate environmental and social prosperity in our region, which is exactly what our company purpose sets out to achieve.

We believe we have achieved the right balance between these objectives by developing a three-tiered approach:

Demand management for instance, reducing how much water households and businesses use

New reservoirs such as the Fens and South Lincolnshire reservoirs

Other supply-side options such as water reuse and desalination, which will help leave more water in the environment when a large storage reservoir is not the best option

Demand management

We will continue to develop our industry leading demand management strategy, focussing on the benefits that smart meters can provide our customers. We will use this to promote water efficiency and look to be as creative as we can to incentivise reductions in water usage.

Smart meters also enable us to identify leaks sooner, giving us a better understanding of our network at the same time as allowing us to highlight to our customers when we believe there may be leakage on the pipes they are responsible for in their homes and gardens - for instance, a leaky toilet cistern, which is one of the most common sources of accidental water waste in the home. We will provide advice to our customers, as well as support those in circumstances that may make them vulnerable, so timely repairs can be conducted.

The water we save through this demand management strategy will enable us to manage the extra water we will need as a consequence of the population growth projected in our region.

This is something we have been successfully doing since privatisation, putting into supply roughly the same today as we did back in 1989, despite a 30% growth in the number of customers we serve. Our demand management strategy will also allow us to delay some supply-side investment, as well as give us opportunity to progress options that take a long time to come to fruition, such as reservoirs. These supply-side investments will ensure our customers remain on resilient supplies of water in years to come.



Two new reservoirs

The Fens and South Lincolnshire reservoirs are at the heart of our plan. They are low-regret, robust options which could provide benefits far beyond just drinking water.

Like many of our other reservoirs, they could provide environmental habitats, enable us to reduce abstraction from sensitive environments, improve the physical and mental wellbeing of communities and provide socio-economic benefits to local towns and villages.

Water reuse and desalination

As well as reducing the amount of water used through demand management measures and the implementation of new reservoirs, we propose that other new water supplies will come from water reuse and desalination. Water reuse would involve us taking treated effluent from water recycling centres and cleaning it again using membrane technology, monitoring it against strict water quality standards. The treated water is then discharged into the environment, either

a river or a reservoir, before being treated again at one of our existing water treatment works to our usual exceptionally high standard.

The resulting water is indistinguishable from water from another source.

We have prioritised water reuse over desalination as it makes use of a resource we already have, a preference expressed by our customers. However, we recognise that both desalination and water reuse have higher operational carbon and bill impacts than reservoirs. They also both have discharges that could be environmentally damaging, if not managed correctly. Therefore, our plan is to only introduce desalination towards the end of our planning period, allowing us time to gain further insight into the scale of our need and to explore advances in technology that might help mitigate potential negative impacts.

Three-tiered approach

Our three-tiered, phased approach of demand management, new reservoirs and other supply-side options

such as desalination and water reuse will enable us to make low-regret investments based on robust environmental investigations to be conducted between 2025 and 2030. This will ensure we keep bill impacts as low as possible by carefully considering the implementation of high carbon solutions such as desalination. We will also continue to appraise the support we offer our customers who may be in circumstances that may make them vulnerable.

We believe we will achieve a best value plan by undertaking a prioritised, three-tiered approach: demand management, two new reservoirs and other options such as water reuse and desalination to solve any remaining deficits. Do you support this approach? Can you explain why you do, or why you don't?



Doing the right thing for the environment



We are committed to improving our environment and will continue to build on our WRMP19 pledge to keep abstraction within historical levels.

For instance, we will be voluntarily giving up 85 megalitres a day of abstraction licences by 2025, which is more than any other company in the country.

We agree that careful evaluation of our abstraction regimes, and their impact on the environment is needed, and plan to carry out investigations between 2025 and 2030. The results of these rigorous scientific investigations will determine the size of further abstraction reductions we will commit to, and in which sensitive environments they should be made. They will also highlight if there are better options for these environments, such as water quality improvement initiatives or river restoration.

The results of these in-depth investigations will ensure we target the parts of our region that are most in need, providing a tailored solution which will deliver maximum benefit.

As these findings will not be available until we are developing WRMP29, we have made our response to them in WRMP24 adaptive. For instance, we recognise that some level of desalination will likely be required - but we will not start developing location specific options for desalination until WRMP29. Instead, we will plan for the Fens and South Lincolnshire reservoirs which we know are low regret options which will be fully utilised regardless of what our future environmental investigations recommend.

We believe this is the correct approach as acting without the results of these environmental investigations, might move us towards achieving our environmental destination sooner, but could mean we invest hundreds of millions of pounds developing desalination solutions that may not be required for environmental improvement. We don't believe this approach would be beneficial for our customers as it will have a bigger bill impact; and we will produce higher operational carbon and discharges that could potentially harm the environment.

By waiting, we also get the opportunity to explore new technologies and potential opportunities with other organisations whilst these environmental investigations are being conducted.

The concept of environmental destination was introduced by the National Framework for Water Resources, promoting a long-term vision to deliver greater environmental improvement to the country by 2050. It challenges abstractors to focus on reducing the impact of their abstractions, moving beyond their current obligations.



As part of WRMP24, we have committed to prioritising the use of surplus water to achieve environmental destination in the areas that need it most.

We have also planned to achieve our environmental destination for the whole of our region by 2040, ten years before the 2050 target.



We are committed to protecting and improving our environment but don't believe this should be achieved by implementing quick fix solutions, such as desalination, that could end up being detrimental to the environment and more expensive for our customers.

Instead, we will develop options such as the Fens and South Lincolnshire reservoirs that may have longer lead times but will provide more environmental benefits in the long term. This means we will have a phased approach to reducing our abstraction in the short term, and will ensure no deterioration to the environment by furthering our already industry leading demand management strategy and implementing short term supply-side options such as transfers.

Do you agree with this approach?



Paying on the basis of the amount of water used



We are in an area of serious water stress and are constantly striving to reduce demand for water. As part of this, we need to consider how to influence the 9% of our customers who have chosen to stay on an unmeasured charge.

This means they pay a set amount for their water, rather than pay according to the amount they use. Whilst we understand these customers may prefer to stay on an unmeasured charge, we know that unmeasured customers use, on average, 174 litres per head per day compared to the 128 litres per head per day used by our measured customers. That's equivalent of an extra four and a half buckets of water a day.

We believe all our customers should pay on the basis of what they use, and that's why we propose implementing compulsory metering by 2030.

We understand that compulsory metering may be alarming for some of our unmeasured customers, particularly those who have a high level of water use that may be beyond their control to reduce. This is especially true while cost of living pressures are so pronounced, and without support may cause affordability issues for some. However, we believe we have the right financial support packages available for all customers for whom this would present an affordability challenge.

As we move toward compulsory metering, we will reinforce how we can support our customers if they have affordability concerns. For instance, we have a dedicated team of agents that provide advice to customers as to the support that is available in their specific circumstances. This includes budgeting and payment support, eligibility for income-related state benefits and eligibility for a discounted tariff.

Our focus is to be proactive in raising awareness of the support available, but we will also data-match with available Department of Work and Pensions records so that we target support automatically where we believe customers may be eligible. We will also continue to work with customers in circumstances that may make them vulnerable, so we can understand their needs and any additional help we can give.



Do you support us implementing compulsory metering? Is there any other additional support we could provide to our customers when they start to pay according to the amount of water they use?

Playing our part in future planning

In order to play a part in our future planning, please contact Defra with your responses to our consultation questions, as well as any general feedback for our plan.

This can be achieved by emailing Defra at:

water.resources@defra.gov.uk

or writing to them at:

Defra

**Water Resources Management
Plan Water Services**

**Department for Environment,
Food and Rural Affairs**

Seacole 3rd Floor

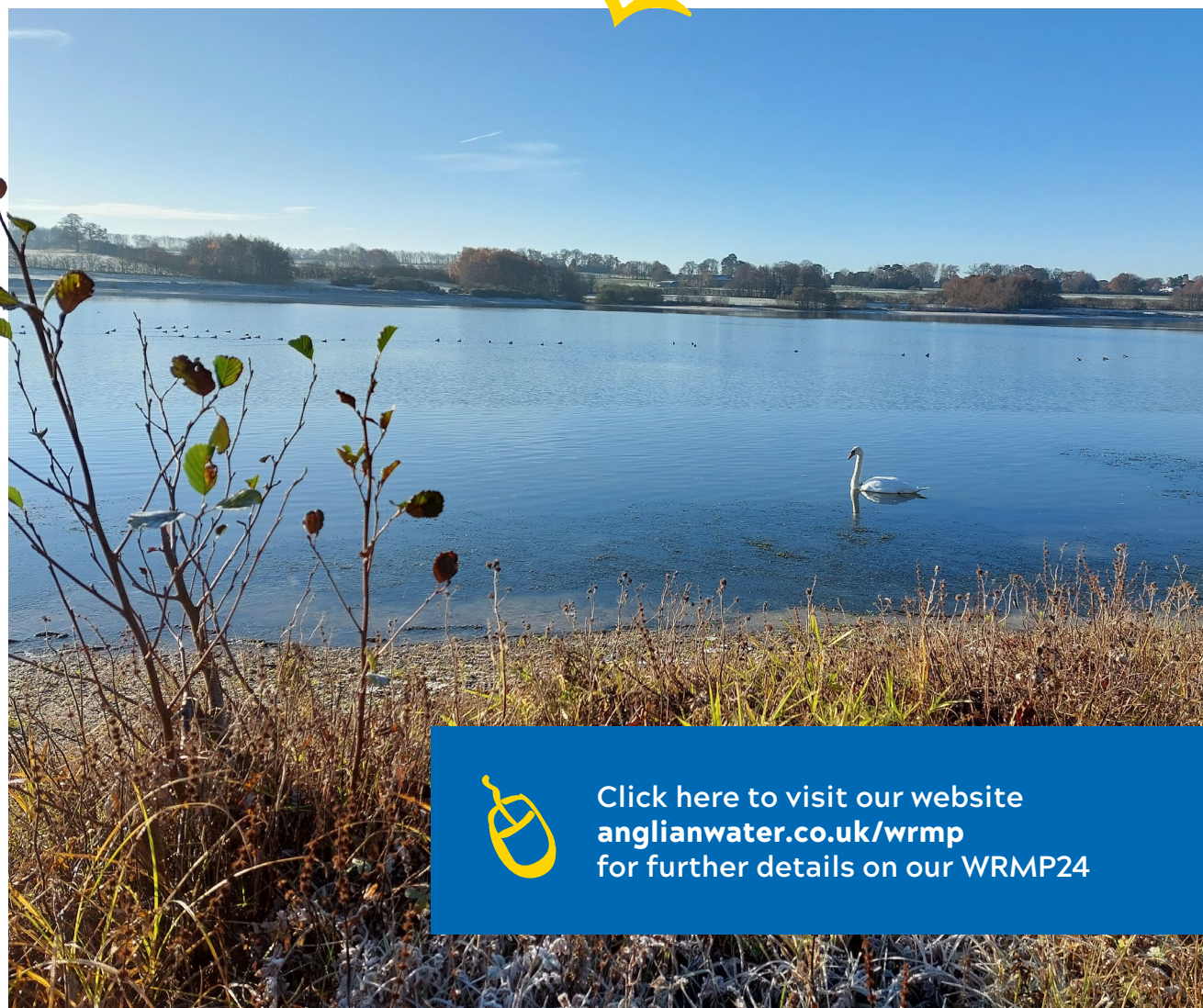
2 Marsham Street London

SW1P 4DF

Please state that your consultation response is related to Anglian Water's draft WRMP24.

You have until Wednesday 29th March 2023 to respond to the consultation.

We will then review all comments and feedback from customers and stakeholders before issuing a revised draft WRMP24 later in 2023.



Click here to visit our website
anglianwater.co.uk/wrmp
for further details on our WRMP24